IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON WOMEN

Economic and Social Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Women in the Federal Capital Territory

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Women’s Rights Advancement & Protection Alternative (WRAPA)
No 19 Monrovia Street, Off Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse II, Abuja
P.O. Box 3363, Garki, Abuja, Nigeria

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Women’s Rights Advancement & Protection Alternative (WRAPA)
Acknowledgement

1.0 INTRODUCTION
   Background
   Aims and objectives
   Specific Objective
   Definition of terms
   Lessons Learned and Implications for Policy
   Recommendations

2.0 METHODOLOGY
   Design of the study
   SAMPLE FRAME
   Problems and limitation

3.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
   Identified Gaps from PWAN Study
   Economic Impact
   Sexual Gender- Based Violence (SGBV)
   SURVEY Demography
   Socioeconomic Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic
   on women in Nigeria
   Impact of covid -19 Pandemic on sexual and gender-Based violence (SGBV)

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS
   Recommendations on the Identified GAPS in PWAN Survey
   Recommendation: Finding from Assessment of the Impact of Covid-19 on women in FCT
   COVID-19 Pandemic
   Socioeconomic Impact of covid-19 Pandemic
Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)
Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on the Mental health and social well-being of women in Nigeria

5.0 CONCLUSIONS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The research team thanks the leadership provided by the Secretary General of WRAPA; Mahdi and Director of Programmes and Administration; Mrs. Anisah Amunega towards the successful completion of this report. The support of other team members is also acknowledged, particularly the technical input by the following persons; Zainab Abdurasheed, Sarah Anlade, Habiba Ahmed and Mrs Ayinde-Yakub Olasumbo for her guidance and support in the collation of the research report.
INTRODUCTION
The Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA) is a non-governmental, non-political, non-profit making charitable organization for the promotion and enforcement of all human rights of women, the elimination of all forms of repugnant practices and violence against women, and the enhancement of their living standards. The main goal of the organization is to advance and protect the rights of women in Nigeria as provided by national laws and policies, regional and international treaties and agreements through an integrated approach, that entrenches respect for the dignity of the woman, and inclusion in the processes of
making decisions that affect her life and the development of her community.

The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown measures put in place to curb the spread of the coronavirus, brought about a lot of barriers with far-reaching impacts on the well-being of women and girls, particularly. This group face multiple challenges, deprivations and limitations in accessing social services or support in crises, and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the public health measures by the governments at all levels, exacerbated the impact of the challenges already faced by women and adolescent girls among other vulnerable groups in the society. These impacts include mental health, loss of jobs and income, as well as the increase in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

The COVID-19 Impact grant has supported a comprehensive approach, aims to support a Nigeria where all women and girls, particularly the most vulnerable, live a life free from violence and harmful practices within and beyond the COVID 19 Pandemic. To achieve this goal, the WRAPA-X-Grant Project addressed the linkages between SGBV and all harmful practices against women and girls as well as access to support services, especially during the COVID Pandemic that has heightened the menace. It
strengthens access to inclusive, timely, and quality services for victims and survivors through research, advocacy and sensitization interventions.

This study aims to support an initial survey conducted by Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN) by identifying gaps in the recommendations proffered in the PWAN study; conduct a deeper survey for FCT and make appropriate recommendations that have been integrated into some of the project policy advisory and briefs.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
The aim of the study is:

a) To deepen research findings and recommendation on a previous survey conducted by Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN)
b) To conduct a similar study focused on women in the FCT
c) To make appropriate recommendations that would be integrated into a policy advisory as it relates to the impact of Covid-19 on women and other pandemic situations.

1.3 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
- To deepen research findings on a previous survey conducted by Partners West Africa Nigeria (PWAN)
Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) refers to any act that is perpetrated against a person's will and is based on gender norms and unequal power relationships. SGBV is a violation of human rights. It denies the human dignity of the individual and hurts human development. It is also primarily rooted in individual attitudes that condone violence within the family, the community and the State. SGBV has been both a cause of forced displacement and a terrible consequence of the breakdown of family and community structures that accompanies displacement. It is most times perpetrated by some of the very people who have been entrusted with the
Harmful Practices against Women and Girls encompasses threats of violence and coercion. It can be physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual, and can take the form of a denial of resources or access to services. It inflicts harm on women and girls.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) are the rights of individuals to decide whether to reproduce and have reproductive health, and this may include an individual’s right to plan a family, terminate a pregnancy, use contraceptives, learn about sex education in public schools, and gain access to reproductive health services. It encompasses efforts to eliminate preventable maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity, to ensure quality sexual and reproductive health services, including contraceptive services, and to address sexually transmitted infections (STI) and cervical cancer, violence against women and girls, and sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents.
2

