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Livelihoods in COVID times: Gendered perils and new pathways in India

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ABSTRACT

This piece argues that to understand the gendered impact of livelihood loss due to COVID-19, we must examine not only the direct effects on women's earnings but also the indirect effects on intra-household dynamics and vulnerabilities, such as food insecurity, depletion of savings and assets, social isolation, and mobility loss. And these precarities and perils are faced not just by women who have lost paid jobs, but also by women who were unpaid workers on family enterprises which have been crippled. Moreover, women can be affected disproportionately not only by the erosion of their own livelihoods, but also by the loss of male jobs and return migration from cities to villages, leading to occupational crowding, extended domestic work, hunger, and even domestic violence. The success of women-centric groups in states such as Kerala, however, suggests that not all outcomes have been adverse. Drawing on telephone surveys and other emerging evidence on the pandemic in India, this piece examines the direct and indirect effects on women of livelihood losses by both genders, especially in poor households, as well as the lessons offered by women-led group approaches for charting new developmental pathways.

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1. Introduction

Beyond morbidities and mortalities, the single most important issue that has received attention in relation to COVID-19 fallouts is the loss of jobs and livelihoods. Yet there has been rather little focus on women's livelihoods, and even less on the economic and social precarities that follow. Livelihood losses, for instance, not only affect women's incomes; they can also cause additional hardships due to pre-existing gender inequalities and social norms, as family resources become scarcer, savings and assets deplete, and intra-household gender dynamics shift. And these indirect (often hidden) burdens are faced not only by women who have lost paid jobs but also by women who are unpaid workers on family enterprises that have been crippled.² In this context, it is also critical to examine the adverse effects of male unemployment on female relatives.

This piece seeks to trace these direct and indirect adverse effects of the pandemic on women in India, and especially those from poor households. At the same time, it also discusses ways forward. In particular, the success of women-centred group approaches (in contrast to individual-focused approaches), in mitigating the ill-effects of COVID-19 on vulnerable livelihoods in some states, points to the potential of new developmental pathways.

Measuring the complex socio-economic effects of an ongoing pandemic is, however, a challenge. There is high dependence on telephone surveys in India, very few of which are disaggregated by gender, although most focus on the poor. Out of 23 such surveys that I examined, only 11 provided gender-specific data, and typically on only one aspect (Table A1).³ Nevertheless, these surveys, along with investigative media reports from the field, give us important leads.⁴

2. When women lose jobs and livelihoods

Some Indian women work for wages, others work without pay for family enterprises (farms or businesses). The pandemic has left both categories economically and socially insecure due to multiple factors: limited job options, the type of work they do, meagre savings, few assets, double work burdens, digital inequalities, and restrictive social norms.

Most Indian workers (90% of the women, 86% of the men) are concentrated in the informal sector, but women have fewer options (Gol, 2019). In rural areas, 73% of women workers are in

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² These unpaid family workers have been largely missed in discussions on the impact of COVID-19 on women.

³ Gender-specific telephonic data also need to be interpreted with caution, since women respondents often lack personal mobile phones or privacy (Alvi et al., 2020).

⁴ In India, reporters could travel during lockdowns as part of 'essential services', but researchers could not. In such contexts, the 'grey literature' that academics usually discount can prove especially useful in sounding the alert (see also Sen, 2013, on the importance of the media).

agriculture relative to 55% of men (Gol, 2019). Rural women work mainly on family farms without pay, or as agricultural labourers and artisans, while urban women workers are largely in services (ranging from nursing and teaching to domestic help and street vending), and to a limited extent in manufacturing and construction.

The immediate effect of a strict countrywide lockdown without warning on 25 March 2020 was on jobs. Deshpande's (2020a) analysis of data from an all-India survey covering 40,000 individuals in April 2020 revealed that while more men than women lost jobs in absolute terms (given the pre-existing gender gaps in employment), women were some 20 percentage points less likely to be employed than men among those who were employed pre-lockdown.⁵ The sudden lockdown also left an estimated 60 million interstate migrant workers (20% being women: Gol, 2016–17) stranded and food insecure. One survey of 11,159 stranded male and female migrants in several states found that after three weeks of lockdown, 72% had rations left for only two days (SWAN, 2020), and another survey of 3196 migrant construction workers found that 42% had rations left for only one day (Sahas, 2020).

