

COVID-19: Impact on households well being monitoring

From March to April, 2021 **The Gambia**

Newsletter No 5. --April 2021



KEY MESSAGES

In the labor market, the share of household heads who are out of work have increased slightly from the December 2020 levels. This increase appears to be driven largely by seasonality of work as oppose to COVID-19 related factors.

Although awareness about the arrival of vaccines is high, willingness to be vaccinated fell from 65% in December 2020 to 55% in April 2021. Vaccine hesitancy appears to be driven by a combination of doubts and misinformation about the vaccines.

Households with Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) report significant disruptions in the source of livelihood and access to basic services- especially as health care for PWDs due to COVID-19.

In April 2021, 6 out of 10 household heads feel they are poor based on their income levels. More than half of household heads (52%) feel their living conditions have deteriorated in the last 12 months.

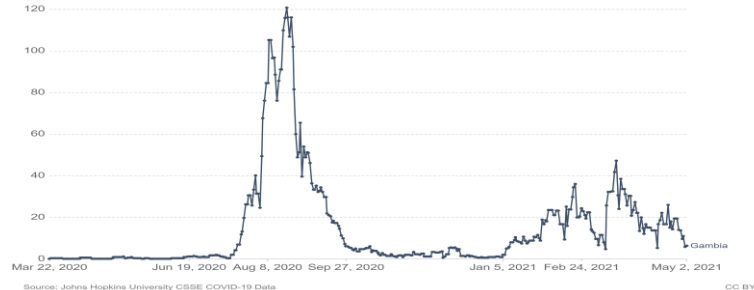
METHODOLOGY



The results in this note were prepared using data from the wave 5 of the High Frequency Survey on the COVID-19 Impacts on Households in The Gambia. A sub-sample of 1304 households of the Labor Force Survey (LFS) were interviewed by phone between March 27th. and April 13th. 2021. These same households have already been interviewed during the previous 4 waves. As for the wave 4, the data collection period corresponded to the second wave of increase in number of COVID-19. The results are representative at the national level and at strata level (Banjul- the capital city; and Kanifing also an urban settlement around the capital city; other urban areas, and rural areas)

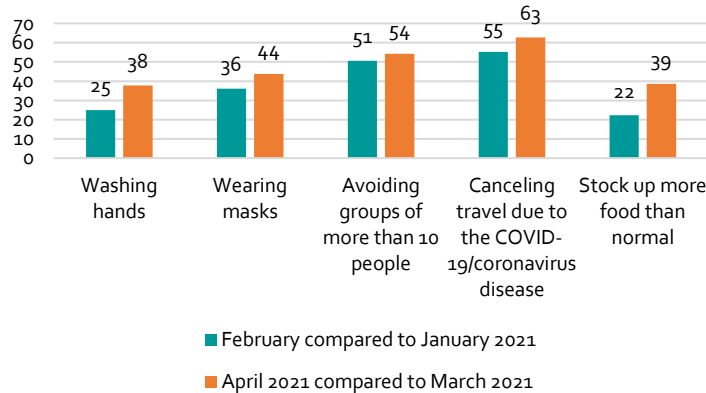
Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases

Shown is the rolling 7-day average. The number of confirmed cases is lower than the number of actual cases; the main reason for that is limited testing.

