

**COVID-19 AND WOMEN IN THE TOURISM & HOSPITALITY WORKFORCE: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS**

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**Abstract**

The impact of COVID-19 on the tourism and hospitality industries is one of the most hotly debated studies in recent literature, but how women in the tourism and hospitality industries dealt with the pandemic has received insufficient attention. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore and investigate the impact of COVID-19 on women in the workforce, specifically in the hospitality and tourism industries in India. A qualitative study methodology was adopted, and in-depth interviews were conducted among 30 females, including employees, small-scale vendors, and entrepreneurs. A thematic analysis of the results was conducted using Nvivo-12. By using thematic analysis, twelve sub-themes were condensed into three main themes. The study addresses the main issues of women in the workforce in a time of uncertainty and crisis and highlights actions needed for the inclusive development of women in society.

**Keywords:** Female Labour-Force; Covid-19; Impact; Tourism; India.

**COVID-19 E MULHERES NA ÁREA DE TURISMO E HOSPITALIDADE: UMA ANÁLISE TEMÁTICA****Resumo**

O impacto da COVID-19 nas indústrias do turismo e da hospitalidade é um dos estudos mais debatidos na literatura recente, mas como as mulheres nas indústrias do turismo e da hospitalidade lidaram com a pandemia recebeu atenção insuficiente. Portanto, o objetivo desta pesquisa é explorar e investigar o impacto da COVID-19 nas mulheres da força de trabalho, especificamente nas indústrias de hospitalidade e turismo na Índia. Foi adotada uma metodologia de estudo qualitativo, e foram realizadas entrevistas em profundidade entre 30 mulheres, incluindo funcionários, vendedores em pequena escala e empresários. Uma análise temática dos resultados foi conduzida usando Nvivo-12. Usando a análise temática, doze subtemas foram condensados em três temas principais. O estudo aborda as principais questões das mulheres na força de trabalho em tempo de incerteza e crise e destaca as ações necessárias para o desenvolvimento inclusivo das mulheres na sociedade.

**Palavras-chave:** Mulheres; Força de trabalho; Covid-19; Impacto; Turismo; Índia.

**COVID-19 Y LAS MUJERES EN EL SECTOR DEL TURISMO Y LA HOSTELERÍA: UN ANÁLISIS TEMÁTICO****Resumen**

El impacto de COVID-19 en las industrias del turismo y la hostelería es uno de los estudios más debatidos en la literatura reciente, pero no se ha prestado suficiente atención a la forma en que las mujeres de las industrias del turismo y la hostelería afrontaron la pandemia. Por lo tanto, el propósito de esta investigación es explorar e investigar el impacto de COVID-19 en las mujeres en la fuerza de trabajo, específicamente en las industrias de la hospitalidad y el turismo en la India. Se adoptó una metodología de estudio cualitativo y se realizaron entrevistas en profundidad a 30 mujeres, entre las que había empleadas, pequeñas vendedoras y empresarias. Se realizó un análisis temático de los resultados utilizando Nvivo-12. Mediante el análisis temático, se condensaron doce subtemas en tres temas principales. El estudio aborda los principales problemas de las mujeres que trabajan en una época de incertidumbre y crisis y destaca las acciones necesarias para el desarrollo inclusivo de las mujeres en la sociedad.

**Palabras clave:** Mujeres; Mano de obra; Covid-19; Impacto; Turismo; India.

**1 INTRODUCTION**

The global tourism business has collapsed due to the COVID-19 outbreak (Mirzaee, Jalalinejad, & George, 2021). The sharp decline in tourist arrivals, partial and complete country-wide lock downs, and domestic and international travel restrictions had a domino effect on tourism revenues, tax collections, job levels, and even the viability of many tourism-related firms. The COVID-19 has an impact on many facets of public and private life, including economic and environmental changes, changes that influence people's income, education, and employment, as well as changes that

have an impact on public services like civil aviation and postal services (Afanasiev & Afanasieva, 2021). Additionally, it highlights how certain subgroups of the population, such as women and children, as well as certain geographic areas, are affected (UNWTO, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic had a severe negative impact on employment in the tourist and related sectors, including India, which has been significant in the growth of the nation's service sectors. The sector is one of the main contributors to the country's overall economic growth and makes a sizeable contribution to foreign exchange earnings (Tourism and Industry Hospitality Report, March 2022).



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Tourism and the hospitality industry, among others, support allied businesses such as lodging, food and beverage, transportation, and a variety of leisure and recreation activities by increasing consumer demand for a variety of items. A substantial number of individuals are employed directly and indirectly as a result of tourism (WTTC, 2017).

