



DRAFT REPORT

A Gender-Sensitive Assessment of the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Households based on a Phone Survey: the Case of Vietnam's Textile, Garment, and Hospitality industries

*Nguyen Thi Thu Phuong, Nguyen Thang, Pham Minh Thai,
Vu Hoang Dat and Nguyen Thi Van Ha
Centre for Analysis and Forecasting – Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences*

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SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in early 2020, has had a significant impact on the Vietnamese economy and industries in general, with two industries in particular standing out: (1) textile and garment and (2) hospitality. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment and households with members working in these two industries was documented in this study, with a focus on female-headed households.

From May to July 2021, 1,000 Vietnamese households with members working in these two industries were surveyed on a national scale. The survey found considerable gender differences in employment, income, and other household impacts.

Because of the pandemic outbreak in Vietnam, the majority of workers in the two industries, (1) textile and garment and (2) hospitality, have temporarily taken time off, reduced working hours, and reduced income. Total household income has decreased significantly, according to the May 2021 household survey, with female-headed households experiencing a greater decline than male-headed households. With no clear recovery signal, the average household income has all fallen to a deficient level. 15.7 percent of households have had their income reduced by more than half (income in May 2021 compared to April 2020).

Social protection policies must be designed to cover not only poor households already on the official list, but also those who have fallen into temporary poverty as a result of the pandemic, particularly female-headed households. This is supported by the survey results, which show the vulnerability of female-headed households in these two industry groups. 44.8 percent of female-headed households experienced transient poverty (higher than the male-headed group, whose rate of falling into temporary poverty was 39.9 percent). According to the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA) poverty line for the period 2021-2025, 13.1 percent of households fall into poverty, with vulnerable households falling into poverty at a higher rate. After one year of being affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, the MOLISA poverty rate tends to increase slightly from 48.4 percent (as of April 2020) to 49.6 percent (as of May 2021).

Policy support is especially important when income declines and temporary poverty are associated with a wide range of other life consequences. For example, as of April 2020, 59.8 percent of interviewed households reported difficulties in non-economic activities. In May 2021, this percentage increased slightly to 63.7 percent. Difficulties primarily concern access to education, health care, and daily shopping. Difficulties will primarily fall on the shoulders of women, as the wife continues to do the majority of unpaid care and domestic work.

Almost all households strictly adhered to the Ministry of Health's pandemic prevention and control recommendations, such as wearing masks, washing hands with soap and hand sanitizer, canceling large gatherings, and increasing online shopping and payment. All interviewed households have installed Bluezone or nCovy applications and are ready to be vaccinated against COVID-19, indicating that pandemic prevention measures are being implemented successfully. However, approximately 19% of households have not been immunized. Concerns about post-injection reactions and side effects (50 percent), a lack of specific information on

vaccination registration (23.9 percent), and concerns about vaccination costs are the main reasons for this group of households (14.5 percent). It should continue to promote vaccination registration in urban areas while also taking into account information on vaccination side effects in the rural and informal sectors.

Spending cuts are the primary household response, with two-thirds of households using them to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Savings or new debt are used as a response measure by one-fifth of households. The majority of major family response decisions are reached by both husband and wife. Furthermore, the gender disparity is evident when the proportion of wives making major decisions in these matters is much higher than that of husbands, particularly when it comes to cutting spending for daily family activities. Households cut costs primarily for food (over half of surveyed households), electricity (1/3 of households), health care costs, and education expenses (about 1/5 of households). Job mobility is sluggish (only 6.4 percent of households). It is critical to change jobs and move geographically to look for job opportunities within the province and industry. Households that had to rely on savings to cover their expenses were primarily those with limited savings resources. 53.2 percent of these households only have enough savings to cover their expenses for 1-3 months.

There is a positive assessment of the Government's support against COVID-19. Most households have trust in the Government's measures to fight COVID-19. The majority of social assistance recipients have a favorable view of the program's implementation. However, survey data show a modest number of those receiving support in general. The majority, accounting for 80% of the households facing difficulties, demand support, especially for female-headed households. But only one in four households said they had received support. Increasing the budget for the social assistance package and promoting digital technology, connecting citizen data on a digital platform will help resolve numerous outstanding issues in implementing social policy support.

Support packages were far from adequate, with only 27 percent of affected households receiving assistance. Moreover, the support packages largely missed the transient income poor. Meanwhile, 44.8 percent of female-headed households fell into temporary poverty, compared to four in ten male-headed households. In addition, emergency support is most needed when income declines substantially, as transient poverty is associated with adverse non-income impact. For example, 59.8 percent of households said they faced difficulties in non-economic activities as of April 2020. This percentage increased slightly in May 2021 to 63.7 percent. Four in ten households reported having difficulty accessing education services, 30.7 percent for health care services, and 31.9 percent for purchasing food, beverage, and other necessities.

Furthermore, the design and implementation of policy support from a gender perspective needs to be given attention properly when the gender gap in unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) is considerable. Most respondents reported that the UCDW burden had disproportionately fallen on women's shoulders. The gender gap in unpaid care and domestic work, in general, is 16.3 percentage points. The gender gap was 42.7 percentage points for house chores, 26.7 percentage points for taking healthcare for family members, 22.9 percentage points for taking care of children's education, and 17.4 percentage points for taking care of small kids (under five years old), and the elderly (over 70 years old) in the family.

INTRODUCTION

In this report, the research team conducts a gender-sensitive assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on two dimensions: (i) economic issues (employment, income, falling into poverty...) and (ii) non-economic issues (expenditure, implementation of pandemic prevention measures...) of households in the textile and garment, and hospitality¹ industries in Vietnam. This is followed by how households respond to COVID-19, in terms of spending, disease prevention, and economic measures, taking into account gender sensitivity. Finally, households' perception on the Government's support is assessed.

The report is based on a telephone survey of 1,000 households in Vietnam to be implemented in May-July 2021 within the research program "Impact of COVID-19 on inclusive development and democratic governance: Post-pandemic rapid assessment in the Mekong sub-region" (referred to as IDRC Survey 2021).

Sampling method

The data used in this report are from a telephone survey of 1,000 households. This sample was selected from 8,453 households with at least one member working in two industries (1) textile and garment industry and (2) hospitality, selected from 45,838 households interviewed in the Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey by the General Statistics Office (GSO) in 2018 (VHLSS 2018). First, 1,000 households were chosen for the official list using the pps method, with some groups of households being oversampled based on specific priority criteria, as detailed below. Each household on this official list has a sampling weight of w_i , which is detailed further below. Second, 7,000 households were chosen for the reserve list using the same method as the official households. This is done to ensure that the households in the two samples of the official and reserve lists have the same characteristics. In the event that a replacement household is required, the replacement household has the same sampling weight as the corresponding official household.

The sampling method ensures that the probability of being selected is proportional to two variables: (1) the number of female members in the household and (2) the number of dependents in the household, including children five years of age and younger (i.e., children three years of age or younger in VHLSS 2018) and older people aged 65 years and over (63 years and older in VHLSS 2018). This is aimed at selecting more households with a married couple and in the target age groups of the study, i.e., these groups of households have a higher probability of being selected. Furthermore, the probability of being selected is increased by the share of the target group in the total number of households to reflect the importance of the target group relative to the rest of the other household groups. Therefore, the probability that a household is selected for the sample is proportional to s_i in the following formula:

$$s_i = N_{i,targeted} * \frac{N_{i,targeted}}{N_i}$$

$N_{i, targeted}$ is the number of household members in the above target group; N_i is the total number of households.

