



Journal of Economics & Management Policy (JEMP)
Issue: Vol. 2; No. 6; October 2021 (pp. 11-17)
ISSN: 2692-7292 (Print); 2692-7306 (Online)
Website: www.jempnet.com
E-mail: editor@jempnet.com
Doi: 10.48150/jemp.v2no6.2021.a2

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Mahitha Kumari M

Research Scholar,
Department of Economics
Mangalore University, Konaje
Mangalore
Mob: 8971155482
Email: mahitham07@gmail.com

Prof. Shripathi Kalluraya

Professor (Retd.)
Department of Economics
Mangalore University, Konaje
Mangalore
Mob: 9448529313
Email: shripathi_k@rediffmail.com

Abstract

The outburst of COVID-19 is the major incident that happened in 2020, and continued still. It already impacted 12.5 million in the world and still going strong and due to the uncertainty, the world struggles to come up with its vaccine. The COVID-19 pandemic affected millions of lives, along with the business operations in the global market. Economists were analyzing, estimating the impact on various sectors of the economy and the possibility of recovery. Lives are loosed, job loss, income decline, production decline, export imports decreased ...are the major experiences of every economy of the world. However, the intensity of impact varies across countries and sectors within the economy. With this backdrop, an attempt is made in this paper to analyze the impact of Covid-19 on women]

Keywords: Unemployment, Working women, Covid-19

Introduction

The world has changed dramatically from the beginning of the year 2020 because a rare disaster, a coronavirus pandemic, has resulted in a tragically large number of human lives being lost. As countries implement necessary quarantines and social distancing practices to contain the pandemic, the world has been put in a great Lockdown. The magnitude and speed of collapse in an activity that has followed is unlike anything experienced earlier in our lifetimes. As result, the world economy experiences an unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and policymakers in all the global capitals prepare record fiscal stimulus plans. Even after one and half years of Covid-19, the economic slowdown continues and everyone realized that recovery is only possible through coordinated global action.

The world is experiencing a major downfall in all the sectors. People are losing jobs, getting pay cuts, and uncertain about the future. In the India novel, the coronavirus has started to show its hard face in March 2019 followed by a very strict lockdown. During this time people were restricted to stay home and follow serious social distancing measures. Social distancing measures that are necessary to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus have had staggering economic and social impacts, hitting the labor market especially women laborers. The COVID-19 pandemic has harmed both women's and men's employment – but at different stages of the crisis due to the gender segregation of economic activities. COVID-19 is unendurable on women because this virus is good at taking existing tensions and ratcheting them up. A large number of women were already supporting themselves and their families on modest wages before the corona virus.

But once this pandemic began everything gone unpredictable and mitigation lockdowns sent unemployment rates skyrocketing and millions of people lost their jobs. Women who face problems in the labor market are never been kept secret, but they have been vexing to address because they are so indelible in the basic operations of our economy and society. The low wages associated with “pink collar” occupations have long contributed to the feminization of poverty, and the chronic shortage of affordable, high-quality childcare reflects outdated notions of women’s societal roles, how the economy functions, and child development. COVID-19’s massive disruption to employment, childcare, and school routines has crippled the economy and pushed millions of women and families to the financial brink.

This moment provides an important opening to rethink how policy supports women’s roles as financial providers and parents. In this paper, an attempt is made to examine the impact of Covid-19 on women in development. In other words, it is an attempt to analyze the gender issues of the economy in the post-Covid-19 situation.

Objectives

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the impact of Covid-19 on women in the economy. te specific objectives are;

1. To analyze the impact of Covid-19 on women in the economy
2. To assess the impact of covid-19 on women employment during the Covid-19 situation
3. To examine the other gender issues that rose during covid-19

Impact of Covid-19 on Economy

As we all know the world is suffering from the Covid-19 pandemic. It has impacted badly to the economy. In India, Employment figures turned negative as people losing their jobs. It has not only impacted livelihood but also the lives of people, India is witnessing several shocking helpless death. People leaving the towns and heading towards natives as the lockdown was imposed on industrial units. According to the study conducted by Ajim Prem University, nearly 50 Million people were pushed below the poverty line during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Poverty has increased its figures by 15.0 percent in the rural area and 20.0 percent in the urban area, between 2019 and 2020. Because of lockdown mobility of people has been reduced with a 7.5 percent decline in their Income. Also half of the salaried workers moved into informal work, either self-employed (30.0%), casual wage (10%), or informal salaried (9.0%) along with a decline in their income.