With direct repercussions on hotels, travel companies, tour operators, eateries, and tourist attractions, as well as indirect effects on land, air, and sea transportation, the COVID-19 pandemic severely crippled India's travel and tourism economy. The shutdown and travel ban both significantly reduced the number of foreign tourists coming to India. Both the travel bans and the shutdown dramatically decreased the number of foreign visitors to India. The Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) during 2021 were 1.41 million (Jan-Dec) (Provisional) with a negative growth of 48.6% over the same period of the previous year (Ministry of Tourism, Annual Report, 2021).

Additionally, foreign exchange earnings (FEEs) from January 2020 to December 2020 were Rs. 50,136 crores (provisional estimates), representing a decrease of 76.3% from the same time last year. FEEs from January 2020 to December 2020 were US\$ 6.958 billion (provisional estimates), a decrease of 76.9% over the same period of the previous year (Ministry of Tourism Annual Report, 2021).

The lockdown has had a detrimental effect on tour operators and travel agencies, affecting both current and future bookings. With the Indian government's resumption of regular commercial international passenger services last month, the hotel industry in India anticipates an increase in reservations and revenue of 8 to 10% (Krishna, 2022). The Indian tour and travel business may see revenue increase this fiscal to over 70% of the pre-pandemic (fiscal 2020) level due to significant pent-up demand and rising traveller confidence as pandemic risks fade. (Ratings from CRISIL, 2022)

Over 100 million direct tourist jobs were put at risk as a result, notably in micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), which account for 80% of the sector and employ a significant number of women and young people (UNWTO, 2022). According to a survey by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2019), women make up 12.1% of the tourism workforce in India.

People working in the organized sector make up a sizable portion of India's tourism industry. Because 95 percent of working women in India work in the unorganised sector, the crisis affects them disproportionately (Durang Bosu Mullick & Siddhi Pendke, 2020). Dhaba waiters, tour guides, auto rickshaw drivers, taxi drivers, hotel staff, homestay owners and assistants, restaurant management, and other service providers are among those employed in the tourism sector.

While women primarily work in the contractual and casual labour categories, they are frequently limited to roles that are associated with their gender, such as childcare, cleaning, and cooking. Women who work in the traditional agricultural and fishing industries contribute to the tourism sector by selling their products, making crafts, and participating in the tourism supply chain. However, the nature of this activity is extremely risky (FAO, 2021).

Due to the industry's distinctive traits, which include a

reduced emphasis on formal education and training, a greater emphasis on interpersonal and hospitality skills, flexible work arrangements, and an increase in entrepreneurship opportunities that don't require significant start-up capital. In accordance with the National Disaster Management Act, the Indian government issued an order on March 25, 2020, to effectively enforce the lockdown and minimise the financial hardship of the migrant workers (Durang Bosu Mullick & Siddhi Pendke, 2020).

First, it provides guidance on how to issue orders requiring all commercial, retail, and industrial institutions to pay their employees at their locations of employment without taking any deductions for the lockdown. This guidance was given to state governments and union territories (SGs and UTs). However, because so many women in the tourism industry had already lost their employment, it was too little, too late (Durang Bosu Mullick & Siddhi Pendke, 2020).

Additionally, because employment is limited to contract and temporary labor, the industry lacks worker accountability ((Durang Bosu Mullick & Siddhi Pendke, 2020) Because there are no collective voices for female tourist employees, women are forced to the margins without any way to voice their needs or opinions.

Women work in the homestay industry at popular tourist destinations in India, including Hampi, Khajuraho, Himachal Goa, Coorg, Jaipur, Uttarakhand, and Kerala, in addition to being housekeepers and kitchen staff in hotels ((Durang Bosu Mullick & Siddhi Pendke, 2020). Since they help with cooking, cleaning, caring for visitors, and providing hospitality, women are frequently the driving force behind a homestay ("a stay at the residence of the local host family").

Their labour is regarded as part of their responsibilities as professionals rather than as workers who contribute financially, despite the fact that they contribute a significant percentage of the costs associated with running a homestay. The money made from a home stay is rarely financially controlled by women. Their work is thereby made invisible (Durang Bosu Mullick & Siddhi Pendke, 2020).

Despite this, the departments have offered them no assistance. Some homestays, which are also social companies, have internal systems in place to help host families during difficult times. They have dealt with local socio-political concerns that affect the populace, such as land rights, the preservation of traditional agricultural and grazing methods, and promoting involvement in Van Panchayat. In order to facilitate the pooling of financial resources, they have also combined homestay models with various traditional economic activities, including agriculture, horticulture, fishing, kitchen gardens, and so forth. Also, it seems that female workers in homestays have always been at risk.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, female labour in the tourism and hospitality industries proved to be a particularly vulnerable group. Therefore, the primary goal of this academic article is to investigate how COVID-19 has affected the women working in the hospitality and tourism sectors in India. One of Kerala's most popular tourist spots, Wayanad, has been chosen as the study's location.