Smaller surveys give vignettes of women-specific occupations. SEWA-Bharat (2020) interviewed 300 women members in April–May across 20 trades in 12 states and found that only 5% were earning anything after lockdown.⁶ Those farming could not harvest or sell their crops, and demand collapsed in most trades. In Kerala, similarly, phone interviews with 1015 women running micro-enterprises such as bakeries, tailoring, tea stalls, pickle units, etc. across all districts, reported substantial or total income loss in most cases due to lack of raw materials and low demand. Those who began making masks initially earned well, but soon faced cloth shortages and overcrowding (Kudumbashree, 2020a). Lack of comparative data on male enterprises restricts our assessment of gender differences, but, notably, one form of women's livelihoods in Kerala largely survived, namely group farming, in contrast to individual family farming (as discussed later).

In urban India, women providing domestic services (3 million by official estimates⁷) in middle-class homes were laid off in vast numbers during the lockdown, and many have not been hired back post-lockdown because employers fear infection from what is termed a 'touch heavy' occupation. This is a major setback, since this has been an important and growing source of urban employment for women, who usually serve several households and are often the sole family earners (ISST, 2020).

In another 'touch heavy' occupation—frontline health work—although women kept their jobs they faced much higher health risks than men. In hospitals, 83% of Indian nurses and midwives are female, while 84% of doctors are male (Anand & Fan, 2016). Nurses, who come lower in the medical hierarchy than doctors, were found less likely to get protective gear and were thus more at risk of infection than doctors. A United Nurses Association officer told the *Times of India* (2020): 'We are getting reports from different parts of the country that nurses either don't get PPE or get poor quality ones. This is because nurses have no presence in decision-making bodies'. She maintained that 'a much larger number of nurses have been infected than doctors'. Although there is no data for India to verify this, *Global Health 50/50* (2020) does report

that women constitute 58–81% (across 8 countries) of the health-care workers infected. Those further down the hierarchy, such as ASHAs (Accredited Social Health Activists)—an estimated 1 million—and ANMs (Auxiliary Nurse Midwives), have been left worst off. Nurses have also faced harassment from male patients in isolation wards (*Indian Express*, 2020a).

A loss of jobs or family livelihoods has led to a range of indirect fall-outs for women: food insecurity, poverty, indebtedness, asset loss, and social isolation. An estimated 70 million poor women live in households that lack ration cards (Pande, Schaner, Moore, & Stacy, 2020), which especially disadvantages female-headed households. Without public transport during the lockdown, poor women also faced difficulty in collecting rations from distantly-located shops. And most eligible women did not receive the Rs. 500 that the central government had promised to poor women for three months (now extended by more months) under its Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojna (PMJDY). This women-specific intervention was important, since women use funds more responsibly than men for family needs (Morrison, Raju, & Sinha, 2007), but every survey found that most eligible women were excluded, since they lacked the special PMJDY bank accounts needed for fund transfer. One survey in April–May 2020, covering 2670 respondents across 10 states and two cities, found that 64% of women were so excluded (CSE, 2020).

Another indirect effect is depletion of savings and assets. To cope with income loss, families draw on savings, take loans, and even sell assets, such as livestock and other items (CSO, 2020; SEWA-Bharat, 2020). The earlier cited SEWA-Bharat study found that having depleted their savings, 91% of the women had borrowed from relatives and friends and 9% from moneylenders. Till May, rather few had sold assets, except a mobile phone and a goat due to lack of sales outlets, but, if compelled to sell, several said they would prioritize animals, mobile phones, and unsold stock. Gender inequality in asset ownership means that few women have large assets, such as land, to mortgage or sell (Agarwal, Anthwal & Mahesh, 2020), but, in time, if women are forced to sell their tools of trade (such as carts or rickshaws for street vendors), or their limited jewellery, it will seriously jeopardise their economic recovery.