In a survey conducted across India in April and May 2020, by Statista Research Development it was found that approximately 87.0 percent of self-employed respondents in urban areas claimed to have lost their employment due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic whereas 45.0 percent in rural areas (Table-1). This was highest among casual workers in rural parts of the country that is 66.0 percent. In general, employment loss in urban India was higher than in rural areas.

Table-1: Impact of Covid-19 on worker across India in 2020

Labor	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Casual	66	82
Regular Salaried	61	77
Self - Employed	45	87

Source: Statista Research Development

Most impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown in India between April and July 2020, in terms of job loss were people between the ages of 15 and 39. Among them, those between 25 and 29 years old alone accounted for about 46.0 percent of all job losses. (Table-2)

Table-2: Estimated Impact from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) on India, by sector.

(April-December 2020)

Tie period	Agriculture (%)	Industry (%)	Service (%)
April to June	3.4	-20.6	-38.1
July to September	3.4	-2.1	-11.4
October to December	3.9	2.7	-1

Source: Statista Research Development

During the financial year 2020-21, GDP was contracted by 7.3 percent as per the data released by the government of India. Since independence, this is one of the most severe contractions in GDP. Not surprisingly everyone can say the reason behind this trajectory are obvious – lockdown leading to the closing of business units, increasing unemployment rate, and a significant decline in domestic consumption.

Reserve Bank of India estimates India will grow at 10.5 percent during the 2021-22 financial year. But the rating agencies across the world have demoted it as the country hardly hit by the second wave of COVID-19. For example, Moody's and S&P Global Rating, initially they have projected 13.7 percent and 11.0 percent respectively. Due to the impact of COVID-19 they have lowered it from 13.7 to 9.3 percent and 11 to 9.8 percent. As the way the second wave hit the economy, ideas around the third wave are not helping the situation at all.

The reports of „Diplomat Risk Intelligence“ shown us that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to adversely impact lives, livelihoods, and the economy in India, with a devastating second wave wreaking havoc even as the threat of a third wave looms large. Rising uncertainty has reduced consumer and business confidence. Growth over the two years 2020 to 2022 could be zero percent or negative. This follows an economic slowdown during the three years preceding the pandemic. With investments and trade performance weak, the Indian economy was firing mainly on consumption, which the first and second waves of the pandemic have hit badly.

Based on expert interviews this report has identified some important issues which tell us what risk India will face in future days. Among them, the deepening job crisis is one of the alarming topics for the growth of the county. It was said in the report that the employment crisis is a medium-term risk to the Indian economy. This problem was present even before the Covid-19 pandemic hit, but the first two waves and potentially the third wave have aggravated it more rapidly. This can problem can be tackled by making market reforms both politically and economically. It was also said that the impact of a pandemic on education has a cumulative impact on jobs and their livelihoods.

Gender Issues

“What is good for gender equality is good for the economy as well as for society”. Women who are poor and marginalized face an even higher risk of COVID-19 transmission and fatalities, loss of livelihood, and increased violence. To understand the gender-related issues we need to look into the Global Gender Gap Index. The Global Gender Gap Index was first introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006 as a framework for capturing the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress over time. The index benchmarks national gender gaps on economic, education, health, and political criteria and gives ranks to countries. A recent report was published in the year 2020 and India ranks 112 among 153 countries.

Despite a small score improvement, some countries ranked lower than India have improved more. The economic gender gap runs particularly deep in India. Among the 153 countries, India is the only country where the economic gender gap is larger than the political gender gap. Only one-quarter of women, compared with 82.0 percent of men, engage actively in the labor market one of the lowest participation rates in the world.

Table-3: Global Gender Gap Index

Indicators	2006	Score	2020	Score
Global Gender Gap Index	98	0.601	112	0.668
Economic participation and Opportunity	110	0.397	149	0.354
Educational Attainment	102	0.819	112	0.962
Health and Survival	103	0.962	150	0.944
Political Empowerment	20	0.227	18	0.411

Source: World Economic Forum.

