



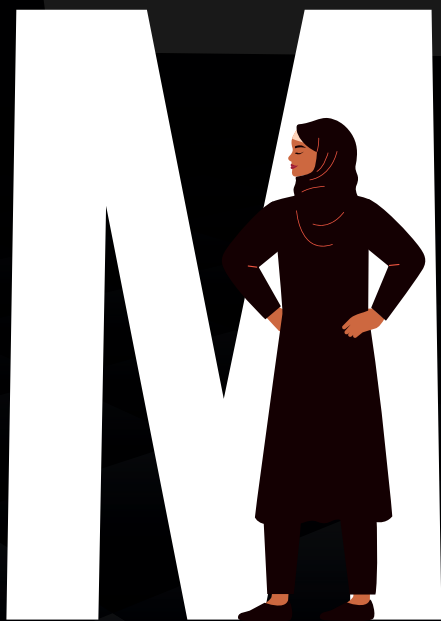
In support of

HeForShe

UN Women Solidarity Movement
for Gender Equality



MARCH 2021



PROGRESSING GENDER EQUALITY

A POST-COVID RESEARCH STUDY



LEWIS

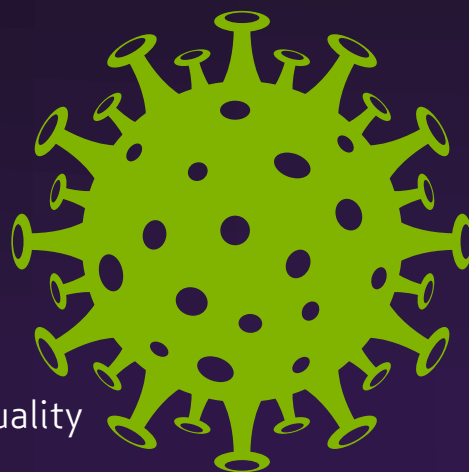


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→ SUMMARY

COVID-19 has adversely affected gender equality



45%

of women respondents' jobs were impacted due to COVID-19



Women spent more time on household work since March 2020





Women have a different lived **workplace experience**

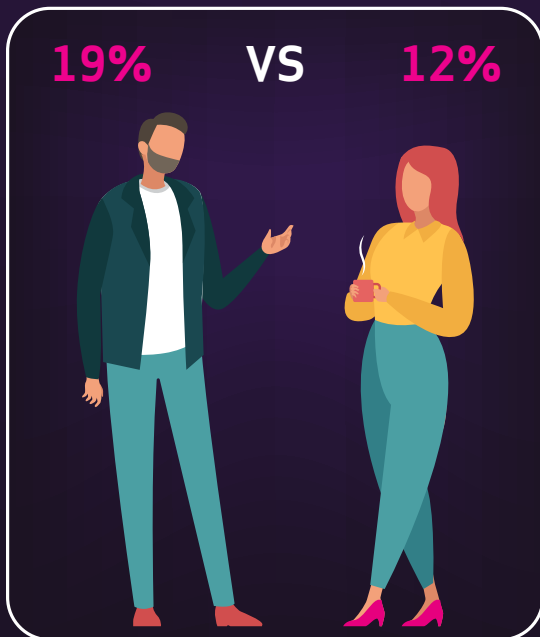
Only
67%

of respondents said men and women are treated equally at work



Men were more likely to say gender inequality is **not a serious issue** anymore

19% VS **12%**



33% of women indicated being **overlooked for a promotion** because of their gender





18%

of women did not report witnessing gender-based discrimination due to fears of possible retaliation