Although fewer women than men have died from COVID-19 (*Global Health 50/50*, 2020), male deaths have indirect adverse effects on women, economically and socially. In poor households, widows are at higher risk of poverty, without work and inadequate widows' pensions (Sahas, 2020). A 70 year old poor widow, Noori Ben, told a SEWA-Bharat survey investigator: 'My sons abandoned me long ago, so I survived with the help of my neighbours. Now, during COVID-19, even the community has stopped feeding me.' For middle-class women, pandemic-related widowhood has led to reduced mobility and social isolation: 9 out of 13 such widows interviewed telephonically in Rohtak district (Haryana) in September 2020 reported that they were now dependent entirely on their sons to accompany them on social visits.⁸ A sense of isolation can also result when women lack a mobile phone and internet access. A 2019 survey of 2000 rural and urban adults found that 63% women compared to 79% men owned mobile phones; and only 21% women relative to 42% men had mobile internet (GSMA, 2020).

A different and somewhat extreme effect has also emerged under COVID-19 with deepening poverty in already-poor households, namely, children being trafficked by families into sweatshops, and especially girls being married off or sold into brothels (*Indian Express*, 2020b). Between March–August 2020, the national childline for distress calls set up by the Ministry for Women and

⁵ Deshpande used the Consumer Pyramid Household Survey of the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy (CMIE). It provides longitudinal panel data and is the only national-level data set available at present for assessing the employment effect of the pandemic by gender.

⁶ SEWA, the Self Employed Women's Association, is a women's trade union constituted of poor, self-employed workers, founded in 1972 in Gujarat. As it expanded to other states, SEWA-Bharat was set up in 1984 as a national federation of SEWA organizations. In 2016, it had 1.3 million members.

⁷ There are also 1.75 million male domestic workers. Figures of domestic workers are likely to be underestimates (ILO India, 2020).

⁸ Unpublished interviews conducted by economist Kavita Chakravarty (personal communication to the author). According to the Records of the Rohtak District Chief Medical office, 15 women were left widowed due to husbands dying from Covid-19 in the District. Of these, 13 agreed to answer questions.

Child Development tracked 192,000 interventions compared to 170,000 in the same period last year ([Indian Express, 2020b](#)). There are also emerging reports of young women being sold off to dance groups (which often run prostitution dens): this August, several such women were rescued by the West Bengal police ([CNN news18, 2020](#)). Once sold, women and girls are socially stigmatised and rarely accepted back by their families.

These gendered fallouts from COVID-induced distress, point to the imperative of looking beyond women's job loss and gender gaps in employment and earnings to a complexity of indirect effects. The next section points to yet another layer of added burdens on women when *men* lose jobs and intra-household gender dynamics play out.

3. When men lose jobs

COVID-related male unemployment in India has adversely affected not only the men but especially the women in their households (whether wage earners or unpaid family workers). To begin with, the noted return of millions of interstate migrant workers to their villages has spread the infection ([India Today, 2020](#)), and female relatives, as the main caregivers, are most at risk of exposure.

Second, the sudden unemployment of these migrants has sharply cut off remittances ([Reja & Das, 2020](#); [World Bank, 2020a](#)). Domestic remittances alone financed over 30% of annual household consumption expenditure in remittance-receiving households, which accounted for nearly 10% of rural India ([Tumbe, 2011](#)).⁹ The burden of making do with less tends to fall mainly on women's shoulders.

Third, with many returning male migrants seeking work in the villages, women have been crowded out to some extent from the most important government job security scheme—the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). This guarantees 100 days of unskilled manual work per rural household annually, and has given poor women valuable access to independent incomes ([Khera & Nayak, 2009](#)). However, with the pandemic, the share of women's workdays under MGNREGS has fallen from 55.0 in 2019–20 to 52.7 in 2020–21 ([GoI, 2020a](#)).

Fourth, the return of male migrants has increased rural women's domestic work burden, not only in cooking, cleaning, etc., but also other tasks. A survey in June 2020 of 4835 rural households (29% female-headed) across 11 states, found that out of the 820 households with returned migrants for which there was information, 53% reported an increase in women's water fetching time, and 71% reported an increase in their firewood collection time. The figures were 39% and 52% respectively in non-migrant households ([CSO, 2020](#)).¹⁰ Rural women not only continue to depend heavily on fuelwood for cooking, but their dependence appears to have risen in the pandemic. The central government's promise of free delivery of gas cylinders during the crisis ([Times of India, 2020](#)) can help only some households: even in 2015–16, only 44% of all households and 24% of rural households used clean cooking fuels; and most lacked gas connections in poor states ([Mint, 2019](#)).

