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RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPACT OF COVID 19; FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF WOMEN

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Abstract

The novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has brought the whole world to a relative standstill, affecting millions universal at the time. women are excessively burdened by unbalanced access to economic, health, and social resources during the pandemic. For many women, COVID-19 has presented new urgency to challenges and illuminates unique issues long encountered. Whereas women were already doing most of the world's unpaid care work prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising researches suggests that the crisis and its consequent shutdown response have resulted in a dramatic increase in this burden.

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Introduction:-

The novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has brought the whole world to a relative standstill, affecting millions universal at the time. (World Health Organization [WHO] 2020).¹ To battle the spread of COVID-19, the Indian government implemented nationwide lockdown measures and self-isolation policies. In the Indian perspective, "lockdown" refers to citizens staying at home while entirely restricting the movement of the population inside and outside of particular areas apart from for essential activities (health visits, purchasing for essential items, and providing essential work). As a result, the measures have led to occupational and educational disruption and psychological misery for many individuals.² By April, 2020, up to 2.6 billion people worldwide were living in areas under some form of stay-at-home order or lockdown.³ Budding evidence suggests that women are excessively burdened by unbalanced access to economic, health, and social resources during the pandemic. For many women, COVID-19 has presented new urgency to challenges and illuminates unique issues long encountered. Gender base roles such as family care-giving and frontline occupations increase women's exposure to COVID-19 infections and critical outcomes.⁴ Whereas women were already doing most of the world's unpaid care work prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising researches suggests that the crisis and its consequent shutdown response have resulted in a dramatic increase in this burden. It is likely that the negative impacts for women and families will last for years without proactive interventions. What we commonly refer to as "the economy" would not function without the (often unrecognized) foundation of work provided by the "care economy": the reproduction of everyday life through cooking, raising children, and so forth.⁵

Work life balance:

The dynamics of the work setting have exerted huge difficulty on working women as they need to hold with two full time jobs – one at home and the other at workplace. Working women have a difficulty to balancing the family and work. customarily, the percentage of men as wage earners were high and women as housewives were low. But now in current India, the proportion of dual-earner couples is regularly increasing and changes in the workforce are go along with changes in values, and creating a new highlighting on the balance between work-life and family life.⁶

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study has revealed that during lockdown working women do work from home they feel burden of extreme office and house work. To fulfill family expectations and not having time for themselves are the prime factors affecting work life balance of working women. As a result many women go through high level of stress and anxiety and also do not enjoy family life. Informal discussions with working women discovered that those who had family or husband support and flexible work schedule enjoyed better work life balance⁷

The care economy: The invisible and unpaid work of women:

The work every one of us does to maintain daily life for ourselves and our family depends on our economic and social status and personal family situation, but might include raising children, catering, cleaning, fetching water and firewood, caring for elderly relatives, shopping, domestic management, as well as mental tasks such as planning schedules and performing emotional labor such as tending family relationships. Of course, not all of this work is done by females, but worldwide women and girls are responsible for 75% of unpaid care and household work in homes and communities every day (Moreira da Silva 2019).⁸ The International Labour Organisation (ILO) calculates that on average women around the world perform 4 hours and 25 minutes of unpaid care work every day compared with 1 hour and 23 minutes for men. The ILO goes further, arguing that redistribution of paid work between men and women in the home is not enough. The organization has recently argued that we are to come out of this crisis with more equitable societies, women will need to be fully involved in the rethinking and redesigning of the world of work post-COVID-19” Some hope for rebalancing traditional gender norms and practices comes from recent research on the impacts of the pandemic on gender equality. (Pozzan and Cattaneo 2020).⁹ Married women in East Asia traditionally bear excessive family responsibilities, and this new corona virus crisis has made women feel depressed.¹⁰

Child care:

Globally more than 1.5 billion children are out of school right now. This has significantly increased the need for childcare¹¹. In addition, grandparent-provided childcare is now discouraged due to the higher mortality rate for the elderly, and given social distancing measures, sharing childcare with neighbors and friends is restricted. Thus, most families have no choice but to watch their kids themselves. Based on the existing division of child care duties in most families, mothers are likely to be more affected than fathers. In many cases mothers will pick up a large share of the additional childcare (and home schooling) during the crisis, there will also be a sizeable fraction of families where role models will be reversed.

Domestic Violence:

COVID-19 presents a new complexity regarding violence against women and girls, with abusers exploiting the inability of women to seek help or leave threatening situations. It has been also seen that stay-at-home orders can exacerbate isolation for women living in unhealthy environments and disrupt social and protective networks/services.¹²

Pregnancy and Birthing in the Time of COVID-19:

As the COVID-19 pandemic accelerates, uncertainties are increasing about the effect of the pandemic on women’s and girls’ sexual and reproductive health and their contact to care. In response to COVID-19, in March, WHO issued interim guidance for maintaining essential services during an outbreak, which included advice to prioritize services related to reproductive health and make efforts to avert maternal and child mortality and morbidity. The Foundation for Reproductive Health Services India, an affiliate of MSI (Marie Stopes International), estimates that the interruption caused from lockdowns could leave up to 26 million couples in India unable to access contraception, leading to an further 2·3 million accidental pregnancies and over 800000 unsafe abortions, which is the third leading cause of maternal deaths in India.¹³

Pregnant women are in states of anxiety and concern regarding issues such as the epidemic’s status, the impacts on maternal and child health, the safety of ANC examination, and treatment prognosis for the fetus and the mother. Pregnant women may be worried about being infected and may demand psychological consultation .¹⁴ The current COVID-19 pandemic has caused the augmented anxiety among the pregnant women. Since these women are concerned about their unborn child and their own health state, so COVID-19 anxiety can also be considered as an influential factor in mental health .¹⁵

Conclusion:-

A survey from UN shows that, although men are more likely to die from coronavirus, women may disproportionately shoulder the psychological and emotional impact of the pandemic. For example, increased unpaid care and domestic work, income loss, and domestic violence under quarantine measures may cause women to fall into a more serious predicament.¹⁶ Women have been significantly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and face difficulties related to society, the economy, employment, and their health, which has caused considerable harm. Home confinement of families and the inability to continue employment raised concerns about effects on economic circumstances, mental health, and intimate partner violence.

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