

# CALL TO ACTION

on Protection  
from Gender-Based  
Violence in  
Emergencies

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# COVID 19 and Beyond

A Feminist Approach to address  
Gender and GBV in Food Security  
and Economic Crisis

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# COVID 19 Gender Equality: What we have seen so far

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It started a bit suddenly with surprise, shock, fear...

Many positive initiatives from most of the governments regarding implementing lockdown to stop spreading

Humanitarian organizations came together in response to support food, relief etc.

A good reflection by the community people as well.

Importantly,

Women's Rights Organizations were involved in the discussion with governments from the very beginning, particularly to suggest to ensure food security for women and children.

# First and the foremost sectors

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Food security and Nutrition

Health (Physical and Mental Health situation)

Social security -

Gender-based violence: Domestic and other forms of Violence

Education – At least one third of the girls will never go back to the school

## Challenges for women, community and the Government

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Short Term-  
Food, Health,  
Social security



Medium Term-  
Food, Health,  
Social Security,  
Education



Long Term-  
Food, health,  
social security,  
education,  
employment

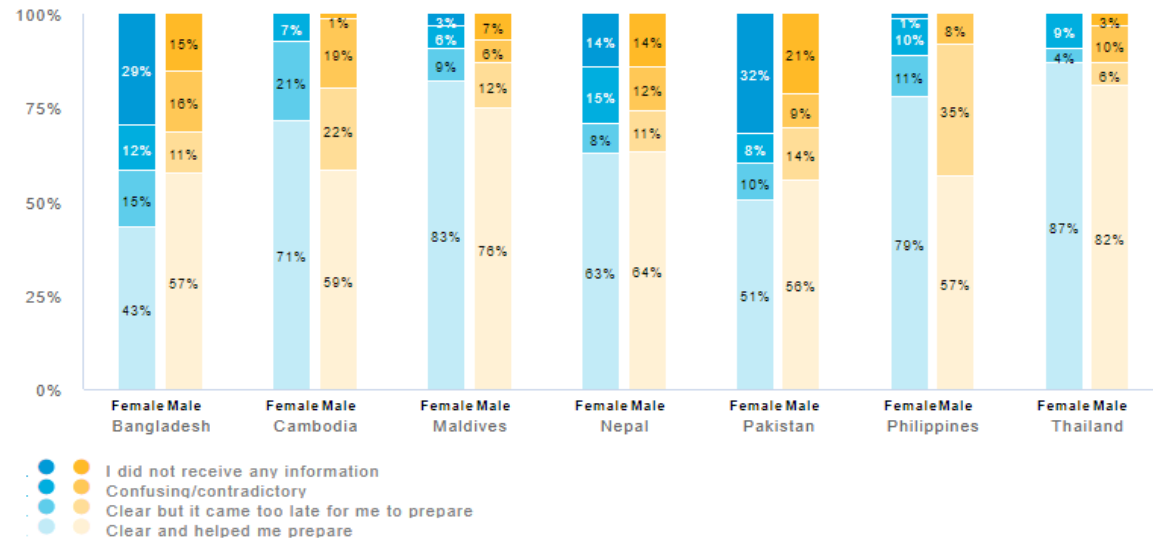
# Women are not a Homogenous Group

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- Pregnant women • Lactating women • Newborns • Female-headed households • Adolescent girls • Refugees, • Internally displaced persons (IDPs) • Migrants
- Homeless & street-entrenched populations • Indigenous women • Women living in poverty • The immunocompromised • Other social and gender minority groups, such as disabled people and LGBTQI+ individuals