The COVID-19 uncertainty has caused a catastrophic phase in the Indian hospitality sector, and the purpose of this study is to especially illustrate how COVID-19 will affect the industry's female workers. The study looks at how the

pandemic has had an impact on different types of female workforces. It necessitates the need to promote the subjective well-being of the employees in the hospitality sector to alleviate emotional and mental health problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Maslakci et al., 2022).

The pandemic changes in the routine of the people, insecurity in the search of new jobs, unemployment and insecurities faced from the family and societies affected the mental and social life of the female workforce in the tourism industry (Sales Dias et al., 2021). Most of the female labors works in the tourism industry faced economic insecurities and social disruptions. This study aims to bring out the economic as well as the social insecurities faced by the female labor force in the tourism industry. Once it is identified it will help in bringing recovery measures.

## 2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In the first five months of 2022, international tourism had a significant upswing, with visitors exceeding almost half (46%) of the levels of the same period in 2019. Overnight arrivals of foreign tourists more than tripled (+221%) from January to May 2022 compared to 2021, but they still came in 54% below. Through May 2022, there were around 250 million international travel reports globally. In contrast, the same months in 2021 saw 77 million arrivals (UNWTO, 2022).

The UNWTO Travel Restrictions Report, (2021), states that 46 places (21% of all destinations globally) currently have tourist-only boundaries. At the very least, 26 of these have entirely closed borders as of the end of April 2020. 112 locations (52% of all destinations) demand foreign visitors to submit a PCR or antigen test upon arrival, and another 55 (25% of all worldwide destinations) continue to have their borders partially closed to visitors from other countries.

In many countries, the hospitality sector is characterized by a substantial social, cultural, and economic separation between guests and employees. Baum (2006) developed the term "social distance" to describe this distinction. Perhaps ironically, this expression is now routinely used to justify the need to fully cut off these employees' sources of income. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality workforce indicate an amplification of already-known problems faced by this demographic rather than the formation of something new due to their precarious employment, low income, and unfavourable working circumstances (Baum et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 outbreak was contained, suppressed, and eliminated on a national and worldwide level (Richards & Morrill, 2021). As seen from a commercial, consumer, and worker perspective, this had very immediate implications for hospitality (Baum, et al., 2020). In many countries, there was essentially no international travel, curfews were imposed on locals in their homes and neighborhoods, and airports, resorts, hotels, restaurants, bars, clubs, and recreational facilities were closed. Other areas of the economy have seen much less of an impact (Baum, et al., 2020).

Non-contractual and undocumented labour, a crucial component of the hospitality sector, is frequently seen as one of society's most vulnerable groups, including those who reside in developing nations' peripheries (Evan and Over, 2020). (Robinson et al., 2019). The effects of COVID-19 on

employment in the hotel industry are akin to those of prior disasters, such as the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 (Henderson, 2007), as well as prior pandemics (such as SARS and MERS) (Belau, 2003; Yang and Chen, 2009).

Understanding the COVID-19 2020 pandemic's effects over time and space (geographical dispersion) is essential for estimating how long the hospitality industry will need to fully recover. According to Zeng et al. (2005), the effects of SARS on several sectors of the economy, including employment, were in fact very fleeting. There was an unprecedented disruption to the tourism industry as a result of the pandemic, travel restrictions, and massive lockdowns that were enforced by nations to impede the virus' spread.

The huge economic and social repercussions of this put over 100 million direct tourist jobs at risk, especially in micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), which make up 80% of the industry and employ a sizable proportion of women and young people. In 2020, the worst tourism year ever, there were 1.1 billion fewer travellers globally (overnight visitors), as foreign travel fell by 72%. (UNWTO, 2022). This brought the number of travellers back to levels seen 30 years ago. In comparison to 2020, there were 22 million additional international tourist visits (overnight tourists) in 2021, a 5% increase (427 million versus 405 million) (UNWTO, 2022).

However, foreign arrivals were still 71% lower in 2019 than in the year prior to the epidemic. During the second half of 2021, there was a minor rebound in international travel. Increased traveller confidence, along with quick advancements in immunizations, and the relaxation of entrance requirements in many locations, were the primary drivers of the surge in demand. Due to differing levels of traveler confidence, vaccination rates, and mobility constraints, the pace of recovery remained slow and unequal across the globe.

