

HYDERABAD

‘Daily labourers hardest hit by demonetisation’

Daily-wage labourers have been hit the hardest by the Centre’s decision to demonetise the Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 currency notes, as workers are not able to find work or are not being paid on time, said Ramon Magsaysay award winner Bezwada Wilson on Wednesday.

Mr. Wilson said that no one is employing daily-wage labourers and other Safai-Karmachari (manual scavengers) who have been rehabilitated in the recent past. “Some of them who have become vegetable sellers are not seeing a huge dip in their business due to loss of customers. People who have money now either buy things online or prefer to use cash for other things,” he noted.

Dalits real sufferers

Mr. Wilson was in Hyderabad to address prison officials as part of a guest lecture at the Chanchalguda Central Jail. “The real sufferers of demonetisation are the poorest and the most marginalised like Dalits. Their lives have collapsed as people are getting a chance to tell them no and deny their daily earnings,” he asserted.

On manual-scavenging, Mr. Wilson said that though the Supreme Court had passed an order in 2014 to all State Governments to pay Rs. 10 lakh to families of people who died while working in sewers, only a few States had paid the amount so far. “Punjab has paid some families the amount. Recently, the Tamil Nadu Government told the Supreme Court that it cannot pay the amount, but finally agreed,” he added.

Biodegradable toilets

He also said that the Indian Railways was the biggest employer of manual-scavengers, as a majority of the train coaches still do not have biodegradable toilets. “About 500 coaches are being fitted with those toilets each year. There are about 1,70,000 train coaches currently. So fitting 500 of them a year will take many years to finish the task,” he pointed out.



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