Inequality in wages and obligation of unpaid care has made more women go out of employment and fall into poverty. Even before the pandemic women were earning just one-fifth that of men's income. When we look into global as well as Indian scenarios we can notice a large number of women have lost their jobs during Covid-19. Center for Sustainable Employment of Azim Premji University in India reported that during the first lockdown in 2020, only 7.0 percent of men lost their jobs, compared to 47 percent of women who lost their jobs and did not return to work by the end of the year. The situation has worsened even more in the informal sector, 80 percent of women have lost their jobs in rural India.

The covid-19 pandemic has been negatively affected people's lives as well as their work. While some studies show us that it is women's jobs and livelihoods are more vulnerable to the crisis. The enormity of the inequality is striking in employment opportunities. According to some studies, the female job loss rate due to covid-19 is about 1.8 times higher than male job loss rates globally. Women have experienced 5.7 percent job loss against 3.1 percent of job loss rate experienced by men as they are more exposed to unpaid care.

Loss of income due to loss of employment will increase the rate of gender inequality in food security. It causes a hike in short-term malnutrition. It will end up with the permanent exclusion of many women from the labor market. There will be a high risk of creating a new cycle of poverty among working women. Because of malnutrition, women may face health-related problems when they return to work once the economy reopens.

Not only in food consumption but access to healthcare also pandemic will make a larger gap in gender inequality. According to the data given by the government, it is 55 percent of women who are no access to public health services. Private health expenditure is very high. Only one-third of households have at least one member covered under any health insurance, which also exhibits a clear gender bias. Protecting women's employment, health, and food security during the pandemic is of critical importance. Yet the COVID-19 outbreak has undermined safety net provisions safeguarding women's well-being.

Women Employment

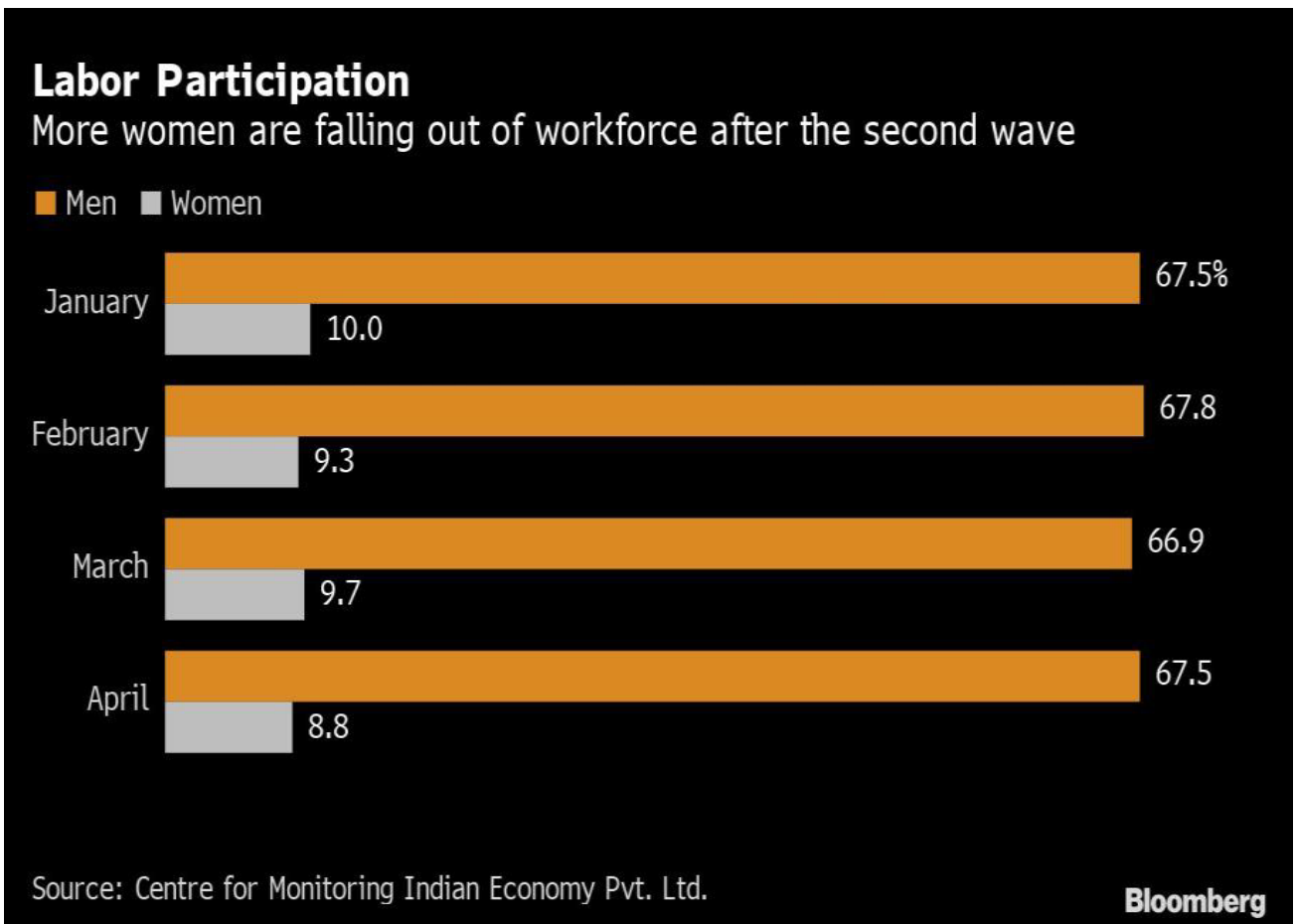
The outbreak of the novel coronavirus is not just only shocked the health sector, but also a radical shock to Indian society and economy. Back in March 2020, when one of the strictest lockdowns in the world was imposed in India, more than 120 million workers lost their jobs overnight. The majority of these workers were from the informal sector and half of them were women. Women are making critical contributions as front-line responders, health professionals, community volunteers, transport and logistics managers, scientists and more, to address the outbreak. With restrictions eased and economic activities struggling to achieve normalcy, by November 2020, men who had lost their jobs had regained most of it and left behind were women – with no jobs and no social security net. The onset of the covid-19 pandemic could have worsened inequality between men and women in terms of income and time in India given their roles in society as "breadwinner men" and "caregiver women."