In comparison to 2019, the coronavirus pandemic reduced foreign visitor visits by 72% in 2020 and 71% in 2021 (UNWTO, 2022). The average number of tourists arriving over the next five years may decline by -5.04%, with a potential \$70.6 billion economic damage, if the Covid-19 epidemic persists longer than anticipated (the best-case scenario). But under the worst-case scenario, the tourist industry would experience a -11.54% annual decline and a 141.8 billion dollar loss in revenue (Sariisik.M.et.al, 2021).

Additionally, due to their generally low levels of education, hospitality workers have some of the lowest incomes across all industry comparisons (Casado-Daz and Sim, 2016; Marchante et al., 2005). Alternative employment options for hospitality employees were limited while COVID-19 was taking place because of their lower level of education (OECD, 2021). Due to their low income, many employees in the hotel industry were also living paycheck to paycheck and had little in the way of savings. The crisis caused an abrupt cessation of their cash flows (OECD, 2020). The sector has a large number of businesses and employees due to low wages, slim profit margins, and fierce competition, but its economic contributions, which range from 5 to 10% of GDP (Bénassy-Quééré et al., 2020), are modest in comparison to those of other industries.

As COVID-19 went on, it became apparent that management at these huge businesses had a much higher probability of preserving their positions. On the other hand,

operational staff became obsolete and unneeded the moment a business folded. The main economic problem is to link finance and employment for the particularly hard-hit sectors—tourism, entertainment, and hospitality—during both lockdowns and recovery (Posen, 2020, p. 206).

Numerous employees in the hotel and tourism industries experience inconsistent employment situations and poor working conditions (Baum and Mooney, 2019; Robinson et al., 2019a, 2019b). Due to the drastically decreased housing demand, school and pre-school closures, forced closures of hotels and hospitality businesses, and the exclusion of hospitality workers from many of the state financial safety nets mentioned earlier, younger workers and women have experienced increased precarity and disadvantages (International Labor Organization, 2020). Unfortunately, the COVID-19 situation has made things worse for those who are already at a jeopardy.

Women who are undocumented migrants have historically been the most unstable and vulnerable employees (Adib and Guerrier, 2003; Tapia and Alberti, 2019). In the grey economy, they are paid "cash in hand," and they are not eligible for benefits (Scharff and Ryley, 2020). The disadvantage—limited career opportunities and availability—that young people with strict student visa status and ill-defined identities as migrant workers experience has gotten worse.

International students who exploited open-all-hours shift work schedules in the hospitality sector (Goh and Okumus, 2020; Solnet and Hood, 2008) and who were already the victims of wage theft and exploitation due to erratic work schedules (Berg and Farbenblum, 2017; Stringer, 2016) lost their homes, the money needed to pay for their education, as well as their jobs and their ability to support themselves (Berg and Farbenblum, 2017; Stringer, 2016; Rushing, 2020). Women in the hotel industry experience unaddressed gender disadvantages such as lower income, less job stability, and lower job quality (Acker, 2006; Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015).

According to the (Fuller Report, 2021), women had trouble finding work when schools got out, sometimes even weeks before hotels had to close. The bulk of new social security applicants were therefore women from the beginning. According to the Fuller Report, single Black and Latina mothers were apparently unable to get government emergency job aid because they work in the 80% of hospitality businesses that are not required to pay employee retention credit (Scharff and Ryley, 2020).

COVID-19 exacerbated gender discrepancies that already existed in the hotel business for the small, privileged group of women in supervisory or management jobs, which are perceived as more stable during economic downturns (Dashper, 2019; Segovia-Pérez et al., 2018). Parenting grew to be "an even more all-consuming responsibility amid physical estrangement and self-isolation" during COVID-19, according to (Costa et al., 2017), which raises the possibility that female managers aren't as "committed" as men in management (Villarreal, 2020; Clevenger and Singh, 2013). Because they are less likely to have a private home office away from children and are more likely to be considered primary caregivers, women find it challenging (if not impossible) to work from home and maintain the

deliberate concealment of caregiving responsibilities necessary to keep them in professional careers (Lyng, 2010). In contrast to the career-affirming glow experienced by male professionals whose work is disrupted by children, when children interrupt a woman's Zoom meeting, it lowers assessments of her knowledge (Simpson and Kumra, 2016).

The 2821 domestic violence cases that have been reported in the industry, up to 700 percent in the UK (Townsend, 2020), as well as those reported in Spain, France, and the United States (Lytleton, 2020), all countries where COVID-19-related job losses for hospitality workers have been catastrophic, have been greatly exacerbated by the COVID-19, further compounding the disadvantages faced by the most vulnerable women in the industry.

Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, non-essential operations were abruptly shut down, which resulted in the loss of jobs and additional revenue from tourism. This has made it economically questionable for female workers. Several social actors who had embraced the logic of the rural space's multifunctionality have been obliged to employ a variety of adaptation methods in response to this disruptive circumstance (Gonzales et al., 2022). They compelled people to embrace new strategies for economic stability.