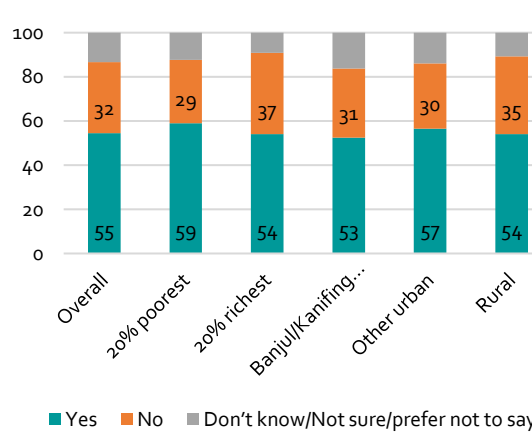


COVID-19 UPDATE

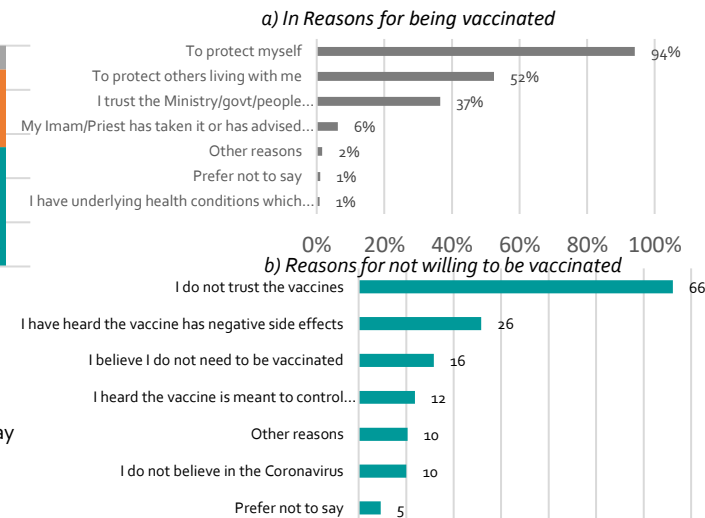
- There appears to be a decline in the compliance with COVID-19 prevention guidelines. The share of households who are either no longer applying various measures or applying them less regularly increased between February and April 2021. For instance, the share of households who are no longer or less frequently wearing masks increased from 36% in February 2021 to 44% in April 2021. Compliance with other measures such as washing hands, social distancing and stocking up food have also declined during the same period.
- Although awareness about the arrival of vaccines is high- 94%; the share of households willing to be vaccinated declined from 65% in December 2020 to 55% in April 2021. The poorest households and those living in urban areas other than Banjul and Kanifing appear to be more supportive of vaccination (59% and 57% respectively). For household heads who are willing to be vaccinated, protecting themselves and/or those living with them are their main reasons.
- It appears the main reason for vaccine hesitancy in The Gambia revolve around doubts and misinformation about the vaccines. 66% of households cited not trusting the vaccines as their main reason for their unwillingness to be vaccinated; whereas 26% said they heard the vaccines have negative side effects.



Graph 1: Share of households less frequently / no longer applying COVID-19 guidelines



Graph 2: Willingness to be vaccinated (%)

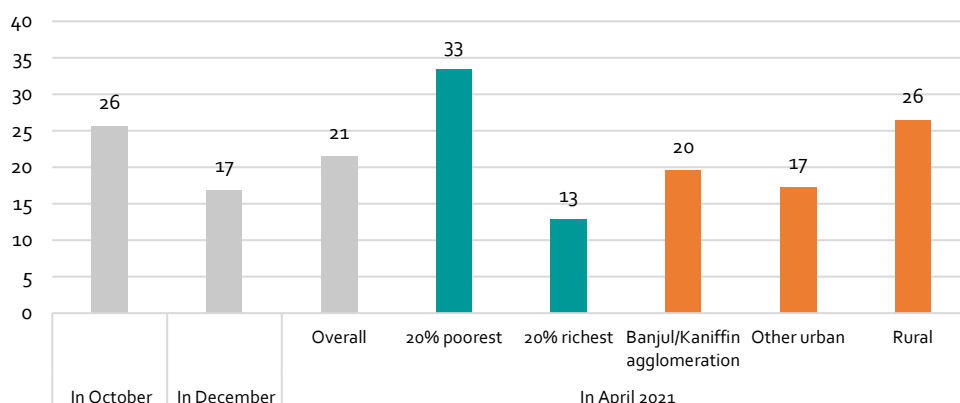


Graph 3: Reasons for (un)willing to be vaccinated (%)

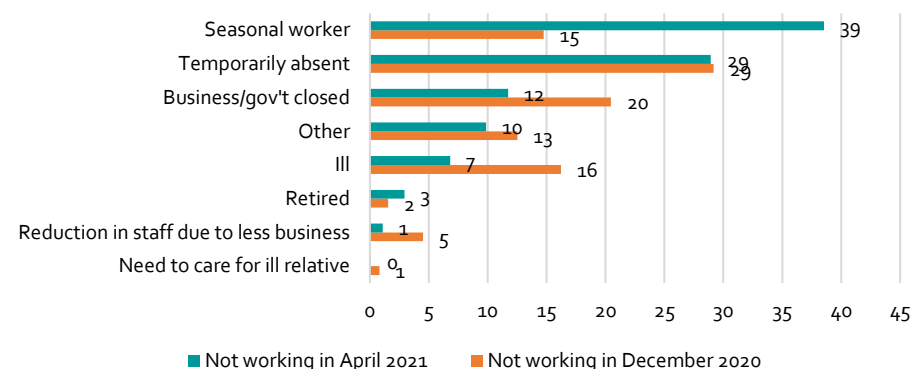


EMPLOYMENT

- The share of household heads who were working before the start of COVID-19 (March 2020) but who stopped working fell from 26% in October 2020 to 17% in December 2020, then rose to 21% in April 2021. These results may be highly sensitive to seasonality especially for activities in the agriculture sector. Among the poorest households and those living in rural areas, the share of household heads who are out of work is higher (33% and 26% respectively) probably because they are more likely to engage in seasonal agricultural activities.
- The reasons for work stoppages in April 2021 support this view, as reasons related to covid -19 are down from December 2020. Reasons related to business closures and staff reduction move down from 20% to 12% and 5% to 1% respectively.