# Access to COVID 19 information

Proportion of population able to access COVID-19 information, by sex



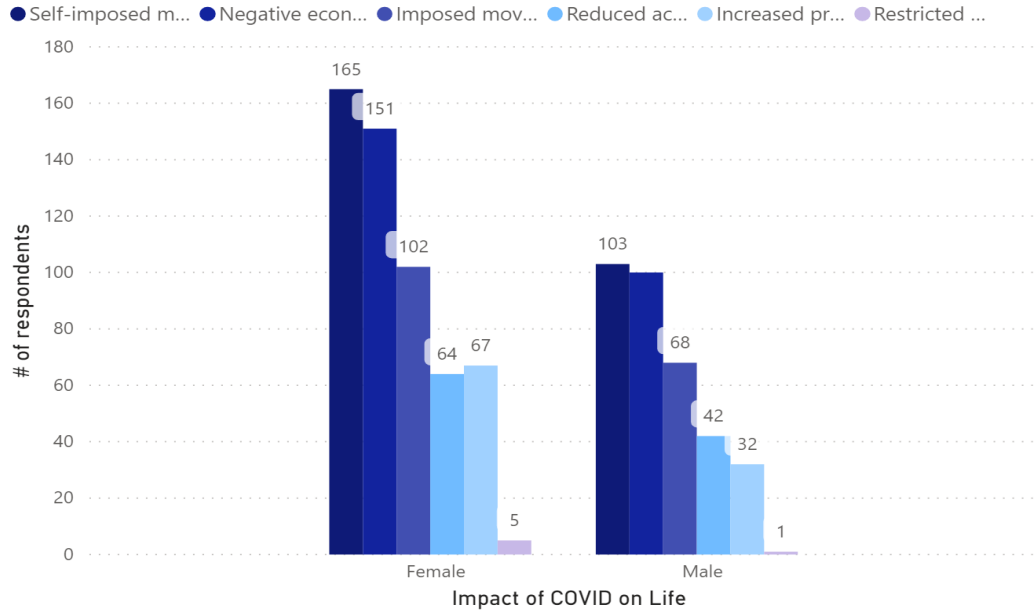
Show/Hide Data

Source: UN Women Rapid Assessment Survey on the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19 on women's and men's economic empowerment (23 April 2020).

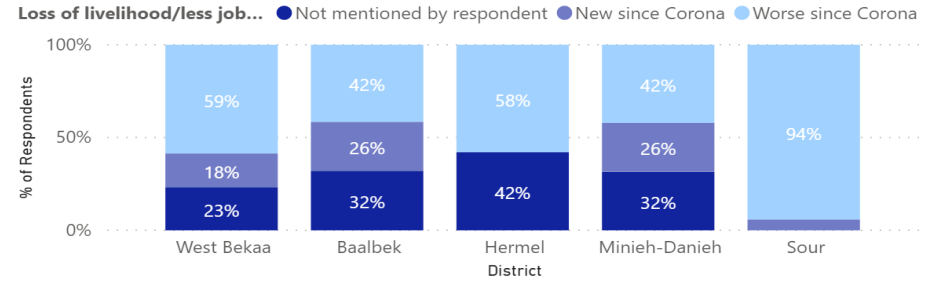
Notes: Responses from countries were as follows: Bangladesh n=2,296; Cambodia n=1,153; Maldives n=4,730; Nepal n=8,028; Pakistan n=2,512; Philippines n=1,883; Thailand n=5,020. Weights were applied to adjust for age, sex and educational attainment.

# Employment (ACF, Lebanon)

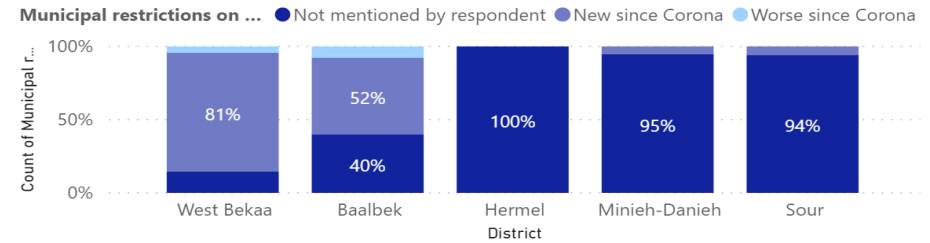
Impact of COVID on Respondent Lives



Reported Job Loss, by District

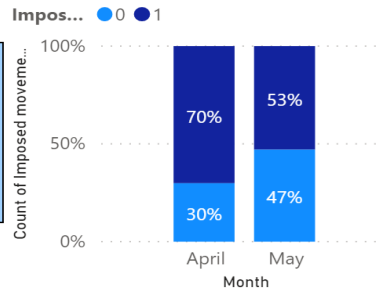


Reported Municipal Restrictions, by District



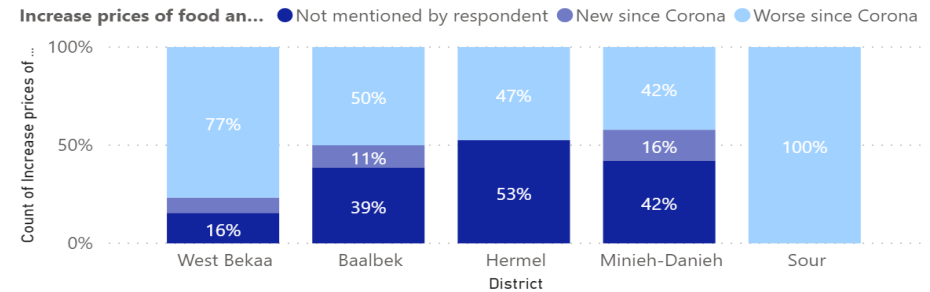
District:

