

Post Covid Issues Faced by Women Workers in Karnataka Public Sector Undertakings in Bangalore

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Abstract: *The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected women workers, amplifying job loss, care burdens, workplace harassment, and mental-health challenges. This paper examines post-COVID issues faced by women employees in Karnataka Public Sector Units (KPSUs) in Bangalore. Using a primary field survey of 200 women employees working in KEONICS, LIDKAR, KAPL and MEI, through stratified random sampling method data was collected, the study focused on changes in work hours and duties, access to workplace benefits, psychosocial impacts, salary changes work life balance, the findings was increased job insecurity, reduced promotion/training access, and emerging mental-health concerns. The researcher concludes with policy and organisational recommendations to strengthen women welfare measures are required for the upliftment of women in KPSUs.*

Keywords: COVID-19

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected women workers globally. Women especially those in vulnerable employment suffered larger job losses, faced increased unpaid care burdens, and experienced setbacks in workforce participation and career progression. Karnataka, with a large public sector presence in Bengaluru (information technology, manufacturing, utilities and garment-linked supplier networks), saw diverse gendered impacts: from layoffs in supply chains to altered workplace practices in PSUs. This study focuses on women employees in Karnataka Public Sector Units (KPSUs) in Bangalore with references to selected public sector undertakings KEONICS, MEI, LIDKAR, KAPL.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anu Madgavkar (2020) the author speaks about how the covid 19 affected the men and women 'While most people's lives and work have been negatively affected by the crisis, their analysis shows that, overall, women's jobs and livelihoods are more vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic'. They estimate that 'female job loss rates due to COVID-19 are about 1.8 times higher than male job loss rates globally, at 5.7 percent versus 3.1 percent respectively.

Linda L. Carli (2020) said that 'the USA and the European Union have typically reduced men's employment more than women's because male-dominated industries, such as construction and manufacturing, suffer more losses during recessions than female-dominated industries, such as education and health care. In every country that has been studied around the world, women, regardless of employment status, spend more time in caring for children and other household duties than men do'.

B. S. Sumalatha et.al., (2021) 'the prevailing vulnerability of women workers emanating from the informality, invisibility and non-recognition of domestic labour is largely obvious. Informal contracts, irregular labour, exploitative and undefined wage and working conditions as well as policy and legal loopholes aggravate the social and economic insecurity of the women workers.

According to Mukhopadhyay. U (2022) the researcher examines 'the differential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on both men and women in academics have received considerable household responsibilities and care giving. Finally, this



study identified the literature gap that very small studies were identified on challenges of working women in pandemic situation of COVID -19 and no one study found on challenges of working women in pandemic situation of COVID -19 in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh state in India.

Objectives

- To assess the post covid-19 socio economic occupational and psychological issues faced by women workers in Karnataka public sector undertakings in Bangalore
- To provide actionable recommendations for KPSUs and policy makers to promote women workers gender-sensitive recovery

Research Gap

While national and state level studies document pandemic impacts on women, there is limited focused research on women employed specifically in Karnataka Public Sector Units (KPSUs) in Bangalore . This study fills that gap by combining a primary field survey of female KPSU employees with qualitative interviews to contextualize quantitative patterns.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A mixed-methods cross-sectional study combining a structured primary survey (n = 200) and semi-structured qualitative interviews (n = 10). The survey captures socio-demographics, employment changes, working conditions, unpaid care responsibilities, workplace supports, and mental-health indicators. Interviews explore lived experiences and organisational responses

Population and Setting

Target population: Women employees (permanent, contract, and outsourced staff) working in Karnataka Public Sector Units (KPSUs) located in Bangalore metropolitan area selected KPSUs KAPL, KEONICS, LIDKAR, MEI

Sampling Design

- **Sample size:** 200 respondents from each selected KPSUs KAPL -50 , KEONICS-50 , LIDKAR-50 , MEI-50
- **Sampling technique:** Stratified purposive sampling method including permanent / contract /out sourcing and administration, technical with convenient sampling of volunteer was used due to access constraints in public sector undertakings environments.

