

# MIGRATION IN CRISIS: INSIGHTS ON COVID-19 FROM PAST PANDEMICS

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 13, 2020, 10AM EST (15:00 GMT, 20:30 IST)

Advance registration is required: [tinyurl.com/SouthAsia19](https://tinyurl.com/SouthAsia19)



Photo by  
Hema K. Pillalamarri, Flickr.

Across South Asia, migrant workers have been among those most affected by the pandemic. In India the initial lockdown was imposed with only hours' notice, leading to a mass exodus of migrant workers from major cities – an exodus that in turn proved to be a major conduit of infection. At the same time, South Asian migrant workers abroad found themselves alternately subject to deportation, or stranded and unable to return home.

This has happened before. During the plague epidemic of the 1890s – far more lethal than Covid-19 – and again during the “Asian influenza” of 1957-58, migrant workers were the subject of intensive scrutiny, and their movements posed challenges to health policy. This virtual panel discussion will bridge insights from research into past pandemics in South Asia, and current research on the impact of Covid-19 on migrant workers. How can the interests of migrant workers be better protected? In times of crisis, what sorts of interventions have been most, and least, effective in balancing the interests of workers, their families, employers, and the interests of public health?

**Migration in crisis: Insights on Covid-19 from past pandemics** – the second in the series, “South Asia Development Dialogues: Economic Policy Lessons from History”

## PANELISTS:

**Sunil Amrith** is the Renu and Anand Dhawan Professor of History, and current chair of the South Asian Studies Council. His research focuses on the movements of people and the ecological processes that have connected South and Southeast Asia.

**Charity Troyer Moore** is Director for South Asia Economics Research at Yale MacMillan Center. Her research has included large-scale phone surveys of women, migrant workers, and other vulnerable groups affected by the Covid-19 crisis.

**Kavita Sivaramakrishnan** is an Associate Professor of Sociomedical Sciences in the Columbia University Department of History. She has worked on social histories of epidemics including the plague and its influence on national and regional politics in South Asia.

**Rory Stewart** is a Senior Fellow at Yale Jackson Institute for Global Affairs, where he focuses on contemporary politics in crisis and on international development and intervention in fragile and conflict affected states. Stewart served as the UK Secretary of State for International Development where he doubled the U.K.'s investment in international climate and environment.

## MODERATOR:

**Catherine Cheney** '10 is a Senior Reporter for Devex, covering the West Coast of the U.S., focusing on the role of technology, innovation, and philanthropy in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Yale MACMILLAN CENTER  
South Asian Studies Council

Yale Economic Growth Center