METHODOLOGY
2.1 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Building on the initial survey conducted by PWAN, which assessed the impact of COVID-19 on women and other vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities, older persons, and internally displaced persons, among others, by emphasizing social determinants, perceptions, attitudes and behaviors that are associated with health and well-being of the target study population, the study employed a dual approach of quantitative and qualitative methods in obtaining and analyzing data from the target group. The survey approach was used in the collection of primary data from the population of the study, while, the
PWAN survey report and other relevant publications served as secondary data to support triangulation. Data collated were used to establish trends and manifestations of SGBV and challenges faced by women and girls in accessing social services or support in crises.

### 2.2 SAMPLE FRAME

The selection of the sample frame was purposive. The WRAPA’s FCT Database of Leaders of Culture and Faith, FCT Grassroots VAWG advocacy organizations, and SGBV survivors list provided a sample frame for the study. At the same time, a random sampling technique was employed in selecting participants from the names of members of these organizations and groups. A sample size of 250 persons was targeted. The survey covered various age brackets to achieve an acceptable level of representation. Out of this targeted sample, 246 responds were received.
2.3 PROBLEMS AND LIMITATION

Usually, there are always limitations to studies of this nature, mostly as a range of experience in time are being condensed into manageable meaningful bits of information. In the case of this study, there were two main limitations:

1) Access to diverse socioeconomic class

The survey period spanned two weeks within which the COVID-19 pandemic made it challenging to get adequate access to respondents of various socioeconomic class, as many citizens were unwilling to have any close contact with outsiders, thereby limiting the data collection method majorly to online. With the realization that majority of the affected citizens may not have access to the internet. This is a significant limitation because grassroot representation was limited.

Financial Resources:

The study had minimal resources; the fund for materials and logistic were grossly inadequate. Meanwhile, some respondents demanded incentives to complete the questionnaires.
3

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

3.1 IDENTIFIED GAPS FROM PWAN STUDY

The results of the survey conducted by PWAN reflected major challenges faced by women as a vulnerable group during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The survey identified socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on women, impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on SGBV, mental health and social well-being of women in Nigeria. The survey particularly highlighted the enormous linkages between issues pertaining to reduced earning capacities of women and increased exposure to abusers. As a consequence of the findings, the survey focused on deficits in women social, economic and mental well being, whilst proffering
recommendations that supported gender-responsive policy that promoted advocacy on SGBV and all harmful practices against women and girls, especially in terms of how it affects Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), as a cross-cutting issue.

The report does not address recommendations on how existing underlying systems can be strengthened to become more sensitive and resilient to the occurrence of pandemics in the future. However, the study would emphasize the need for the Federal and State Governments and CSOs to examine practices from nations like Sweden that never went into lockdown and adapt strategies employed in order to reduce decline and loss of livelihood during pandemics.

The major gaps in the study areas bother on the economic impact of Covid-19 and sexual gender-based violence (SGBV),

**3.1.1. ECONOMIC IMPACT**

Specifically, the report identifies the spike in chores and other unpaid services undertaken by women and girls but doesn't provide a recommendation to address the issue.
3.1.2. SEXUAL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV)

Likewise, the report identified how the lockdown measures reinforced SGBV. It goes further to identify cultural inequalities that strengthen SGBV (p.55) and determines the most potent failure in efforts to mitigate the effects of SGBV as the breakdown in referral mechanisms across all levels of society. But the study did not:

a) State any strong policy recommendation on the need to move services online, nor identify the role of government and other stakeholders in the implementation of such structural change in the referral system.

b) Address issues around why over 55% of victims did not seek for help, nor provide practical steps to address the problems on how to protect the identity of people who reported abuse.

3.2 SURVEY DEMOGRAPHY

The study, conducted in the metropolitan Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, Abuja, had 93.1% female and 6.9% male respondents completing the survey questionnaire. 19.9% per cent of the total number of respondents reside within the city center, while 80.1% are from the suburbs in the six area councils of the FCT.

The age distribution of the study shows that 2.4% of
2. Sex
246 responses

93.1% Male
6.9% Female
Prefer not to say

3. Location
246 responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kuje</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMAC</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bwari</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwali</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwagwalada</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abaji</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

respondents are below the age of 20 years, while 65.9 percent and 28.9 per cent are distributed along the ranges of 20-40 years and 40-60 years respectively, which was considered as active working and reproductive populations, and 2.8% of the population represent respondents who are over 60 years old.

