

» TODAY'S PAPER » TAMIL NADU

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## Unorganised workers' pleas remain unheard

- [R. Sujatha](#)

It has been a long struggle for unorganised workers. Every election, they make a set of demands and it is ignored. They hold protests but their voices are so feeble that politicians hear only a few words.

Activists working with unorganised sector workers say around 92 per cent of the State's workforce is in the unorganised sector, making it imperative that a comprehensive policy framework is created.

For the last several years, they have been demanding that Government Orders 122, 123 and 124 be annulled. The G.O.s, issued in 2008, put the verification of migrant workers under the Village Administrative Officer. The verification process is mired in delays and rejection, shutting them out of welfare boards. But none of the manifestos have addressed this issue.

### Funds crunch

The welfare boards are cash strapped and unable to generate funds. Except for construction and auto industry, no levy is collected in other occupations to make the boards self-sufficient. Even the small contribution by workers was scrapped.

R. Geetha, adviser to the Unorganised Workers Federation, says: "Not just migrant workers from other States, but inter-district migrant workers have also been suffering because of this. Welfare boards are highly politicised. In the DMK regime, there were five alliance parties which helped in ensuring some work in welfare boards. However, the AIADMK has installed its party members. We need a grievance redress mechanism."

### Medical cover

In its report on the public hearing regarding the performance of unorganised workers welfare board, the members had said they needed medical cover under the Employees State Insurance Scheme. Their demand has not yet materialised. Sema Narayanan, president of Potters Workers Federation, which has around one lakh members and four lakh workers in the State, has made six demands, including establishing an institute for pottery on the lines of that for stone sculpture.

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