Fifth, large numbers of rural households report food insecurity across surveys. In the mentioned [CSO \(2020\)](#) survey, 62% of the households with returned migrants had reduced the number of

items eaten per meal, and half had reduced the number of meals eaten. Since women and girls typically eat last and least they tend to get fewer calories and proteins, and in poor homes are more likely to go hungry than boys and men. Also this situation may persist, since many migrants plan to stay back. In an [IFPRI-SEWA \(2020\)](#) survey of 627 SEWA women in June 2020, 40% respondents reported eating less than needed, and 12% going hungry.¹¹ Although state governments sought to transfer cash and grain rations to poor households, many fell through the cracks. Hence reports of hunger are widespread, and intra-household nutritional inequalities that stem from embedded social norms cannot be overcome easily.

Sixth, COVID-19 lockdowns increased household size, with the closure of educational institutions and rising unemployment. This raised the burden of regular domestic work and also added new tasks such as sanitizing products. Normally, women shoulder most domestic work. By the all-India pre-COVID Time Use Survey in 2019 ([GoI, 2020b](#)), females spend on average 5 hrs per day on unpaid domestic work and males spend 1.6 hrs (rural/urban averages are about the same). Under lockdown, among urban professional couples who had to manage without part-time domestic help, men initially pitched in to share housework ([Times of India, 2020](#)), but this has declined since ([Deshpande, 2020b](#)).

Seventh, with men's extended home confinement, the perils of domestic violence and emotional abuse have risen in India ([Deshpande, 2020b](#); [SEWA-Bharat, 2020](#)), as also found globally ([UN Women, 2020](#)). Even in normal times, spousal violence is found to be significantly higher in India if men are unemployed and women lack independent assets or incomes ([Agarwal & Panda, 2007](#)). COVID-19 has exacerbated this effect.

While data for August 2020 suggests a recovery in employment relative to April 2020, it is still below the pre-pandemic level, and is much less for women than men ([Deshpande, 2020c](#)). Also, a return to work does not imply an equivalent recovery in incomes which, especially in the informal sector, vary with the intensity of working hours and, in agriculture, depend on seasonal labour demand. These factors, along with high pre-pandemic unemployment, the severe contraction of the economy, the predicted rise in extreme poverty overall, and disproportionately for women ([UN Women, 2020](#)), and the existing structural inequalities of gender and class, mean that many of the noted adverse effects on women are likely to persist, and even worsen.

Overall, while both women and men have faced substantial adverse effects under the pandemic and associated lockdowns, intrahousehold dynamics places women (especially the poor) at greater long-term risk. They have less economic resilience, given their restricted work options; can be crowded out by men in some sectors; shoulder additional carework; and are likely to have less autonomy and bargaining power within families. There is, however, a silver lining. These effects could be mitigated to an extent if government and civil society interventions are directed at women, especially using a group approach.

4. Women-centred group pathways

A key positive, amidst the noted negatives, has been the pathway opened up by women working in groups, and especially in agriculture which has been less affected than other sectors.¹² In recent decades, for example, a new model of farming—group farm-

⁹ Tumbe's calculations are based on the National Sample Survey 2007–08 and relate to domestic remittances. These are the most reliable estimates so far, as also confirmed by Tumbe to the author on November 15, 2020.

¹⁰ These figures are from Round 2 of the survey, the early results of which were shared with the author by the Vikas Anvesh Foundation. Round 1, undertaken in April 2020, had 12 states of which 10 overlap with Round 2.

¹¹ It is difficult to say how much of this is due to gender as vs. household shortages, in the absence of comparative data for men, highlighting the need to collect data for both sexes.

¹² In the first quarter of India's financial year 2020–21, agriculture grew at 3.4% while overall GDP contracted by 23.9%.

ing—has emerged in several states, but particularly in Kerala, South India.

