

## Labour, Gender and Work in the Regions of India During the Covid-19 Period

### Abstract

Great informality and mixed, clashing gender norms are predominant in the Indian labour market, influencing women's work and overall nature of employment in India. The policy response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting recession and reverse migration tends to have significant effect on work participation. This chapter aims to explore these effects by analysing the existing disadvantages and migration flow across regions, and critically examining the policy responses. Our hypothesis is: the loss of jobs and reverse migration wave may increase poverty and the economic burden on women in the household. In analysing the situation, we apply gender-and-development theory (GAD) combined with human capabilities theory. Our analysis, based on nationally representative secondary data sources, reveals the high vulnerability of workers due to the large informal sector, and policy biases and disadvantages of women workers, who are also undercounted. Female disadvantage is higher in the North-Central region states with a greater risk of infection from returning male migrants. The employment and social security policies need to be more progressive, and gender should be fundamental in the poverty-focused interventions in India.

Key-words: Gender; Informal work; Labour; Migration; India; Covid-19.

Online annex URL <https://github.com/WendyOlsen/COVIDworkimpactIndia2020>