



# THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND HUMAN DIGNITY: THE CASE OF MIGRANT LABOURERS IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

*The Indian government has implemented a number of measures to stop the spread of the new coronavirus because it was one of the countries that had been severely afflicted. While actions like the lockdown caused major harm to various societal groups, the situation of migrant workers from other states in India was devastating. The migrant labourers trapped in various regions of the country felt like second-class citizens while the affluent segments of society could afford the stringent restrictions imposed by the state. This study offers an ethical discussion of the pandemic-era welfare state and the human dignity of migratory workers. Data acquired from articles on the topic published in state-approved media were analysed using the theoretical framework of human dignity violation. The study's conclusion includes a critical evaluation of the marginalised people's human dignity in a purported modern welfare state.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Welfare state, Human dignity, Intersectionality, Privilege, Migrant labourers, COVID-19*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the deadliest pandemics in the history of modern virology has been COVID-19. In order to contain the virus, the globe has had to rely on preventive measures combined with symptomatic therapy due to the lack of pathogen-specific treatments. The pandemic has significantly harmed social lives and disturbed the global economy. The pandemic has affected social and economic systems, making it a national priority for all countries in the world. Thus, governance has emerged as a crucial component in the pandemic situation's management. The world's nations implemented precautionary measures like lockdowns of public venues and travel bans as a result of the virus's rapid rate of transmission and possible harm. So, the fight against COVID-19 involves not just a pathogen and modern medicine but both the state and the pathogen. The effects of this "state versus pathogen" scenario on everyday people's life have sparked a discussion on the "ethics of the state-initiated measures." While the government must base its actions on the "welfare of the citizens," its applicability to all citizens raises questions. Citizens of a country fall into various categories, some of which may overlap, suggesting intersectional. For instance, it is possible to be an Indian national, poor, and migratory worker all at once. The state's actions performed in the interest of its people's wellbeing do not always have to take disadvantageous citizens into consideration.

In order to stop the COVID-19 epidemic from spreading, the Indian Union, the country's government, declared a statewide lockdown on March 24, 2020. This lockdown included travel bans and limitations on assembling in public places. Although

migrant workers were one of the most impacted groups, many other underprivileged individuals were not taken into account in the state's "lockdown" approach. Especially in terms of infrastructural development, migrant labourers help India's economy grow. The construction of infrastructure and other unskilled jobs in India's major cities frequently include the exploitation of migrant labourers. Migrant workers in India were left without a job or a source of income due to the pandemic control efforts. The fact that the migrants were unable to return to their hometowns owing to the travel ban only made matters worse. The impact of the state's COVID-19 containment measures on migrant workers and the state's response to those measures are critically evaluated in this article. The investigation is based on articles from state-approved media outlets. An ethical discussion about "human dignity in a welfare state" is the first step of the research, which is then followed by a critical analysis of media content about the "status of migratory labourers" during the epidemic.

## HUMAN DIGNITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The "Kantian deontology" is largely responsible for the development of the idea of human dignity as we know it today. The deontological ethical position holds that because humans are "ends in themselves," they have a moral dimension and hence possess inherent dignity. The presumption directly contradicts the notion that utility and dignity go hand in hand. Instead, the concept is that humanity has dignity in and of itself (Sensen, 2016). The idea of human dignity has evolved in modern civilizations in and around the Kantian deontological perspective. The international mandates affirm that all people



are equally endowed with human dignity (Kotzmann&Seery, 2017).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations in 1948, states in Article 1 that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." Hence, a crucial tenet of the contemporary human rights notion is human dignity. There are four basic ways to deprive someone of their sense of dignity: humiliation, instrumentalization, degradation, and dehumanisation (Kaufmann et al., 2011). The social structure tasked with preserving human dignity is the state. In order to uphold human dignity, member states are obligated under Article 22 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights to provide social security in addition to economic, social, and cultural rights. Human rights are derived from the idea of human dignity. As a result, a welfare state's foundational principle is the idea of human dignity. Every welfare state has a duty to uphold human dignity, which includes ensuring that unemployment or disability does not deprive people of their means of subsistence, that every citizen's rights are unaffected, that there is a functioning, sustainable economy, that assistance is given to those who cannot help themselves, and that existential risks like fear are eliminated (Steigleder, 2014). According to Article 22 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, welfare states establish "basic rights" in response to the urge for respect for human dignity.