Nearly

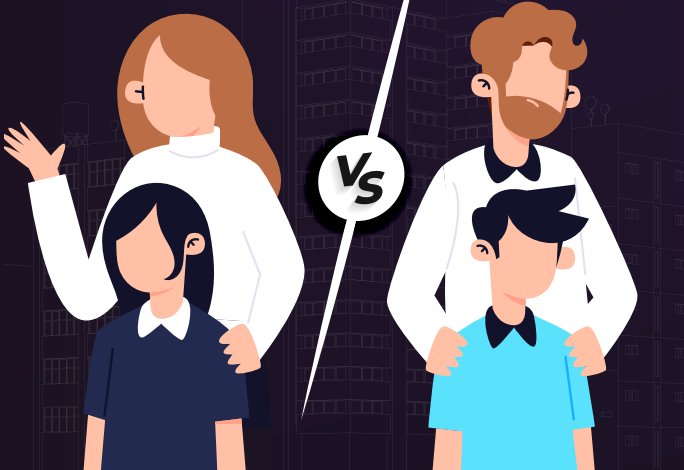
1 in 3

haven't discussed gender inequality in the workplace



26%

23%



Parents of daughters were more likely to talk about gender inequality at work

Parents of daughters were more likely to talk about gender inequality with their kids

30%



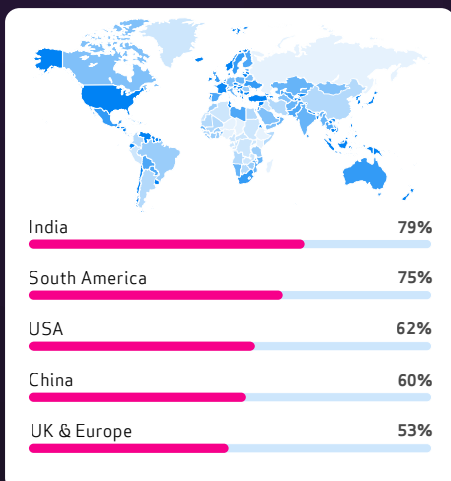
24%



—— Tackling gender inequality requires **everyone**

79%

of respondents in India think gender inequality is a serious issue



41%

of men indicated they were ready to help tackle gender inequality issues



98%

of women want men to get more involved in helping to reduce gender inequality



Women suggest **men can...**



Speak out against gender inequality when they witness it

STEP 1



Take on more 'traditional' female roles in the household (e.g. cleaning, cooking, childcare)

STEP 2



Actively participate in conversations about gender inequality

STEP 3



Promote rules/laws against gender inequality

STEP 4



Educate others on gender inequality

STEP 5





→ INTRODUCTION

Global advances in gender equality over the past few decades are at risk. The same global value chain that created opportunities for women in remote regions is now forcing the marginalized group back in search of subsistence-level work to survive. Glass ceiling gains in advanced economies are now in reverse. Domestic violence reports are on the rise across the board.

Though the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic are layered and complex, its imbalanced impact on women is abundantly clear. An international chain reaction in the form of trickle-down gender disparity is taking place as women are disproportionately represented in low-wage jobs globally. While the collapse of the global fashion industry decimated the female-dominant retail workforce in the U.S. and U.K., female garment factory workers in Bangladesh and Ethiopia lost their livelihoods due to canceled production.¹ While flight attendants faced unprecedented job losses due to the shattered airline industry, women in developing tourism states lost economic lifelines.

Imbalanced gender effects from the current global health crisis underscore the fragility across our social and economic structures. Threats to the world's most vulnerable populations have intensified. More than ninety percent (92%) of women in low-income countries work informally, making a living through means such as street vending, home-based work and domestic service.² Social interaction restrictions, public space closures and collapsed supply chains have threatened means for survival. Women in low to middle income countries limited their earnings due to inequitable share of household and childcare responsibilities pre-COVID-19. School closures and sick relatives have increased hardships, further reducing earning capacity.

¹United States Census Bureau, A Profile of the Retail Workforce, September 1, 2020
<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/09/profile-of-the-retail-workforce.html>

²International Labour Office, January, 2019 Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistical Brief
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_711798.pdf



The global pandemic has inflamed systemic inequalities across countries and cultures. Socioeconomic faults have deepened. Women across economies of all sizes have not only lost income – unpaid, domestic demands have amplified as well. Women and girls account for more than three-quarters of unpaid work worldwide.³ Our study shows the disproportionate burden is widening, with women taking on increased unpaid care work as a result of COVID-19. From homeschooling to household chores, women experienced an increased share of responsibility compared to their male counterparts.

