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RESEARCH ARTICLE



A Study on Impact of Covid-19 on Informal Women Workers with Special Reference Pallapalayam, Karur (Dt) of Tamilnadu

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The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems and the world of work. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic is devastating: tens of millions of people are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, while the number of undernourished people, currently estimated at nearly 690 million, could increase by up to 132 million by the end of the year. The precarious nature of employment of women informal workers is examined using data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (2018–19). To capture the gendered experiences of informal workers during the lockdown period, data from a series of rapid assessment studies is used. It was found that the unequal gendered division of domestic chores existed even before the onset of the pandemic, but the COVID-19- induced lockdowns have further worsened the situation. In terms of paid employment, women tend to work in risky, hazardous and stigmatised jobs as front-line health workers, waste-pickers, domestic workers, but do not receive the minimum wages as specified by the government. In the present study, an attempt was made to examine at micro level and the various aspects of impact of covid-19 of informal women workers in Pallapalayam, Karur (Dt) Of Tamilnadu. An attempt was also made to find if socio economic conditions of informal women workers, financial status and problems faced during the pandemic period.

Keywords: COVID-19, lockdown, informal sector, income and livelihood, loss

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide and presents an unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems and the world of work. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic is devastating: tens of millions of people are at

risk of falling into extreme poverty, while the number of undernourished people, currently estimated at nearly 690 million, could increase by up to 132 million by the end of the year.

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In the present study, an attempt was made to examine at micro level and the various aspects of impact of covid-19 of informal women workers in Pallapalayam, Karur (Dt) Of Tamilnadu. An attempt was also made to find if socio economic conditions of informal women workers, financial status and problems faced during the pandemic period.

OVERVIEW OF INFORMAL WOMEN WORKERS

The International Labour Organization (ILO 2020) report has indicated that as a result of COVID-19, an estimated 400 million informal sector workers are at risk of abject poverty in India. Women are likely to bear the brunt of job losses the most because much of their work is invisible, and they are more likely to work in informal work arrangements.¹ Moreover, the significant and widening gender gaps in workforce participation rates, employment and wages that existed before the lockdown were expected to intensify during the post-lockdown period. Additionally, India has recorded one of the most unequal gender division of household work, and according to the first (and only) national Time Use Survey (TUS) (1998–99), women spend around 4.47

hours per week on direct care work (that is, looking after children, elderly, sick and disabled), while men spent only 0.88 hours per week. Along with the gross imbalances in gender distribution of unpaid care work, the COVID-19 pandemic might worsen the situation by increasing women's burden of domestic chores, unduly cuts and lay-offs in employment.

The informal economy is classified and can be defined in two parts. The first one is informal employment, which refers to workers employed by formal, registered firms on a casual, day-wage basis, as well as subsistence actors such as self-employed workers. This includes individuals and entrepreneurs that might undertake piecework in their own premises, street vendors and most domestic workers. They lack protection for non-payment of wages, retrenchment without notice, and often work under limited occupational safety conditions with no sick pay and health insurance. The second group involves informal sector enterprises, which engage in coordinated commercial activity, such as bazaar traders, restaurants, and manufacturing in small ad hoc factories. They may or may not have a discernible organisational structure, with operations (and employment) that grows or shrinks, depending upon the demand for the enterprises' outputs or services. They are built around an actor/entrepreneur who engages in a series of spot market transactions with customers, suppliers, and workers, depending upon demand (Geertz, 1967). Informal enterprises are unable to seek (formal) credit and have limited access to social programs and public goods. Informal sector enterprises rarely invest in productivity-enhancing equipment, upgrade workers skills, or achieve economies of scale, and tend to function on razor-thin margins. They have no recourse to legal protection should their customers renege on payment and can offer no form of security to their employees, pay no taxes, and ignore minimum wage regulations.

¹Shiney chakraborty, Covid-19 and women informal sector workers in India, Economic and Political weekly, vol,55, Issue no.35, 29 august, 2020.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shineyachakraborty 2020, evaluate the precarious nature of employment of women informal workers is examined using data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (2018–19). To capture the gendered experiences of informal workers during the lockdown period, data from a series of rapid assessment studies is used. It was found that the unequal gendered division of domestic chores existed even before the onset of the pandemic, but the COVID-19- induced lockdowns have further worsened the situation

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

They study is focused impact of covid-19 on informal women worker with special reference, pallapalayam ,karur (district). These are the following objectives.

- To study the socio-economic conditions of informal women workers, during pandemic period.
- To examine the financial status of informal women workers, during pandemic
- To face the problems of informal women workers during covid-19

FINDINGS

1.Area of living of the respondents that 70% of the respondents are in rural area and 30% of the respondents are in urban area. Majority 70% respondents are rural.

2.Occupation of the respondents that 20 % of the respondents are 100 days workers, 20% of the respondents are textiles worker, 18% of the respondent are farming, 12% of the respondents are cooking worker, 8% of the respondent are housekeeping worker, 6% of the respondent are toiler, 4% of the respondent are supervising, 2% of the respondent are own shop. Majority 20% of the respondent are 100 days worker and 20% of the respondent are textiles.

3.Income of the Respondents that 44% of the respondents are got income 5,001 to 10,000, 40% of the respondents are got below 5,000, 10% of the

respondents are got 10,001 to 15,000 and 6% of the respondent are get income above 15,000. Majority 44% of the respondents are got income 5,001 to 10,000.

4. Government funds received by the respondents that 84% of the respondents are got government funds and 16% of the respondents are do not got government funds. Majority 84% respondents are got government funds.

5. During covid-19 issues faced by the Respondents that 74% of the respondents are acing financial issues during covid-19. 20% of the respondents are facing health issues during covid-19. 8% of the respondents are facing family issues during covid-19 and 2% of the respondents are facing work issues during covid-19. Majority 74% of the respondents are facing financial issues during covid-19.

SUGGESTIONS:

- The government shall give more financial assistance to informal women workers.
- The government and private financial institutions give, interest free loan to informal women workers.
- To give awareness about covid-19 and some safety measures (using mask, sanitizers, social distance and vaccine).
- To extent the social security schemes to informal women workers during pandemic period.
- All industrial units can give minimum work to informal women workers during pandemic period.
- To NGO's private enterprises, and Religious organization ccan help in hands to informal women worker.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has attempted to investigate the ground that informal women workers facing in the financial crisis during covid-19 pandemic. It has brought to the fore the multi-layered and multidimensional issues in the financial, job security of informal women worker and the effect of lockdown on them. The analysis of the data collected as indicated that many women workers are facing financial crisis and the effect substituting the jobs the current era of COVID-19. The government therefore needs to focus on providing financial support to informal women worker so that they are able to survive through this lockdown. The lack of government involvement in this issue states that informal women workers are not considered to have a bigger picture in the industrial sector owners are taking advantages of the situation.

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