Women affected to a greater degree by the coronavirus pandemic

While 2020 was much awaited as the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, intended to assess and champion gender equality, the world is currently battling what can be called the deadliest pandemic. While the health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have been widely discussed, what is missing has been a dialogue on the larger impact the pandemic has and will have on women and girls.

According to the World Economic Forum, at the global level, women make up 70% of all health and social services staff putting them at the forefront of the pandemic. Additionally, the burden of unpaid care work on women in such situations also points sharply to the existing gender discrimination that women face. This, when coupled with the economic vulnerability of women translates into fewer opportunities in the labour market and limited access to financial resources. All of this is further exacerbated by the spike in cases of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence that have been reported. And while the number of reported cases reflect just the tip of the iceberg it points at the larger systemic oppression that women are facing.

While tackling this pandemic, governments and policymakers must recognise this heightened impact on women and ensure that policies and measures implemented involve women in the decision-making process.

In Karnataka, women SHG lead the way in combatting COVID

In Karnataka, women Self Help Group (SHG) members under the Karnataka State Rural Livelihood Promotion Society’s Sanjeevini scheme are leading by example in ensuring the containment of the pandemic in the state.

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