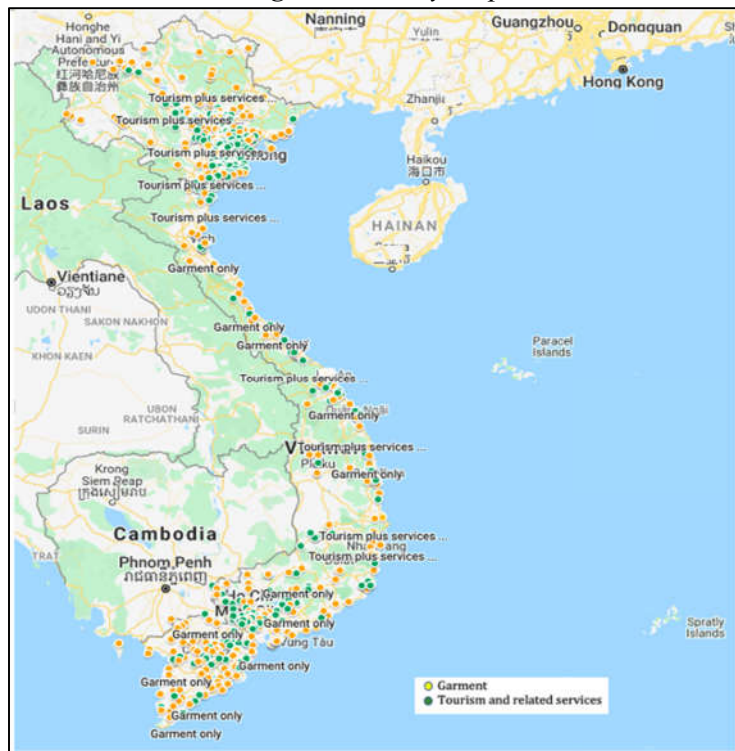
¹ Hospitality includes tourism and related sectors namely hotel, catering and passenger transportation

The above formula shows that households with a higher share in the target group will have a higher probability of being selected. Among households with the same sampling rate, those with a higher absolute number of members in the target group are more likely to be selected. To account for these sampling properties, a household sampling weight, which is inversely proportional to the probability of being sampled, i.e. $w_i = (1/s_i) * w_{VHLSS2018}$ is assigned to household i , where $w_{VHLSS2018}$ denotes the household sampling weight in the household survey 2018. This sampling weight will be used to calculate the aggregate in the quantitative analysis in the report.

The survey sample

The final survey sample includes 998 households, of which: 344 households have female heads of households, 442 households have members working in the textile and garment industry, 568 households have members working in the hospitality industry, 43 ethnic minority households, 873 households with members working in the informal sector, 68 households are poor according to MOLISA poverty line in the period 2021-2025. Figure 1 is a map of the geographical distribution of households in the sample by two industries: textile and garment and hospitality.

Figure 1. Survey map



Source: CAF Survey 2021

KEY FINDINGS

1. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on both economic and non-economic aspects

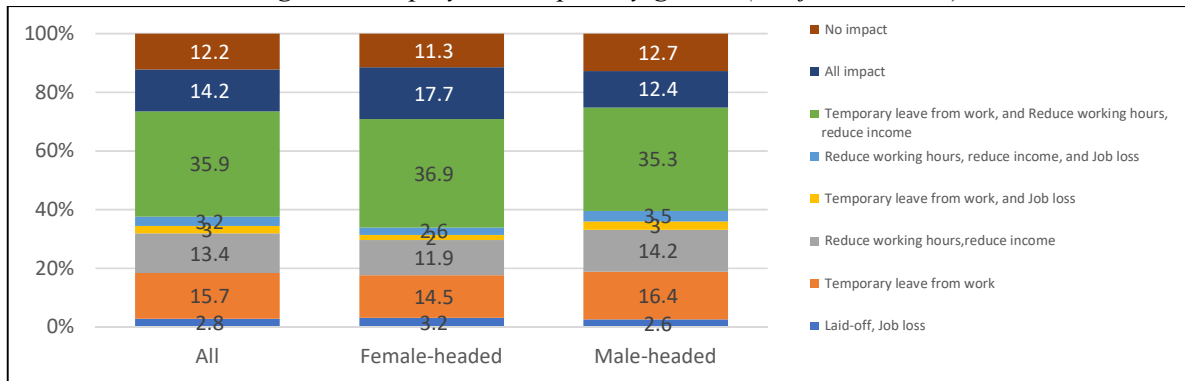
1.1. Economic impacts

Most workers have temporarily taken time off work, reduced working hours, and reduced their income since the pandemic showed signs of spreading vigorously.

The Covid-19 pandemic breaking out became more and more complicated from March 2020 in Vietnam, forcing the Government to apply social distancing measures. COVID-19 breaking

out and social distancing measures have significantly affected the activities of enterprises and household businesses, especially in the textile and garment, and hospitality industries. As a result, it leads to a decrease in employment in these two industries. Figure 2 shows the ratio of the impact on employment due to Covid-19 by gender for three types of impacts (1) job loss, layoff, (2) temporary leave from work, and (3) reduction of working hours, and income. It can be seen that, mainly, households have members who are simultaneously affected by two types of impacts, including (1) temporary leave from work and (2) having reduction of working hours working hours, and income, accounted for the most significant proportion of 38.2%. Households with only one member affected by temporary leave from work accounted for 15.1%. Households with only one impact of reduction of working hours working hours, and income, account for 13.5%. 13.6% of households with members suffer from all three types of impacts: layoffs, job loss, temporary leave from work, and reduction of working hours working hours. Households that are not affected account for 12.4%. The proportion of households with members who have been laid off or lost their jobs is 2.4%. Among the interviewed households, 39.3% of male-headed households suffer the two most types of impacts at the same time (i.e., temporary leave from work and reduction of working hours working hours). This rate is higher than that of female-headed households, only 33.1%. However, the percentage of female-headed households who were temporarily leave from work (17.9%) was higher than that of male-headed households (14.5%). In contrast, the proportion of male-headed households with reduced working hours and reduced income was higher than that of female-headed households (13.8% vs. 11.7%, respectively). The rate of female-headed households being laid off or losing their jobs is higher than that for the male-headed (4.5% vs. 2%, respectively) (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Employment impact by gender (% of households)



Source: IDRC Survey 2021

The hospitality industry has a higher proportion of workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic to employment than the textile and garment industry.

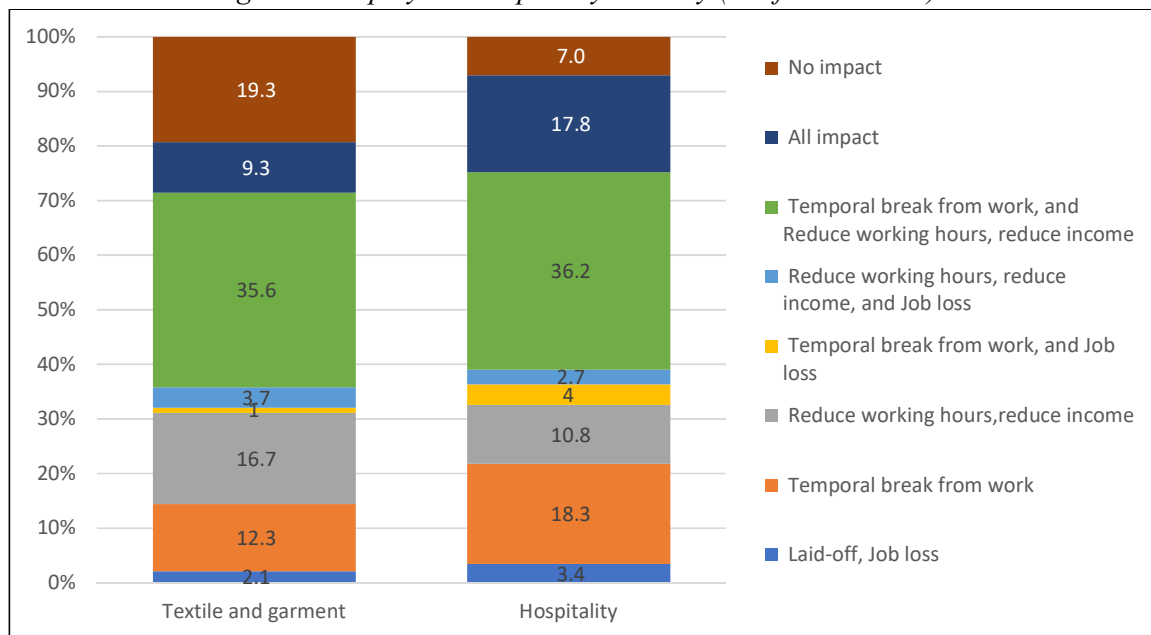
Impacts by industry can be ignored for too few households with members active in both industry groups, accounting for only 1% of the survey sample. 45.7% of the survey sample has members working in the textile and garment industry. The remaining 53.3% of the sample has members working in the hospitality industry (Table 3, in Appendix).

About one-third of each groups of households by industry suffer from simultaneous impacts of (1) temporary leave and (2) reduction of working hours, which is the main form of impact on employment. 35.6% of the households working in the textile and garment industry and 36.2% of those in the hospitality industry suffer from these two types of employment impacts simultaneously (Figure 3).

The most significant difference here is that the proportion of affected households in the hospitality industry is higher than that in the textile and garment industry. Up to 80,7% of households in the textile and garment industry suffer impact on employment. This share for the hospitality industry is 93%. Moreover, the employment impact in this industry coincides with all three types of (1) layoffs, (2) temporary leave (3) reduction of working hours, accounting for 17.8%, twice as high as that of the textile and garment industry (only 9.3%).