The fixed notion of gender roles is inherent to the well-documented economic and social disadvantage women face universally. Our global study indicates there is ample room to grow in terms of recognizing and addressing the gravity of gender inequality. All findings cited in this report are statistically significant at a 95% confidence interval.

³Oxfam International, *Not All Gaps Are Created Equal: The True Value of Care Work*
<https://www.oxfam.org/en/not-all-gaps-are-created-equal-true-value-care-work>

→ THE IMPACT

1 Pinched Potential

2 Regression Accelerated

3 Power of Participation

→ PINCHED POTENTIAL: women in the workplace

Pre-COVID-19, women accounted for only 38 percent of human capital wealth globally.⁴ Universally, women earn less and hold less secure jobs. U.S. women tallied nearly the same number of jobs as men at the start of 2020, but by the end of the year U.S. women were down one million more jobs comparatively.⁵ The gender gap has exacerbated since the pandemic, reversing gains in gender-fair economic welfare and agency. Women in informal work bear the brunt of health, safety and market risks while working on diminutive margins due to nonexistent institutional protection or social support. COVID-19 has forced many to choose between risking infection or going hungry. The risk is compounded by inaccessible health care. These circumstances women are facing in both emerging and mature markets highlight socioeconomic fault lines across our institutional systems.

Racial inequity

Women play a vital role in the essential workforce with overrepresentation in many of the hardest hit industries such as childcare, education, retail, and food and hospitality. The pandemic has widened inequality issues stemming from race and class. All 156,000 U.S. jobs lost in December 2020 were held by women – and Latina and Black women suffered the bulk of those losses.⁴ In January 2021, unemployment rates among Latina and Black women nearly doubled that of white women.⁶ This trend parallels the caregiving crisis women of color are facing due to disproportionate representation in essential, low wage industries such as food service and education. With no options for remote work and not enough income to cover childcare, women of color have been unevenly pushed into an unforgiving cycle of hardship.

⁴The World Bank, *Unrealized Potential: The High Cost of Gender Inequality in Earnings*, May 30, 2018

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender/publication/unrealized-potential-the-high-cost-of-gender-inequality-in-earnings>

⁵U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment of women on nonfarm payrolls by industry sector, seasonally adjusted*, February 5, 2021

<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t21.htm>

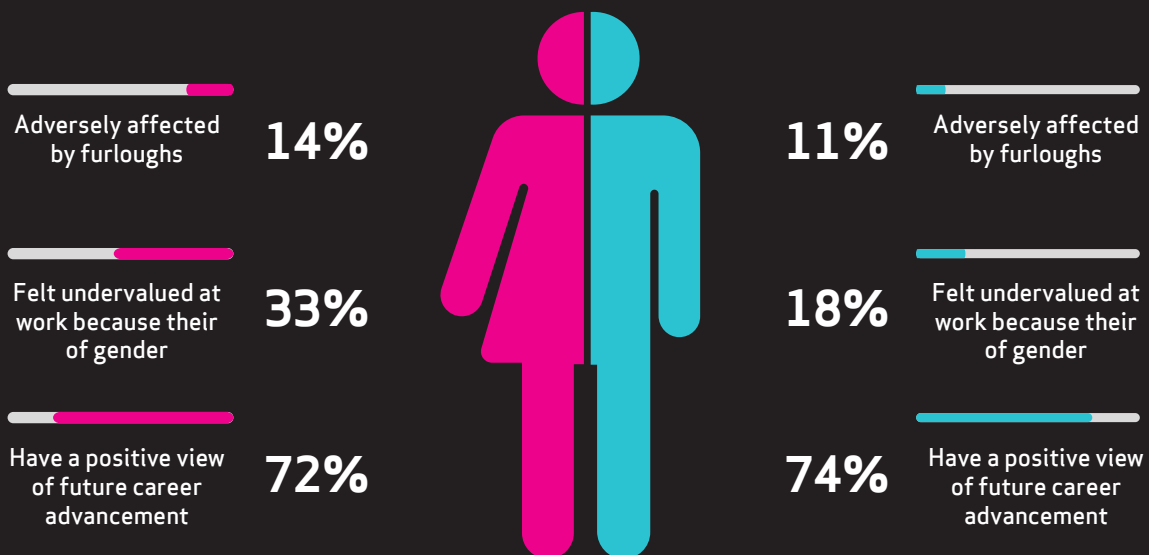
⁶U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment status of the Hispanic or Latino population by sex and age*, February 5, 2021