In 1998, Kerala launched the Kudumbashree Mission (State Poverty Eradication Mission). Unlike anti-poverty programmes in other states, Kerala set in place an institutional structure for promoting all-women group enterprises—the Kudumbashree Network (K.Network)—which connects women in neighbourhood groups (NHGs) at the village level and is scaled up to Community Development Societies (CDS) at the panchayat (village council) level. Each CDS is registered as an autonomous society. NHGs begin with savings and credit, but members can then come together in small numbers to start joint enterprises for farming or other activities (Agarwal, 2020a). Following COVID-19, this network of some 295,000 NHGs (with 4.4 million members) began community kitchens, delivered home meals to the needy, including to school children who missed midday meals, coordinated with ASHAs¹³—the community health workers—for contact tracing, and so on. In April 2020, community kitchens were providing 250,000 meal packets daily (Outlook, 2020). In addition, Janakeeya hotels, established by the K.Mission, provided low-cost meals. These measures contained widespread hunger and livelihood loss.

Most importantly, vast numbers of rural women in Kerala were largely protected under the lockdown when they were farming in groups (termed Joint Liability Groups or JLGs in Kerala). These JLGs—which began forming from the early 2000s—contain 4–10 women who jointly cultivate leased in land, pool their labour and capital, and share costs and benefits. In my in-depth research in two Kerala districts I found that women's group farms, compared with largely male-managed individual family farms, had 1.8 times the annual value of output/hectare and five times the net returns/farm (Agarwal, 2018).

Around March 2020, at the time of the COVID-19 lockdown, 48,940 JLGs were cultivating, and 31,241 (63.8%) were ready to harvest. Of these, 87% managed to get a fair return, and only 13% suffered serious losses due to harvesting delays or other problems (Kudumbashree, 2020b). Most had enough intra-group labour for timely harvesting. Those growing paddy sold it to the *padasekara samitis* (paddy farmers associations) or to the state-run cooperative, Supply-co. Those growing vegetables and fruits found local markets, and about 12,000 sold (and some donated) their produce to the community kitchens. This 'convergence' of farm livelihoods and food-relief measures was one of the principles on which Kudumbashree built its COVID-19 response.¹⁴

Hence, while Kerala's non-farm group enterprises—bakeries, tailoring, tea shops, etc—incurred losses due to demand and supply bottlenecks (Kudumbashree, 2020a), the JLGs largely survived, including those growing perishables. Unlike individual male farmers in Kerala and other states whose vegetables and fruits largely perished¹⁵ (some even had to throw them away), Kerala's group farmers found buyers, and helped communities by linking with food relief. As members of groups, the women have also acquired technical and managerial skills as well as political voice—many have won in village council elections (Agarwal, 2020b).

What explains Kerala's agile response to the pandemic? The answer lies especially in its long-term investment in institutions and women. This includes decentralised governance with empowered panchayats instituted in the late 1990s, with 10% of the panchayat budget set aside for women's schemes; institutional innovations, especially women-only group enterprises; universally accessible community health care; investment in education (95% women are literate); and an official commitment to women's eco-

economic empowerment. High literacy and mobile phone access eased COVID-19 messaging. Some 2.2 million women (50% of all NHG members) were connected by 190,000 whatsapp groups during the COVID-19 crisis (Kudumbashree, 2020c). Whatsapp connections also helped women report domestic violence. As with recovery from massive floods in 2018 (Anandan, 2018), Kudumbashree's role was central to the COVID-19 response.

Is Kerala special? To some extent it is, especially in the state government's commitment to Kudumbashree. Encouragingly, though, for group farming, NGOs have played a catalytic role (albeit on a smaller scale) in several states, using similar principles. We have examples of group farming in Bihar and West Bengal in eastern India (Sugden et al., 2020), Gujarat in western India (Cohesion Foundation Trust), and Telangana in the south (Agarwal, 2018). Here too, the groups report having survived better than individual farmers. In Gujarat, for example, 16 all-women group farms in one village reported being food secure under the lockdown, with members sharing their output for home consumption, while individual farmers who depended on outside sales suffered losses due to lack of sale outlets.¹⁶ Similarly, farmers' collectives (of varying gender composition) in Bihar saved on harvest labour costs, and obtained high wheat yields which provided members subsistence for several months, while individual marginal farmers had to depend mostly on the government's public distribution system,¹⁷ which has proved unreliable for many during the pandemic (Scroll, 2020).