The fact that many workers in the hospitality sector belong to a social group that has, so far, been disproportionately affected by COVID-19's direct medical and broader social effects (poor, minorities, women, and undocumented migrants) and may not have the resources or standing to seek assistance when they are most in need makes these social vulnerability indicators even worse (Shadmi et al., 2020). We have made a number of preliminary findings on COVID-19 and workers in the hospitality industry. We have made a number of preliminary conclusions about COVID-19 and hospitality personnel as a result of our inquiry into the sector's existing environment, and we have discussed the consequences of our findings for the people employed in the industry.

It is essential to intervene during difficult times in a family's or a person's life (Cooke et al., 1998). For someone who is under a lot of stress to feel better, social support is crucial. Fear appears to be the greatest factor which influences employee, employer, and customer relationships (Tapfuma et al., 2022). According to studies, social support is beneficial for women's mental health in general (Ferrari et al., 2016; Harandi, 2017).

Increased familial support enhances a person's capacity to handle psychological suffering and mistreatment. When compared to a woman who has her parents' support, staying with an abusive spouse and his family doubles the likelihood that she will experience psychological suffering (Mahapatro & Singh, 2019). Having enough social support lowers the likelihood of future violence and its negative effects if a relationship is violent (Cohen et al., 2000; Katerndahl et al., 2013). The low amount of social and family support will lead to social disruptions.

The primary goal of this study is to evaluate how COVID-19 has affected the number of women working in the hospitality and tourism industries. Women who have institutional, emotional, and physical support will continue to contribute to society despite the pandemic's severe setbacks. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the

help that women in the community and their families provided are examined in this study, as well as how the situation affected the socioeconomic well-being of women employed in the hotel and tourism sector. In this situation it is necessary to adopt recovery measures. This study is trying to address the following research questions.

The following research inquiries are put forth to address this:

RQ1. What are the economic challenges faced by women in the workforce during the pandemic?

RQ2. What are the social disruptions faced by women in the family and community during Covid-19 pandemic?

RQ3. What are the measures and support received by women workforce for recovery?

**Table 1:** Women Workforce issues in Pre-Pandemic Era.

S.no.	Issues faced by women work force	SOURCES
1.	Low income, and unfavourable working circumstances	Baum (2006), Baum et al., 2020
2.	Non-contractual, Un stable and undocumented labour	Evan and Over, 2020). (Robinson et al., 2019), Adib and Guerrier, 2003; Tapia and Alberti, 2019).
3	Lower income, less job stability, and lower job quality	(Casado-Daz and Sim, 2016; Marchante et al., 2005)., Acker, 2006; Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015).
4	Wage theft and exploitation due to erratic work schedules, losing their homes,	(Berg and Farbenblum, 2017; Stringer, 2016)
5	The money needed to pay for their child education, health and their ability to support themselves .	(Berg and Farbenblum, 2017; Stringer, 2016; Rushing, 2020)
6	Domestic violence	Townsend, (2020), (Lyttleton, 2020),
7.	Low amount of social and family support	(Mahapatro & Singh, 2019) Cohen et al., 2000; Katemdahl et al., 2013)

Source: Compiled by authors.

### 3 METHODS

#### 3.1 Research Methodology

The study uses a qualitative approach to examine the data collected from 34 respondents. Out of 34 interviews, a total of 30 responses were taken into consideration for the final analysis. Convenience and random sampling were used in this investigation. First, a convenience sampling was used to select the respondents. Referrals were taken from preliminary respondents to complete the data collection. For the study, the data was collected from the women's workforce in the tourism and hospitality industry at Wayanad.

Most of the women interviewed in the study include women entrepreneurs in the tourism and hospitality industry, women working at the major tourism destinations, and some women working indirectly in the tourism industry (vegetable suppliers to hotels, milk vendors, etc.). Incomplete and ambiguous voice responses were excluded from the study. This study was conducted during the months of November 2021 to January 2022. Interviews were taken until theoretical saturation was reached. According to Marshall et al. (2013) and Malterud et al. (2015) in a qualitative study, the typical data saturation happens at 30. Semi-structured interviews were conducted. The study uses a hybrid technique and is both exploratory and descriptive in nature. Interviewing female employees in the tourist and hospitality industries helped to achieve this. The theoretical framework for the survey is provided by secondary sources, such as research papers, journals, periodicals, and articles on the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry and its employees. For this, databases including Pro-Quest, EBSCO, and Google Scholar were employed.