Reported Movement Restrictions, by Month



Decreased access to services, compounded with economic impacts of the crisis, will continue to exacerbate existing pressures on refugees to meet their basic needs. **Assistance needs are likely to increase; funding appeals must remain relevant to changes in needs.**

Reported Increases in Prices, by District



## Safety, security and Gender-based Violence: What we have seen so far

In Kishoreganj, Bangladesh 306 rape cases reported in 1 month.

In Ethiopia 101 girls raped by their family members.

In Ghana, adolescents reported about trading of sex for food items.

Afghanistan already sees high levels of domestic violence – 87% of Afghan women reportedly experience at least one form of physical, sexual or psychological violence. Due to COVID-19, especially because of economic concerns and stress related to lockdown and cramped living conditions. Another survey showed, 97% of female respondents said that gender-based violence has already increased since the COVID 1

This ‘shadow pandemic’ is widespread: Women are [17 times more likely](#) to be assaulted by their spouses during the lockdown; the country’s emergency helpline for children received [92,000 SOS calls](#) in the span of eleven days; and the National Commission for Women helpline reported that distress calls reporting domestic violence had [nearly doubled](#). These numbers are disturbingly high, and this is after the fact that around 70 percent of cases go [unreported](#). (IDR, June 3).....data from all Action Against Hunger missions



## The Shadow Pandemic: Violence Against Women and Girls and COVID-19

Globally,

**243** million



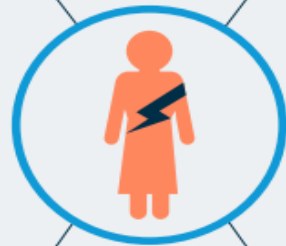
women and girls aged 15-49 have been subjected to sexual and/or physical violence perpetrated by an intimate partner in the previous 12 months.

The number is likely to **INCREASE** as security, health, and money worries heighten tensions and strains are accentuated by cramped and confined living conditions.

Emerging data shows that since the outbreak of COVID-19, violence against women and girls (VAWG), and particularly domestic violence, has **INTENSIFIED**.

In **France**, reports of domestic violence have increased by **30%** since the lockdown on March 17.

In **Argentina** emergency calls for domestic violence cases have increased by **25%** since the lockdown on March 20.



In **Cyprus** and **Singapore** helplines have registered an increase in calls of **30%** and **33%**, respectively.

Increased cases of domestic violence and demand for emergency shelter have also been reported in **Canada, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom** and **the United States**.

As stay-at-home orders expand to contain the spread of the virus, women with violent partners increasingly find themselves isolated from the people and resources that can help them.

**87,000** women

were intentionally killed in 2017. The majority of these killings were committed by an intimate partner or family member of the victim.

Violence against women and girls is pervasive but at the same time widely under-reported. Less

than **40%** of women who experience violence report these crimes or seek help of any sort.

The global cost of violence against women had previously been estimated at approximately.

**US\$1.5** trillion

That figure can only be rising as violence increases now, and continues in the aftermath of the pandemic.

The surge in COVID-19 cases is straining even the most advanced and best-resourced health systems to the breaking point, including those at the front line in violence response.



Domestic violence shelters are reaching capacity, or unable to take new victims due to lockdown and social distancing measures. In other cases, they are being re-purposed to serve as health centers.

National responses to COVID-19 must include:



**Services to address violence against women and girls**, including increased resources to support shelters, hotlines and online counselling. These essential services should be expanded and adapted to the crisis context to ensure survivors' access to support.



**A strong message from law enforcement that impunity will not be tolerated.** Police and Justice actors must ensure that incidents of VAWG are given high priority and care must be taken to address the manifestations of violence emerging in the context of COVID 19.



**Psychosocial support** for women and girls affected by the outbreak, gender-based violence survivors, frontline health workers and other frontline social support staff must be prioritized.

