

Title: Need to enhance the wages of Head Loaders working in Food Corporation of India in Kerala.

SHRIABDULLAKUTTY (CANNANORE): The Food Corporation of India (FCI) has been mandated primarily to serve the social sector through procurement of food grains, its storage and movement, and as a key functionary in the Public Distribution System (PDS).

For all ills afflicting FCI, the blue-collar workforce of its head loaders has been keeping the PDS channel fully operational day and night. FCI depots at West Hill (Calicut), Mavelikkara and Chalakkudi in Kerala are still to be brought under the Direct Payment system to ensure parity in wages for the loaders working at these depots. An upward revision of Rs. 50 in daily wages for the loaders was awarded by the Bombay High Court and a tribunal in Chennai, which has yet to be given effect to by the FCI management.

The Central Government has been generous in declaring a hike in DA for its staff at the rate of 3 per cent recently, which works out to an annual cost of more than Rs. 1,600 crore to the exchequer. The likely outgo on account of enhanced wages to the FCI loaders will not exceed Rs. 95 crore a year. I urge the Government to be equally generous to the blue-collar workforce of its public undertaking -- FCI -- serving the social sector.