In regards to the sizes of households, 46.7 percent of

4. Age:
246 responses

65.9%

28.9%
households were made up of 8-11 members, while 32.9 per cent and 19.9 per cent of households were consisted of 4-7 and less than 4 members, respectively. In terms of livelihoods, though all the participants of the study are employed, only 41.5 per cent of the population earn an average monthly income above Nigeria's minimum monthly wage cap of 30,000, and at least 51.6 per cent of households had been unable to sustainably afford
6. How many are you in the household?
246 responses

- 46.7% in 1-3
- 32.9% in 4-7
- 19.9% in 8-11
- 24% in 24

7. What is the average monthly income of the head of the family?
246 responses

- 31.3% N3,000 - N30,000
- 29.3% N31,000 - N60,000
- 29.3% N61,000 - N100,000
- 10.2% Above N100,000
essential provisions during the period of the covid-19 lockdown measures.

7. Did you experience at any time, a situation whereby you and your family did not have enough money to cover your daily expenses during the lockdown? What is the average monthly income of the head of the family?

246 responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>51.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON WOMEN IN NIGERIA

Noting that the Covid-19 pandemic and attendant response measures taken to control its effects has deepened pre-existing inequalities and tipped the scale
more against vulnerable groups, findings from the PWAN survey showed that imbalance against women have particularly been heightened socially, politically and economically (p.22). The survey acknowledged the ripple effects of lockdowns and the steep decline in economic activities, especially in Nigeria. These measures designed to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus have meant that there is less need for most services with majority of women confined to their homes. Interestingly, it is also worthy to note that most services such as tailoring, catering and

![Social Impact - Education](chart)

9. Are you willing to send your child back to school after the lockdown? If No, please specify the reason why you will have to stop them from attending school?

246 responses
grooming, which are dominated by female operators(employers and employees), were forced to shut down, thus leaving these population confined to their homes with less opportunities for income to support their daily needs and depletion of existing savings in many cases. Among other adverse effects of the physical measures to upturn the Covid-19 pandemic also involved increased

10. Did your girl child take up a job to contribute to household income during the pandemic lockdown?

246 responses
unpaid work. The study notes that this trend was highly visible in essential service industries, likewise in the management of home chores by women. Hence, the gap assessment report identifies the poor integration of social and economic inclusiveness in the framework for mitigation measures to curb Covid-19 spread by the government. Responses from the survey indicates that challenges in terms of access to school and the likelihood of girls to readily return to school is exacerbated by uncertainties surrounding economic capacities of families.

11. Were you able to provide an alternative learning medium for your children during the period?

246 responses

- Yes: 57.3%
- No: 42.7%
12. Do you have any pensioner in your household, if yes were they able to access pension during the lockdown?

246 responses

- Yes: 72.4%
- No: 27.6%

13. If your response to the above question in 13 is No, Did they have to depend on you or any other female relatives?

246 responses

- Yes: 33.3%
- No: 66.7%
Data analyzed shows that almost half of girl population have taken up jobs to support their families during the lockdown period. Though, about 57.3 per cent of girls have access to alternative sources for educational development, about two-third of this population live in families that have older family members who may be benefiting from pensions but yet need support.

Generally, existing underlying systems can be strengthened to become more sensitive and resilient to the occurrence of pandemics in the future. This would address imbalance in the distribution of responsibilities in the case of general restrictions on movements or lockdown measure. Also, as we rebuild economic structures which are more inclusive and resilient, there is an opportunity to be transformative, and to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work once and for all.

### 3.4 IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV)

The PWAN survey identified how the lockdown measures reinforced SGBV. It goes further to identify cultural inequalities that strengthen SGBV (p.55), and identifies the
most potent failure in measures to mitigate the effects of SGBV as the breakdown in referral mechanisms across all levels of society. It does not state a strong policy recommendation on the need to move services online and leveraging on various virtual spaces, nor identify the role of government and other stakeholders in the implementation of such structural change in the referral system.
RECOMMENDATIONS
RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE IDENTIFIED GAPS IN PWAN SURVEY

Although, far-reaching recommendations were made in regards to protecting women and girls during crisis situations, the study was found to require further recommendations along the following areas:

1. Strengthening of underlying systems to become more sensitive and resilient to pandemics;

2. Imbalance in the distribution of responsibilities in the case of general restrictions on movements or lockdown measure;
3. policy recommendation on the need to move social referral services online, and identify the role of government and other stakeholders in the implementation of such structural change in the referral system; and

4. Strengthen help-request systems and victims identify protection procedures.

4.2 RECOMMENDATION: FINDINGS FROM ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN IN FCT

4.2.1. SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As we rebuild economic structures which are more inclusive and resilient, there is an opportunity to be transformative, and to recognise, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work once and for all.