# Situation in West Africa

## -Aminata Ba, Regional Gender Advisor

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- ❑ **Pre-existing food insecurity to COVID ( particularly during the lean season)**
- ❑ **Food assistance needed for around 50 millions of people in West and central Africa – focus should be for pregnant and lactating women**
- ❑ **GBV increase some how but not so much evidences : family stress, lack of mobility, people at home , bad coping mechanisms; High risks of food abusing**
- ❑ **Protection need for refugees, internal displaced people minorities, people with high risks of GBV**
- ❑ **Lock down impact on informal work,**
- ❑ **Less access to basic services including GBV response mechanisms, humanitarian access constraints**

# Ways for Action (West Africa)

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- ❑ **Provide immediate food assistance, cash, vouchers for loss of income compensation;**
- ❑ **Support the economic recovery by providing cash transfers services to have a lasting impact on the revival of value chains and income-generating activities;**
- ❑ **Invest in hygiene infrastructure in markets and COVID-19 prevention spacing methods so markets can remain open where critical.**
- ❑ **Invest in out-of-school COVID-19 safe activities for young women and men so they can be more active in the community response**

## Addressing GBV (WA)

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1

Ensure adequate and appropriate prevention and response measures are put around GBV among essential services, including continued access to GBV

2

Ensure hotlines are staffed, psychosocial support provided, clinical care, safe spaces in case of violence available.

3

Support the implementation of safe spaces for women adapted to the COVID-19

# Impact of Job loss on women, girls and the marginalized Community (Global)

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The recent initial assessment of the International Labour Organization (ILO), almost 25 million jobs could be lost worldwide as a result of COVID-19

## Salaried job

- Service Industry
- Health and Front-line workers
- Education
- Private sectors

## Non salaried job

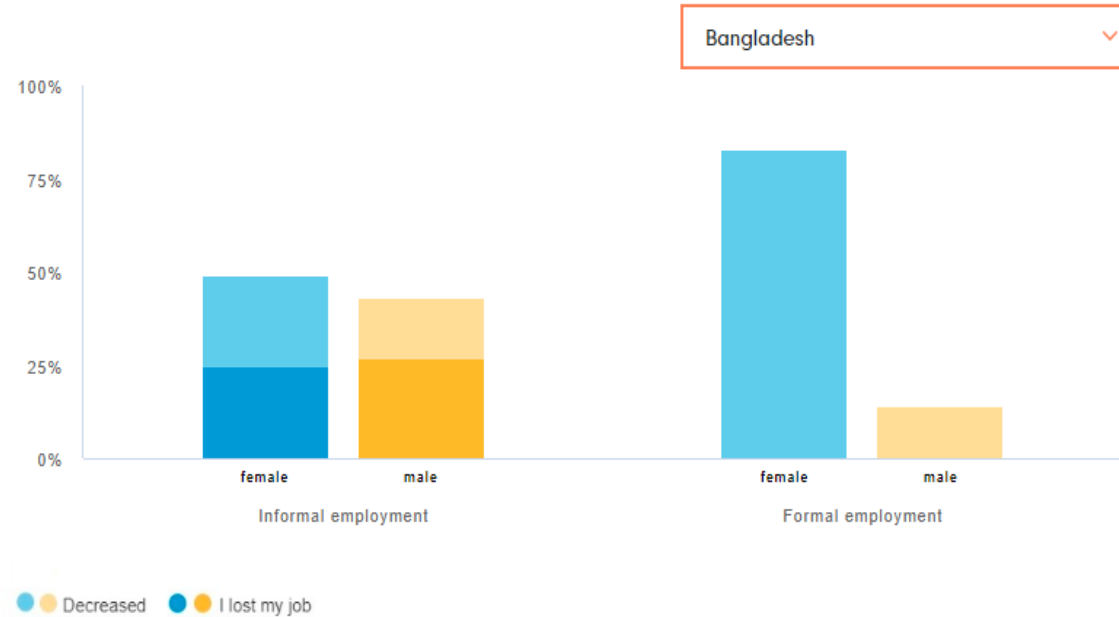
Day labourers, Domestic helpers

Migrant workers

Women in sex trade

# Job loss

Proportion of people who worked fewer hours or lost their job since the spread of COVID-19, by sex and informality



## Impact on women's security: Internally Displaced People, Migrant Workers

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Some measures have been disproportionate and fundamentally discriminatory

The Labour Department of Hong Kong appealed to foreign domestic workers to stay with their employers to reduce the risk of the virus spread in the community

Implementation of “lockdowns” without any measures of social safety nets, posing significant risks to Refugees, internally displaced persons, urban poor communities and other extremely marginalized sectors, leaving ‘no food on the table’.

