**The Impact of COVID-19 on Women's Employment, Education, and Domestic Violence.**

**Sohini Mazumder,**

**Post Graduate Student, Amity School of Economics, Amity University, Kolkata**

***Abstract***

The infectious disease coronavirus spreads through human interaction and claims many lives. The virus known as SARC-coV-2 is to blame. The severity of the virus varied from person to person; some developed serious illnesses and required medical care, while others succumbed to it and passed away. It became essential to start lockdown because it was spreading via human interaction. The Indian government imposed a countrywide lockdown on March 24th, 2020, after WHO deemed the novel coronavirus epidemic a global pandemic. Lockdown had some unfavourable side effects, one of which was detrimental to women. Lockdown, which was implemented to contain the COVID-19 epidemic, had a detrimental effect on women in many places. Understanding this effect on domestic violence against women, employment, and education is the primary objective of this paper. The National Commission on Women's Data stated that domestic abuse increased by a factor of 2.5 in India. Females had to deal with the repercussions in the field of schooling as well. Women were unable to devote themselves to learning due to a lack of resources at home and having to prioritize their household duties and chores. The effect of COVID-19 on women in these regions is specifically discussed in-depth in this article.

**KEYWORDS:** COVID19, lockdown, domestic violence, women education, women unemployment.

INTRODUCTION

The "2019 novel coronavirus," later named COVID-19 by the World Health Organization (WHO), is an infectious disease. The actual origin of COVID-19, a disease caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, is yet undetermined. The virus is suspected to have infected humans through an intermediate animal host, possibly an animal, in a wet market in Wuhan, China, where live animals were bought and sold. Fever, cough, shortness of breath or trouble breathing, tiredness, muscular or body pains, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea, and vomiting are common COVID-19 symptoms, as given by the WHO. COVID-19 can produce repetitive shaking with chills, nasal congestion, conjunctivitis, a skin rash, disorientation, and gastrointestinal difficulties in addition to the typical symptoms. In severe situations, symptoms such as trouble breathing, chest discomfort or pressure, disorientation, and pale lips or faces necessitate emergency medical intervention. It spreads through physical contact; if an infected person coughs, sneezes, or speaks, the virus can spread in small liquid particles from their mouth or nose and cause major respiratory breathing problems. The spread happens in two ways: through direct contact and through indirect contact. direct contact and indirect contact The indirect ways included coming into contact with the contaminated products or objects (Lotfi, Hamblin, and Rezaei, 2020). People with other medical conditions faced the worst consequences. With the rapid spread of the virus, the mortality rate increased. On March 20, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a pandemic, a worldwide epidemic of an infectious disease that affects a huge number of people in many locations or nations, frequently resulting in severe sickness, high fatality rates, and major societal disruption. To further restrict the spread, the World Health Organization (WHO) stressed reducing physical contact and maintaining social distancing. This isolation was believed to be essential to preventing the spread of the virus. The virus's transmission was restricted by self-isolating affected people, preventing them from coming into contact with others and spreading the disease further. Furthermore, isolation measures like lockdowns and stay-at-home orders delayed transmission by lowering total contact and interaction between people, allowing healthcare systems to function and medical professionals to deliver effective treatment. This initiative further disrupted the chain of transmission by identifying and self-isolating confirmed individuals, even if they were asymptomatic, which further contributed to limiting the spread of the virus on a larger scale.
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on women, disrupting several aspects of their lives. Women have encountered severe employment challenges, like higher rates of job loss and shorter working hours, particularly in industries that were significantly impacted by the pandemic. Girls' education has been disrupted, resulting in higher dropout rates and contributing to increased educational inequality. Women in healthcare have been on the front lines, enduring increased dangers of virus infection and dealing with mental health issues. Lockdowns have also contributed to an increase in domestic violence instances, placing women in danger in their own homes. Women now face differences in economic prospects and financial resources as a result of the pandemic, which has also worsened already-existing economic inequities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nanthini and Nair (2020) The research examines the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Southeast Asian women, with a particular emphasis on the socioeconomic and health effects of COVID-19 on women. The report goes on to say that women are more susceptible to both direct and indirect effects on their lives, such as socioeconomic effects. When a situation like COVID-19 occurs, these vulnerabilities for women are heightened even more.

Augustus (2021). This paper investigates how the COVID-19 epidemic has affected working women. It also investigates how working women's productivity is affected by staying at home. How women have been disproportionately affected by the harsh reality of working from home It compares with factors that have a disproportionate impact on women compared to men. The paper explains the reasons why highly educated workers should provide their staff with some flexibility. This could make it easier for women to reorganize their workdays so that they can fit it in between taking care of the kids. Given that the overall workload of women has grown, as this paper's conclusion indicates, they should be offered a flexible working schedule and location so that they may manage properly.

