

Resources: Gender-responsive planning and interventions during Covid-19

Gender mainstreamed response to Covid-19

<https://feminisminindia.com/2020/03/24/covid-19-gender-should-matter-india/>

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/the-coronavirus-fallout-may-be-worse-for-women-than-men-heres-why/>

More women workers in the health care sector who would be disproportionately infected because of the nature of their work, burden of unpaid care work, especially for the elderly and for children during school closures.

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/3/news-checklist-for-covid-19-response-by-ded-regner>

Checklist for Covid-19 responses by UN Women

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/why-gender-matters-impact-and-recovery-covid-19>

How women will be affected- domestic violence, unpaid care work burden, sexual and reproductive health, women in sectors such as services and tourism

https://www.cgdev.org/blog/how-will-covid-19-affect-women-and-girls-low-and-middle-income-countries#.XnCDP1_dZiY.mailto

Women are disproportionately affected by the after-effects of diseases because of economic crises

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)30526-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30526-2/fulltext)

Include women in decision-making. Data on gendered aspects of the disease lacking, needs to be collected.

<http://www.edf-feph.org/newsroom/news/message-ana-pelaez-narvaez-women-disabilities-and-covid-19>

Suggestions- services to women and girls with disabilities

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/governance/ideas-for-a-pro-poor-and-pro-women-approach-to-covid-19-69867>

- A special social protection programme to support women who are single parents or are the main breadwinners is needed

- Work with businesses and issue a policy on paid dependency leaves so women who need to miss work to care for a sick family member do not need to be placed in an impossible situation of choosing between a job and caring for family members dependent on them
- When implementing cash transfers, ensure that women-headed households are prioritised
- Cash-for-work schemes almost always exclude women who cannot leave home because of care work. It is time to recognize that care work is work and has economic value. Include stay-at-home women in cash-for-work schemes. There are existing pilot projects (by Oxfam and partners) with methodologies and calculations that might help. These can then be modified and adapted to the particular LGU context

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/295508/half-workers-expect-covid-harm-workplace.aspx>

Likewise, women are more likely than men to think COVID-19 will negatively affect their workplace. In addition to being more likely to identify as Democrats, women are more likely than men to work part-time jobs, which may be more susceptible to workplace disruption during this time.

https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/19/human-rights-dimensions-covid-19-response#_Toc35446584

Overloaded health systems, reallocation of resources, shortages of medical supplies, and disruptions of global supply chains could harm women's access to contraception and pre- and post-natal and birth care. Although the risk of infection through breastfeeding is not known, the UN Population Fund has recommended that breastfeeding mothers who become ill [should not be separated from their infants](#). Past epidemics, such as the Ebola outbreak in [Sierra Leone](#), have impacted the availability of routine prenatal and maternity care, leaving women more at risk to preventable maternal deaths or morbidities.

[Japan](#) responded to the potential for a disproportionate impact on families with young children by offering to offset costs to businesses for workers taking paid leave to care for children during school closures, though the amount offered was low. **Italy** was considering measures to mitigate the effects of the lockdown on families with children. These could include emergency paid parental leave or vouchers for families with children up to 12 years old (or children with disabilities without any age limit) who need to pay for childcare amid the prolonged school closures.

Up to [95 percent](#) of female workers in some regions work in the informal sector where there is no job security, and no safety net if a crisis like COVID-19 destroys their earnings.

Women are up to [31 percent](#) less likely to have internet access than men in some countries, and worldwide about [327 million](#) fewer women than men have a smartphone.

Even when women have access to the internet, gender disparities may make them less able to use it for reasons including cost, socialization, and family pressures. When multiple members of a household need access to limited computing resources within the home, gender inequality may mean women and girls have less access.

<http://www.eip.org/en/news-events/why-we-need-gender-perspectives-our-global-solutions-covid-19>

Recommendations to include gender perspective in planning responses to the epidemic

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-51705199>

How do women who have businesses manage increased care work during this period?

UN Women are also concerned about the possible diversion of resources with increased efforts to contain outbreaks.

"Diverting resources from critical services that women rely on, such as routine health checks or gender based violence services, is something we are very concerned about," says Ms Holtsberg.

Jiang Jinjing, the woman behind the Coronavirus Sister Support campaign, which is trying to deliver feminine hygiene products to front line workers in Hubei province, recently told online media publication [Sixth Tone](#) that women's menstruation needs are being overlooked.

In China, "since many migrant women do not have employment contracts, the coronavirus has meant that they do not receive any income - if they do not work, they do not get paid", she says.