Further, politically motivated sanctions, continuation of war on certain countries as they are hit with the pandemic may tantamount to genocide.

Autocratic states such as media censorship or declaration of emergencies with heavy military presence in violation of international human rights obligations, at this time of crisis.

# Unemployment Increased GBV, risks and vulnerability

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Sex trade for food

Forced marriages

Trafficking under the name of marriage

Child abusing

Sex in exchange of job security

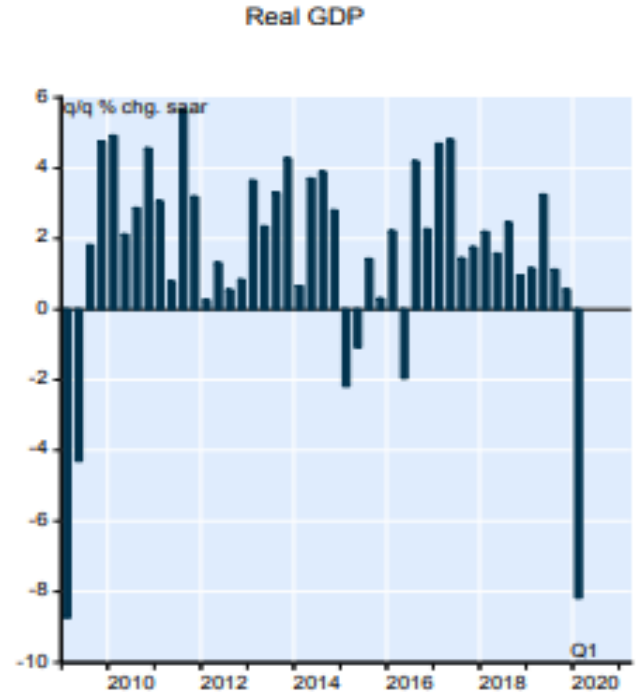
Sex in exchange of day labourer opportunity



# Changes in the Economy in last 4 months, example from Canada

(Monthly Economic Monitor, National bank of Canada, Financial Market, June 2020)

## Canada: March lockdowns hammer Q1 real GDP



Contributions to real GDP

	2020Q1	2019Q4
<b>GDP</b>	<b>-8.2%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
Consumption	-5.1%	1.0%
Business investm.	-0.2%	-0.6%
Nonprofit sector	-0.1%	0.0%
Residential investm.	0.0%	0.1%
Government	-0.6%	0.3%
<b>Domestic Demand</b>	<b>-6.1%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>
Exports	-3.6%	-1.4%
Imports	3.7%	1.1%
<b>Trade</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>
<b>Inventories</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>
Stat.discrepancy	-0.2%	0.0%