#### 3.2 Data Analysis

For the study, a qualitative data analysis has been chosen. Word clouds, sentiment analysis, and thematic analysis are all included. This reveals the respondents' opinions and ideas on the important subject. The study was carried out in two stages, first laying the theoretical groundwork and then gathering information from interviews. The responses from the interviews were cleaned up and transcribed before being put into N-Vivo. The transcribing feature was not employed in this study; instead, all transcription was done manually with MS Word. Initially, top words and punctuation were removed in order to clean up the data. In order to extract the relevant text for the investigation, stop words were first used to create word clouds. Further Sentiment analysis and thematic analysis were done to generate the Sentiment and Themes using the Auto code feature.

### 4. FINDINGS

N-Vivo 12 was adopted for conducting the qualitative analysis. The COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted the job and business entrepreneurship activity of the women workforce in the tourism and hospitality industry. Most of the businesses run by women in relation to tourism and the hospitality industry closed due to the pandemic. Many have lost their jobs and lost their incomes, and they are unable to manage the family expenses and unforeseen challenges. Their spouse also lost their job, adding to the burden on the women in the family.

The women working in the tourism industry struggled to manage their family expenses due to unemployment. Many difficulties are being reported, such as managing daily routine expenses, children's education, medical emergencies, and other expenses. Unemployment and uncertainty led to mental depression, stress, and sleepless nights, making the life situation worse. Many faced debt issues, loans, and a lack of money. Because of this situation, they were unable to manage their financial, mental, social, as well as health needs either.

The COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the standard of living of the women's community. Because of the reduced income due to the persisting impact of COVID-19, the respondents shared that they could not meet the expenses in the family, and they reported needing to depend on the family for their needs. It led to unrest, physical and mental harm in the family, and most of them were unable to meet the educational needs of their children.

#### 4.1 Word Cloud Analysis

**Figure 1.** Word cloud analysis of the impact of Covid-19 impact on the women workforce working in the tourism and hospitality industry.



**Source:** Primary Data.

The word cloud analysis depicts that most common words that emerged from the study. The most highlighted words are pandemic, income, expenses, business, job, support from family, community and government, changes in the standard of living, and as well as managing the livelihood etc. During the pandemic period, it had great impact on the income, expense, business, job and family life of most of the women working in the tourism and hospitality industry.

**Table 2.** Sentimental Analysis.

	A	B	C	D
Impact of covid-19 on job/business	17	29	7	2
Economic well-being	19	26	16	6
Standard of living	19	15	8	2
Impact on neighborhood bonds, community connections, and people attachment to the place.	17	25	10	4
Change in the women's position of power in the family and in the community	16	15	13	3
Support from the family	8	34	6	0
Support from the government / Panchayat / tourism department	9	18	6	0
Management of family expenses during the pandemic	10	28	5	0
Progress during the post lockdown stage	23	18	26	9
Measures to support the women workforce in the tourism and hospitality industry	5	6	14	3

**Source:** Survey Data. Legend: A - Very negative; B - Moderately negative; C - Moderately positive; D - Very positive.

From the sentimental analysis it is clear that the impact of Covid-19 affected the women workforce very negatively. Most of the respondents negatively viewed the impact of Covid-19 on their economic well-being, standard of living, community connections, and women's position of power in the family, support from the family, community and government. Still the respondents have a positive view that there could be changes after the post lockdown stage and if the government took effective measures to reduce the impact of Covid-19 on the women workforce in the tourism and hospitality industry.

#### 4.2 Thematic Analysis

Automated "topic modelling," or the automatic detection of themes from text sets and text-based datasets, is possible with N-Vivo 12. The influence of COVID-19 on the female workforce in the hotel and tourism industries can be extracted as themes using N-Vivo. The primary elements that were taken from the topic "The influence of COVID-19 on women workers in the tourism and hospitality industry" are shown in Table 3.

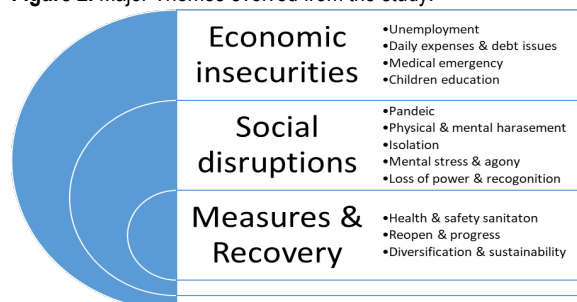
**Table 3.** Thematic analysis of the Impact of Covid-19....

