

Mixed reaction to minimum wages for tailoring industry

- [R. Vimal Kumar](#)

The recent High Court order with respect to the minimum wages announced in October 2014 for the tailoring industry has evoked mixed reactions in the Tirupur knitwear cluster.

“This court order is not applicable to hosiery industry. It is only for the tailoring industry”, Tirupur Exporters’ Association president A. Sakthivel told *The Hindu*.

Substantiating Mr. Sakthivel’s views, industry sources cited another order by Madras High Court on March 17 this year, based on a petition by a Dindigul textile unit that has production base in Tirupur too, in which the court had mentioned that hosiery and tailoring industries were different.

Meanwhile, CITU state secretary M. Chandran said the court order should be implemented in the categories of employees where the minimum wages given were found lower than in the Oct 10, 2014, order.

“For example, tailors in Tirupur cluster are getting higher wages in the tripartite wage agreement signed by the textile associations, trade unions and labour department compared to the scales in the 2014 order. But the scales of helpers and sweepers in units are quoted higher in the 2014 order. In such cases, arrears should be given”, he said.

The GO on October 10, 2014, issued by Labour department, on ‘Revision of minimum rates of wages for employment in tailoring industry’; had given room for confusion even then as the government had constituted minimum wages committee for employment in hosiery industry.

Based on the committee’s findings, a new set of minimum wages came in to force exclusively for hosiery industry on February 17 this year.

The GO set aside the alleged discrepancies in pay scales much to the satisfaction of the industry in general.

Even if the arrears have to be given, industry experts as well as sources in trade unions accept that there would be practical difficulties in its disbursement.

“The main problem is that majority of the workers here are employed on weekly wages or on piece rate wages, and they migrate from one unit to another frequently. So, even if we want to pay arrears for the said period they cannot be located,” pointed out some unit owners.

For the workers too, many persons will not be able to make any claim for arrears as they were not in payroll. Even in those companies where workers were put on payroll only a few persons were permanently in the payroll of a particular company, industry sources said.