

**THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON INFORMAL WOMEN'S
EMPLOYMENT: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MATTAKKULIYA
AREA, NORTH DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT COLOMBO**

Women are normally self-employed in businesses involving the buying and selling of goods and services. Such employment was severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The research explored the impact of COVID-19 on informal women's employment. This study included mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The problem areas were identified in a pilot survey conducted with the key informants drawn from the women's employment. The data was analyzed by descriptive and SWOT approaches. According to the SWOT analysis results, the high mean value is maintained in the strong improvement of demand for goods and services for a specific period (3.25), the weakness of non-availability for gaining government subsidies (4.11), the opportunity incensement of leisure time (4.06), and the threat of curfew or lockdown (4.49). During a pandemic, the threat plays the most important role in the employment cycle of women informal workers. Furthermore, the results revealed that 74% of informal female workers lost their incomes and 18.7% of informal female workers were unable to continue their informal employment in the period of the pandemic. The Pearson's chi-square non-parametric test shows internal factors are significant and external factors are not significant. Policymakers should focus on providing social and economic support to informal female workers. Further, the government and non-governmental organizations should open training programs for informal women workers, and social workers can develop outreach programs to include informal sector women workers into the government database.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, Women's employment, SWOT, Informal

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