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COIMBATORE, November 5, 2016

Equal pay: contract workers will have to wait

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The Supreme Court order on equal wage for equal work is likely to impact the Coimbatore Corporation, which engages over 2,000 people on contract for conservancy work and a few hundred more for clerical work in its offices.

An apex court comprising Justices J.S. Khehar and S.A. Bobde called inequality in pay for the same work as “exploitative enslavement”, especially for contract and temporary workers.

Sources in the corporation said that the contract conservancy workers at present get Rs. 255 a day.

It had engaged the workers through four ‘man power’ agency contractors, who paid the wages after deducting insurance and provident fund. Until a couple of years ago, the corporation paid the workers at Rs. 120 a day.

Protest

After much protest and bargaining by the workers’ union, the civic body revised it to Rs. 255 a day.

This was based on the non-mazdoor roll prepared by the district administration.

The workers sweep the roads, collect garbage, and clean drains and also accompany vehicles carrying the waste. In short, they do the permanent conservancy workers.

The latter, however, get a minimum of Rs. 12,000 - 15,000 a month.

That is twice more than what the contract workers get.

Senior permanent workers get up to Rs. 25,000 a month and this could go up as and when the Tamil Nadu Government implements the

If the corporation were to pay as per the Supreme Court's recommendation it would more than double its expenditure on contract conservancy workers.

And, deeply impact its budget, especially at a time when the civic body's finances were not comfortable, said sources.

But the corporation would wait for instructions from the State Government and could only then consider revising wages.
