

COVID- 19 and its Impact on Women

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Abstract

This paper looks to explore the ongoing conditions of women in India, how pandemic change the social and economic consequences of infectious diseases outbreaks impact on women more than men. We everyday listen case of domestic violence case but in pandemic they are at the increased risk of domestic abuse and are significantly affected by decreased access to sexual and reproductive health service. Since women are more likely to have fewer hours of jobs than men and are on unsafe or zero-hour contracts, in periods of economic hardship they are more affected by job losses. Since the start of COVID-19 lockdown, there has been a "horrific global rise in domestic violence," said United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in early April. For example, between 18th March- 26th March, Malaysia registered 57 percent more calls on domestic abuse helpline. In this paper I will be highlighting the conditions of women and how the government helped them

Keywords: Pandemic- Lockdown, Outbreak, Covid-19, Migrant Labours
Introduction

On 24th March 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared a three-week nationwide lockdown starting from midnight of 25th March 2020. He explained that it was the only way of breaking the Covid-19 infection cycle. This essentially extended the lockdown from most states and Union Territories to the entire country and provided a more definite timeline. "Social distancing is the only way to break the cycle of infection," he said. 1 The lockdown was extended till May'2020.

Our nation has experienced unprecedented lockdown measures, which have meant drastic restrictions on economic activities. The rapid loss of livelihoods and salaries occurred, in turn meant more insecure lives and livelihoods than ever for the already marginalised informal workers with low wages and social security initiatives. The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated human lives, the global economy, and educational systems. 2 There were many studies which were conducted and they predicted a post-COVID-19 increase in poverty. According to for Science and Environment (CSE), India is projected to add 12 million more poor people to its population. At the same time, criminal enterprises have evolved. Since the lockdown we have been witnessing heart wrenching scenes for example migrant crisis which broke everyone's heart after seeing what migrant labourers went through. And one more disaster which strikes an unequal world can only create further inequities. Women throughout the country faced violence in the form of abuse, trafficking, child labour and domestic violence. 3 According to 'State of India's Environment in Figures 2020, A proven pre-condition for trafficking is the growing number of poor and consequent economic disparities. This suggests that not only are trafficking victims becoming more vulnerable after COVID-19 to exploitative conditions, but their numbers are also at rise and traffickers may have already made their way to the hinterlands to scour potential victims. This is not the first time that a very serious infectious disease may have increased the human trafficking in affected countries. Ebola, for example, increased the number of orphans vulnerable to trafficking. Other diseases outbreaks have also forced countries to divert resources needed to combat human trafficking to other critical needs of the community.

Disaster and Conflict-Related Unrest and Instability

Pandemics can break down a social infrastructure, a compounding existing weaknesses in the times of conflict, pandemic and disaster times. This lead to increased in family exposure of women and children to unsafe conditions, including exposure to sexual violence and harassment as women seek to obtain basic goods, including food, firewood, and water.

According to the The Foundation for Reproductive Health Services India, an affiliate of MSI, reports that up to 26 million couples in India were unable to access contraceptives due to the lockdowns which resulted in an additional 2-3 million unwanted pregnancies and over 800000 unsafe abortion. This led to third leading cause of maternal mortality in India.

