

Fisheries sector in city hit by demonetisation



KOCHI: Demonetisation has affected fisheries sector in the city, with business going down by almost 70%. Fishermen said the supply to various markets has lessened because of payment arrears to labourers, owners and owners to drivers.

"We can survive if there is liquid cash. Card payment will not help us. Due to the lack of education, fishermen are finding it difficult to use card for payment," said Augustine, union secretary of fish market in Chambakkara.

"We had given application to State Bank of India (SBI) for a point of sale (POS) machine one month ago. But we haven't got the machine yet," said Sebastian, owner of Matha fish shop.

"Around 70% of fish sale has decreased due to demonetisation," said Sudheer, a salesman.

"Authorities concerned should organize awareness programmes especially among labourers of fish market about digital payment," said Cyrus, regional executive of Kerala fishermen's welfare fund board (KFWFB).

"Demonetisation has affected the market badly and situation is much worse than what it was in November. It has become important to educate labourers and owners. Only 10% of the staff in marine exports company are using cards and it is difficult to convince labourers about card payment as they need liquid cash for daily needs. We did an awareness programme at Munambam Harbour recently," said Mahesh S, deputy director & chief executive, officer Fish Farmer's Development Agency (FFDA), Ernakulam.

"At present, payments are done through cheques. Though cheques are used for large-scale payments, small-scale transactions are still done by cash. Demonetisation is a good thing, but it has a considerable effect on our day-to-day life. We didn't start using e-payments. It is not that easy for people like us to adapt to these new methods," said Sunil Kumar, a worker from Vallarpadam.

"Our day-to-day life is at stake as we are struggling to receive payment. We trust our owners but we want to buy things. We have needs," said Shihabudheen, a worker from Vallarpadam terminal.