Data Collection

- **Survey instrument:** Conducted field survey with prepared questionnaire covering employment status pre/post COVID, pay changes, hours, remote work feasibility, access to benefits (maternity, sick leave), unpaid care hours, perceived job security, harassment incidents, mental health (self-reported stress/anxiety), and access to organisational support.
- **Secondary data :** Karnataka public sector undertakings websites ,journals ,research articles and selected KPSUs annual reports

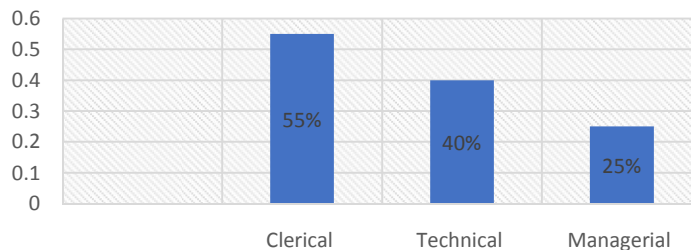
IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Indicator	Before COVID	During COVID	After COVID
Average Monthly Income (INR)	35,000	26,000	30,000
Job Insecurity Perception (%)	Clerical: 55	Technical: 40	Managerial: 25
Stress/Anxiety Prevalence (%)	None: 10	Mild: 40, Moderate: 30, Severe: 20	—

Source: Field survey October and November 2025

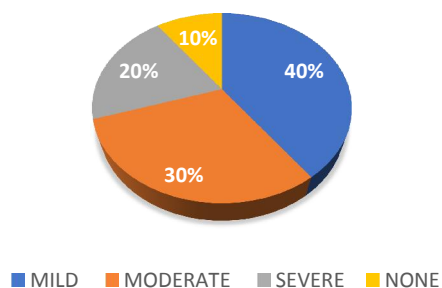


**Figure 1 :Job Insecurity Perception
(Percentage)**



Source: Field survey November 2025

Figure 2 :Stress /Anxiety Prevalence



Source: Field survey November 2025

Figure 3: Average Monthly Income (INR)



Source: Field survey November 2025

Interpretation

Income: Women's average monthly income dropped by 26% during COVID, with partial recovery post-COVID.

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Job insecurity: Clerical staff felt most insecure 55%, highlighting vulnerability in lower-grade roles.

Stress prevalence: 50% reported moderate to severe stress, underscoring the need for workplace mental-health support. The above analysis shows how COVID-19 reshaped women's work and wellbeing in KPSUs with selected **KAPL, MEI, KEONICS, LIDKAR**

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Disproportionate negative impact on contract/outsourced women: Confirming state-level reports about garment and informal workers, contract and outsourced women in KPSUs faced higher layoffs and pay instability.

Sustained increase in unpaid care burden: The rise in unpaid care hours persisted beyond lockdowns, consistent with broader evidence showing a gendered increase in unpaid work. This likely constrained women's labour market recovery and access to training/promotion.

Mental-health and limited organisational support: A substantial share reported stress and anxiety; very few had access to formal workplace counselling. This gap aligns with literature calling for psychosocial supports in recovery strategies.

Policy environment matters: State and national policies (labour code changes, social protection measures) interact with organisational practices; targeted measures for women in PSUs can accelerate recovery.

Recommendations (for KPSU management and policymakers)

Childcare support: Establish childcare/creche facilities.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP): Provide confidential counselling, stress management workshops to be conducted.

Protect contract/outsourced staff: Extend basic social protections (paid sick leave, maternity benefits where applicable) to outsourced workers.

Skill re-training & return-to-work programs: Targeted schemes for women who lost jobs in the pandemic, with stipends and childcare support

VI. CONCLUSION

The post-COVID recovery in KPSUs is uneven and gendered. Women especially contract and outsourced workers face lingering job insecurity, elevated unpaid care burdens, stalled career progression, and unmet mental-health needs. KPSUs and policymakers should adopt targeted, gender-responsive measures (flexible work, childcare support, contractual protections) to restore equitable workforce participation and wellbeing.

Limitations

The study used stratified purposive sampling and convenience selection within strata, so results may not be fully generalisable to all KPSUs.

Access constraints prevented random sampling across all PSUs in Bangalore.

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