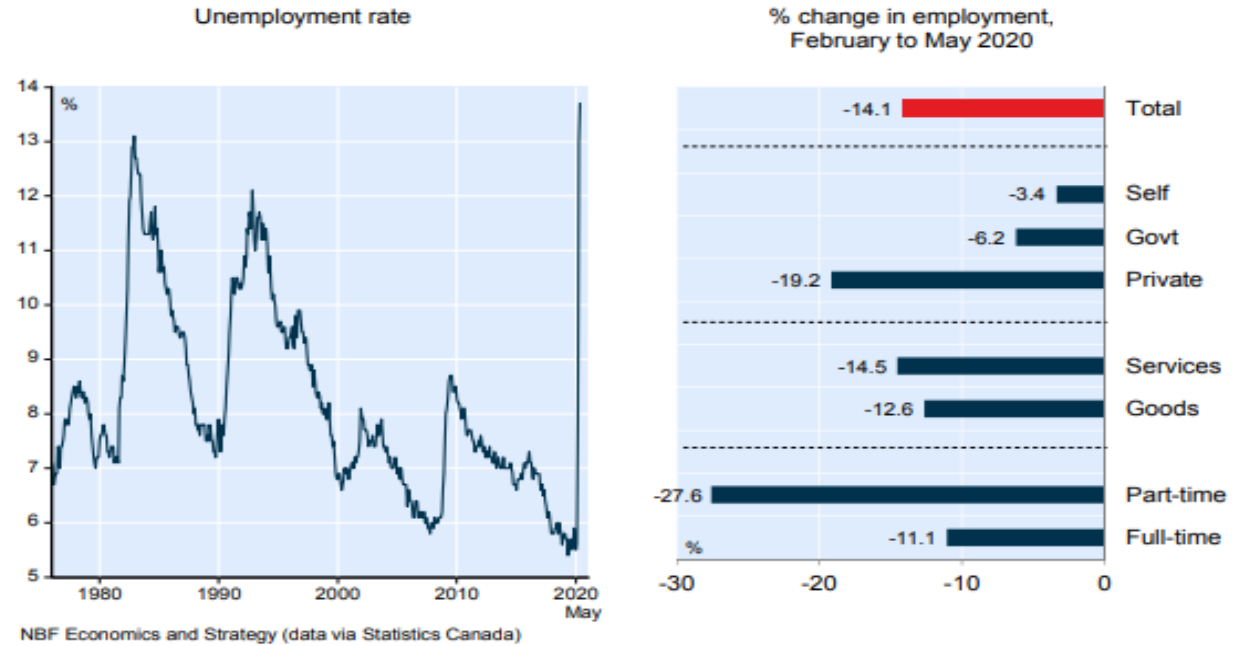
NBF Economics and Strategy (data via Statistics Canada)

The 9% annualized drop in consumption spending was the worst on records as Canadians were forced by confinement to save – the savings rate actually climbed to a 19-year high of 6.1% in Q1. While a higher savings rate should help support spending, it's unlikely to fully smooth out consumption in Q2 considering the hit to disposable incomes stemming from record job losses.

# Labour market situation in Canada

(Monthly Economic Monitor, National bank of Canada, Financial Market, June 2020)

## Canada: Labour market under pressure



The historic slump in employment could have been even worse were it not for technological innovations which allowed Canadians to work from home, i.e. telework. There is indeed a positive relationship between telework capacity and employment. The six industries with the highest capacity to telework (including finance/insurance and education) have seen employment drop roughly 8% on average since February, contrasting sharply with the six industries least suited for telework (including construction and accommodation/food services) where employment is down 20% on average over the same period.

## Basic changes happened in Employment and labour Market

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The pandemic has also laid out in the open the fragilities of the real sectors -- agriculture, manufacturing and services.

In many countries, the earning from remittance has declined due to the pandemic and huge numbers of migrant workers returned from abroad.

Loss of jobs and reduction of remittance earnings will dampen consumer spending, in turn constricting the GDP. The reduction in the inflow of remittance will also hurt the rural economy.

The earning from export too has shrunk. The real sectors -- agriculture, manufacturing and services -- are hit hard by the lockdown.

# Let's think differently

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For most of the countries in global south, who are export dependent:

The prime focus is on the sectors relating to universal basic needs and on the retention and creation of employment, particularly because of erosion of income and unemployment, aggravated by pre-crisis high unemployment and underemployment due to jobless growth and shortages in skills.

Accordingly, the sectors relating to universal basic needs such as health, full-fledged universal social security education and food security are given priorities.

Enhancement of domestic capabilities through diversification, productivity augmentation, technological catching up and increased competitiveness in agriculture, manufacturing and service sectors.

## Initiatives that may not count women in a holistic approach

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As measures to respond to this level of crisis, the World Bank and international Monetary Fund, announced their neoliberal response in the form of new 'emergency loans' targeting poor countries where the health systems are the weakest and people are most vulnerable.

In fact, following structural adjustment programs, many health care and other essential services such as education and water in the region have been a target for 'profit making' and subsequently privatized: precisely why so many women and marginalized communities are falling through the gaps now.

# Why we are talking for a feminist approach to plan Food security in a pandemic situation

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Where do we see women and marginalized in the economy:

Agriculture- Primary Agriculture production support

Historical Shifting of Agriculture towards capitalist interest – profitable for the owners

Globalization: Destruction to Local Economy - What offered us uncertainty and stress

Created vulnerabilities and risks for women, girls and children

Destruction of environment, destruction of the relation between women and the environment

Luxury without construction of basics

Sick competition

Stress to women

# A Feminist approach to plan Food security in a pandemic situation

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Food security should be the First Priority for many

And for women and girl's food security comes with physical and social safety!!!

