

Gender Speak



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COVID-19 is Having an Impact on Female Employment

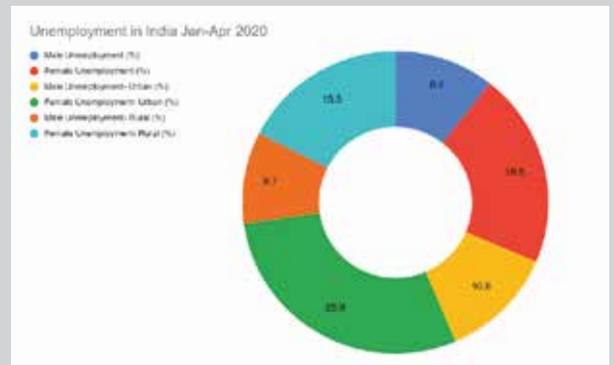


Source: Economic Times

While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the world, the brunt of the pandemic on the economy and employment, particularly female employment continues to be worrisome. A new study by McKinsey indicates that women's jobs are 1.8 times more vulnerable than men's jobs owing to two distinct reasons. The first is the gendered nature of jobs in the world with women concentrated in sectors most affected by the pandemic. This includes sectors such as hospitality, wholesale and retail trade and accommodation and food services. The study also indicates that 4.5% of the female employment opportunities come under a threat as compared to the 3.8% in case of men. The second reason is the existing gender norms that govern society at large which play a crucial role in dictating employment opportunities as well. It is predicted that if the gender impact on employment is not taken into consideration, the global economy stands to lose an estimated 1 trillion USD owing to the current pandemic. Conversely, addressing this gender gap can add 13 trillion USD to the economy by 2030. For the world to achieve the 2030 SDG Agenda in all earnestness, there is a serious need to put gender equality at the forefront.

Latest GDP Numbers Paint a Sombre Picture for Female Employment in India

While women in the developed world enjoy greater job security and a higher Female Labour Force Participation rate (FLFPR), India has one of the poorest FLFPR globally, at 20%. However, this number is from the pre-COVID era, with new estimates threatening an even larger fall in the labour force participation of women in the country. This is further exacerbated by the latest GDP estimates released by



Source: CMIE unemployment statistics January-April 2020

the Government which predicts a stark decline of -23.9%, painting a recessionary image for the Indian economy. This, coupled with the latest estimates by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy on the 18.9 million job losses during the period from April to July, indicates that female employment will suffer further owing to the structural factors that have contributed to declining FLFPR in the first place. An analysis of the unemployment breakdown by gender indicates that while male unemployment is estimated at 9.4%, female unemployment is estimated at a double of 18.5%. The data also indicates that urban unemployment is higher for both male and female than in the case of rural. A snapshot of the unemployment data, disaggregated by gender is provided below.

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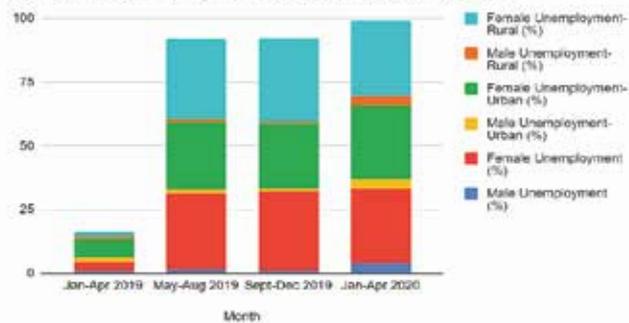
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Karnataka Unemployment Statistics (%) 2019-2020



Source: CMIE unemployment statistics January-April 2020

Similar to the case in the country, in Karnataka too, female unemployment is precarious with the state having the highest inequality in terms of unemployment. While the male unemployment rate 4%, female unemployment is almost 7 times higher at 29%. Moreover, it must be kept in mind that while these statistics are during the pandemic, the situation is only predicted to get worse as the effects of the crisis continue to take shape. The figure below shows the growth in unemployment rates across all categories from January to April 2019 and January to April 2020.

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