

**Timeline**

April-November 2020

**Study Type**

Quasi-experimental Analysis

**Article Link**

<https://osf.io/wvf7m/>

**Research Implemented by IPA**

No

# The Impact of COVID-19 on the Lives of Women in the Garment Industry: Evidence from Ethiopia

## Researchers

[Christian Johannes Meyer](#), [Morgan Hardy](#), [Gisella Kagy](#), [Eyoual Tamrat Demeke](#), [Marc Witte](#)

## Abstract

In a globalized world, pandemics transmit impacts through markets. In this study, researchers document employment changes, coping strategies, and welfare of garment factory workers in Ethiopia's largest industrial park during the early stages of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 pandemic. Researchers field a phone survey of female workers during a two month period in which cases are rapidly rising globally, but not locally. The data suggest significant changes in employment, high levels of migration away from urban areas to rural areas if women are no longer working, and high levels of food insecurity. These findings compel a research and policy focus on documenting and mitigating the market-reach of pandemics on low-income workers at the margins.

## Project Outcomes of Interest

Basic demographics, current and past employment, other economic activity, income, savings, physical and mental health, health behaviors, social networks, relationship status, marriage and fertility choices, aspirations, first- and second-order beliefs about COVID-19, trust in government, perceived needs in the community, and economic preferences

## Key Findings

- The employment of female workers in Ethiopia's garment industry has changed

dramatically due to a sharp drop in demand during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- In the sample, 41 percent of respondents employed in January 2020 were put on leave or terminated by the time of our survey a few months later.
- Migration appears to be a major coping mechanism, but many respondents report barriers. Most who have left the city desire to return if possible.
- Levels of food insecurity are high; rates are higher for those currently still in the city where garment industry jobs are located.
- Respondents are well informed about COVID-19; false beliefs or myths appear to be extremely uncommon.

## Link to Results

[Final paper is available here.](#)

## Impact Goals

- Build resilient and adaptable businesses and employment opportunities
- Improve social-safety net responses
- Improve women's health, safety, and economic empowerment

## Project Data Collection Mode

- CATI (Computer-assisted telephone interviewing)

## Link to Pre-Registration

<https://www.socialsciceregistry.org/trials/5750>

## Results Status

Results