



Gender and Covid-19 Policy Response

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Introduction

The report titled “Covid-19- Emerging gender data and why it matters”, originally published by UN Women, highlights the differential impact of the pandemic on men and women. The report highlights the immediate health impact on women as 70% of the healthcare workers globally are women. The pandemic has hit women hard and has toppled their hard earned-progress. It becomes important to have a sex-disaggregated data to devise effective responses to the challenges posed by the pandemic. Governments around the world have taken measures to respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic on women. To track this, the UN Women and UNDP has developed a Covid-19 Global Response tracker with 1299 measures. The tracker monitors the policy responses to 3 major challenges faced by women: increase in violence, rise in unpaid care work, and loss of livelihood.



Key Highlights

- Female health care workers have been affected by Covid-19 infections twice more than their male counterparts in some countries. In Spain, for instance, 75.5% of the total infected care workers were females.
- Out of the 381 million global care workforces, 65.3% are women. Covid-19 is creating problems for these care workers who are investing billions of hours every day, especially, when most of these women are working as unpaid care workers at home.
- Because of the stay-at-home obligation due to the virus, violence against women by their intimate partners has increased. 18% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical and sexual violence at the hands of their present or former intimate partner as of 2017.
- In the context of Covid-19, services like shelters, hotlines, police and justice services constituted 64.7% of the measures taken in response to violence against women followed by awareness rising (17.2%).
- 136 countries have taken at least one measure in response to violence against women. However only 52 countries have integrated violence against women in their Covid-19 response plans.
- Over 740 million women are engaged in informal work and the pandemic has brought a halt to this sector. As of 2019, 63.8% of women are involved in non-agriculture informal employment.
- In 2019, 58.2% of women’s employment was in services. Major sectors were childcare, hospitality, tourism and retail which have been hit hard by the lockdowns. This has rendered women jobless, affecting their economic independence.
- To tackle the care and livelihood crisis brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic, 219 countries have taken 1700 social protection measures. Out of which only 13% of the measures prioritize women’s economic security and only 11% address the unpaid care work.
- According to the UNDP-UN Women Covid-19 Global response tracker, 77 measures of cash transfers, with women as primary recipients, have been taken to strengthen women’s economic security. 59 countries, including Colombia, Kenya

and Togo have responded with cash transfers followed by 32 countries adopting the second most common measure that is food and other in-kind support targeting women.

- According to the response tracker, to address rising unpaid care work, 44 countries granted extended family leave to working parents to take care of their sick children. However, such provisions are said to have excluded informal workers.
- 32 out of 219 countries, that is 15% of the countries do not have gender-sensitive data and response to the Covid-19 policy plan. There is lack of sex-disaggregated data associated with Covid-19 policy response because the Governments had to take haste decisions. However, the lack of gendered perspective is worrying.

Read more: <https://data.unwomen.org/resources/women-have-been-hit-hard-pandemic-how-government-response-measuring>
<https://data.unwomen.org/resources/covid-19-emerging-gender-data-and-why-it-matters>

Author: Sukhpreet Kaur, PILOT at Pratham