Themes	Rate of the impact
1: Unemployment	39.56%
2: Reopen and Progress	31.33%
3: Daily Expenses & debt issues	27.71%
4: Loss of power and recognition	23.44%
5: Pandemic	19.83%
6: Diversification & Sustainability	44.73%
7: Medical emergencies	24.46%
8: Physical mental harassment	36.26%
9: Mental stress & Agony	19.12%
10: Children education	16.87%
11: Isolation	14.87%
12: Health, safety & sanitation	34.11%

**Source:** primary Data.

A total of 12 themes identified from the study. From these sub themes, three major themes were condensed. The three themes deducted are 1. Economic insecurities 2. Social Disruptions 3. Measures and Recovery. The sub themes of Economic Insecurities include un-employment, daily expense & debt issues, medical emergencies and children education; Social Disruption includes five sub themes comprising of the pandemic, physical & mental harassment, isolation, mental stress and agony, and loss of power and recognition; The third major theme, Measures and recovery, comprises three sub themes: health, safety and sanitation, reopen and progress, and diversification and sustainability.

**Figure 2.** Major Themes evolved from the study.



**Source:** Primary Data.



### 4.3 Economic insecurity

The Covid-19 had a significant impact on the economic development of the local community. From this analysis the major issues faced by most vulnerable women community include unemployment, increase in daily expenses and debts, medical emergencies and children education. Due to unprecedented impact of Covid-19, the employability ratio has reduced in the tourism industry. This led to unemployment, and unrest in the families, especially women who were working in the industry could not manage the daily expenses. This also forced them to borrow money to manage their expenses particularly for the medical emergencies and for the children education.

### 4.4 Social Disruptions

Covid-19's negative impact on the economic well-being of the women workforce in the tourism and hospitality industry negatively affected the standard of living of women in the community. Because of reduced income and job loss due to the persisting impact of Covid-19, several participants shared that they cannot meet family expenses, and the women need to depend on their families for their needs.

This has led to unrest, physical and mental harassments, isolation, mental stress and agony and loss of power and recognition in the family as well as community. The participants struggled to overcome these difficult circumstances, and they lost the respect, dignity and independence that they had while working. They experienced stress and depression and failed to manage the financial burden, as well as physical and mental suffering from family.

### 4.5 Measures and recovery

In order to overcome the impact of Covid-19 for women in the workforce, recovery measures should be adopted. From this it is clear that the tourism industry and responsible tourism development had a great role in the economic development of the local community. The sustainable tourism development could enhance more job and business opportunities for people, which in turn will support the income and earnings of the community. This will help the local community to manage their personal and family expenses.

During the pandemic women need a safe environment to work and live, and they need support from the family, community, as well as the government and tourism department. The lack of support from the family, community and authorities led to serious issues like mental stress, financial instability, and domestic violence, increased domestic job without any wages, fear, and lack of social interaction a result of social distancing. The impact of Covid-19 on the lives of the women working in the tourism industry needs to be addressed and should take effective measures to overcome the current situation in a more sustainable way.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Conclusion

The objective of this study is to specifically draw attention to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on women in the workforce in the travel and hospitality sectors in Southern India. The COVID-19 shock triggered a terrible era for the Indian hospitality business. All around the world, anti-pandemic measures had an influence on the hotel and tourism industries.

Due to trip cancellations and postponements made by foreign visitors, domestic guests, and business travelers, several hotels were forced to cancel reservations (Wang et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic had a terrible effect on local residents' mental health (Su et al., 2021; Li, Wang, Abbas, et al., 2021). This led to unemployment and economic instability among several stakeholders, especially female employees in the tourism and hospitality industries. As a result, it is critical for businesses to establish a resilient team and implement creative processes in order to withstand the brunt of any disruptive incident.

The women workforce underwent enormous challenges during the pandemic. From our study, three primary areas of concern emerged include Economic instability which caused Unemployment, Daily expenses and debt issues, medical emergencies, Children educational expenses; secondly the Social disruptions like the Pandemic, Physical and mental harassment, Isolation, Mental stress and agony, Loss of power and recognition; and third is the resilient measures which includes Health, safety and sanitation, Reopen and progress, Diversification and sustainability. As a result of the pandemic, travelers seeking pleasure and leisure are conscious on safe and hygiene travel.

Another feature is diversification and sustainability of job. Some who worked in hospitality, diversified their job and made their living through, vegetable gardening, making cotton masks, canning homemade pickles and so on. To extend this improved the mental health and reduced the stress of the female workforce. Dealing with employee's mental health issues is an increasingly significant part of the job (McAdams. et al, 2021). The industry is in a serious state of crisis, but at the same time, it is looking for novel, groundbreaking concepts, innovative ideas, and proposals.

After the epidemic is over, it's likely that the tourism projects built on these pillars and mechanisms will serve as new engines for industry expansion (Afanasiev, O. E, et.al 2021). At this point a sustainable tourism business will create additional job opportunities, which will help women workforce to engage in tourism and hospitality industry and it will lead to the community's economic development, and the women workforce will receive support from their families and the community.