The next difference is that reduction of working hours is more common than temporary leave from work in the textile and garment industry (16.7% vs. 12.3%), in contrast to the hospitality industry. On the other hand, for households in the hospitality industry, temporary layoffs were more common than only reductions in working hours (18.3% vs. 10.8%).

Figure 3. Employment impact by industry (% of households)

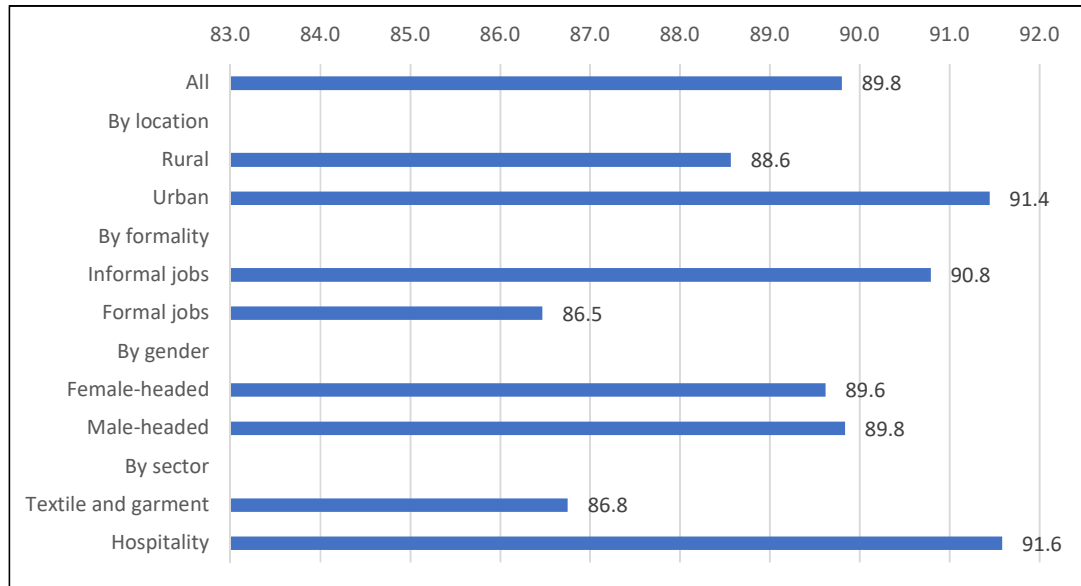


Source: IDRC Survey 2021

The low rate of layoffs is since most believe the employment impact will soon pass, so most have temporary leave from work.

89.8% are optimistic that employers do not allow layoffs or dismissals but only temporary leave from work because they think the impact of the pandemic will soon pass. Again, this ratio is quite similar in all different population groups (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Reasons for temporary leave and no layoffs: thinking the impact of the pandemic will pass soon (% of households)



Source: IDRC Survey 2021

The average income of households has all decreased to a deficient level, with no clear recovery signal.

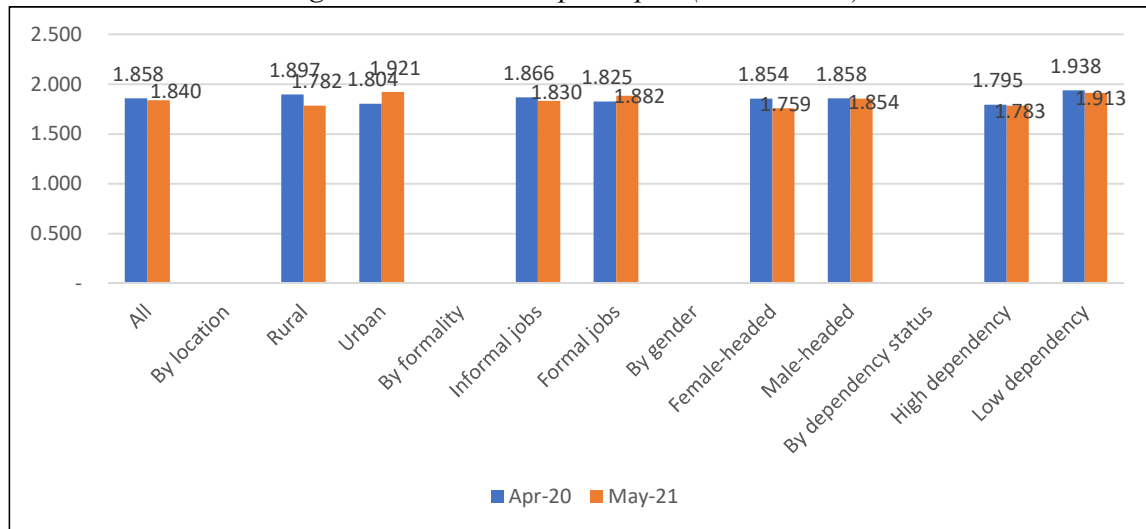
A year after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, it seems that households are still in a difficult situation. Industries such as textile and garment and hospitality have been heavily impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Since March 2020, due to pandemic outbreaks, distance measures have been applied more strictly in many provinces. At the pandemic's peak in April 2020, the average income of interviewed households was only VND 1,858 million. As of May 2021, it is still at such a low level, VND 1,840 million (Figure 5).

In April 2020, a more severe income impact was observed in urban areas, the formal sector, and household groups with a high dependency, more than in rural areas, the informal sector and household groups with a low dependency.² However, in May 2021, better recovery signals was observed in urban areas, the formal sector than in rural areas, the informal sector. At this time, those in rural areas, the informal sector experienced a decline in income, possibly due to

² A household is considered to have a low dependency when the ratio of children under 5 years old and elderly people over 70 years old in total household size is lower than 66.66%. Households are considered to have a high dependency when this ratio is 66.66% or more.

spillover and prolonged effects due to traffic disruptions and labor shortage due to social distancing.

Figure 5. Real income per capita (VND million)



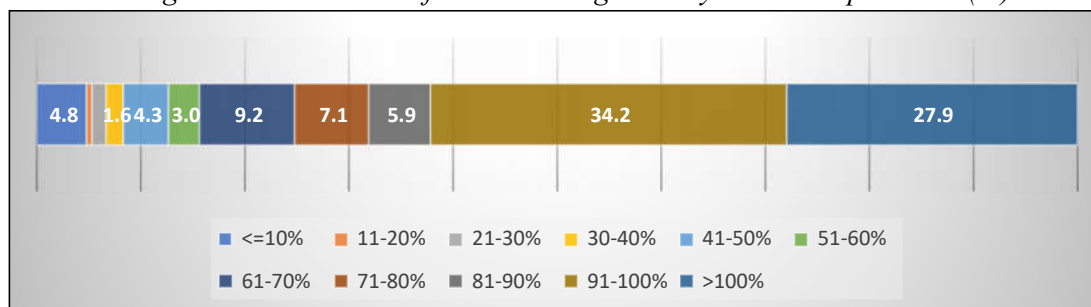
Source: IDRC Survey 2021

The impact of the pandemic on households was not significantly different by gender of the head of the household at both survey points. There was a negligible decrease in income of female-headed households as of May 2021.

15.7% of households suffered from income fall by more than half (income in May 2021 compared to April 2020).

As of May 2021, up to 15.7% of households have even experienced a heavy income loss, which is more than half of their income compared to April 2020 (Figure 6). These are the most affected households. For households with an income loss of more than 20%, the proportion accounted for 37.9% of the surveyed households. There were 34.2% of households with an income loss of less than 10%, and 27.9% had income recovery.

Figure 6. Distribution of income change in May 2021 vs. April 2020 (%)

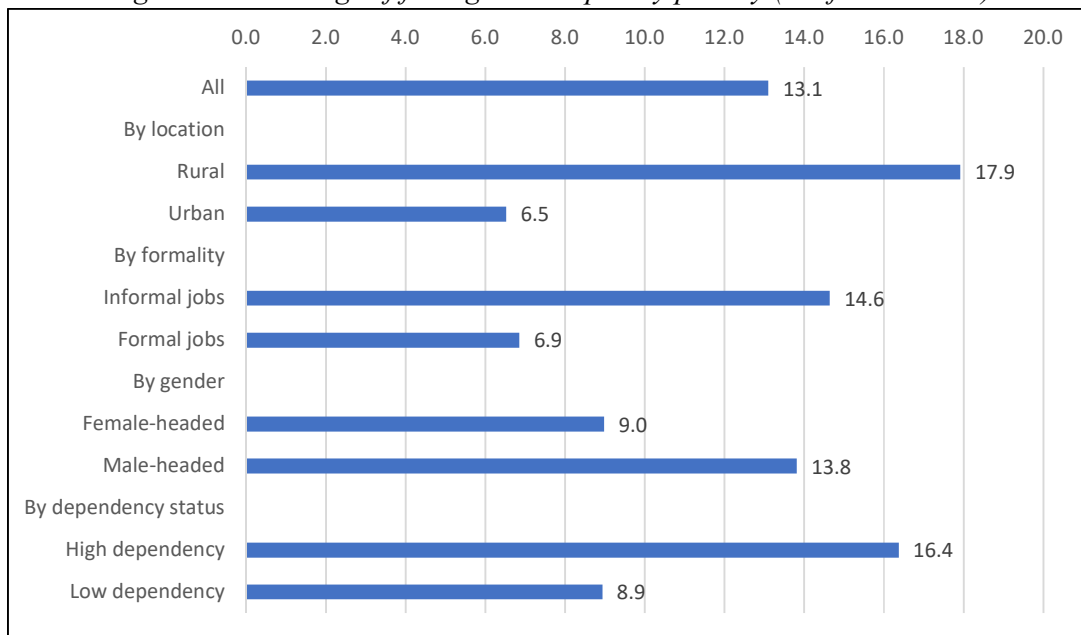


Source: IDRC Survey 2021

Based on the poverty line of MOLISA for the period 2021-2025, 13.1% of households fall into poverty, in which the proportion of vulnerable households falls into poverty is higher.

