



Woman in Development and Politics

Investigating the Level of Vulnerability of Women Compared to Men in the Era of Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

In Iran, the first case of corona virus was reported on February 19, 2020 in Qom city and since then until now (April 12, 2023) according to official statistics, more than 7.59 million people have been infected with this disease, of which 145 thousand people have died. Using data from Mashhad, Iran, this study investigates the effect of socioeconomic factors on income, savings and employment status during the outbreak and spread of Covid-19, with a focus on gender segregation between two groups of women and men.

Methodology

The data for this article were gathered through the administration of questionnaires. SPSS software was utilized to analyze the regressions related to the status of income, savings, and employment. The investigation encompasses a statistical population of 1093 individuals, of which 523 are women and 570 are men. Our objective is to address this research void by utilizing comprehensive micro-data obtained from a survey to analyze the impact of Covid-19 on gender inequality in terms of employment status, savings and income. This survey was conducted in September 2021, amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. Considering that no such research has been conducted in Iran so far, and in similar foreign studies have not investigated the impact of variables such as loans and socioeconomic status, the current study is novel in this regard. Given the significant impact of this disease on the service sector, especially tourism services, and the reliance of Mashhad's economy on this sector, an examination of the effects of Corona on the city's economy was conducted through a case study. In periods of crisis, such as the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, it was stipulated that insofar as feasible, resolutions could be found for the effective factors contributing to the decline in income, savings, and employment conditions, as well as the exacerbation of these circumstances.

Findings

At the 95% confidence level, the results of the regression analysis indicate that households with more members, tenants, and older individuals have all experienced a decline in income and savings, with males being disproportionately affected. Enhancing socioeconomic status, education, and income class has the potential to mitigate the detrimental effects of Corona. Specifically, women experience a greater reduction in damage than males in this regard. Hence, this finding aligns with the research conducted by Palano et al. (2020), McGee et al. (2022), Biland et al. (2022), Dang (2020), Chi Bucari et al. (2020) and Ehlert (2021).

Conclusion

Among different jobs, self-employed jobs were disproportionately impacted by Corona than government and salaried positions. These results are supported considering that the major part of Mashhad's economy is services and generally tourism services, because according to the announcement of the relevant institutions, such as the Central Bank and the Tourism and Cultural Heritage Organization, this sector is the most damaged. It has suffered from the corona epidemic. Therefore, it is rational that the people who have been working in this sector, which are generally related to freelancers and salaried personnel in the private sector, have been the most severely affected. The strong aspiration for employment in government positions may stem from the same factor. This matter represents an additional groundbreaking development in the current research that was not identified in analogous foreign investigations. Given the significance of employment in both the public and private sectors within Iranian society, it was deliberated in this domain. In this regard, females have incurred a greater number of occupational injuries and losses than males. Hence, it can be asserted that employed women hold occupations that are more precarious in nature compared

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to employed men, and in times of emergencies such as the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, they will endure a greater degree of occupational harm.

Suggestions

According to the results of the research, more support should be given to the elderly and people living in the lowest income class of society and tenants to overcome the negative effects caused by Covid-19. In this regard, considering the negative effect of the loan, which was mostly taken for consumption expenses and usually with low amounts and does not help to improve the existing situation, it would be much more appropriate if the loan amounts were more long-term and led to the purchase of capital and durable goods such as housing. to reduce the number of renter households and to prevent the effects of reduced savings in crises such as the one that happened in the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic. Of course, more research in this field is necessary; Because in Iran's economy, banks play a significant role in financing, so it is necessary to do more research and use the data of banks in the field of loans and to track these loans to achieve stronger and more definite results. Perhaps this issue is the key to many of the current problems of the Iranian economy, an economy that relies heavily on the banking system. Also, considering the greater vulnerability of women compared to men in freelance jobs and private sector salary earners, it is possible to reduce the uncertainties in freelance jobs by paying more attention to life insurance and business insurance and different professions, so that in times of crisis, people working in such jobs can be less harmed. Because men participate in income-generating activities in society more than women, and in this sense, Iranian society is a traditional society in which women are more engaged in housework and naturally suffer less economic damage in such crises. In this way, it is important to pay attention to social structures and planning with a focus on social differences compared to other countries, and the necessity of having an Islamic-Iranian program based on capabilities and cultural differences with other societies is becoming more and more apparent. Considering the negative coefficients related to education and income class and socio-economic status, it is possible to think of measures to improve the education situation and education level of the society in the long term, as well as reduce the weak section of the society through micro-support policies and of course macroeconomic policies and finally promote The socio-economic position of the people of the society reduced the probability of failure during crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic crisis and reduced the vulnerability of the society in such crises and started to strengthen the economy.

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