

## Trade unions reach out to migrant workers

- [M. Soundariya Preetha](#)

In a district that has thousands of workers from other States, employed in industries, retail outlets, and farmlands, some of the trade unions have started enrolling these workers in the unions.

According to K.M. Selvaraj of engineering workers' union (AITUC), there are several challenges in enrolling the migrant workers in the unions.

They work for six to eight months and go home for at least a month during festivals. When they return, they might join work in another unit.

However, there are workers in some industries who are here for four or five years, have settled down in Coimbatore with their family.

"If we have the union in that unit, we enrol these workers too, though the number is small," he said.

"Our members also advise these workers on the need for social security and the benefits that are available to them," he added.

The number of migrant workers is high in industries that have more manual work, such as foundries.

Trade union leaders here say that language is another problem in registering these workers.

The AITUC however plans to reach out to the migrant workers in the construction sector by creating a database and conducting campaigns for them.

However, a pumpset manufacturer here says that migrant workers are not employed in the main shop-floor activities. So far, they have not been part of any union.

J. James, president of Tamil Nadu Association of Cottage and Tiny Enterprises, says that one of the demands of the micro units is setting up of a welfare board for both the owners and workers of micro and cottage units. Work is uncertain for the owners too in the micro units, he says.