

## **The Worker's Finger and the Ration**

### **By Rejimon Kuttappan**

In a village in northern #India, I met a woman worker whose finger told the story of her life.

At the factory where she works, gloves slow down production. And now, everything is on a piece-rate basis — this much work earns you this many tokens; the tokens are then converted into wages.

There is no employment contract. No minimum #wage. No paid #leave. No provident #fund. No ESI. No #insurance. No ID. No #holidays. If you work, you earn; if you don't, you go hungry. It is nothing short of bonded labour.

Now, about her finger. Since she worked without gloves, the skin on her fingertips has worn away. She can't even place her fingerprint at the ration shop — the machine fails to register it.

In short, she can't get her subsidised grain. She is forced to buy rice from private shops at a much higher price.

This is not an isolated case. I have met nearly 300 women workers in the same situation. Dalits. Labourers. One among India's 490 million unorganised workers

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