



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DEVELOPMENT

The Role of Women During COVID-19

Preliminary results

Zalina Enikeeva

Institute of Public Policy and Administration
University of Central Asia
October 12, 2023
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DEVELOPMENT

A joint research project '**JSPD Joint Covid Call – Comparative Research on Pastoral Societies in Post-Covid 19 Inner Asian Countries (PPIA)**' involving:

- University of Oxford,
- Kagoshima University,
- University of Central Asia,
- National University of Mongolia

Special thanks to **Kanyshai Makeshova** (University of Central Asia), **Dr. Troy Sternberg** (University of Oxford)

Methodology

Desk research, qualitative interviews with:

- a) women living in urban and rural areas who had their business in March 2020 and/or active women, women employed in agricultural and tourism sectors;
- b) local institutions, experts;
- c) national government, aiyl okmotu

Osh oblast:

- Osh city
- Chon-Alay region (Daroot-Korgon, Sary-Mogol, Jar-Bashy, Kyzyl-Tuu)
- Alay region (Gulcho, Sary-Oy, Kyzyl-Oy)

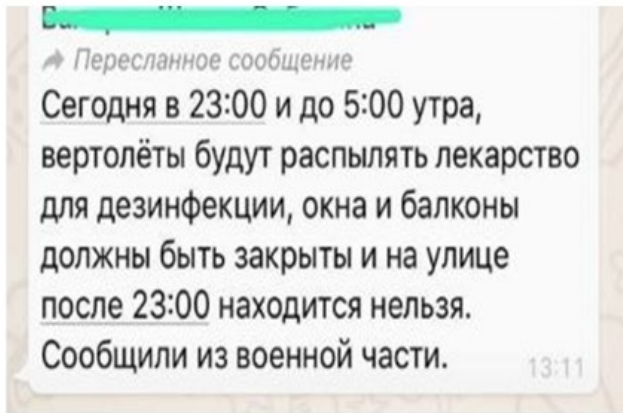
Issyk-Kul oblast:

- Karakol city
- Yrdyk village
- Barskoon, Tamga, Tosor, Kadji-Say, Bokonbaev

Similarities

- It was easier to survive the lockdown for rural citizens (possibility to go outside, vegetables and fruits from own plots); urban citizens had more difficulties during the lockdown;
- Economic recovery was faster in urban areas;
- Exception: fake news via WhatsApp messenger's groups

Example: Fake news



Similarities

- Humanitarian supplies: a very few number of respondents received humanitarian supplies;
- Big role of volunteers (students of medicine faculties, businessmen and businesswomen, civic leaders) in providing food, medical drugs, equipment etc.

Similarities

- Increase of violent incidents towards women and children in urban and rural areas;
- Increased burden of household chores, helping children with school lessons, taking care of elder people;

How did women survive the lockdown/pandemic?

- New business: catering, boxed lunches, online teaching;
- Rural women became more active in social media;
- Active participation in online educational programs (acceleration programs etc.);
- Apricots' harvesting and selling to companies as the only source of income in the southern shores of Issyk-Kul lake – according to some respondents;
- Reorientation on internal tourists;

After-effects

- Women realized that there is no hope on government: less participation in civil life, more wish (and trials) to open own business and earn money;
- Understanding of life's fragility: spend less money on festivities, more –on travelling;
- Some labour migrants took decision to live and work in Kyrgyzstan - living through a pandemic far from children and parents was difficult.

After-effects

- Border closure with Tajikistan: less tourists in Alay and Chon-Alay oblasts,

Conclusion

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had both positive and negative consequences on women's lives in Kyrgyzstan;
- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound and multifaceted impact on women's lives;
- While it has highlighted women resilience and contributions to society, it has also exposed and exacerbated gender inequalities.

Thank you for your attention!

Рахмат!

zalina.enikeeva@ucentralasia.org