Figure 7 shows that the rate of falling into poverty is reported to be higher in vulnerable households such as those in rural areas, in the informal sector, and with a high dependency. The rates of falling into poverty among households in rural areas, the informal sector, and groups with a high dependency (17.9%, 14.6%, and 16.4%) are more than doubled, compared with this rate for households in urban areas, the formal sector and groups with a low dependency (6.5%, 6.9%, and 8.9%), respectively. Male-headed households have a higher rate of falling into poverty than the female-headed group (13.8% vs. 9%). This is because women may have put more effort into keeping household income from falling too deeply.

Figure 7. Percentage of falling into temporary poverty (% of households)



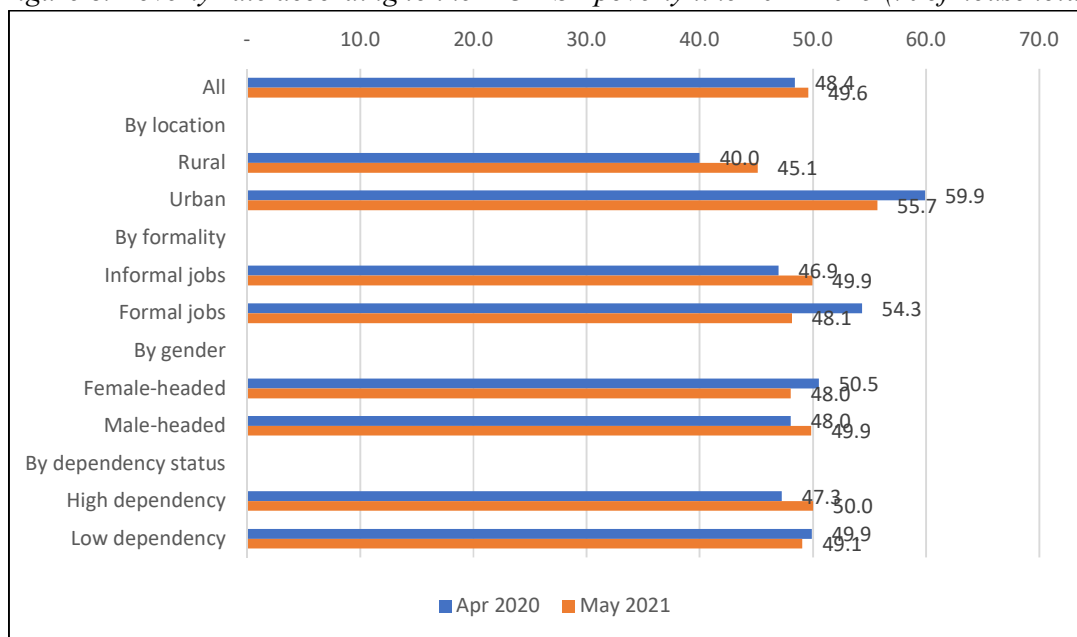
Note: Based on the poverty line issued by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs for the period 2021-2025

Source: IDRC Survey 2021

The poverty rate defined by MOLISA for the period 2021-2025 tends to increase.

Percentage of poor households according to the poverty line set by MOLISA for the period 2021-2025 tended to increase slightly from 48.4% (as of April 2020) to 49.6% (as of May 2021), after one year of being impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic (Figure 8). The slight increase occurred in rural areas, the informal sector, male-headed households, and households with a high dependency. In contrast, the poverty rate decreased slightly in urban areas, in the formal sector, in female-headed households, and in groups with a low dependency.

Figure 8. Poverty rate according to the MOLISA poverty line 2021-2025 (% of households)



Source: IDRC Survey 2021

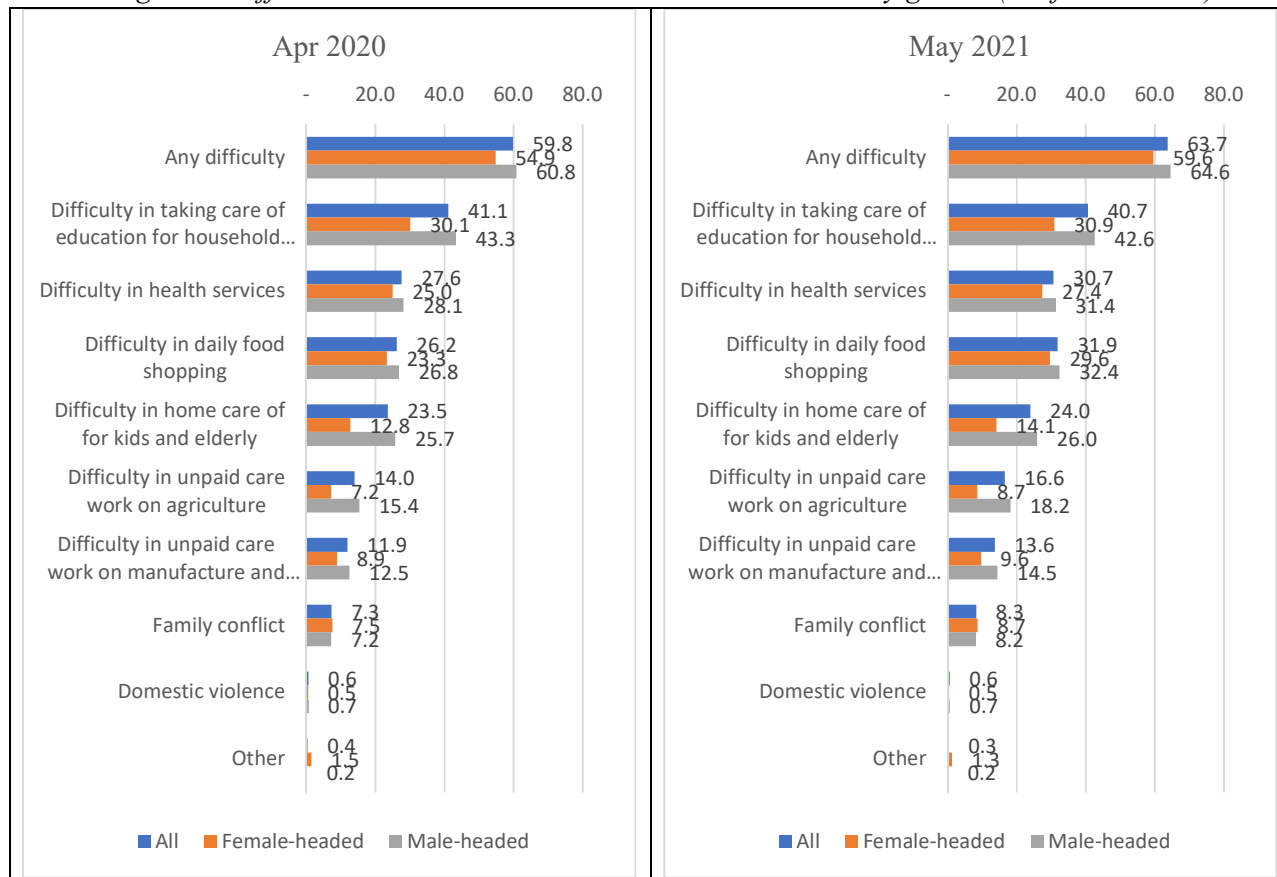
1.2. Non-economic impact on households

More than half of the interviewed households said that they faced difficulties during the pandemic, mainly in unpaid care work for children's education, access to health services, and daily shopping. Moreover, the difficulties tend to increase slightly.