# A Feminist approach to plan economy in a pandemic situation

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Women must be a part of decision-making in national budgeting processes, especially when urgent fiscal policies are made to respond to this COVID-19 crisis.

The responses must be formulated with the aim to reduce inequalities, redistribute wealth and achieve human rights. For that, structural change is undoubtedly crucial.

Family protection, childcare and Nutrition should come in the first discussion.

It needs to stop prioritizing corporate well-being over human and environmental rights including the elimination of all corporate packages, urgently develop and distribute COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures for free for all, ensure social safety nets for all, and move towards nationalization of all privatized essential public services.

The current unequal 'global wealth' has been generated and accumulated through colonial and neoliberal policies imposed on the peoples of the Global South.



# A Feminist approach to plan economy in a pandemic situation

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Feminist Economics: The economic structure that will serve the purpose

Responsible and starts from the household level and considers all to include in the economy

Make sure values enter economic analysis at many different levels.

Non-market activities, Power relationships are important in an economy.

A gendered perspective is central to the study of economics.

Human beings are complex, and they are influenced by more than just material factors.

People compete, cooperate and care, Government action can improve market outcomes.

The scope of economics must be interdisciplinary.

## Health and social safety

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COVID-19 demonstrates the failure in state provision of universal basic needs such as food, health, social security, education, shelter, etc.

A full-fledged universal, not targeted, life-cycle based social security system with income support, national health services, child benefits, housing benefits, disability living allowance, invalid care allowance, state pension and jobseekers' allowance is a dire necessity.

This requires moving away from the current charity-based approaches and the proposed targeting-approach-based national social security strategy.

The healthcare is in shambles. The focus is to bring every citizen under the auspices of universal health care through the distribution of national health cards based on a national population database.

The extra expenditure required for the provision of a family doctor, nurse and infrastructure may be financed by tripling the current budget allocation on health.

# Example- To develop an Inclusive Gender Responsive Budget (IGRB)



# Agriculture and Food security

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This requires a huge investment in enhancing diversification. To ensure food security, there is a need for a public food distribution system by introducing the income-based rationing system.

Domestic capabilities through diversification, productivity augmentation, technological catching up and increased competitiveness in agriculture, manufacturing and service sectors.

A fair price should be ensured.

Objective oriented equity matching facilities – the green industrialization fund, the diversification fund and the nationwide rural area regeneration industrial fund -- can be established to drive the much-needed changes.

We can see a definite role and inclusion of women and marginalized in the discussion.

## SOURCES OF REVENUE AND DEFICIT FINANCING

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The shrinkage of the economy will lead to declined income and value-added taxes and customs duties. We may see a budget deficit.

Under such circumstances, the government has to embark upon a concerted strategy.

First, unnecessary expenditure such as capacity charge subsidies in the power sector and government largesse will have to be reduced without resorting to austerity measures.

Second, efforts shall be made to increase foreign aid from bilateral and multilateral sources.

Third, obtaining multilateral and bilateral loans with low rate of interest, longer repayment and grace period shall be the priority to ease debt servicing, besides seeking relief, writing off and deferrals of debts.

Fifth, the government has to primarily source from the central bank, even if such requires printing of the currency as banks are already in a liquidity crisis and treasury bills and savings certificates are costly (as an example).

# A Feminist approach to plan economy in a pandemic situation (Short, Medium and Long-Term Approach)

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The current crisis is a reminder to the long-fought demands of feminist and peoples' movements for the development justice and an opportunity to realize the elimination of wealth, power and resources inequalities between countries, between rich and poor and between men and women.

We see the urgent need to seize this moment and galvanize our collective power to realize human rights and fundamental freedoms, especially our rights to quality public services including universal public healthcare services, universal so

We acknowledge and prioritize that Gender-based violence is crucial at this point because of food insecurity and lose of income and this has to be prioritized in the planning process.

Social protection such as unemployment support, social housing and universal basic income.

# A Feminist approach to plan economy in a pandemic situation

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The world has sufficient wealth to execute this, and it only requires the political will for implementation.

We should look for collective action and coordinated response to overturn the current dominant rules, and rewrite one that is feminist, based on the principles of human rights, historical responsibility, accountability, international cooperation and solidarity. Feminist and peoples' movements must be at the centre and lead this pathway.

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