"With no social security to fall back on, they face the dilemma of either returning to work and potentially getting sick or needing to pay for other forms of accommodation. Alternatively, they might be forced to stay at home and live off the little savings they have. This puts them in a very difficult situation".

"The differential needs of women and men in long-and-medium-term recovery efforts also need to be considered," says Mohammad Naciri, regional director of UN Women Asia and the Pacific.

<https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/news%20and%20events/stories/2020/giha%20wg%20advocacy%20brief%20gender%20impact%20covid19.pdf?la=en&vs=5651>

Gender impact of Covid-19 in Asia and the Pacific and recommendations.

Indian Government directives/Measures for businesses to adopt

While women-specific initiatives have been difficult to come by at this time, the rationale for collating resources for this list was to identify challenges and interventions that vulnerable populations face, with the assumption that such interventions would have some benefits for women. Emphasis is placed on workers in the unorganised sector, since about 90% of women workers are in this sector. This includes women in construction work, garment industry and contractual workers.

https://labour.gov.in/sites/default/files/Central_Government_Update.pdf

Union Government directives to employers, including order to not retrench workers at this time.

<https://www.news18.com/news/india/coronavirus-janata-curfew-live-updates-coronavirus-india-trains-railways-metro-cases-deaths-delhi-mumbai-bengaluru-hyderabad-2546019.html>

Andhra Govt Announces Economic Relief | For all those who depend on daily wages to make ends meet will receive a sum of Rs 1,000 from the government in order to help them cope with the testing times and loss of income. A total of Rs 1,500 crore has been sanctioned for the same.

<https://www.businessinsider.in/india/news/all-central-government-contract-workers-will-be-paid-during-lockdown/articleshow/74785306.cms>

Outsourced professionals and contractual workers in central government offices, ministries and departments will receive their full pay during the lockdown period.

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1607959>

Ministry of Railways decides to treat contract and outsourced employees 'on duty' during the period of suspension of Passengers services in Indian Railways

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/indian-state-promises-compensation-workers-hit-coronavirus-200319042121426.html>

Millions of poor Indians may receive cash compensation for income lost due to coronavirus, as officials in northern Uttar Pradesh (UP) state start counting the number of qualifying citizens on Wednesday.

<https://www.peoplesmatters.in/article/c-suite/what-should-employers-be-doing-in-covid-19-a-checklist-to-consider-25071>

Checklist for employers in terms of workplace safety, payment plans, leave policies and work from home arrangements.

<https://www.trilegal.com/index.php/publications/update/covid-19-what-employers-in-india-need-to-know>

FAQs on employers' obligations during the virus outbreak.

<https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=925611fa-7200-4392-97cf-858ce34c996a>

FAQs on employer and workplace in India. Although it is dated and does not factor in government directives to not terminate services of employees, it does mention that allowances, such as TA, cannot be altered during work from home periods.

Benefits announced for construction workers

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/covid-19-govt-directs-states-to-transfer-cash-to-construction-workers-120032400746_1.html

In a first major step for the unorganised sector to tide over the COVID-19 pandemic during lockdown, the central government on Tuesday directed states to transfer cash into the bank accounts of [construction](#) workers from the unutilised welfare funds earmarked for them.

<https://www.bloombergquint.com/business/government-advises-states-to-release-rs-52000-crore-for-construction-workers>

The central government has initiated a process to release nearly Rs 52,000 crore as a short-term relief to construction workers across the country. The widening local spread of the coronavirus and lockdowns announced across a number of key states have brought construction activity to a halt, hurting daily wage earners who work in the sector. According to government estimates, close to 5.1 crore workers are employed in the construction sector across segments like infrastructure and real estate.

Suggestions to provide services and goods to the poor and vulnerable at this time, especially those in the unorganised sector

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-perils-of-an-all-out-lockdown/article31136890.ece>

Since time is of the essence, the first step is to make good use of existing social-security schemes to support poor people — pensions, the Public Distribution System (PDS), midday meals, and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), among others. Initial measures could include advance payment of pensions, enhanced PDS rations, immediate payment of MGNREGA wage arrears, and expanded distribution of take-home rations at schools and anganwadis.

<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/economy/covid-19-pandemic-why-keralas-rs-20000-crore-relief-package-is-not-financial-wizardry-5069911.html>

The Centre should think of a quick and seamless way to put money in the hands of the people. A simple way would be to double the old age/widow pension from the current Rs

300 to Rs 600. The Centre should expand its reach from BPL families to everyone. It will be a universal pension scheme, and the advantage here is that the infrastructure for its distribution exists. At present Kerala pays about Rs 1,300 per month to about 5.5 million people—of this, the Centre's contribution is Rs 300 for 0.65 million people.

