

At last Garment workers got Rs. 141 as Minimum wage!! - After a long struggle by GATWU and Munnade

After a long gap of 8 years, the garment workers have been smiling, as they are getting Rs 3675.00 (Basic 2777 + DA 898) per month with an increased amount of Rs.750 in their wages. Karnataka state government has revised the minimum wages for garment industry and now it is 141.32 Rs per day and all the major exporters are implemented this.

In 2001, the minimum wage for the garment industry was Rs71.70. As per the law, this was supposed to be revised before five years i.e.2006 which didn't happen. From 2006, various initiatives have been taken by Garment and Textile workers Union (GATWU) and Munnade, for the revision of / hike in minimum wage for garment Industry.

- Memorandums were submitted to Minister of labour and National human Rights Council about the revision of Minimum wage.
- In early 2007, a study survey was conducted among 300 garment workers. The survey was about their monthly family expenses, and the wage they were getting. It was clearly came out from the study that the family expenses for a garment worker was about Rs 6000 per month and the wages they were getting was about 3000. Based on this, GATWU and Munanade organized a Minimum wage campaign with demand of 200 Rs/day including various activities, like mass protest rally, hall meeting, area meetings, and meetings with union leaders etc.,



Ashim Roy, President GATWU, addressing gathering inauguration of Campaign



Union leaders of AITUC and HMKP demanding the minimum wages with workers

As a result of this, a minimum wage committee which was formed early 2007, has released a draft notification, and it has legally notified on 2009 March. As per this notification, every unskilled worker should be getting Rs. 127.00 per month.

When this was not implemented by any garment manufacturer, GATWU wrote a letter to 12 major exporters and followed by that a reminder letter also written, as there was no response. Also memorandums were submitted to the labour minister, Labour secretary, and Labour commissioner about the violation of Government order.

When there was no response from any of these Authorities, a Writ Petition was filed by GATWU in High court of Karnataka on 8.3.2010, for non implementation the minimum wage and a order passed by court to issue the notices for the exporters including the Labour Secretary, and the Labour Commissioner.

Immediately the State has altered its previous notification of 2009, and passed a fresh notification on March 2010; with decreasing the minimum wage about Rs. 4.88, giving the reason of 'Typographic error'. As per the Fresh notification the minimum wage was 141.32.

GATWU has filed another petition against this decrease on 23.4.2010 and demanding for the previous notification. Both cases are pending for order in the High court.

For the whole issue, Clean Cloths Campaign (CCC) and Workers Rights Consortium (WRC) have supported a lot by pressurizing the international brands about the non implementation of minimum wages.