59.8% of interviewed households said they faced difficulties in non-economic activities of unpaid care work as of April 2020 (Figure 9). This rate increased slightly to 63.7% in May 2021. Difficulties mainly include unpaid care work for children's learning activities, accessing health services, and daily shopping. It is understandable in times of COVID-19 outbreaks due to disruptions in traffic and the shortage of service access due to social distancing. The remaining households that did not face any difficulties may have had good adaptations, or the situation of social distancing has been overcome due to better adaptation to technology. The most serious difficulty is in unpaid care work for children's learning activities, which is reflected by 41% of households in April 2020 and May 2021. Other difficulties in the family are reflected at a low rate.

The slight increase in difficulty was recorded mainly in accessing health services and daily shopping. 27.6% of the interviewed households said that they faced difficulties in accessing health services in April 2020. This percentage increased slightly in May 2021 to 30.7%. 26.2% of interviewed households said they faced difficulties in daily shopping activities as of April 2020. This percentage increased slightly in May 2021 to 31.9%. The difficult situation in taking care of young children under 5 years old and the elderly (over 70 years old) has hardly changed.

Figure 9. Difficulties in household activities due to COVID-19 by gender (% of households)



Source: IDRC Survey 2021

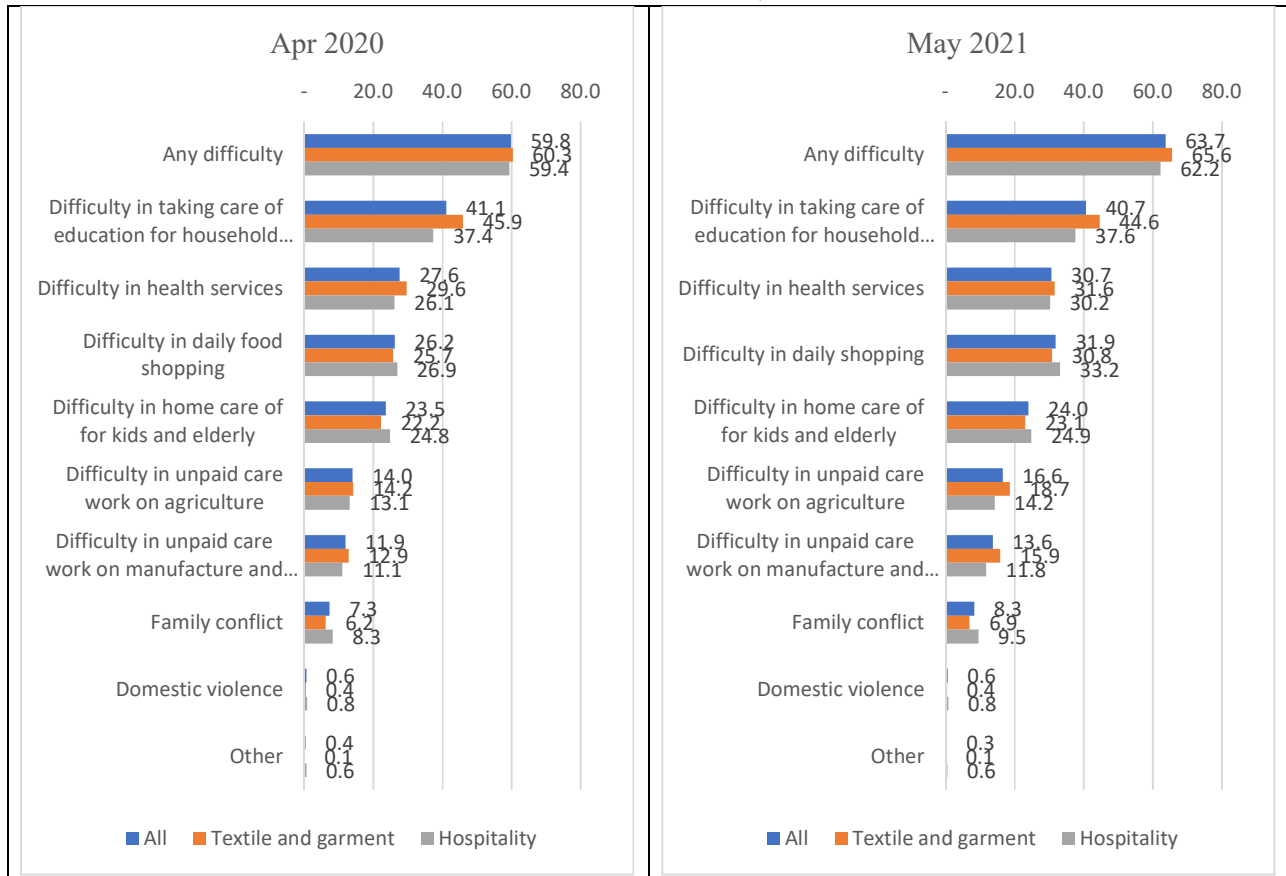
The gender impact shows that male-headed households face more difficulties than female-headed group. As of April 2020, 60.8% of male-headed households, and 54.9% of female-headed households face difficulties. This gender gap is similar to May 2021, slightly increased with a higher proportion of male-headed households facing difficulties than female-headed households (64.6% vs. 59.6%, respectively). Similarly, this gender gap is slightly increased to other difficulties.

There is not too much difference in difficulty between the two groups of households by industry in April 2020 (Figure 10). As of May 2021, households with members working in the textile and garment industry had a slightly higher rate of difficulties than those in the hospitality industry. Mainly, the slight increase in difficulty is reflected in accessing health services. 27.6% of households in the textile and garment industry had difficulty accessing health care in April 2020, increasing to 30.7% in May 2021.

In contrast, the proportion of households with members working in the textile and garment industry who have difficulty in daily shopping is lower than that as for the hospitality industry. As of May 2021 in comparison to April 2020, the rate of difficulty in daily shopping increase by 6 percentage points for those households in the hospitality industry, higher than that by nearly 4 percentage points for those households in the textile and garment industry.

The increase in the difficulty rate in the above activities is because, in May 2021, the pandemic broke out again, with the number of cases skyrocketing, leading to medical distancing and blockade in some provinces. In comparison to the textile and garment industry, those household working in the hospitality industry continues to face employment difficulties, so they have more time in providing education and medical care for household members, but face more difficulty in daily shopping.

Figure 10. Percentage of difficulties in household activities due to COVID-19 by industry (% of households)