Maji et al., (2020) the research examines how COVID-19 has contributed to domestic violence and how it has harmed women's lives. It researches and investigates how women in India were treated with barriers during the COVID-19 lockdown, which had limited access to support systems, emergency helpline numbers, and any aid for them. Moving on, the author emphasized how domestic violence may have an influence on one's physical health, mental health, and social integration in the long run.

OBJECTIVES

1. Examine the impact of COVID-19 on women's employment, education, and domestic violence.
2. Identify challenges that women encountered during the epidemic, such as employment losses, educational interruptions, and a greater risk of domestic abuse.
3. Examine the underlying factors that had a negative impact on women during the COVID-19 period.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in "The Impact of COVID-19 on Women's Employment, Education, and Domestic Violence" is secondary data, which comprises thorough evaluation and analysis of available literature, reports, and statistical data. The publications of relevant academic databases, official websites, and respected organizations are studied, examined, and presented in this paper. Relevant publications, research papers, surveys, and reports that specifically address the issue have been used. The findings from chosen secondary sources referring to the impact of COVID-19 on women in terms of employment, education, and domestic violence are additionally discussed in the article. Finally, no primary data was collected in the current study.

**FINDINGS**

IMPACT ON WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT

The COVID-19 outbreak has significantly disrupted women's employment, worsening gender disparities in the workforce. Gender disparities in the workforce that already existed have been brought to light by the pandemic. In the long run, gender imbalance in the workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to negatively affect the economy since it will negatively affect economic growth, result in income inequalities, and generate a variety of other economic and socioeconomic issues. Women's earning potential and economic independence are restricted by the persistence of gender pay gaps and income disparities, which increase overall income inequality. Additionally, the economic benefits of different viewpoints, talents, and skills—which may improve corporate performance and profitability—are denied to the economy when women are excluded or have their prospects restricted.

The epidemic also highlighted how low-wage female workers are particularly vulnerable to missed opportunities for earning an income (ILO, 2020). School closings and the lack of childcare facilities during the pandemic increased the amount of unpaid care work and household responsibilities placed on women, limiting their ability to engage in paid employment and resulting in decreased labor force participation rates (ILO, 2021). The gender employment gap has grown as a result of women being forced to shoulder increasing caregiving duties. Due to school closings and restricted access to childcare facilities, the amount of unpaid care labor and household duties has grown, which has an effect on women's employment (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020).

IMPACT ON WOMEN’S EDUCATION

The COVID-19 epidemic has presented various obstacles for women's education, worsening already-existing gender gaps in educational possibilities. The pandemic's financial effects have made gender disparities in schooling even more pronounced. Women and girls have been disproportionately affected by the disruption brought on by school closures, online learning, and economic constraints across the world. A huge number of students have had their education interrupted by the closing of educational facilities, but female students were particularly badly affected. Due to limited or no access to technology and internet connectivity, girls from marginalized groups are more likely to experience challenges with remote learning (Smith, 2020). The COVID-19 has increased girls' household chores, such as childcare and housework, for which they couldn’t focus on their academics and learning. Adolescent females were the ones who left school earlier so that they could look after their families (UNESCO, 2020).

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Global societies were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdown protocols, which had an impact on many aspects of everyday life. One of the most alarming impacts was the surge in domestic violence against women. Increased stress, fewer support networks available, economic reliance, more time spent together, and interruptions of critical services all contributed to the tense environment that exacerbated abuse cases. Together, these factors increased women's vulnerability and increased their likelihood of experiencing domestic violence. Domestic violence for women has grown as a result of being kept at home, and subsequently, these women lacked supporting policies and tools since they were cut off from their social networks during the COVID-19 outbreak and the ensuing lockdown. (Maji et al., 2020)

There are some factors that caused an increase in cases of domestic violence during COVID-19. Stress can be one of them, which, along with anxiety related to uncertainty brought in by the pandemic, increased the instances of domestic violence. (Smith et al., 2020). Social isolation can be regarded as another reason for domestic violence. (Bradbury-Jones & Isham, 2020) Isolation can increase domestic violence by cutting off support, making victims feel trapped, and raising the risk of abuse. Victims are vulnerable because of limited interaction and a lack of outside aid, and abuse can escalate out of hand. Third, interruptions to essential services such as counseling and legal assistance limited women's ability to seek help and protection (Kaukinen, 2020). Fourth, increased time spent together as a result of lockdowns can exacerbate conflicts and tensions, leading to violent behavior (Peterman et al., 2020). Finally, women's financial dependence on their partners was exacerbated by pandemic-related unemployment and continued to be trapped in abusive relationships (Van Gelder et al., 2020).