These examples hold important lessons for reviving livelihoods, as India seeks new pathways to economic recovery. A vast potential for undertaking group enterprises, especially group farming, lies in India's 6 million self-help groups (SHGs) with 67 million members. Under COVID-19, many SHGs began producing masks, hand sanitisers and protective gear (World Bank, 2020b). An estimated 66,000 SHG members produced 13.2 million masks in March 2020 alone (GoI, 2020c). They could now diversify into other economic activities, especially agriculture and agro-processing, with state and civil society support. There is also an opportunity here for transforming the rural economy, and especially food systems, so that they are more localised, agroecologically friendly, and integrated within communities (IPES-Food, 2020).

As we plan for a post-COVID world, these examples highlight the critical importance of establishing interconnected networks of local institutions, especially by building on and strengthening women-centred groups through government and NGO support. Given that COVID-19 may be around for a while, and other challenges may follow, states need to start building such institutions sooner rather than later.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The author declares that she has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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¹³ Kerala has some 26,000 ASHA workers today (Indian Express, 2020c).

¹⁴ Personal communication from Mr. Hari Kishore, Executive Director of Kudumbashree, 17 May 2020.

¹⁵ In April–May 2020 there were several reports: see, e.g. New Indian Express (2020)

¹⁶ Personal communication from Ms. Hiral Dave, Programme Manager, Cohesion Foundation Trust, based on her discussions with the women group farmers, 16 May 2020.

¹⁷ Personal communication from Mr. Anoj Kumar, Scientific officer, International Water Management Institute, Delhi, based on his discussions with both group and individual farmers in Bihar, 25 May 2020.

results from their surveys or insights from informal discussions: Nirmalya Choudhury and Kiran Limaye for the CSO (2020) surveys, Paromita Sen for the SEWA-Bharat survey, Kavita Chakravarty for

the widows' survey, and Hiral Dave and Anoj Kumar for their discussions with farmers in Gujarat and Bihar respectively, on how they fared under COVID-19 and the lockdown.

Appendix

Table A1
Rapid surveys on COVID-19 and their coverage of gender effects, India.

	Name (alphabetically)	Period	States/Regions	Sample Size	Method	Profile	Issues	Gender data
1	Centre for Labour Research and Action, et al. Ahmedabad ¹	23 April to 1 May	3 states	592 individuals	Telephone interviews	Migrant and informal workers through trade unions and CSO networks	Food security, wages, travel to home, access to relief	No
2	Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy ²	April 2020, August 2020	All India sample	Individuals	Telephone	Workers	Employment, time use	Yes, on employment and time use
3	Counterview desk ³	26–31 March (round 1), 4–11 April (2nd Round)	6 states	87 (first round) 40 (2nd round)	Telephone interviews	Rural respondents, pregnant and nursing women registered at local anganwadis	Awareness of Corona; food security; hardships due to lockdown	Yes, for pregnant and lactating women
4	CSE, Azim Premji University ⁴	April 13 to May 13	10 states, Delhi and Pune cities	4700 households	Telephone interviews	Informal workers approached via CSO networks	Livelihoods, Impact on Households, Relief Measures	Yes, on women's employment and food security
5	CPIM-CITU ⁵	10th to 18th April 2020	Delhi	506 individuals	Telephone interviews	Migrant Workers in Delhi; Misc Occupations 43% in tailoring and embroidery work	Employment and earnings post lockdown; remittance sent home, access to Government Relief	No
6	CSO (2020) ⁶	26 April to 5 May (round 1)	12 States, 47 districts	5162 rural households	Telephone interviews	Village households	Food security, drudgery, expenditure, prepared for kharif sowing, assets	Yes, on workloads of rural women
7	Dalberg ⁷	7–9 April (1st round)	10 States	6915 households	Telephone interviews	Household survey (random)	Financial impact of COVID-19 and lockdown; efficacy of Government schemes in helping BPL households	No
8	Dvara Research ⁸	April (round 1)	9 states	322 households	Telephone interviews	Micro-finance associated households	Availability of essential services; relief scheme accessibility; coping mechanisms	Yes, for Jan-Dhan transfers to women
9	Farzana Afridi, Amrita Dhillon and Sanchari Roy ⁹	6–18 April 2020	10 industrial estates of Delhi	1,500 couples 18–45 years old	Telephone interviews	Urban poor: majority are daily-wage workers in factories, construction, or self-employed in the informal sector	Impact on employment and livelihoods; emotional well-being; Health practices; Government Assistance	Yes, for women's mental health
10	Foundation For Agrarian Studies, Bengaluru ¹⁰	April 15th to April 18th, 2020	21 villages across multiple states	43 households	Telephone interviews	At least one manual worker and one peasant household per village	Impact on health, household employment and incomes, government benefits.	No
11	IFPRI-SEWA ¹¹	May–June 2020	Gujarat, 9 districts	600 individuals	Telephone interviews	Members of SEWA	Incomes, livelihoods, food and water scarcity	Yes, on women's livelihoods and food security, etc.
12	Indus Action ¹²	April–May 2020	11–13 States, and Delhi	7411 individuals	Telephone interviews	Vulnerable households	Need for food, healthcare; benefits received; unemployment	No
13	IIT-Delhi (Gram Vaani) ¹³	Rural and urban surveys during April 2020	3 states rural, and 4 urban areas	2400 + individuals	Gram Vanni helpline	1700 + rural labourers and 700 + industrial workers	Loss of employment; ability to cope; access to government schemes	No
14	Institute of Social Studies Trust ¹⁴	23–28 April 2020	Delhi	35 women	Telephone interviews	Domestic workers, members of Chetanalaya group	Economic situation, social profile	Yes
15	Jan Sahas ¹⁵	25–27	Mostly	3196	Telephone	Construction Workers	awareness of government schemes,	No