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- Fewer girls may return to schools** During the lockdown in India, girls in rural areas have taken on increased burdens of care. They are struggling to access distance learning as schools are closed all over India. Families facing household financial challenges may de-prioritise the cost of education of girls or steer girls into child marriage. Since every year, primary schools increase girls' wages by 10 to 20 % which encourages them to marry later and have fewer children. This restricts their access to education and compromises their livelihood prospects. It also led to increase the likelihood that will live in poverty which risks the intergenerational impacts.
- Health care resources are diverted to COVID-19** COVID-19 shifted in resources strains the ongoing provision of basic maternal, child and reproductive health care services, particularly in already underserved rural areas, which may lead to increases in both maternal mortality and teenage pregnancies.⁴ The Foundation for Reproductive Health Services India, an affiliate of MSI, reports that up to 26 million couples in India are unable to access contraceptives due to the disturbance caused by lockdowns, resulting in an additional 2-3 million unwanted pregnancies and over 800,000 unsafe abortions, the third leading cause of maternal mortality in India.
- Increase in human trafficking during COVID-19** COVID-19's economic impact, including widespread job loss, has left many people unable to pay rent. Despite moratoriums on evictions for others, some were left unprotected. However, individuals could still be unemployed and unable to pay rent when moratoriums end. These factors increase the vulnerability of already poor families and may result in homelessness for adults and children. This can leave young people at increased risk of various types of exploitation, from sexual survival to exploitation in different labour sectors. From March to April 2020, the National Centre for Missing and Abused Children noted a rise from 2 million to 4.2 million cases of online exploitation. Since poor women are without income sources, their unpaid care-giving positions and anticipated 'emotional work' are likely to make them fall victim to traffickers who provide them with immediate economic support and false promises of well-paid employment in a distant city or country. Because of the secondary status provided to women, despite knowing the potential dangers of such migration, large families facing hunger are also often forced to send their girls to traffickers. In addition, domestic abuse at home also makes young girls leave the safety of their homes and are frequently recruited at railway stations by trafficking agents. As women find themselves trapped with their perpetrators at home during this period, there is a risk that runaway cases will also increase. A proven pre-condition for trafficking is the growing number of poor and consequent economic disparities. This suggests that not only are trafficking victims becoming more vulnerable after COVID-19 to exploitative conditions, but their numbers may also rise and traffickers may have already made their way to the hinterlands to scour potential victims.
- Domestic violence** Since social isolation and lockdown interventions for COVID-19 began, domestic violence has risen across the country, affecting women and girls more than males. In March, the media reported that a woman was killed in Argentina every 29 hours at the hands of a partner, which is about 4 more women than the monthly average. In the first four phases of the COVID-19 lockdown, Indian women have filed more domestic violence complaints than in last 10 years. But this unusual spurt is only the tip of the iceberg, as 86% of women who experienced domestic violence did not seek any help in India. In India, the number of domestic violence complaints received by the National Commission for Women has doubled from 123 distress calls to 239 domestic violence complaints, from March 23, 2020, to April 16, 2020.⁵ Some would be struggling to obtain assistance with separation policies limiting women's activism and their privacy. Domestic violence incidents are expected to rise as COVID-19 progresses and information is gathered. In recent health emergencies, similar trends have emerged. According to the country's minister of social action, women and children, during the 2014 Ebola outbreak in Guinea, sexual and gender-based abuse increased by 4.5 percent relative to pre-outbreak levels. A

research last year in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) regions affected by Ebola found that women and girls reported rises in sexual and domestic abuse since the outbreak began in 2018. The efforts by countries on the problem in the current pandemic differ widely. In others, for example, in Kazakhstan, where domestic violence is not a criminal offence, it has not been discussed at all. And in May, Hungary announced that the Istanbul Convention on violence against women would not be ratified, leaving women.

Objective

This project's main objective is to enable readers to understand the readers that how women in India struggled not only with covid-19 but also against inequality and abuse that happened with them. Also, it helped to understand the how women survived in this difficult time. The paper also carry out the solutions that can help women to fight these issues.

Conclusion

In this world, women suffer the most every time a conflict or disaster occurs. They're have become a soft target, they're targeted by everyone, their family, by society who are strangers to them. This time during the pandemic also, Women suffered all kinds of violence against them. They're becoming a soft target, they're targeted by everyone in society. Due to financial problems, many girls will suffer from child marriage, and parents may also sell their child for money because they don't have the money to feed their family. Women and a girl child are a soft target. According to the submissions of the Central Government, the Ministry of Women and Child Development recognised the need for a rapid response mechanism to assist victims of domestic violence during the lock-up. Special awareness-raising webinars for helpline staff on how to provide psychological and legal advice have been conducted, and district collectors / department magistrates have been directed to provide logistical support to helpline staff and to provide duty rosters for the officers concerned so that they can provide assistance to the victims concerned.

References

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