**Fig.2:** Total monthly complaints received by the National Commission for Women from January 2019 and October 2020, India

****

We can clearly see in Fig. 2 how lockdown has resulted in an increase in domestic violence reports. The information was gathered by the National Commission for Women (NCW), a government organization with the goal of defending and developing women's rights in a number of countries, including India. Its responsibilities include investigating and dealing with allegations of domestic violence, ensuring that laws protecting women's rights are followed, and advocating for legislative changes to advance gender equality. The figures show that there was a noticeable increase in the number of complaints received during the initial and subsequent days of the lockdown.

*Domestic violence's effects on mental health*

Domestic violence negatively impacts a woman's mental health. In a cross-sectional study, it was discovered that domestic violence has a major influence on women's mental health. The study included 827 overmarried women from Delhi who were chosen by cluster sampling and systematic random selection. The respondents who experienced domestic violence reported having suicidal thoughts and a poor mental state (Sharma et al., 2019).

Domestic violence may have detrimental psychological and emotional effects on survivors during a lockdown. Increased fear, anxiety, and trauma can result from prolonged exposure to abusive behaviors in the confining atmosphere of the family. Feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, and impotence may be made worse by the extended stress of living in an abusive situation, as well as by the isolation and lack of social support that come with being on lockdown. It is critical to offer comprehensive support services and treatments because survivors may experience psychological and emotional harm that is exacerbated by the abuse's persistence and their inability to ask for help.

Major Findings-

Women were negatively impacted in several ways by COVID-19; it hindered their ability to pursue an education, had an effect on their employment, and raised the incidence of domestic violence when the country was under lockdown.

*Education*: The transition to remote learning and school closures have disturbed the education of women. There was a paucity of technology and internet access, and the network wasn't solid everywhere. Increased obligations for family and housework have taken time and energy away from academic endeavors.

*Employment*: Industries that employ more women have been more severely impacted by the COVID-19 epidemic than others. The COVID-19 presented challenges for women who worked in the informal economy since they had no income. Working women had to take care of their families, which left them with less time to work and thus a reduced employment rate.

*Domestic Violence*: Due to lockdown procedures that prolong house confinement, COVID-19 has seen an upsurge in domestic violence incidents. Domestic violence frequently affects women who are in violent relationships. A few of its forms include physical abuse, psychological and emotional abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, and threats. Economic constraints during COVID-19 and other reasons have made things worse.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 had a tremendous detrimental influence on millions of lives; women also suffered bad repercussions in many areas and ways. The paper, which focused on education, employment, and domestic violence, investigated the complex impact of COVID-19 on women's education and work, as well as how it increased the number of domestic abuse cases. Women's education was harmed. The abrupt adjustments in the system to accommodate COVID requirements generated an imbalance among female students. This extended their educational disparity, affecting their employment and job-securing status even more. Women lost jobs, and COVID-29 and its lockdown measures limited their ability to participate in the formal labor force. There has been an increase in domestic violence. Lockdown had little access to any type of support structure or organization that might assist them in overcoming such domestic abuse.

**REFRERENCE**

1. Bradbury-Jones, C., & Isham, L. (2020). The pandemic paradox: The consequences of COVID-19 on domestic violence.
2. Kaukinen, C. (2020). When stay-at-home orders leave victims unsafe at home: Exploring the risk and consequences of intimate partner violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Nathini,S. & Nair,T. (2020). Covid 19 and the Impacts on women.
4. Peterman, A., Potts, A., O'Donnell, M., Thompson, K., Shah, N., Oertelt-Prigione, S., & van Gelder, N. (2020). Pandemics and violence against women and children.
5. Smith, S. G., Zhang, X., Basile, K. C., Merrick, M. T., Wang, J., Kresnow, M. J., & Chen, J. (2020). The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2015 data brief–updated release. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
6. Van Gelder, N., Peterman, A., Potts, A., O'Donnell, M., Thompson, K., Shah, N., ... & Hossain, M. (2020). COVID-19: Reducing the risk of infection might increase the risk of intimate partner violence.
7. Smith, A. (2020). COVID-19 School Closures: Impact on Education and Gender Equality. UN Women.
8. UNESCO. (2020). COVID-19 and Girls' Education: A Global Response.
9. Lotfi, M., Hamblin, M., Rezaei, N. (2020). COVID-19:Transmissiom,preventiom and potential therapeutic opportunities.
10. Badri, B., (2020). The Impact of COVID-19 on Women. United Nations.

 <https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/impact-covid-19-women>

1. Augustus, J. (2021). The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women Working in Higher Education.
2. Maji, S., Bansod, S., Singh, T. (2020). Domestic violence during COVID-19 pandemic: The case for Indian women. J Community Appl Soc Psychol.
3. United Nations Office on Drugs and crimes. (n.d).Research brief: What crime and helpline data say about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on reported violence against women and girls.
4. Kumari Sharma,K., Vasta, M., Kalaivani,M., Bharadwaj,D.(2019). Mental health effects of domestic violence against women in Delhi: A community-based study.