

UNBIASED ECONOMIC AND EMOTIONAL PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS WORKING WOMEN DURING PANDEMIC: LONGER FOR LAST

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DOI No. – 08.2020-25662434

Abstract

The impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic will not be equal for women and men, and it is a great setback in gender equality for a generation. This Pandemic has exposed more weaknesses of Indian society that were always there.

Keywords: *Pandemic, Working Women, Self-Employed, Low-Income, India, equality, Unbiased.*

INTRODUCTION

This health-related war-like emergency measure has disproportionately affected specific sections of our society adversely. Attitude towards women in the face of this Pandemic is shocking. This Pandemic affects women deeply and openly exposes gender inequality and their economic rights.

Status of the women is changing in India after globalization, industrialization, urbanization, and they are increasing their education level, migrating for better opportunities and increasing awareness about their rights. Most of the women in cities prefer to be engaged in some work by which they can earn and contribute financially to their families. Nevertheless, the attitude towards women, especially married women, and their role in the family has remained the same. Even today, taking care of the family and children is considered their primary responsibility and this non-paying care is a hindrance in women work.

The daily lives of working women run on the backs of a slew of service providers like maids, drivers, gardeners, garbage collectors, small vendors who bring essential goods right to their doorsteps, and provision stores that have an incredibly efficient home delivery service. As homes with part-time help confront increased housework because the service providers are in lockdown, this whole apparatus disrupted. While both men and women stranded at home, which of the two deals with this avalanche of domestic chores and care work disproportionately?

Pandemic exposes the burden of unpaid work at home on them around the world. There is a sharp rise in gender-based violence due to the worldwide lockdown. Women are also more likely in informal and low-paid jobs, and millions have lost their livelihoods overnight. More female-run businesses are closing during this Pandemic than men's (World Bank, 2020). It will take around 250 years to get economic congruence between women and men before the crisis (World Economic Forum, 2020).

UNBIASED PERSPECTIVE AND LONGER FOR LAST

According to International Labour Organization, women perform more than two-third of unpaid care work at home. In Asia and the Pacific, the percentage is 80 per cent. The risk of infection becomes significant to them when any family member will need to be cared for at home due to infection, and it overall adds the burden on them.

During this fight, women are on the front line around the world. Many of them expect to work longer hours while juggling domestic responsibilities such as childcare. The impact lasts a lifetime, reducing their earning potential and work opportunities. The economic problems are increasing. Their wage losses are much more severe and enduring when they occur in recessions, and women have less secure jobs than before.

The setback comes at a striking moment. Last year in February, with the outbreak of the virus, working women passed a rare milestone, making up more than half of the nation's civilian non-farm labour force. They perform a disproportionate work from home. Among the married couples who work full time, women provide close to 70 per cent of child care during standard working hours. That burden is super-sized as schools and other activities shut down, and help from cleaning services and babysitters have curtailed.

Based on the research in 104 countries of the world, Women comprise 70 per cent of health and social care workers, and are working on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19 and unfortunately receive 11 per cent less than the income of men in the same field (WHO, 2020). However, work both at job and home has been increased comparatively more. In few female jobs like Nurses, feel more physical and mental fatigue. Although they spent more time at their workplace, they have the different problem of not spending quality time with their family.

(UNESCO) reports that around three million students miss their classes and do not go to schools due to this Pandemic. This mass lockdown and closure of these schools and child care centres has increased the problem to stretch for a long time, and all working women with no choice to take time off have to work from home while caring for their children.

Those who are poor, working on the front desk, salesgirls, semi-trained nurses (who look after patient other than COVID), part-time maids, in service jobs that cannot do from home, and those without paid leave are especially vulnerable. During the first wave, 70 per cent of domestic workers laid off from the job due to lockdown and social distancing. They do not have any legal and social protection. They do not have enough money to buy essential food items due to an increase in unemployment. Women are on a cliff edge, at risk of hurtling right back into poverty.