#### Migrant Labourers in India : an Overview

The poor and the marginalised are compelled to move to urban areas in search of work because of the widening gap between the rich and the poor in India's liberalising economy. Together with many other variables, the migration of people from rural to urban areas is a result of poverty and the junction of casteism and poverty. Unskilled labourers may migrate both within and across states in India. In India, there are 307 million people who have moved away from their birthplace, of whom 41 million (13%) are interstate migrants, according to the 2011 census. 140 million of the 307 million migrants relocate in search of employment. Those who relocate from one state to another may be skilled or unskilled migrants. Migrant labourers are frequently engaged in the low-wage, high-risk informal sector, which calls for unskilled or semi-skilled labour (DDU-GKY Ministry of Rural Development, 2018). In India's labour force, there are at least 100 million migrant workers earning low wages (Shah & Lerche, 2020). Unskilled migrant workers make up a group that experiences prejudice and discrimination frequently. Interstate migrant labourers make up 56 million of these unskilled migrant workers (Census, 2011), the bulk of whom rely on daily employment in the unorganised sector. Given the nature of their profession, it is common for these employees to not even have a legitimate identification card (Varma, 2020).

#### INTERSTATE MIGRANT LABOURERS AND INTERSECTIONAL

The concept of intersectionality focuses on the connections between and effects of various forms of discrimination. It looks on the impact that power dynamics have on interpersonal interactions and experiences. A concept called intersectionality looks at social and political life as the result of many different variables. An intersectional perspective on social inequality would show the interconnectedness of the social divisions causing the issue (Collins & Bilge, 2016). An intersectional worldview of the unorganised sector's interstate migratory worker population would shed light on a number of interconnected dimensions. Caste, class, ethnicity, and many other factors play a role in the predicament of the population of migrant workers in both their home countries and their host countries.

One of the main causes of interstate migration in India is poverty. In search of fortune, poor people, many of them are from rural areas of India, move to states with higher HDI and greater economic development. But these people's poverty is not a standalone occurrence. Interstate migrant workers in India are a population that endures a number of interrelated difficulties. It is discovered that those who are deemed to be at the bottom of the caste system work the hardest and in the worst conditions as migrant labourers. The states where these labourers are from have the lowest human development indices and are infamous for upper caste wealth extraction, leaving lower caste individuals with essentially little wealth (Shah & Lerche, 2020).

The caste structure causes poverty, which in turn encourages migration to other states, demonstrating the intersectional character of interstate labour movement in India. People from lower castes are frequently put in low-paying, pointless tasks and face prejudice at work (Banerjee & Knight, 1985; Das & Dutta, 2007; Madheswaran&Attewell, 2007). Curiously, the situation does not just persist in the home countries. Migrant workers frequently use brokerage platforms to get on the job market. The labourers are frequently exploited by labour brokers in the host states by being hired for cheaper rates (Picherit, 2019). While moving to a new state, persons who previously faced discrimination on the basis of class and caste now face additional prejudice based on language and ethnicity. The inhabitants of the "receiving states" discriminate against migrant workers in a variety of ways, including on the basis of their ethnicity and language, in addition to the poverty- and caste-related injustices they face in their home countries. A serious violation of dignity is caused by this dual burden of discrimination in the "receiving state" and the original state. Interstate migrant workers are among the most vulnerable groups of the population because of their estrangement from their country of origin and their family members, as well as poverty and prejudice. So, it is clear that interstate migrant workers are a marginalised group in society who face many forms of discrimination in a so-called welfare state.