<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t03.htm>

Back in the office

Though topics of equitable pay and workplace inclusivity have taken a backseat given historic impacts to the global workforce, it remains an issue. Our study shows women are more than twice as likely to say men are treated better or get more opportunities at work while men are more likely to think all employees are treated equally.

From imposter syndrome to microaggressions, women face unique workplace obstacles and COVID-19 has added complexity. Many mothers are overextended, working double and triple time with longer remote hours, childcare and housework. Yet nearly a quarter of women reported feeling overlooked for a promotion or opportunity because they have children. One in five women felt their work has been undervalued because of their gender.



⁷World Health Organization: Violence Against Women, November 29, 2017
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

⁸Office for National Statistics: Crime and Justice, November 2020
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice>

→ REGRESSION ACCELERATED: women at home

Gender inequality has no boundaries. The regressive impact from COVID-19 reverberates between work and home for women around the world. It has upended all facets of everyday life. While the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work on women has sharply increased, health and safety risks have worsened at startling rates.

Household safety

Nearly a third of women in a domestic relationship experienced violence in pre-pandemic conditions. Recent reports are staggering.⁷ Domestic homicide rates in the first two weeks of lockdown were three times higher than average in the U.K.⁸ Brazil reported a 45% increase in domestic abuse cases where police were dispatched.⁹ Searches for domestic violence support increased by 75% in Australia.¹⁰

COVID-19 has intensified household stress with the damage it brings. Financial instability, childcare demands, sickness and social isolation have increased vulnerabilities. Women at risk of domestic abuse are finding themselves with little to no options for support and safety due to cuts in civic and social services.

Unpaid labor

On average, women take on three times more unpaid care work than men.¹¹ Raising children, caring for relatives, cleaning, cooking, chores and more amount to 12.5 billion hours every single day.¹²

The value of unpaid work

12.5 billion hours per day

1

Valued at \$10.8 trillion per year

2

13% of global GDP

3

Three times the size of the tech industry

4

⁹Human Rights Watch, Brazil Events of 2020

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/brazil>

¹⁰ABC News, Google reports 75 per cent spike in searches for help with domestic violence, March 20, 2020

<https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/reports-75-per-cent-spike-in-searches-for-help-with-domestic/12101690>