The pandemic has disproportionately affected women, especially those who are part of the workforce. According to an analysis, COVID-19 and gender equality is countering the regressive effects, conducted by McKinsey Global Institute in the year 2020; women are more vulnerable and susceptible to COVID-19-related economic effects because of the already existing gender inequalities. Using the unemployment data, trends, and surveys in the United States and India, the study estimates that female job loss rates owing to COVID-19 are about 1.8 times higher than the male job loss rates globally, at 5.7 percent versus 3.1 percent, respectively. According to the Center for Monitoring Indian Economy, the already low labor participation rate for women has shrunk even further after the pandemic to 11.0 percent compared to 71.0 percent for men.

When it comes to women's employment, the greatest effect is a reduction of gains from gender equality over the decades. Most of the women are working in front-line occupations in service sectors like health and social care. Lockdown in the service sector and disproportionate increase in unpaid care have seriously affected their jobs.



The unemployment rate among women has taken a sharp hike during the second wave of Covid-19. (Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy). Lockdowns imposed by governments to break the chain of the virus have worsened the economic activities of the country, which in turn resulted in more than 17 million jobs being lost in the past two months. When compared to the men more women are expelled out of the job. From January to April unemployment rate among women have been increased from 13% to 17% which is more than double the rate for men.



It is not surprising that several women have lost their jobs. Data from CMIE shows that women have suffered the most in times of economic shock. The reason behind this is women always find it tough to manage the job when the situation is critical. Most of the women are paid less compared to men. A larger portion of working women belongs to informal work which is directly affected by the pandemic. Women who survived and continued in their jobs had to deal with a drop in wages. The income of women has seen a drastic fall and was inversely associated with a sharp spike in new virus cases in India. In a survey by The Nudge Foundation, women reported a more than 76% reduction in weekly income due to lockdowns to control the pandemic. They had to dip into their savings and faced issues related to food and health.

Conclusion

Not only in India but also across the world The COVID-19 pandemic has a pervasive impact. The undefended portion of the population, however, has been excessively impacted by the pandemic, and the case of women workers in countries like India is an issue of grave concern. Women are more likely to be liable for unpaid care and domestic work, and this made them drop out of the labor force of the country. The responsibility and confinement made the life of women more stressful. Due to the lockdown and restrictions, women are lagging in the race of labor force participation.

Women have a role in both family and workforce, most of the time they choose both. It is impossible to come out of the recession without supporting women in both roles. It is not only to create a good number of jobs for women; we need to take care of fair compensation to them in their workplace. It includes improvement in wage equality and eradicates discrimination in the labor market.