## THE DOWNSIDE OF BEING AN INTERSTATE MIGRANT LABOURER IN INDIA

The discrimination faced by migrant workers makes their socioeconomic situation worse. A migrant worker's issues start with accommodation and progress to risk to life. To reduce living expenses, migrant labourers live in cramped, unsanitary housing infrastructures. Migrant workers frequently wind up living in unclean conditions, eating poorly, skimping on personal cleanliness, and otherwise putting themselves in dangerous living situations in an effort to reduce the cost of living in the "receiving state" (Ashok & Thomas, 2014a, b; De Haan, 1997; Zabeer et al., 2019). In addition to having a difficult time finding housing, migrant workers are subject to hazardous working circumstances. Interstate migrant workers are frequently placed in risky workplaces like construction sites, where they run the danger of mishaps, falls, and machinery-related injuries (Jane, 2016). Interstate migrant workers are also exploited with low pay and long hours (Agarwal & Raj, 2020). Migrant workers frequently don't participate in decisions made about their areas of employment. The decision-making process is controlled by the "receiving state" contractors. This is owing to migrant workers' lack of familiarity with the "receiving state's" sociocultural fabric and the fact that, in the absence of a state-imposed system, they are hired through private businesses and people.

In India, migrant workers face discrimination and exploitation every day of their lives. They frequently face prejudice and exploitation in the "receiving state" in addition to class and caste-based persecution in their own country. The issue of human dignity is brought up by this situation of being a discriminated and exploited human being. According to international conventions and the Indian Constitution, migrant workers have a right to be citizens with dignity, however they are frequently denied this respect. The pandemic scenario exacerbated this dilemma, and the next part discusses how migrant workers' human dignity is being violated under the welfare state of India.

## THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON INTERSTATE MIGRANT LABOURERS

The population as a whole went through sufferings on the economic, social, and psychological fronts as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, which created an unusually terrible situation. Interstate migrant workers, a vulnerable demographic, experienced never-before-seen sufferings on a variety of fronts, including material, psycho-social, and socio-political.

### Material Impact

The pandemic's most fundamental impact on the migrant labourers was on the financial front. When the pandemic hit the labour market, inexperienced workers with poor job security quickly found themselves out of a job and without the necessary financial resources to live. The pandemic control measures, including as the lockdown, made the employment prospects for migrant workers even more dubious (Guha et al., 2020; Khanna, 2020). The pandemic affected even the most basic demands of the migrant labourers in India, leading to a scenario where they

had no income (Singh, 2020). Economic instability brought on by the pandemic, in turn, created the path for psycho-social suffering among migratory workers.

### Psycho-social Impact

Migrant workers were troubled by the unknown length of the lockdown, their inability to travel and visit their family, their fear of being abandoned by their employers, uncertain career prospects, etc (Chander et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2020). This made migrant workers' anguish worse, along with their worry about social marginalisation. Migrant workers' mental health was negatively impacted by social exclusion because they are more likely to experience discrimination and loss of social standing. The state-mandated measures, such as mandatory isolations and quarantines, had a negative impact on the migrant workers' mental health (Choudhari, 2020).

### The Socio-political Dimension of the Pandemic Induced Hardships of Migrant Labourers

The difficulties that migratory workers experienced during the pandemic demonstrate how the social system precariously contributed to their suffering. The limited scope of the social security programmes available to migrant workers was demonstrated by the governmental authorities' incapacity to assure their welfare collectively during a bad event. The concurrent list of the Indian constitution includes "labour," which suggests that both the state and the federal governments are equally liable for launching welfare initiatives in this area. The ineffectiveness of the state apparatus on this regard is explained by the lack of a direct grievance redressal mechanism for migratory labourers. The Supreme Court of India's *suo motu* intervention strengthened the claim that the state had not been responding to the situation in an effective and desired way by taking cognizance of the violation of migrant labourers' fundamental rights and ordering the state to meet their immediate needs (Chander et al., 2020; Rajagopal, 2020).

The notion of safeguarding the wellbeing of migrant labourers is at the centre of the policies and legislation in black and white, but the actual situation is far from perfect. It is disheartening that the migrant labourers are not treated with the respect they merit on a human level by the system that exploits them for economic gain. The predicament of migrant workers is constantly influenced by state and societal influences, something that the epidemic clearly highlighted. While some state policies had been least sympathetic to migrant workers, aggravating their situation (BBC, 2020; Aljazeera, 2020; Gupta et al., 2020; Pandey, 2020; Chaturvedi, 2020; First Post, 2020; Babu & Sahay, 2020; Kulkarni, 2020), it was the state's incapacity to deal with the circumstance and inaction that, in certain cases, caused people to face increasing difficulty (Lalwani, 2020; Ameen, 2020; The Wire, 2020; The Federal, 2020; News 18, 2020; Kulkarni, 2020). The condition of migrant workers had also been made worse by societal attitudes, including negative perspectives and unfavourable responses (The New Indian Express, 2020; Tomlinson & Chaurasia, 2020).



## METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study is a qualitative investigation of the instance of an interstate migrant worker's right to dignity being violated in India during the pandemic. The case has been investigated from the perspective of "human dignity" under the conceptual framework of "violation of human dignity" (Sensen, 2016). (Kaufmann et al., 2011). The study uses a narrative approach, creating a narrative on the treatment of migrant workers' dignity during the pandemic using information from state-approved media. Data for the study was acquired from media reports covering the time period from March 24 (the day the lockdown in India was announced) to May 24, 2020, when interstate migrant workers were either stranded in host states or made a valiant effort to return to their home states. Using the terms "migrants," "migrant labourers," "pandemic," "human dignity," "human rights," "discrimination," and "India," we were able to locate incidents of violations of the dignity of migrant workers at this time in India. The results regarding unskilled interstate migrant labourers were examined in the context of "violations of human dignity," and the pertinent results were enlisted for further investigation (Table (Table1.1)). At this point, reports from unlicensed media outlets were disregarded, and complete inter-coder consensus was obtained over the listing of the report's dignity violations. To maintain objectivity, only the reports that listed factual events were chosen, and those that were opinions or comments were disregarded. The selected reports fall under three broad categories viz.

- a. Violations caused by state/state mechanisms: This category of reports covers instances in which a state government or its machinery, primarily the bureaucracy, engaged in behaviour that violated the dignity of migrant workers.
- b. Violations brought on by state inefficiency: These reports cover incidents in which the dignity of migrant workers was violated as a result of the state's incapacity, typically, to take the required steps to prevent negative consequences.
- c. Infractions brought on by societal perceptions: These reports cover people's general attitudes or behaviours that have led to violations of migrant workers' human rights.

The three types of reports were examined in the context of human rights abuses in order to describe the instance of migrant workers' respect for human rights during the epidemic in India. There were 25 reports overall, and the stories that were chosen were analysed thematically within the context of human dignity violations, including humiliation, degradation, instrumentalization, and dehumanisation (Kaufmann et al., 2011). One form of violation frequently had components of another form of violation in the situations given in the reports. In these situations, the reports were taken into account under the categories of infractions that they most closely related to. The following parts present the reports' topically classified findings.

## THE HUMILIATION OF UNSKILLED INTERSTATE MIGRANT LABOURERS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Any affront to one's or a group's pride is considered to be humiliation. It involves an emotional reaction to a forced or intentional decline in social position (Burton, 2014). Both an objective and a subjective experience for the victim, humiliation exists. Human dignity can be violated by a person or a group being treated humiliation (Kaufmann, et al., 2011). According to Kaufmann (2011), there are three different ways to shame a group: "direct group humiliation," "symbolic group humiliation," and "representative group humiliation." The constitution and laws in India make sure that there are few direct and symbolic humiliations. The term "representative humiliation" refers to the humiliation of one or more members of a group who then cause the entire group to feel humiliated. This existed in the case of the migratory workers during the pandemic.

On March 24, 2020, the Indian state imposed a lockdown, which resulted in job losses and a consequent lack of means of subsistence, leaving the migratory labourers trapped in host states. Several migrant workers who were in extreme poverty had to walk to their home states because of the travel ban that was implemented along with the lockdown (Pandey, 2020). The migrant workers were placed in an embarrassing situation after making the agonising journey across many states to reach their hometown. Interstate migrant workers were viewed as possible virus carriers by bureaucrats in some states' administrative systems, and the Uttar Pradesh officials' approach was degrading and offended the collective human dignity of the migrant workers. The authorities doused the migrant workers with chemical liquids rather than using any scientific methods (BBC, 2020; Aljazeera, 2020; Gupta et al., 2020). The World Health Organization rejected this approach as being unscientific (Fox, 2020). The fact that migrant workers had to endure this humiliation while none of the expatriated residents living abroad had to indicates a blatant instance of discrimination and a breach of human dignity. The random act of "representative humiliation" painted a picture of migrant workers as dirty virus carriers, even if it might be argued that this was an administrative error rather than a violation of state policy.