¹¹UN Women, Policy Brief: Unpaid Work and Care, November 2016

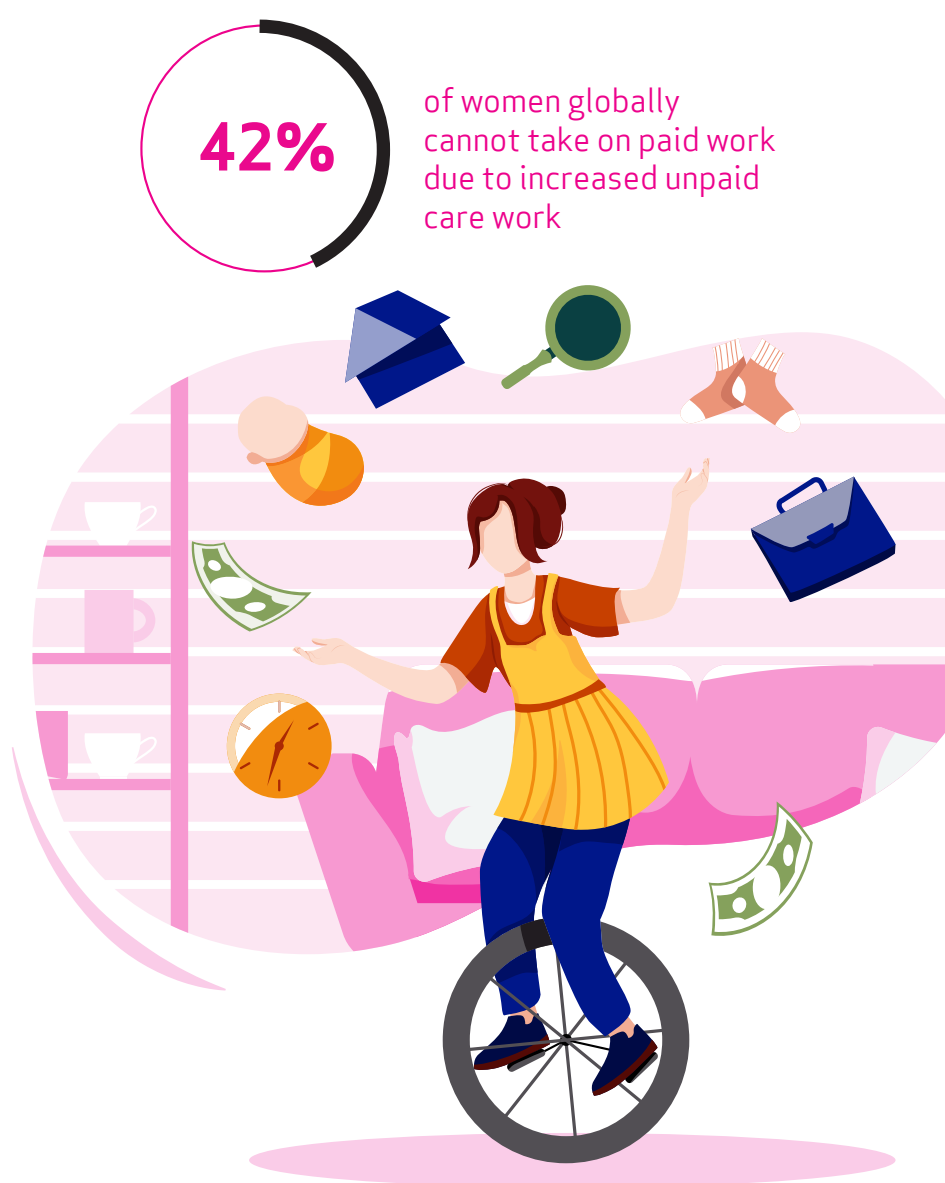
<https://www.empowerwomen.org/media/files/un%20women/empowerwomen/resources/hlp%20briefs/unpaid%20work%20%20carepolicy%20>

¹²Oxfam International, Not all gaps are created equal: the true value of care work

<https://www.oxfam.org/en/not-all-gaps-are-created-equal-true-value-care-work>

— And that was pre-COVID-19. Women in our study saw a greater increase in their share of household responsibilities compared to their male counterparts. Specifically, they took on a larger role in cooking, home schooling, taking care of elderly relatives, cleaning and washing clothes.

For women, the pressure is on. High levels of unpaid work have a negative correlation with women's involvement in professional and technical jobs or taking on leadership positions. The world will see less women making decisions, less representation and less diversity of thought if the gap continues to widen. More than forty percent (42%) of women across the world cannot take on paid work due to their (unpaid) caregiving responsibilities.