The Centre must make food grains available to the states. Our godowns are flooded with grains and they are at a loss to know how to dispose of these grains. States like Kerala are in need of these grains. Let people be provided with food grains free of cost so that there is no starvation because of the lack of employment opportunities during this lockdown. The expenditure for the procurement has already been incurred and therefore central government does not have to make any new pay out.

We have the Kudumbasree — the most comprehensive neighbourhood women's network in India—that cuts across all barriers of caste, religion, etc. The thousands of food stalls we intend to open will be possible because of these neighbourhood women's network.

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/covid-19-pandemic-90-of-indias-estimated-47-crore-workforce-not-entitled-for-any-lay-off-benefits/1904866/>

Around 90% of India's estimated 47-crore workforce are not entitled to get any sort of benefit or compensation in case they are laid off in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, experts said.

Unlike retrenchment, lay-offs are temporary suspensions. Employers lay off employees in different circumstances, including when they find revenue generation difficult like the present situation. Work from home is not an option for India's 84% of the workforce as their roles are mostly outbound, according to Rituparna Chakraborty, co-founder, Teamlease

<https://scroll.in/article/956755/covid-19-indias-travel-restrictions-delay-rescued-sex-workers-return-to-bangladesh>

“Coronavirus has only added to the whole process of repatriation,” said Tariqul Islam of Justice and Care, a charity that reintegrates victims in Bangladesh. “If India and Bangladesh had a standard operating procedure for repatriation, these girls would have been home within six months.”

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/coronavirus-pandemic-puts-india-s-informal-workers-in-the-firing-line-11584902659516.html>

Article on the lack of social security net for informal sector workers.

<https://scroll.in/article/956385/coronavirus-they-cannot-work-from-home-or-follow-social-distancing-here-is-why>

Highlights how work from home and social distancing are not possible for workers in sectors such as waste management.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/coronavirus/coronavirus-lockdown-labourers-pm-modi-india-inc-6328689/>

AT LEAST six top corporate leaders are said to have recommended to Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) that the government should make payments to **unorganised sector workers** since they bear the brunt of the severe lockdown measures to arrest the spread of [Covid-19](#) disease.

Uday Kotak, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, Kotak Mahindra Bank, had a more specific suggestion. Given the exceptional circumstances, the government must, as a one-off measure, immediately transfer Rs 5,000 into the bank accounts of all those who are over 25 years. For those over 65, he advocated a one-time payment of Rs 10,000.

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/states/west-bengal/unions-seek-bengal-government-steps-to-insulate-workers-from-coronavirus-crisis/cid/1755961>

The unions demanded that the government try to make up for the wage loss by offering to cover a part of the pay and also make food packets available to unorganised sector workers. The leaders also urged the minister to ensure that the workers get proper treatment if they contract the coronavirus.

Some recent reports on the labour force suggest that the sector has over 20 million workers across the country. These workers are mainly part of labour-intensive industries, with construction at the forefront. Many work as domestic helps and rickshaw pullers. These workers hardly have any job security or social safety.

Measures adopted by companies in India

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/jobs/special-leave-to-ensure-isolation-doesnt-hit-pay/articleshow/74681435.cms?from=mdr>

“We have introduced a special leave provision where, in case a person wants to or is recommended to self-isolate, he or she can take leave till as long as required,” said Suresh Tripathy, vice-president – human resources of Tata Steel.

Others like RPG Enterprises is also advising and encouraging employees to take leave for as long as they need in cases where they are unable to work from home till the time they get better. To facilitate this, RPG has come up with an “exceptional” leave policy with full pay for as long as needed.

<https://qz.com/india/1816412/flipkart-swiggy-ola-hike-helping-staff-work-amid-coronavirus/>

Initiatives by platform-based companies for ensuring good health of partners during Covid-19.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1yAyLwy5sgRHKhq94yQzJcVKwuEAbYPx9mwuucoO4Duo/edit#>

Work from home advisory to start-ups (crowd-sourced document put together by the start-up community)

<https://www.india-briefing.com/news/best-practices-businesses-india-work-from-home-19903.html/>

Suggestions for special leave provisions and robust internal communication mechanisms to manage work from home.