## DEGRADATION OF UNSKILLED INTERSTATE MIGRANT LABOURERS DURING THE PANDEMIC

A person's autonomy is violated, and their emotional experience is subjected to violence, which is what is meant by degradation. Degradation is characterised by a disregard for a person's personality and typically involves forcing a person to do something against his or her will (Webster, 2011). Degradation is a frequent type of violation of dignity in the day-to-day life of migrant workers; it frequently takes the shape of a lack of decision-making autonomy, subpar housing provided by contractors, etc. The epidemic sparked a situation that has worsened the degrading treatment of migrant workers' human dignity. The treatment of migrant workers collectively is one of the outstanding features of the degradation during the pandemic.



There have been accounts of how individuals were prevented from making independent decisions on their travel and housing choices throughout the pandemic.

Degradation of migrant workers as a group had occurred frequently. The first of these is the means of transportation for migratory workers travelling between states. Although the government set up "Shramik trains" for migrant workers, the demand outstripped the supply, causing thousands of migrant workers to walk to their hometowns (India Today, 2020). Due to the government's lack of an organised plan for their repatriation and rehabilitation, the migrant workers found themselves treated as inferior or second-class people. The state took systematic steps to repatriate its people who were employed abroad, but paid less attention to the migrant workers from the Indian Union. Despite Indian Railways' claims to the contrary, the few trains the government had organised to bring the migrant labourers home were frequently late and short on food and water (Lalwani, 2020; Ameen, 2020; The Wire, 2020; The Federal, 2020; News 18, 2020). These events indicate that migrant workers as a whole are being degraded.

### **INSTRUMENTALISATION OF UNSKILLED INTERSTATE MIGRANT LABOURERS DURING THE PANDEMIC**

Instrumentalization, or treating people like objects in order to obtain something, is employing people as a method to attain goals (Kaufmann, 2011). The pandemic crisis cleared the way for even more instrumentalization, even if it is a common form of human dignity violation against migrant workers in free market economies. Throughout the pandemic, political and organisational actors profited from the misery of migratory workers.

Political negotiations arose in several Indian states as a result of the lack of a standardised state-run mechanism to enable the transit of migrant workers. For instance, an opposition party in the state of Uttar Pradesh provided free buses to take migrant workers to their hometowns. The state authorities rejected the deal due to claimed forged car documentation (Chaturvedi, 2020; First Post, 2020). The episode demonstrates how political parties used the misery of migrant workers to further their objective of improved Public Relations Rating. Similar circumstances were reported in Kerala, where one of the opposition parties offered to pay the migrant workers' travel expenses, but the state administration declined the proposal (Babu&Sahay, 2020). These events demonstrate how political parties view migrant workers as little more than tools. This suggests that instrumentalization has violated the dignity of migrant workers as a group.

### **DEHUMANISATION OF UNSKILLED INTERSTATE MIGRANT LABOURERS DURING THE PANDEMIC**

Dehumanization is the practise of considering individuals as less than human. Dehumanization is frequently discussed in relation to conflicts and genocidal acts. Yet, removing a person's identity or group is one of two traits that characterises a dehumanising scenario (Kelman, 1973). Treating someone as a lesser human

does not usually entail violent conflict. Exclusion doesn't always have to be direct and aggressive; it might instead be indirect exclusion (Oliver, 2011). Although it may not include organised dehumanisation, indirect identity robbery and exile from the community are instances of dehumanisation. Although though the class and caste systems frequently dehumanise migrant workers, the pandemic time was more traumatic for them.

It was such a dehumanising act to spray chemical substances on migrant workers (BBC, 2020; Aljazeera, 2020; Gupta et al., 2020). The predicament of the migrant labourers was revealed in reports from the state of Uttar Pradesh, when migrants were seen being videotaped racing to collect bananas in a transit centre (The Quint, 2020). The demands of the affluent middle class and upper class had been catered to by the state, but the migrant workers received no such treatment. The migrant workers suffered a major loss of their personal integrity, which had a knock-on effect on their self-esteem and sense of identity.