Women entrepreneurs have to overcome many barriers to get their businesses thriving and to overcome poverty. Moreover, it is precisely these women that hold power to face the gigantic task ahead. Women can elevate their communities back out of poverty, rebuilding what they have lost, and they urgently need the support and help from the decision-makers. Many small businesses like gym, dance and aerobics, small Tiffin-food suppliers have to close their business during the first wave.

Women's participation in economic activities similar to men could add to global annual GDP in 2025. It is a heartbreaking fact, and we continue to face a global financial recession in the status quo. The impact on low-income and precariously employed women are particularly severe and are amplifying long-standing inequities in societies. Women at the substructure of the income distribution pyramid cannot work remotely and added to unemployment data. The Pandemic has exacerbated income inequality. Entrenched inequality means that while women make up 70% of health care workers, their percentage in politics is tiny.

The Pandemic has exacerbated the anxiety. "New Normal" is working from home, caring for one's parents, and worrying about how social contact could result in infection. Stresses at work

or job conflicts at home, or financial struggles can build up into larger anxieties that can paralyze thought and prevent people from doing basic tasks optimally.

Around 6.4 crore women have lost their jobs during this Pandemic. It is the imaginary situation of women of the US, Canada, Spain and Brazil in women empowerment. Women are struggling for equality and equity for decades. Furthermore, just as they are losing their paid employment, many women face a massive upsurge to look after the home in care work due to school closures, overwhelmed health systems, and the increased needs of older people.

Seventy per cent of women are more likely than men to be employed in the Indian informal sector. Informal employment leaves women with lower pay, without any legal protection. They have to live hand-to-mouth and have tiny financial buffers like savings and access to credit. In India, 79.20 per cent of women lost their jobs in the informal sector. Indian IT sector, startups, media, tourism, and export-oriented sectors are gradually going to be informal sectors, and the participation of women is comparatively more. Hence they again have to struggle and sacrifice more socially and economically.

Advanced, economically strengthened economies even have the mentality that women should look after their family and not focus on equity in income. Labour Force Participation rate was 23.5 per cent in the labour force in India in 2017-18. the foundation of Aatam Nirbhar Bharat is women empowerment, which gives self-confidence and develops the capacity to decide on their own. However, the man-dominated society's emotional and mental pressure drag them behind and leave the jobs for men.

Since the world wars, women forced to quit their military jobs and focus on the household chores, and at the same time, many others were also taking challenges when their husbands were at war. Unfortunately, there is not any change in the situation and mentality of the society and political parties.

PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE FOR MORE INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT RECOVERY

Historically, it observed that women's economic security is always suffered more than men during any disease outbreak. It is precisely slow and prolonged to recover. In 2014 when the Ebola outbreak in Liberia, the unemployment rate was very high, but income recovery of men leap back promptly than the recovery of women. Both emerging market and developing countries will hit hardest by this crisis. They will face more significant challenges and steeper trade-offs than the advanced economies and advocate more support for last (IMF, 2020).

Painfully, the negative consequences of pandemic control measures on women are wide and deep. Unsurprisingly, this is another gender-blind policy that ignores its disproportionate impact on women. Unpaid work by women at work has been increased and decreased the flow of income in the economy.

Wage subsidies and public-works programs like MNREGA can help regain women livelihoods working in the informal sector. To reduce inequality and make people better prospects, governments need to strengthen education and training to better prepare workers for future jobs. Lifelong learning also means bolstering access to schooling and skills training to help workers displaced by economic shocks.

Women working in insecure jobs need to necessitate social security, like health insurance, childcare leave, Universal basic Income security during the lockdown. In terms of cash transfers, credits, and loans, measures to stimulate the economy must target women, whether they are

working in the formal sector or part-time or seasonal workers in the informal economy, or as entrepreneurs and business owners.

This Pandemic is challenging global health systems but our commitment to equality and human dignity. With women interests, we can come out of this Pandemic faster and build equal and resilient communities and societies that will benefit everyone.

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