

ABSTRACT

THE RIGHT TO DIGNITY: AN ENIGMA FOR THE MIGRANT WORKER?

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The Covid 19 pandemic disrupted all our lives. The virus proved to be a great leveler; it affected rich and poor without any discrimination. Or so it seemed at first glimpse. The lockdown was equally and indiscriminately implemented for all without fear or favor. Only those deemed as essential services were allowed on the road. Then came the relaxation of the lockdown and with that began the migrant exodus. Daily the news brought heart rending images of migrants on the move, their only wish to get home. The human rights violations were unbelievable, while there was some was on the basic needs such as food and shelter, the manner in which these needs were initially addressed were appalling. Media was full of images, of human beings scrambling for food, hosed down, beaten. Even in death dignity was denied, the heart wrenching video of the toddler trying to wake up her dead mother will haunt many of us to eternity. Human rights, even the ones enshrined in the Constitution, as fundamental rights, were ignored. Human rights remain lofty ideals, to be taught in classrooms and discussed in conferences. In reality many of these cherished rights remain the domain of the rich and entitled. The poor spend a lifetime trying to eke out a living, in doing so, this life, "a gift from God", is unfortunately, a mere existence, devoid of colour, joy and all the faculties which make life worth living. The very least is that this life be one of dignity.

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