### **Whose Welfare State ?the Dignity Violated**

"Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection," reads Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The article emphasises how crucial it is to safeguard the working class's human dignity by providing social protection when it is required. The article asks the member nations to ensure that labourers' human dignity is not violated. A class of people who experience human dignity breaches are migrant workers, and the pandemic exposed some of the severe ways in which they are violated. Equal chances, a just distribution of income, and a civic duty to the disadvantaged are the cornerstones of a welfare state (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.). A welfare state has the right to advance its residents' social and economic well-being. The Indian Constitution's Directive Principles of State Policy aim to advance citizen welfare by emphasising social, economic, and political justice (Joshi, 1983). The constitution calls for the protection of human dignity as part of its concept of social, political, and economic justice. The migrant workers were subjected to clear-cut social, economic, and political injustice patterns that deprived them their dignity. They experienced dehumanisation, degradation, instrumentalization, and other types of aggression against their dignity. Extreme cases of human dignity abuse during the pandemic were merely a symptom of deeper issues with society and the system. In contemporary India, migrant labourers are a population whose dignity is in jeopardy. It brings up the issue of the marginalized's dignity in a purported welfare state.

### **Pandemic Response: What Worked and What Needs Revamping:**

There have been examples of attempts to safeguard the welfare of migrant workers in many sections of the country, despite the fact that this research has mostly focused on abuses of human dignity. The central government launched a programme to offer



free food grains for 8 crore migrant labourers, while the state of Kerala built relief camps where migrant workers received food and recreational amenities (Nileena, 2020). (The Economic Times, 2020). By providing shelter, food, healthcare, and other essentials, non-governmental organisations and philanthropic organisations were essential in helping migrant workers meet their fundamental needs (Suresh et al., 2020). All of these initiatives aimed to protect the migrant workers' wellbeing. Unfortunately, these initiatives mostly focused on meeting the most basic requirements without taking into account the perspective of "rights" or "dignity."

A genuine welfare state must uphold the dignity of migrant workers as fellow citizens. The ability to repatriate individuals who were stranded in other countries demonstrated the effectiveness of the system for allocating resources for the welfare of the populace during the epidemic. The migrant labourers also required the same level of insight. They are equal citizens who also contribute to society and the economy. There are considerable concerns about the nature of the welfare state in place given the disparities people experience in their own country. The state should take considerable steps to impose stringent "human dignity protection" laws in order to improve the current scenario. In order to integrate migrant workers into society's mainstream social fabric, the state should address the issue from a standpoint of "dignity." One immediate manifestation of this may be the introduction of migrant workers' social security programmes. To address the issues posed by migrant labourers, the government and society must move beyond a "needs-based strategy" and begin using a "dignity-based approach."

## CONCLUSION

Although the concept of a welfare state is inclusive in and of itself, it is not frequently put into practise. In order to improve the welfare of migrant workers, the Indian Union has implemented laws like The Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, (1979). Yet, the act's main focus is on civil and economic rights. Due to poor execution, even the minimal civil and financial protection provided by the legislation is frequently compromised. The second and third generations of human rights, which substantially uphold human dignity, have not yet been addressed. The migrant labourers' human dignity is violated as a result of prejudice, which is caused by the caste and class gap that is ingrained in India's social structure. This fundamentally unfair social system has contributed to the cases of migrant workers' human rights being violated throughout the epidemic.

Since the epidemic was an unexpected event that caught the state off guard, it cannot be justified as a basis to jeopardise a group of citizens' rights and dignity. The pandemic-caused anguish was merely the system's complacency coming to a head. Action is still pending on the report of the working group on migration that the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation established in 2017 and which suggested extensive

social security measures for migrant workers. This demonstrates how relaxed the state has been in this area. The state's ability to manage crises was demonstrated by the seeming effectiveness with which resources were pooled to repatriate Indians from overseas. Yet, in the case of migrant workers, this forceful approach was missing, casting doubt on the state's commitment to internal migrants. A long-term plan needs to be started by the state for the migrant workers. A centralised strategy is impossible given the scale of India's migrant population (Suresh et al., 2020). An improved option is a public-private partnership model that decentralises the approach to the welfare of migrant workers. Also, the problems faced by migrant workers must be seen from a dignity viewpoint that emphasises their rights.

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