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## Gender and Covid 19 in the Comoros

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### Abstract

*Since the beginning of the Pandemic, many people have been complaining about the difficulty of living with the preventive measures against covid-19. The most painful thing in this period is the deprivation of our freedom. Since the beginning of the crisis, without any accompanying measures, women have been the most affected by the measures taken by the authorities such as the closing of borders, curfews, the prohibition of praying in places of worship, the limitation of passengers in public transport, the muscular arrests, often at night, by the forces of law and order, the prohibition of celebrating cultural and religious activities with more than 60 people, among others. The copy-and-paste system adopted by the authorities and the call for international aid are worrying the population.*

**Keywords:** Covid; Comores; gender; social inequalities

The freedom of the Comorian is being restricted on a daily basis, even if we do not question the validity of these measures. The citizen is faced with the harsh reality of being limited to the need to come and go as he pleases. Female single-parent households suffer. Market vendors and kebab cooks, most of whom are women, suffer enormous consequences from the rules imposed by the authorities. Thus, the health crisis has greatly accentuated the social and economic inequalities between men and women in Comoros, between rich and poor. Women work in the sectors most affected by the pandemic.

In general, many women are technically unemployed because they are often employed in less important jobs such as secretaries, housekeepers, assistants, etc. If the husband is dismissed for economic reasons or made redundant, the wife and minor children suffer greatly. Barrier measures imply economic and financial support for those directly or indirectly involved in the socio-economic effects of the pandemic. For the moment, in Comoros, the preventive measures against covid-19 are copies of other countries which have the technical, material and financial means to impose them. The

security measures put in place by the authorities since the beginning of the health crisis have an impact on the rhythm of life of everyone.

In the labor market, men are numerically higher than Comorian women. The latter are mostly employed in the informal sector in the markets of the big cities, among others. They face multiple and persistent inequalities in the labor market, and carry a huge double burden of work and family responsibilities. The VCT-19 pandemic has not only exacerbated existing gender inequalities, but has also widened the socio-economic gap between men and women.

While the gender gap in employment and health is significant to the detriment of women, the authorities seem to ignore the problem. In terms of gender equality, women are being put to the test. They are confronted with the excessive impacts of the pandemic in a fragile situation of inflation and high living costs due to the impacts of Covid 19 and the chaotic management of the health crisis. At a time when our exits are framed, limited by the reason of the pandemic, our fundamental freedoms are presented as a luxury. A couple without a job stirs up arguments and marital violence because the household is left without a job. What if the management of the pandemic takes into account the local socio-cultural reality?

Our research also indicated that the high participation of women in the country's labor force should not be interpreted as an indicator of equal opportunity.

But it is women who suffer the most compared to men, especially older women.

1/8 of the women in our study declare that they have lost all professional ambitions since the beginning of the pandemic by stopping working to devote themselves more to household and family tasks. In addition to all this, women are under-represented in political and leadership positions throughout the country, including in the private sector. Without having an exact figure, our survey may confirm our suspicion that the majority of deaths related to covid 19 are women.

How can the protection of women victims of domestic violence be anticipated in times of health crisis?

Targeted actions are needed to advance gender equality in national recovery and resilience plans. The most vulnerable women must be supported. The state should examine the impact of the pandemic on women and propose measures to protect women's rights and promote gender equality during and after the crisis.

## **Covid 19 and Domestic Violence**

Historically, the response actions to the pandemic imposed by public authorities have been insufficient. They are considered in themselves violence against women. It is time to put in place a local or regional covid hazard alert

system to reduce the adverse effects of the pandemic on vulnerable people such as women, children and individuals with limited mobility.

In addition, the establishment of a national protocol to combat violence against women and children during this period of crisis, involving all stakeholders, seems urgent. The crisis disproportionately affects women economically and creates gender inequalities. Promoting gender equality as a plan for recovery and resilience to the crisis is important.

To reflect the different circumstances in which women find themselves, adequate measures must be taken according to the seriousness of the situation of each family, of each woman. Elderly women, disabled women, divorced women, women in polygamous households, rural women, with dependent children deserve the support of the authorities.

### **Conclusion**

COVID-19 has undoubtedly had socio-economic impacts on women. The increase in domestic violence during this period and the phenomena of job loss or technical unemployment make women in a situation of absolute precariousness. However, men have also been affected by the pandemic in a significant way but far from being comparable to the ordeal of women and children.