Graph 4: Household head working before March 2020 but not working in October, December 2020, then April 2021 (%)

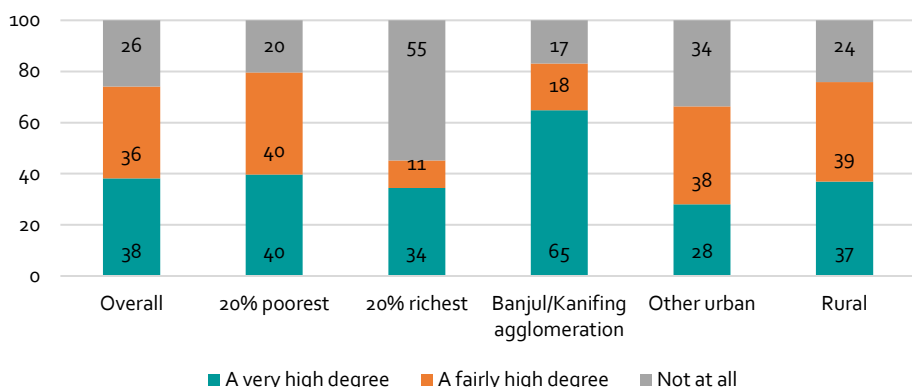


Graph 5: Reasons for work stoppage (%)

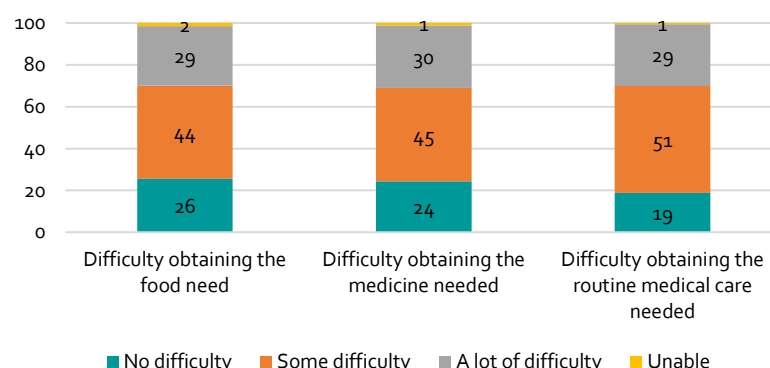


IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDs)¹

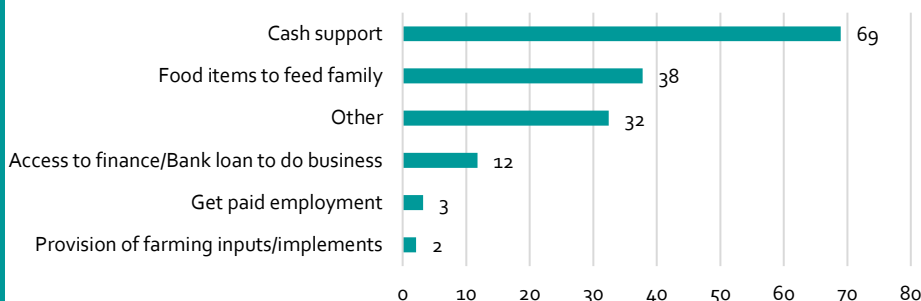
- About one in ten households has a member with a disability. This type of household is more common within the 20% poorest (15%) and in rural areas (15%). Walking difficulties are the most widespread among households (4%).
- In nearly three out of four households (74%), the usual source of livelihood for persons with disabilities (mostly family and friends support) have been affected by the coronavirus epidemic, especially for those belonging to the poorest households and those living in the Banjul and Kanifing areas. In this case, the latter are the most severely affected (65% severely affected against 38% at the national level).
- Persons with disabilities are also facing difficulties in accessing basic services-especially health care; since COVID-19 outbreak. Persons with disabilities have difficulty accessing food (74%, of which 29% to a very high degree), the medicines they need (76%, of which 30% to a very high degree) and medical care (81%, of which 29% to a very high degree)