<https://www.asiancommunitynews.com/combat-covid-19-companies-resort-to-best-practices-to-safeguard-employees/>

Lists measures by multiple companies in India including implementation of flexitimes and work from home, availability of sanitisers and masks at the workplace and requesting those aged above 60 to stay home during this period.

Covid-19 and the garment industry

<https://cleanclothes.org/news/2020/live-blog-on-how-the-coronavirus-influences-workers-in-supply-chains>

The [Indian Times](#) reports that 10,000 manufacturing units in Tirupur are struggling to maintain their largely migrant workforce with payments and new orders not coming in. The Karnataka Garment Workers Union (KOOGU KGWU) [reports](#) that workers in Bengaluru are refusing to enter their factories. The union urges the government to protect garment workers and all informal and unorganized workers from exposure to the virus without having to suffer pay cuts and dismissal and calls upon brands to reschedule order deadlines and ensure paid leave to all workers in their supply chains, allowing them to practice social distancing for themselves and everyone around the world.

The Asia Floor Wage Alliance issued a [statement](#) identifying developments across the region and listing demands on brands, retailers and the government to protect garment workers: "Three trends can be identified with respect to the degree of institutional response on COVID-19 in the garment-producing countries in Asia:

1. Governments are taking stringent measures to reduce the direct health effects of Covid-19 while also providing economic support for workers. For example, in Sri Lanka, factories in some regions, under government directives, have shut down, with workers entitled to paid leave. Factories that are still operational have to follow adequate health and safety measures due to stringent directives from the Sri Lankan government. In India, till last week most factories continued to work without taking adequate steps to prevent

occupational exposure to COVID-19. However, from today onwards, factories across most states in India have closed down till March 31st under strict directives from state governments. Additionally, the Indian government has also issued an order stating that workers must not be terminated nor face a reduction of wages due to this crisis. The order, most importantly also states that workers are entitled to fully paid leave till this crisis is mitigated.

2. Governments are issuing voluntary codes of conduct to factories to mitigate direct health effects while also promising some economic support for workers: For example, in Cambodia and Myanmar, the shortage of raw materials from China has forced many factories to halt production, with thousands of workers suspended. In Cambodia, the government has issued guidelines for workplace health and safety to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Also, factories that have suspended operations must pay 40 percent of the minimum wages to workers. An additional 20 percent of the wages will be provided by the Cambodian government for workers who have enrolled in soft skills training programs organized by the Cambodian Ministry of Labour. In Myanmar, many workers who have been laid off have not been compensated, and the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) has announced that factories that refuse to pay workers' salaries will be banned from continuing operations.

3. Governments are issuing voluntary guidelines for factories to mitigate direct health effects of COVID-19 and ensuring no economic and employment policies to protect workers: For example, in Indonesia, the government has only issued health and safety guidelines for factories that continue to operate and some factories seem to be adhering to these precautionary measures. In general, the efforts to mitigate the income losses and reduced economic activity due to COVID-19, which is also an important incentive to disclose potential infections, has been limited across garment-producing countries in Asia."

Global good practices

https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/impacts-and-responses/WCMS_739049/lang-en/index.htm

Measures adopted in countries like Italy, Japan and South Korea to counter effects of Covid-19 in the workplace.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/how-are-companies-responding-to-the-coronavirus-crisis-d15bed6137/>

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/from-perfume-to-hand-sanitiser-tvs-to-face-masks-how-companies-are-changing-track-to-fight-covid-19/>

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/homeless-self-isolation-cities-coronavirus/>

<https://www.mom.gov.sg/newsroom/press-releases/2020/0324-further-measures-to-help-companies-cope-with-covid-19-situation>

Singapore government issued measures for companies to manage Covid-19.

<https://www.enterprisesg.gov.sg/covid-19>

Singapore government directives to enterprises

47. If you have 10 or more employees and have implemented any cost-saving measures that affects your employees' monthly salaries (including bonuses and increments) during this period, you are required to notify MOM through this [online form](#) – within 1 week after implementation. This temporary requirement is in place to encourage responsible implementation of such measures, prevent downstream salary disputes, and allow MOM to monitor the scope and scale of such measures. For more details, please refer to [the MOM website](#).

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/3/statement-ed-phumzile-covid-19-women-front-and-centre>

Cyberviolence too has become a routine feature of the internet, and as movement restrictions increase online gaming and use of chat rooms, this is an area for vigilance to protect girls. Girls too can step up their own resistance work in this area, and lead with social media solutions. In China the hashtag #AntiDomesticViolenceDuringEpidemic has taken off, helping to expose violence as a risk during lockdown and linked to online resources.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2020-03-23-covid-19-the-fight-to-protect-human-rights-must-include-considerations-for-gbv/>

Recently, the Open Society Foundations announced their commitment to taking proactive action in support of its grantees' and partners' efforts to effectively respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically on countering populist responses to Covid-19, protecting migrants and refugees, assisting low-wage workers and those in the informal and gig economy who are at greater risk of infection and subsequent economic pressures, and ensuring access to rapid testing, vaccines and therapeutics.

