

# After a hard-fought 8-year battle, Kerala women workers win 'right to sit'

Wednesday 25 July 2018, by [MANUEL Thomas](#), [T. Venkat](#), [TADEPALLI Srividya](#) (Date first published: 22 July 2018).

Led by the Asanghadita Mekhala Tozhilali Union (AMTU), women workers from Kerala have won the right to take a seat at work. *The Better India* [reports that the shop owners had extremely harsh rules](#) for their employees to follow, including forbidding their employees from sitting or leaning against the wall during work-hours, limiting their lunch breaks and their bathroom breaks and that "talking to colleagues... could result in loss of pay." The union took the matter to court and has been fighting the cause for almost eight years. Now, the Kerala Shops and Commercial Establishments Act is going to be amended to allow workers the 'right to sit'. The leader of the AMTU, Viji, [told the Times of India](#) that "The shop owners, including the Kerala merchants' union, had said that if people wanted to sit or use the toilet, they should just stay at home". This is a small example of how workers have to mobilise the entire state and judicial machinery even for something as small as resting at work.

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