→ THE POWER OF PARTICIPATION: everyone's role in gender equality

The path to gender equality is paved with redistribution of power. Two years ago the World Economic Forum said it would take 257 years to close the global gender pay gap. The pandemic was a blow to that sobering prediction.

Access to fair economic opportunity changes lives and subsequent generations. It contributes to healthier economies and societies. While we found men are almost twice as likely to say gender inequality is not a serious issue any longer, our study also indicates close to half (41%) of men are ready to address gender inequality issues.

True change cannot happen without conversation. It also cannot happen without half of humanity on board. Leveling the playing field for equivalent pay is just the start to reforming archaic institutional policies and indoctrinated norms. Fostering an inclusive dialogue that sustains over time is key to removing barriers and creating equal opportunity.



Knowing how to take action can often be the sticking point. In our global study, 39% of women said they want men to speak out against gender inequality when they witness it. Whether on the street, among friends or in the workplace, women want men to use their voices.

— The parent gap

There is a notable gap in perception of gender equality between parents of sons and parents of daughters. Globally, parents of daughters are more likely to think gender inequality is a serious issue. They are also more likely to say they feel comfortable discussing these issues because they have a sister, daughter or mother. Meanwhile parents of sons are more likely to say they don't believe gender equality is an issue anymore.

Those who have close relationships with women have greater sensitivity around gender inequality. The lived experience is the most impactful, which is why gender equality starts at home.

_____ Taking action

*How can everyone make a difference?
What do they need to do?*

Level power dynamics

- Champion equal economic opportunity
- Confront gender biased stereotypes and cultural/societal cycles of discrimination

Challenge traditional notions of masculinity

- See something, say something
- Develop an intersectional mindset

Show solidarity

- Raise awareness around the importance of gender equality with the power of collective voice
- Pressure for institutional change at the government, civic, and education levels



→ CONCLUSION

Pre-pandemic, women were under pressure. Globally they faced billions of hours of unpaid work, glass ceilings in the workplace, barriers to healthcare and even physical danger. Things only got worse during COVID-19.

Over the past 12 months women have seen increased workloads, fewer pay raises, higher rates of unemployment, and increased subjection to abuse. It has not been an easy period for anyone, but for women it has been even worse.

The effect of this imbalance will be felt throughout the world. The fragility in our social and economic structures has dramatically increased and global advances in gender equality are at great risk. The opportunities for women, particularly in marginalized groups, are quickly disappearing. Action needs to be taken.

Gender inequality is not a problem for women to fix on their own. It affects everyone, regardless of gender. You don't have to be a victim of injustice to want to fight it.



→ METHODOLOGY

Progressing Gender Equality: Research Methodology

A Post-COVID-19 Research Study report is based on a survey conducted by the LEWIS Research and Insights team to understand the impact COVID-19 has had on women in the workplace. The survey was fielded from February 16th – February 23, 2021 and captured responses from employed individuals located in Argentina, Austria, Brazil, China, Colombia, France, Germany, India, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom and the United States. A total of 7002 respondents were captured and the overall margin of error is 1.17%, at a 95% Confidence Interval. The respondents were sourced from OpinionRoute.

→ ABOUT

—— About HeForShe

Created by UN Women, the United Nations entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women, the HeForShe solidarity movement for gender equality provides a systematic approach and targeted platform where a global audience can engage and become change agents for the achievement of gender equality in our lifetime. HeForShe invites people around the world to stand together as equal partners to craft a shared vision of a gender equal world and implement specific, locally relevant solutions for the good of all of humanity. For more information, visit www.HeForShe.org/en.

—— About LEWIS

LEWIS is a global marketing agency built to help and inspire brands to grow. It provides a full spectrum of marketing, communications and digital services to deliver tangible business impact for clients. The company has over 500 staff across 24 offices throughout Asia, Europe and North America. For more information visit www.teamlewis.com.

→ GET INVOLVED

Be the change. Commit to the HeForShe movement and inspire others.
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