(continued on next page)

Table A1 (continued)

	Name (alphabetically)	Period	States/Regions	Sample Size	Method	Profile	Issues	Gender data
16	Kudumbashree, Kerala ¹⁶	March 29–31	Delhi, UP and MP, Kerala	1015 micro-enterprises	interviews Telephone interviews	Women-run group micro-enterprises	access to these schemes and money left Economic effect on units	Yes, but only on women-run enterprises No
17	National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) ¹⁷	3–6 April, (1st round); 23–26 April (2nd round)	Delhi NCR	1,750 households (on going)	Telephone interviews	Sample households selected from the ongoing Delhi Metropolitan Area Study (DMAS)	People's knowledge of the COVID-19; perceptions about risk of infection, preventive & control measures; impact COVID-19 on livelihoods, income, social life, access to essential items.	No
18	National Law School of India University Bangalore ¹⁸	11 to 27 April 2020	5 districts of Karnataka	152 individuals	Telephone interviews	Respondents were selected from the identified categories based on the schemes under NFSA 2013	Assess immediate impact of COVID-19 lockdown on food & nutrition security of rural poor, access to government schemes	Yes, for pregnant and lactating women in one state No results reported yet
19	Population Council ¹⁹	3–22 April (baseline)	Bihar, Uttar Pradesh	2041 individuals	Telephone interviews	Young people (19–23 years)	COVID-19 related knowledge, attitudes and practices amongst youth	No results reported yet
20	Ankur Sarin (IIM Ahmedabad) ²⁰	Multiple Rounds from March 24 to May 2	Ahmedabad	~130 households (110 & 500 in previous rounds)	Telephone interviews and helpline calls	Vulnerable households	Livelihood, situation of households and reach of relief measures	No
21	Right to Food Campaign (Jharkhand) ²¹	First Week of April 2020	Rural Jharkhand	50 observers in blocks, 19 districts, Jharkhand	Phone reports by observers	Local observers	Access to relief measures	No
22	SEWA-Bharat ²²	April- May	11 states	300 women	Telephone interviews	SEWA informal sector women workers	Livelihood impact, income and assets	Yes, on women's livelihoods, incomes, etc No
23	Stranded Workers Action Network (SWAN) ²³	March 27 to April 13 (round 1). April 14–26 (round 2)	Several states	11,159 individuals	SWAN helpline	Migrant Workers stranded across the country, majority being factory/construction workers	Challenges faced since lockdown; Government response; access to relief	No

Sources: This table has been compiled by the author using a range of sources. The surveys have then been examined for the features listed, including gender-disaggregated information, if any.

Notes: VAF = Vikas Anvesh Foundation. CSO = Civil Society Organisations. All the links below were accessed by the author on 27 October 2020.

¹<http://clra.in/files/documents/6687c0d7-6bdd-4c8c-a6ab-98c79ef70d11.pdf>.

²<https://consumerpyramid.sdx.cmie.com/>.

³<https://www.counterview.net/2020/04/were-daily-wagers-how-will-it-be-okay.html>.

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