

Embodiment in Social Accounts of Indian Migrant Workers' Experience of the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Introduction

On 24 May 2020, tens of thousands of daily wage migrant workers in India suddenly realised that they were without work due to the abrupt announcement of a nationwide lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. With no employment, most of the workers exhausted their meagre savings within a few days. Stranded without food and no means of sustenance, the migrant workers voiced their plight: "*Corona se nahi marengi par bhookh se mar jayenge*" ("We will not die of Corona, but will die of hunger"). This expression emerged as a strong statement depicting the images of distressed bodies of the migrant workers of India. Overnight, their employers turned them away, which led to them becoming outcasts in the cities they erected with their labour. All modes of transportation were suspended because of the complete lockdown. Men, women, including pregnant women, and children began their journey on foot back to their villages facing starvation, their bags packed with all their worldly possessions. The pictures of their long

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