### 5.2 Conceptual contribution of the study

The aftermath of Covid-19 on women in the workforce is explored in this study. The focus is to address the problems and implement practical solutions to embrace long-term sustainability and crisis resilience. The role of those directly and indirectly involved in the sector, particularly women workers, has to be strengthened. This study discussed the major impacts faced by the Women workforce in tourism and hospitality industry during pandemic period. From these,

three major themes were evolved. These themes can be further developed to conduct more quantitative studies. Especially on different vulnerable communities and the problems faced by them in the tourism and hospitality industry in the changing environments.

### 5.3 Practical contribution

The government in several states is engaged in offering relief measures to alleviate some of the hardships encountered by workers. However, when it comes to relief measures, there is a lack of a gender perspective. It has been observed that the welfare department provides compensation and relief to persons who have enrolled under various government initiatives.

Unfortunately, because many migrant employees in the tourism business, particularly women, are seasonal, they are not included in the labor department's dashboards or even the tourism industry's records. In the case of migrant women workers, there is an immediate need to address this because they are having difficulty accessing relief resources. Local organizations in different destinations keep track of migrant workers who have been unable to reach out to the local authorities for assistance. In partnership with local governments, these organizations have established helplines and assistance camps for migrants stuck in different regions.

Self-help groups (SHGs) and women who work in unorganized tourism but have lost their jobs recently are urged to make masks, sanitizers, and other supplies to aid in relief efforts. Women have been provided some opportunities to get through the current crisis as a result of this. However, it is crucial that these women continue to be involved in politics and the tourism industry.

Women must be involved in the process of coming up with a solution to this conundrum. Women work in a variety of tourism-related professions, such as organic farming, fishing, husbandry, community kitchens, kitchen gardens, women working in the medical field, artisans, female tour guides, and many more, join forces to form groups. Groups can help create company chains and startup models that attract more women to work in the tourism sector.

In the developing world, 60 percent of women work in the informal sector. Much of this is connected to tourism, both directly and indirectly. Following COVID-19, tourist projects should be redesigned in collaboration with state governments, assuring the participation of diverse segments of the workforce, which is the industry's backbone. To have robust tourist models, the tourism sector and state governments will have to continue to foster new ways of growing workforce capacities.

To address this the Ministry of Tourism/India Tourism and the Labor Department should put procedures in place to monitor worker attrition rates so that the above directive may be properly implemented and also in the case of home stays if the tourism office acknowledges their contributions, they will be covered by the State Department of Tourism's help programs.

Social media can be used by businesses and governments to convey crucial information about COVID-19 as it can enhance learning behavior among different

stakeholders and advance the subjective wellbeing and mental health of workers and clients (Abbas et al., 2019, 2021, Mamirkulova et al., 2020). Furthermore, based on the health belief model, hotels can create actions to protect stakeholders' mental health (Azadi et al., 2021).

A sustainable development and alternative measures could be adopted to retain the industry and its stakeholders even during the pandemic too. Thus, for bringing a stable income for the women workforce in the tourism and hospitality industry and to improve their conditions, responsible tourism development is essential based on sustainable development principles. And it can be achieved with the support of the family and local community.

### 6 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

There are various shortcomings in this study that call for more research. First of all, the study's interviewees' demographics may be more diversely composed. Numerous stakeholders, including neighborhood leaders, business owners, government employees, community organizations, and developers were left out of this study. (Juliet et al, 2021), studied about the challenges faced by the female employees in the South African hospitality Industry tried to quantify the study and also (Sika et al, 2021) studied the perspectives of Women's on the impact of Covid-19 on the hotel service providers of Kenya used qualitative method. From these studies it is evident that only a qualitative technique was used because this study is still in its early stages.

Future research could expand on the results of this study and create a scale to quantify the how the COVID-19 has affected the labor force of women as well as different other stakeholders. This study also throw light on the importance to study the long-term impact of Covid-19 on various sectors. The current study solely focuses on women in the workforce, but it might be expanded to include other venerable groups that are susceptible to these types of crises.

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**CRedit author statement.**

Term	Definition	A1	A2	A3	A4
Conceptualization	Ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims	x	x	x	x
Methodology	Development or design of methodology; creation of models	x	x		
Software	Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components	x			
Validation	Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/ reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs		x		
Formal analysis	Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyze or synthesize study data	x	x		
Investigation	Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection	x			
Resources	Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools	x	x	x	x
Data Curation	Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later reuse	x			
Writing - Original Draft	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation)	x			
Writing - Review & Editing	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision – including pre-or post-publication stages			x	x
Visualization	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/ data presentation	x	x		
Supervision	Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team		x		
Project administration	Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution		x		
Funding acquisition	Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication				

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