



Road to Gender Inequality: UNDP

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Why in News

Recently, the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** in its latest report named “**Protecting Women's Livelihoods in Times of Pandemic: Temporary Basic Income and the Road to Gender Equality**” has proposed a **Temporary Basic Income (TBI)** for poor women in developing countries.

The proposal comes ahead of the **International Women's Day (8th march)** celebrations.

Key Points

- **Gender Inequality:**

- **Unpaid Labor:**

- On an average, **women spend 2.4 more hours per day than men on unpaid care and domestic work.**
 - Among people who participate in the paid economy, **women spend an average of four hours more per day** than men on paid and unpaid work combined.

- **Discriminative Policies:**

Beyond complex gendered norms, some of the economic vulnerability imposed on women also comes from **policy and political decisions** that have persistently **deprived them of compensation in the form of equal pay, paid maternity leave, universal health, unemployment and care benefits.**

- **Effect of Covid:**

- Women have been hit harder than men by the **pandemic**, losing income and leaving the labour market at a greater rate.

This vulnerability is due to **gender inequality**.

- Women are 25% more likely than men to live in extreme poverty.
 - Only one in ten countries and territories, however, have policies addressing women's economic security needs, according to the **Covid-19 Global Gender Response Tracker**.

Covid-19 Global Gender Response Tracker is an initiative of **UNDP** and **UN Women** which shows that social protection and jobs response to the pandemic has largely overlooked women's needs.

- **Major Proposals:**

- **Temporary Basic Income:**

- A TBI for millions of the world's poorest women, **to help them cope with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic** and alleviate the economic pressures they face every day.
 - A monthly investment of **0.07-0.31%** of a developing countries' **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** could **provide reliable financial security to 613 million working-aged women living in poverty.**
 - The benefits of such a meaningful investment could not only help women and their families absorb the shock of the pandemic, but also **empower women to make independent decisions about money, livelihoods and life choices.**

- **Policies Favouring Women:**

- A set of policies should be aimed at recognising the needs of all workers, men and women, to **reconcile their household obligations with paid work** and allow for a more even distribution of care and domestic work by institutionally acknowledging it as a shared responsibility.
 - Such policies include **guaranteed paid maternity leave, extended paternity leave** and the enforcement of its take-up.
 - Establishing flexible arrangements such as **part-time work** or the provision of **breastfeeding facilities** in the workplace that allow parents to return to the workforce shortly after having a child should also be encouraged.

- **Reform Labour Market:**

Beyond reconciling paid work and family responsibilities, governments must address other sources of the gender pay gap such as **horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market.** The response should include **anti-discrimination laws and affirmative action initiatives.**

- **Horizontal segregation** can be broadly defined as the concentration of men and women in **different kinds of jobs.**
 - **Vertical segregation** denotes the situation whereby **opportunities** for career progression for a particular gender within a company or sector are limited.

- **Related Initiatives of Other Countries:**
 - **Philippines:**
Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act, 2009.
 - **Mexico:**
Introduced reforms to its **Social Security Law allowing men to access childcare services.**
 - **Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bolivia:**
They have allowed parents to reduce work hours for Covid-19 family care.
 - **Cape Verde, North Macedonia and Trinidad and Tobago:**
They have enabled employees with care responsibilities to perform their work remotely.
- **Indian Provisions to Promote Gender Equality:**
 - **Ministry of Women & Child Development:**
A separate ministry was established in 2006 to boost employability of Women.
 - **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017:**
 - It allows for pregnant women to take leave for a total of 26 weeks out of which up to 8 weeks can be claimed before delivery.
 - The woman is also supposed to get paid a benefit at the rate of her daily wage for three months before she goes on maternity leave.
 - **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013:**
It has been enacted covering all the women, in spite of their age and employment status, and protects them from sexual harassment at workplaces, in both the public and private sectors of the industry where the women are employed.
 - **Social Security Code, Code on Occupational Safety, Health & Working Conditions Code, and Industrial Relations Code, 2020:**
Under the new codes, women have to be permitted to work in every sector at night, but it has to be ensured that provision for their security is made by the employer and consent of women is taken before they work at night.

Source: DTE