**Policy Recommendation**

a) Ban on layoffs should be imposed to protect women and other vulnerable citizens and to mitigate the effects of the crisis on the economy;
b) Postpone the payment of rent for public properties for six months during pandemic situations;

c) Providing support to women through incentives to the girl child, such as continued school feeding programmes and adapt them to the crisis context by preparing rations for delivery or pick-up; if there are no imposed restrictions;

d) Identify strategies to migrate referral and response services online and real-time;

e) Rediscount credit worth a certain amount, targeting women goods and services importers to increase their access to finances and support employment;

f) Intensify social intervention programmes, for instance, a fund allocated to women traders, and industrialists, such as trader money should be increased with adequate monitoring for accountability

g) Private businesses owned by women such as restaurants, hotels, coffee shops, performance and entertainment and sports services should be exempted from tax for a year during pandemic
situations. These companies employ mostly low-paid and low-skilled staff with a high percentage being women;

h) Providing unpaid family caregivers during and beyond the lockdown restrictions with the support and equipment necessary to do their jobs safely at home.

i) Ensure continuity of care for older persons, persons with disabilities and those who recover from COVID-19; and

j) Declare SGBV and other response services emergency services during pandemic situations.

4.2.2 IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV)

The most potent failure in measures to mitigate the effects of SGBV during the breakdown is the referral mechanisms across the FCT. Therefore, the Government should adapt strategies in order to reduce long contacts of SGBV victims or other vulnerable people with their abusers as well as likelihood for abuse. should ensure that all social referral and response services go-live and real-time. Other measures to turn this tide include to:
Policy Recommendations:

1. Identify strategies to migrate SGBV referral and response services online and real-time.

2. Expand the capacity of shelters for victims of violence by re-purposing other spaces, such as hotels, education institutions, private businesses to accommodate

3. Expand and improve telecommunication services to accommodate the provision of online social services. This will include the provision of permits to the essential service provider to reach residents within their locality.

4. Designating discrete safe spaces for women where they can report abuse without alerting perpetrators, e.g. in grocery stores or pharmacies close to their location.

5. Expand the capacity of shelters for victims of violence by re-purposing other spaces, such as hotels, education institutions, private businesses to accommodate quarantine needs, and integrating considerations of accessibility for all.
6. Increased and improved partnership between private business and organizations providing essential services on the front line of response.

7. Stepping up advocacy and awareness campaigns, including targeting men at home for reorientation through online media during pandemic situations.

8. Ensure representation of women in the design of palliatives or other interventions that alleviate the sufferings of women. Knowing women bore the brunt of the lockdown and attendant issues, it is important to involve them in decisions making towards addressing the effect of pandemics and other social issues.

4.3. IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING OF WOMEN IN NIGERIA

The government and other stakeholders should initiate tele-mental health services to serve as an alternative to traditional treatment to manage present and future pandemic psychological implications amongst Nigerians.
5

CONCLUSIONS
CONCLUSIONS

The study revealed that the COVID-19 Pandemic affected the economic and social life of women in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria. The unintended adverse consequences of the enforced lockdown on the local economy, health systems, traditional livelihoods, food security, maternal wellbeing, security and the informal sector, have serious implications on the social, economic and cultural life of citizens, especially women, children and other vulnerable citizens. The economic and social impact varied in nature and ranged from livelihood, stress, mental health, including Sexual and Gender Base Violence

Women are particularly overrepresented among the low-wage workforce engaged in small and informal businesses. Lack of access to basic amenities, environmental pollution
and degradation are also undermining women's resilience.
The impact of the pandemic on women amongst major vulnerable groups in the FCT as shown by the study demonstrates that human rights must lie at the basis of emergency responses. Most importantly, the Government must take gender into consideration when developing executive or legislative responses to pandemics. With more knowledge about effective epidemic control strategies emerging across nations, there is need for the Nigerian Government to review and revise its emergency response policies to align with the lived experiences and needs and rights of citizens in order to reduce the rate and level of hardship on citizens especially, women and girls amongst major vulnerable groups.
Women’s Rights Advancement & Protection Alternative (WRAPA) NIGERIA

No 19, Monrovia Street, Off Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse 2, Abuja. P.O. Box 3363, Garki-Abuja-Nigeria

+234 706 380 7887, +234 817 212 5692, +234 804 000 6176 (Direct Line to Legal unit)

www.wrapanigeria.org

Women’s Rights Advancement & Protection Alternative

info@wrapanigeria.org, wrapa399@yahoo.com

Wrapa Nigeria wrapa399 wrapang