Graph 6: Degree to which persons with disability normal livelihood have been disrupted by the coronavirus outbreak (%)



Graph 7: Difficulties encountered by persons with disability since becoming aware of the coronavirus outbreak (%)

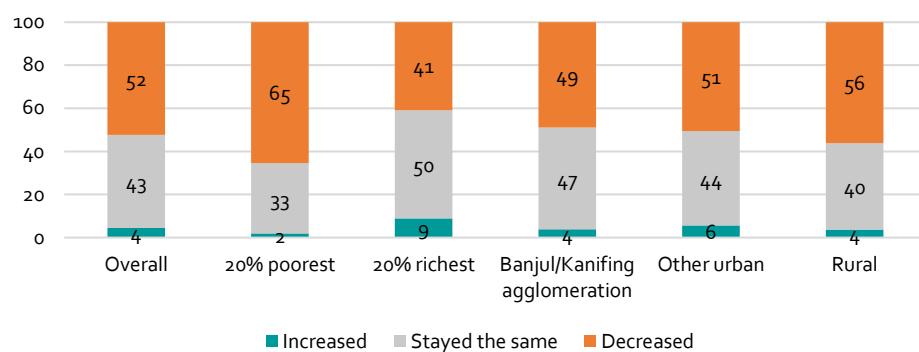


Graph 8: Kind of support persons with disability would be most interested in receiving (%)

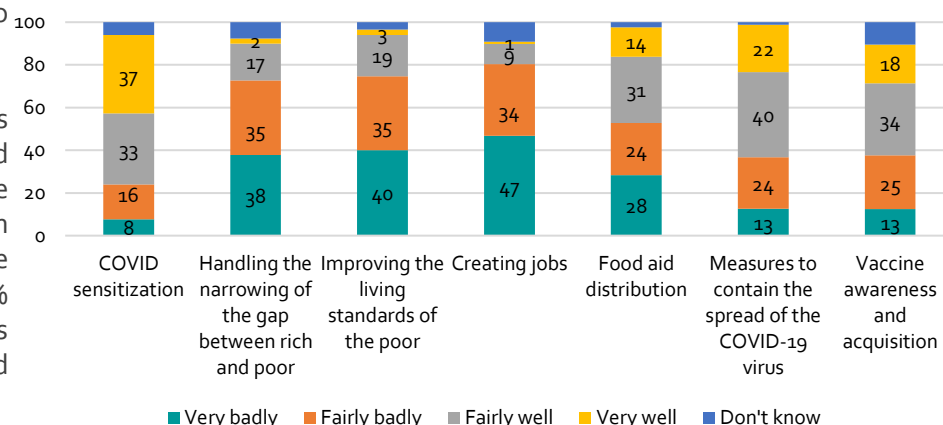
- People with disabilities would mostly like to receive cash assistance(69%) or food supplies(38%). Only 12% and 3% would like to receive financial and employment assistance, respectively.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON POVERTY AND SOCIAL COHESION

- In April 2021, 6 out of 10 household heads feel they are poor based on their income levels- 8% feel they are 'very poor'. More than half of household heads (52%) feel that their household's living conditions have deteriorated over the previous 12 months- reflecting the protracted nature of the effects of the pandemic. The share of households who reported deterioration in their standard of living is higher among households in the poorest quintile of the asset index-based welfare distribution (65%) and those in rural areas (56%).
- When asked about the main issues affecting young people, most respondents cited inadequate access to opportunities to fulfill their aspirations; and inadequate representation in community decision-making- 61% and 54% respectively. Furthermore, more than half of respondents (60%) consider that the treatment of women has not changed compared to the pre-COVID-19 period- 27% think the treatment of women has worsen.
- Households' perception about government actions since the pandemic is generally mixed. Households are dissatisfied, particularly with economic and social actions related to job creation (47% very unfavorable), the improvement of living conditions (40% very unfavorable), and the reduction of the gap between rich and poor (38% very unfavorable). The opinions are more favorable towards the measures to fight the spread of COVID-19, - 62% and 52% of households report satisfaction with the government's measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus and vaccine awareness and acquisition, respectively.



Graph 9: Change in household's living standard during last 12 months (%)



Graph 10: Perception of government actions during the pandemic (%)

¹ Although attempt was made to follow the Washington Group on Disability Statistics approach to identifying Persons With Disabilities (PWDs), adjustments were made to accommodate limitations imposed by a telephone survey. As such the full extent of PWDs may not be completely captured by the data and hence we urge readers to bear these caveats in mind in interpreting the results.

For further details, visit <https://www.gbosdata.org>

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