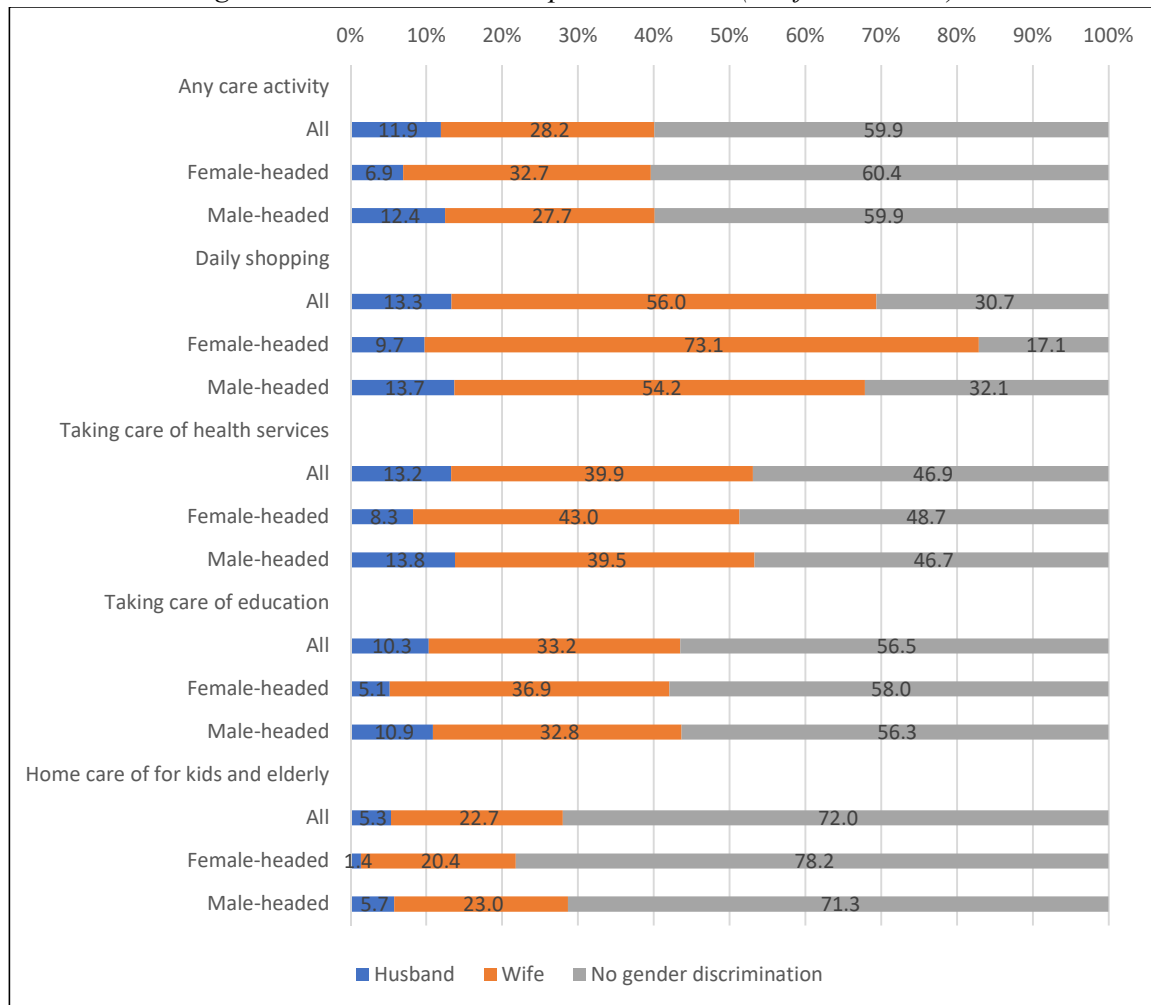
Source: IDRC Survey 2021

The rate of domestic violence is very low, less than 1%, with no increase during the pandemic outbreak. Controversial conflicts in the family are also reflected at a low level, only 7.3% in April 2020 and very slightly increased to 8.3% in May 2021. Despite these low figures, it is also worth noting weak assistance to women. Only 27% of households reported receiving help from local women's shelters. Moreover, the slight increase in conflict was coupled with a slight decrease in the number of people reporting shelter assistance from 27.9% in April 2020 to 27.1% in May 2021. This situation may also be due to pandemic prevention difficulties that have overwhelmed the local assistance system.

Difficulties largely fall on the shoulders of women when the wife still takes care of most of the unpaid housework.

In general, most women are still the ones who do unpaid care work for the household. About 60% of the interviewed households reported no discrimination between husband and wife in general household responsibilities (Figure 11). However, 28.2% of households still said that women bear the primary responsibility for unpaid care work. This is more than double the rate of 11.9% of households who said men carry this primary responsibility. For female-headed households, of course, the percentage of women taking the primary responsibility is much higher than the ratio of men doing unpaid care work (32.7% vs. 6.9%).

Figure 11. Gender roles in unpaid care work (% of households)



Source: IDRC Survey 2021

The highest burden on women is found in daily shopping. The percentage of households reporting that women are mainly responsible for doing daily shopping is 42.7 % points higher than the proportion of households reporting that men do this work. Women are mainly responsible for carrying out daily shopping, accounting for 56% of the households interviewed. Only 13.3% of households said that men are mainly responsible for daily shopping.

This gender difference reached the second-highest level for unpaid work of healthcare (26.7% points), followed by unpaid care work for children's education (22.9% points), and lowest for taking care of small kids (under 5 years old) and the elderly (over 70 years old) in the family (17.4% points). Meanwhile, these activities face many difficulties during the period of social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It means the difficulties during the pandemic outbreak fall more on women in all categories of unpaid care work. The gender gap in the unpaid care work in general is 16.3 % points.

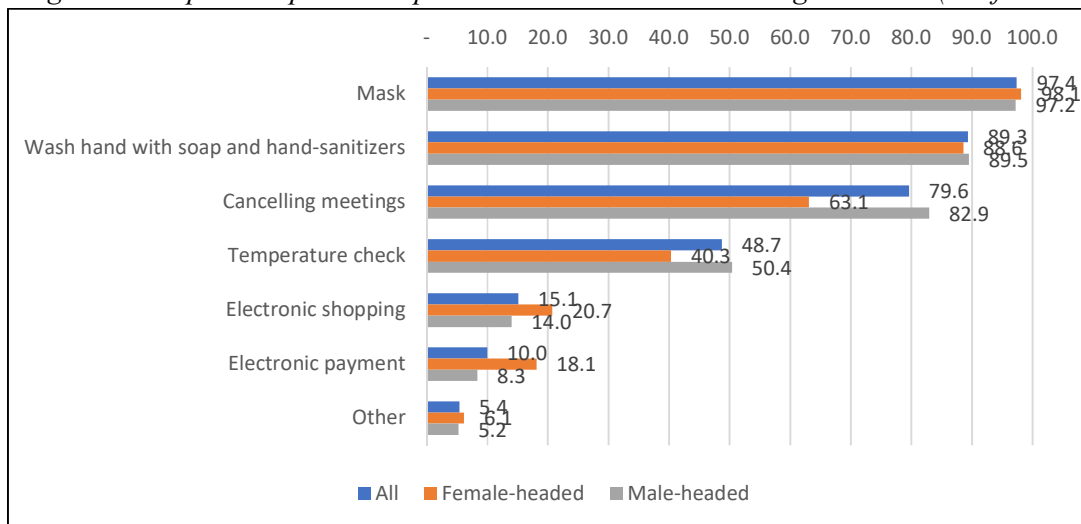
2. Household response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

2.1. Response to prevent the pandemic

Most of the interviewed households (99.9%) seriously followed the pandemic prevention and control recommendations of the Ministry of Health on using masks, washing hands with soap and hand sanitizer, canceling mass gatherings, enhancing online shopping, and online payment.

Safe living with COVID-19: households strictly follow the recommendations of the Ministry of Health on implementing 5K³ to prevent the COVID-19 outbreak: with 97.4% of households using masks, 89.3% washing hands with soap and hand sanitizer, 79.6% canceling meetings, 48.7% having temperature checks, 15.1% online shopping, and 10% using electronic payments (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Implement pandemic prevention and social distancing measures (% of households)



³ 5K includes: Mask – Disinfection – Distance – Decentralization – Medical declaration

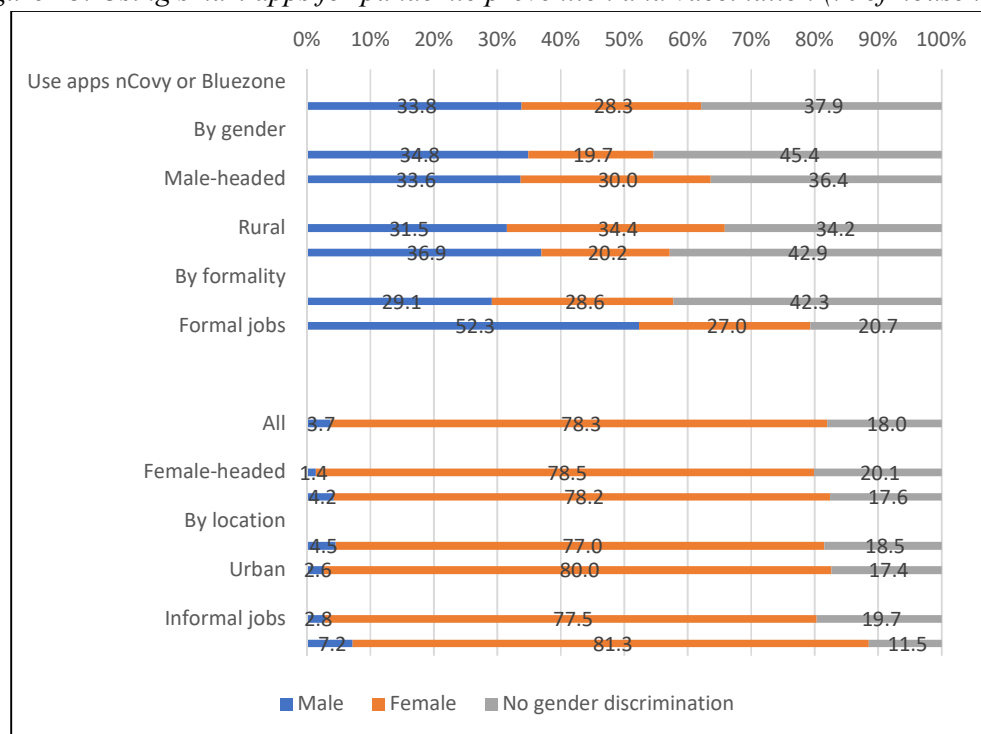
Source: IDRC Survey 2021

An interesting result is that there is not too much difference by gender in the rate of using masks or hand sanitizer, but there is quite a clear gender difference in other methods of pandemic prevention. For example, the percentage of female-headed households wearing masks is less-than-one-percentage-point higher than that of male-headed households. In contrast, the proportion of male-headed households using hand sanitizer was slightly higher than one percentage point than that of female-headed households.