References

- UN Women (2020) “COVID-19 and its economic toll on women: The story behind the numbers”
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/9/feature-covid-19-economic-impacts-on-women>
- Shalini Singh (2021) “Photos: How Covid-19 pandemic has affected women workers in Delhi”
IndiaSpend.com, <https://scroll.in/article/984351/photos-how-covid-19-pandemic-has-affected-women-workers-in-delhi>
- Julie Kashen, Sarah Jane Glynn, and Amanda Novello (2020) “How COVID-19 Sent Women’s Workforce Progress Backward”, Center for American Progress,
<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2020/10/30/492582/covid-19-sent-womens-workforce-progress-backward/>
- Yogima Seth Sharma (Aug 2021), “Share of agriculture sector in employment sees steady increase: CMIE”,
The Economic Times- E-Paper,
<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/share-of-agriculture-sector-in-employment-sees-steady-increase-cmie/articleshow/85266073.cms>
- Vrishti Beniwal (May, 2021), “Indian women are suffering more than men during the pandemic, data shows”,
The Print <https://theprint.in/economy/indian-women-are-suffering-more-than-men-during-the-pandemic-data-shows/667760/>
- Manoj Kumar (Aug 2021), “India's female labour participation rate falls to 16.1% as pandemic hits jobs”,
Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indias-female-labour-participation-rate-falls-161-pandemic-hits-jobs-2021-08-03/>
- Manoj Kumar and Alasdair Pal (Aug 2021), “Coronavirus likely to lock India's women out of job market for years”,
Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/coronavirus-likely-lock-indias-women-out-job-market-years-2021-08-02/>
- Mahesh Vyas (July 2021), “Employment recovery expected in July”, Center for Monitoring Indian Economy,
<https://www.cmie.com/kommon/bin/sr.php?kall=warticle&dt=20210726180747&msec=616>
- Nick Wilkinson (July 2020), “Impact of COVID-19: Firms, jobs, and women’s employment”, IGC,
International growth Center, <https://www.theigc.org/blog/impact-of-covid-19-firms-jobs-and-womens-employment/>

- Rukmini S, (June 2020), “How Covid-19 has Locked out women from jobs”, Mint E-paper, <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/how-covid-19-locked-out-women-from-jobs-11591772350206.html>
- Elizabeth Roche, Gireesh Chandra Prasad (October, 2020), “Pandemic has worsened gender inequality in India, says Oxfam”, Mint E-paper, <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/pandemic-has-worsened-gender-inequality-in-india-says-oxfam-11603938129337.html>
- Dr. Soumitro Chakraborty in Voices, India, (March 2021), “Covid-19 aggravates gender inequality – Burning at the stake are women”, The Times of India, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/covid-19-aggravates-gender-inequality-burning-at-the-stake-are-women/>
- “In Focus: Gender equality matters in COVID-19 response”, UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response>
- “The Impact of Covid-19 on Women” (July 2020), https://populationfoundation.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Policy-Brief_Impact-of-COVID-19-on-Women.pdf
- “Impact on unemployment rate due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown in India from January 2020 to January 2021” <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1111487/coronavirus-impact-on-unemployment-rate/>
- COVID-19 and gender equality: Countering the regressive effects, (July 15, 2020), <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/covid-19-and-gender-equality-countering-the-regressive-effects>
- Written by Kadambari Shah, (May 2020), “How COVID-19 is amplifying gender inequality in India”, The Indian Express, <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/coronavirus-gender-inequality-india-6414659/>
- M Niaz Asadullah and Kalyani Raghunathan, (June 2020), “Fighting Gender Inequality in India During the COVID-19 Pandemic”, The diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/fighting-gender-inequality-in-india-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>
- Women in the Workforce: India (Quick Take), Catalyst, <https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-in-the-workforce-india/>
- Angad Bagai, Atul Sukumar, and Samridhi Puri, (March 2021), “Women in India: COVID-19 Impact, Response and Policy Environment”, Sattva, <https://www.sattva.co.in/insight/women-in-india-covid-19-impact-response-and-policy-environment/>
- M Niaz Asadullah and Kalyani Raghunathan, (July 2020) “Tackling India’s deepening gender inequality during COVID-19”, The London School of Economics and Political Science, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2020/07/08/tackling-indias-deepening-gender-inequality-during-covid-19/>