

Seven Issues Affecting Women and Girls During the Covid-19 Pandemic



Economic Impacts on Women

1. Unequal share of domestic and care work

Women's ability to earn money is limited due to the time they spend on domestic work and care in the home

- Globally, women carry out [at least 2.5x](#) more unpaid care work than men; in India, it is 10x more and Covid-19 has increased the burden by a [further 30%](#)
- Given that women typically earn less than men, there is a growing risk [that women's jobs in heterosexual households will be sacrificed](#) so the man can continue to work, leading to a step-back in equality and [delays to women's time to achieve success in their careers](#)

2. Higher rates of job losses

More women employed in hardest-sectors, leading to job losses and unpredictable incomes

- [60% of US job losses](#) are amongst women in low-paid sectors affected by Covid-19 lockdown, such as hospitality
- In Bangladesh, [a quarter of the largely female 4.1 million](#) garment factory workforce are now unemployed
- Sex workers globally - from the [~1 million in the USA](#) to the [1.2-3 million in India](#) - face both loss of income and are [excluded from Covid-19 social protection responses](#)

3. Reduced financial independence and future prospects

Without their own financial independence, women and girls are subject to being dependant on others

- More than 1.5 billion children are out of school due to Covid-19; school closures can lead to increased early marriage and a higher rate of [child] pregnancy for girls [who will then never return to school](#)



Health and Wellbeing Impacts on Women

4. Increased risk of pregnancy-related death and teenage pregnancies

Past pandemics, such as Ebola in West Africa, saw an increase in undesirable outcomes for women and girls that experts have raised as issues on the rise during the Covid-19 pandemic

- The Ebola outbreak was projected to cause [120,000 preventable maternal deaths](#) due to pressure of health services and fears amongst parents of contracting the disease in hospital
- Teen pregnancies are also [expected to rise as a result of school closures in Africa](#), as seen during the Ebola outbreak, where [~18,000 teenage girls became pregnant](#)

5. Spikes in sexual, physical and domestic violence and exploitation

National lock-downs leave women vulnerable and at-risk from others

- A surge in domestic violence has been reported across the globe, from China, to Europe to Latin America – [40-50%](#) increased calls for help in Brazil; [90% of increase](#) linked to Covid-19 in China
- [220,000 vulnerable women](#) report being asked for sex by their rental landlords in Scotland in lieu of rent



Health Care System Impacts for Women

6. Increased pressure and risk for front-line health workforce

Gender imbalances and representation across the health care workforce lead to inequity in pay and risk

- [70%](#) of the global health and social care workforce is female and are at greater risk of catching Covid-19
- Verses [70% global health leadership is male](#); in Covid-19 policy spaces, there is inadequate women's representation (e.g., in the [White House Coronavirus Task Force](#))

7. Reduced access to vital health services and exclusion from future Covid-19 treatments

Reducing health care access for women simply forces them to take unnecessary risks - from unsafe abortion to taking unapproved medicines whilst pregnant or breastfeeding

- Several reproductive health services may be deemed as [unessential and diverted due to Covid-19](#). In Texas, [the ban on abortion as non-essential](#) has been revised
- Sanitary pads [were initially excluded](#) from pandemic essential products lists in several countries
- Pregnant women [could be at risk of pregnancy-related complications](#) due to Covid-19. Yet, trials to find treatments [exclude pregnant women](#), leaving all those planning for a family without a treatment that is safe for use during pregnancy