The gender difference is most pronounced in a much higher proportion of male-headed households canceling mass meetings and taking temperature checks than that of female-headed households. Meanwhile, the percentage of female-headed households conducting online shopping and electronic payments is higher than that of male-headed households. Online shopping and electronic payment account for a modest proportion. This shows that more efforts are needed to make these online methods as a solution on the COVID-19 outbreak prevention by gradually cashless habit promotion towards accelerating digital transformation such as the goals set by the Government over the past few years.

All interviewed households have installed Bluezone or nCovy applications and are ready to be vaccinated against COVID-19. It is a good sign in the implementation of pandemic prevention measures.

Figure 13. Using smart apps for pandemic prevention and vaccination (% of households)



Source: IDRC Survey 2021

It can be seen that there is a gender difference in having a decisive voice in the application of these pandemic prevention measures. 37.9% of households said that the decision to use smart applications such as Bluezone or nCovy is equally agreed upon between husband and wife in

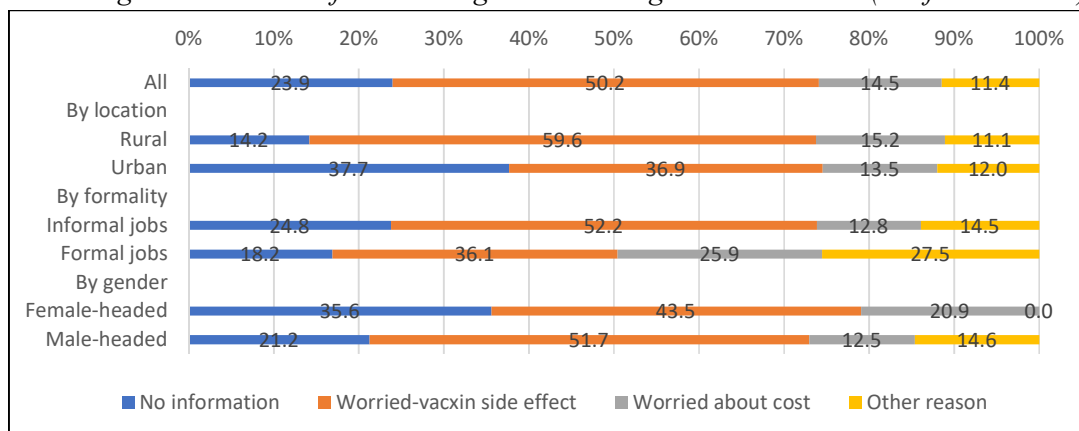
the family (Figure 13). However, 33.8% of households decided this issue by the power of the husband. Meanwhile, only 28.3% of households have a voice in deciding this issue by the wife. There is an more equal power between husband and wife in female-headed households, so the no-discrimination rate is 45.4%, higher than that of male-headed households at 36.4%. The situation of a male voice having a much more decisive power is recorded in the formal sector, when 52.3% of households in the formal sector have this decision made by the husband in the family.

In contrast, women play a crucial role in deciding whether to be vaccinated against COVID-19. 78.3% of households have this decision made by the wife in the family. This ratio was not too different between groups in different sectors.

About 19% of households have not been vaccinated⁴. Among this group of households, the main reasons are concerns about post-injection reactions (50%), no specific information on vaccination registration (23.9%), and concerns about costs incurred by vaccination (14.5%).

The gender difference is quite evident when the proportion of female-headed households who are worried about the costs incurred by vaccination and do not have information on vaccination registration is higher than that of male-headed households. These figures show that women's access to information is inferior to that of men in this regard. 35.6% of female-headed households claim the reason for not having information on vaccination registration, while this rate is only 21.2% as for male-headed group (Figure 14). This situation is also seen in urban areas where 37.7% households claim the reason for not having vaccination registration information. The proportion is as high as 59.6% of households in rural areas, 52.2% of those in the informal sector who have concerns about vaccine side effects. Therefore, it should promote information on vaccination registration in urban areas and information on side effects of vaccination in rural and informal areas.

Figure 14. Reasons for not being vaccinated against COVID-19 (% of households)



Source: IDRC Survey 2021

⁴ Vaccination coverage for people aged 18 and older was very high at the time of writing this report.

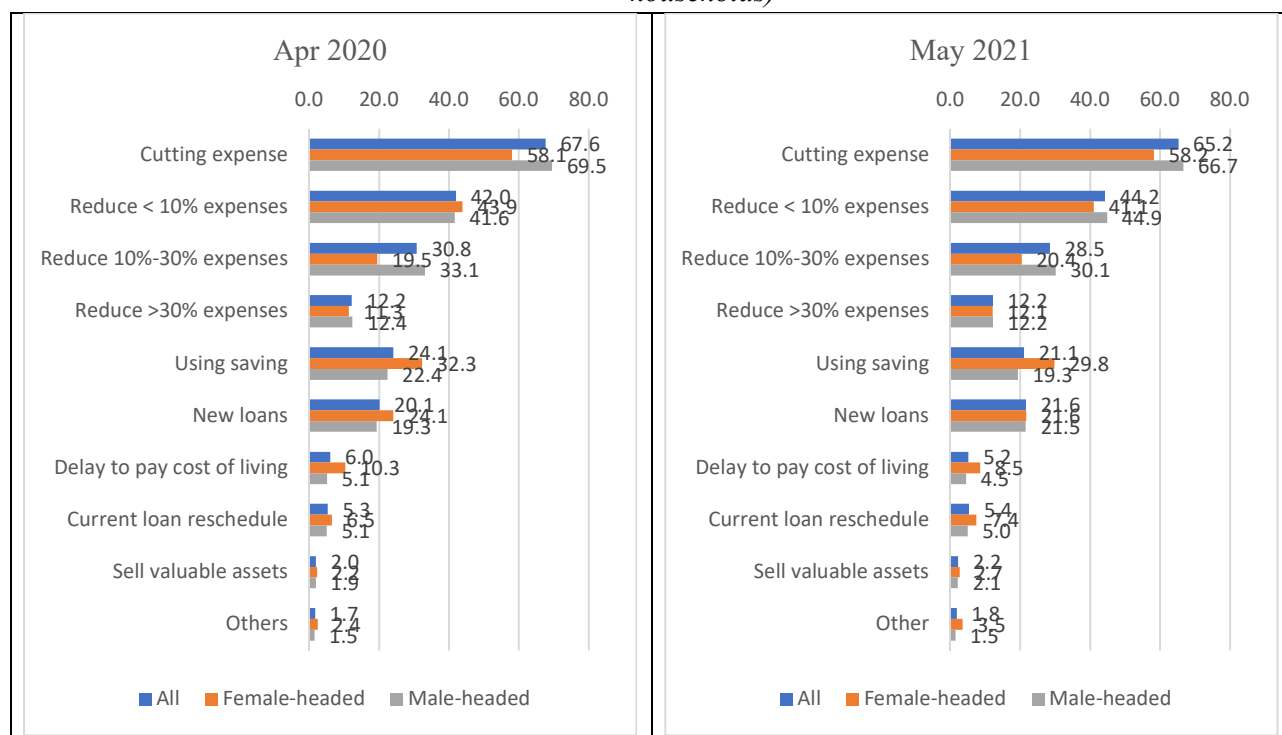
2.2. Economic responses

Cutting spending is the primary response, with two-thirds of households using it to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are 1/5 of households using savings or new loans as a response measure. Only a few households use the methods of selling valuable assets, deferring payment of living expenses, and renewing debts.

As of April 2020, to cope with the pandemic's peak, the majority of affected households have managed with the reduction in income by choosing the solution to cut spending (67.6% of households) (Figure 15). Specifically, 42% of households have cut less than 10% of household spending; 30.8% of households have reduced their spending by 10-30%, and 12% have reduced their spending by more than 30%. The situation of 10-30% reduction in spending improved in May 2021, when this ratio decreased slightly to 28.5% of households cutting 10-30% of spending. Therefore, the ratio of households that cut spending by less than 10% increase slightly to 44.2% in May 2021. The ratio of households that have to cut spending remains high, only decreasing slightly to 65.2% in May 2021, i.e., a decrease by 2.4 percentage points.

In May 2021, there was also a slight decrease by 3 percentage points in the percentage of households that had to use savings for household spending, but a slight increase by 1.5 percentage points in the rate of new loans for spending. A few households have changed their coping strategies to cope with difficulties during the pandemic, from using savings to taking out a new loan or applying for a loan extension.