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/3/news-womens-needs-and-leadership-in-covid-19-response>

“In addition, the majority of women work in the informal economy, where health insurance is likely to be non-existent or inadequate, and income is not secure. Because they are not well targeted for bail outs they are financially on their own. This is not simply a health issue for many women; it goes to the heart of gender equality.”

The evidence is also mounting that the economic impacts of COVID-19 will hit women harder, as more women work in low-paying, insecure and informal jobs. Disruptions,

including movement restrictions, are likely to compromise women's ability to make a living and meet their families' basic needs.

In China, for instance, UN Women is focusing on economic recovery solutions to support small and medium businesses owned by women, to mitigate the negative economic impact of the outbreak. It has also supported outreach campaigns to promote women's leadership and contributions in the COVID-19 response, reaching more than 32 million people.

Globally women continue to be paid 16 per cent less than men on average, and the pay gap rises to 35 per cent in some countries. In times of crisis like this, women often face the unfair and sometimes impossible choice of giving up paid work to care for children at home.

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/coronavirus-and-corporate-social-innovation/>

[Lululemon](#), which is temporarily shutting down all stores in North America, will continue to pay employees and provide access to a pay relief fund. [Microsoft](#) is committing to pay its hourly workers their regular pay, even as demand for their services slows down, and Walmart, Apple, and the Olive Garden are updating their [sick-leave policies](#) to provide additional coverage and support for their most vulnerable workers.

Amazon announced a [\\$5 million relief fund](#) for small businesses in the vicinity of its headquarters, while Google is pledging [\\$1 million](#) to organizations in Mountain View, California, impacted by the pandemic. Billionaire [Mark Cuban](#) has been reimbursing employees who purchase lunch and coffee from local restaurants.

The corporate sector can move the needle during this crisis by implementing strategies and initiatives that benefit society – as well as their long-term success – by supporting their employees, customers and the economy at large.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/03/10/walmart-apple-olive-garden-are-among-major-employers-updating-sick-leave-policies-coronavirus-cases-spread/>

“Why gender matters in the impact and recovery from Covid-19”

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/why-gender-matters-impact-and-recovery-covid-19>

“The coronavirus fallout may be worse for women than men. Here's why”

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/the-coronavirus-fallout-may-be-worse-for-women-than-men-heres-why/>

“Ideas for a pro-poor and pro-women approach to COVID-19”

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/blog/governance/ideas-for-a-pro-poor-and-pro-women-approach-to-covid-19-69867>

“COVID-19: Can A Health Crisis Become A Breeding Site For Gender Inequality?”

<https://feminisminindia.com/2020/03/24/covid-19-gender-should-matter-india/>

“Being a transperson in India during Covid-19 pandemic”

<https://www.dailyo.in/variety/covid-19-transgender-hijras-health-risk-social-stigma-aadhaar-coronavirus-in-india/story/1/32608.html>

“COVID-19 Killing More Men Than Women – What Numbers, Studies Say”

<https://www.thequint.com/neon/gender/why-is-coronavirus-killing-more-men-than-women>

Some additional links:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/india-fight-coronavirus-takes-toll-migrant-workers-200324084150540.htm>

<https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/effects-of-covid-19-on-maharashtra-and-indias-business-and-labour-63649/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/mar/24/pregnant-healthcare-staff-under-pressure-covid-19>

<https://www.shethepeople.tv/blog/women-affected-covid-19-economically-medically>

<https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/03/the-covid-19-outbreak-and-gender>

<https://asia.oxfam.org/latest/blogs/ideas-pro-poor-and-pro-women-approach-covid-19>

<https://www.eco-business.com/news/from-nannies-to-helpers-coronavirus-spotlights-asia-womens-job-insecurity/>

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)30526-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30526-2/fulltext)

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/coronavirus-covid-19-china-women-frontline-sexism-12512276>

https://www.ilo.org/newdelhi/areasofwork/employment-promotion/WCMS_342334/lang--en/index.htm

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-51705199>

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/press-releases/responses-to-covid-19-and-states-human-rights-obligations-preliminary-observations/>