Figure 15. Measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by gender of head of household (% of households)



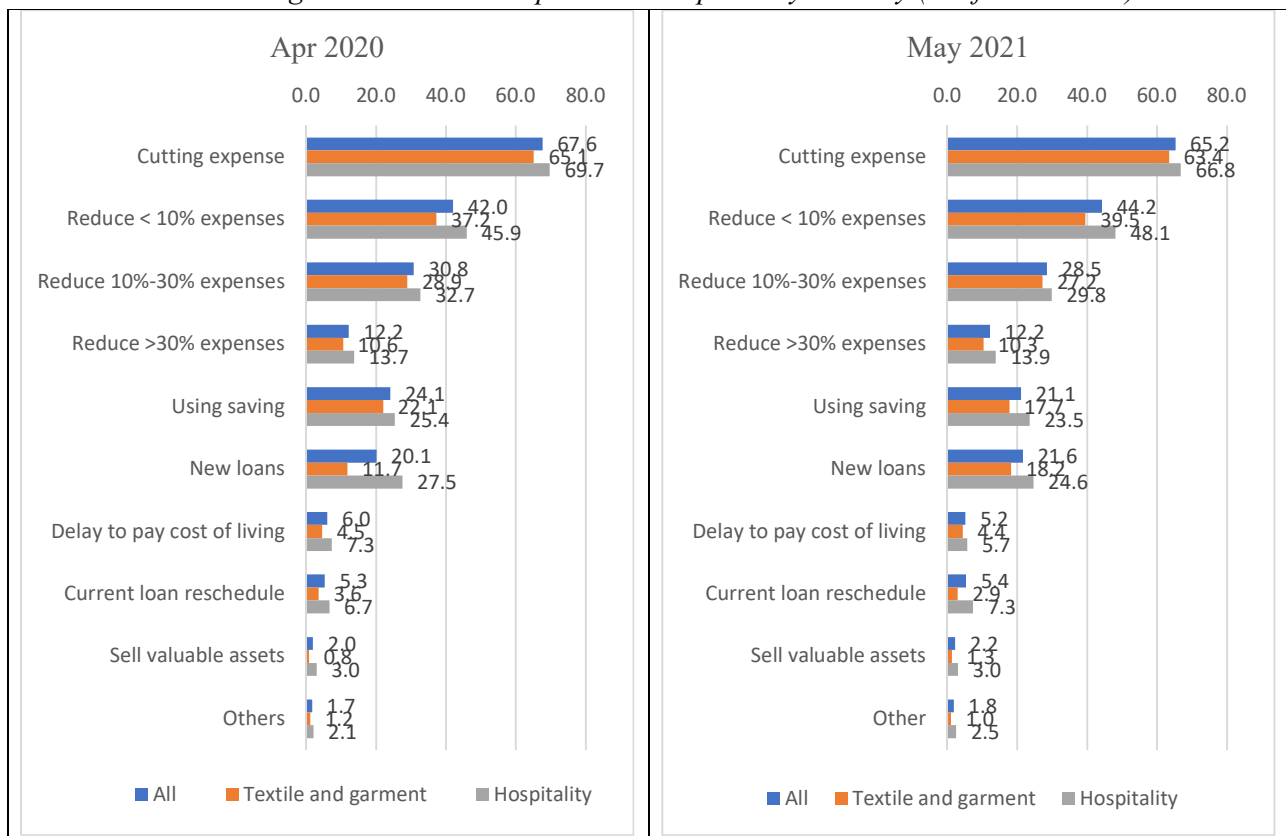
Source: IDRC Survey 2021

It is a positive note that only a tiny percentage of about 2% of affected households sell valuable assets to cope, possibly because they do not have assets to sell or are not forced to use this coping measure.

The gender difference is recognized in the measure of cutting spending and using savings for household consumption during the COVID-19 outbreak. The percentage of female-headed households using savings is higher than that of male-headed households. Still, the rate of female-headed households cutting spending is less than that of male-headed households, and mainly in cutting less than 30% of household spending.

Sectoral differences were evident across all measures, especially cutting spending by less than 10% and making new loans (Figure 16). A higher proportion of households in the hospitality industry using such measures to respond to the COVID-19 impacts is higher than those working in the textile and garment industry. However, by May 2021, households in the textile and garment industry also switched from using savings to making out new loans, more than those in the hospitality industry.

Figure 16. COVID-19 pandemic response by industry (% of households)

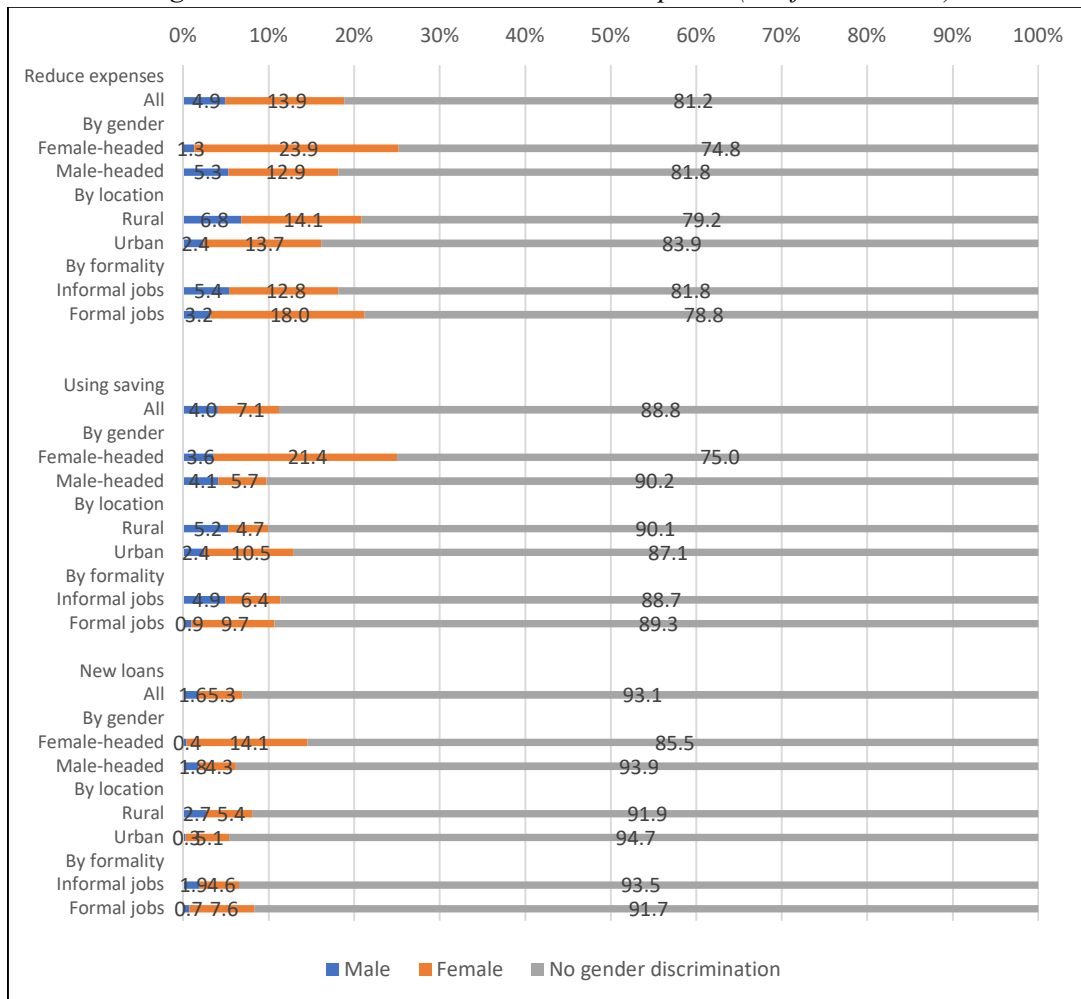


Source: IDRC Survey 2021

Most family response decisions are agreed upon by both the husband and wife in the family. In addition, the gender disparity is also evident when the proportion of wives making the main decisions in these matters is much higher than this role of husbands, especially about cutting spending.

81.2% of households have an equal voice in an agreement between husband and wife in deciding to cut spending (Figure 17). The rate is 88.8% of households have an equal voice in using savings, and 93.1% as for making a new loan for household spending during difficult times. In all three of these main household responses, this ratio is not too different between groups of households with different characteristics. However, despite this great consensus, the percentage of women making the main decisions is still much higher than that of the male group. 13.9% of households' spending cutting are decided mainly by the wife, while only 4.9% are decided by the husband. 7.1% of households' saving using are decided mainly by the wife, while only 4% is decided by the husband. 5.3% of households' loan making are decided by the wife, while only 1.6% are decided by the husband.

Figure 17. Decisive voice in household response (% of households)



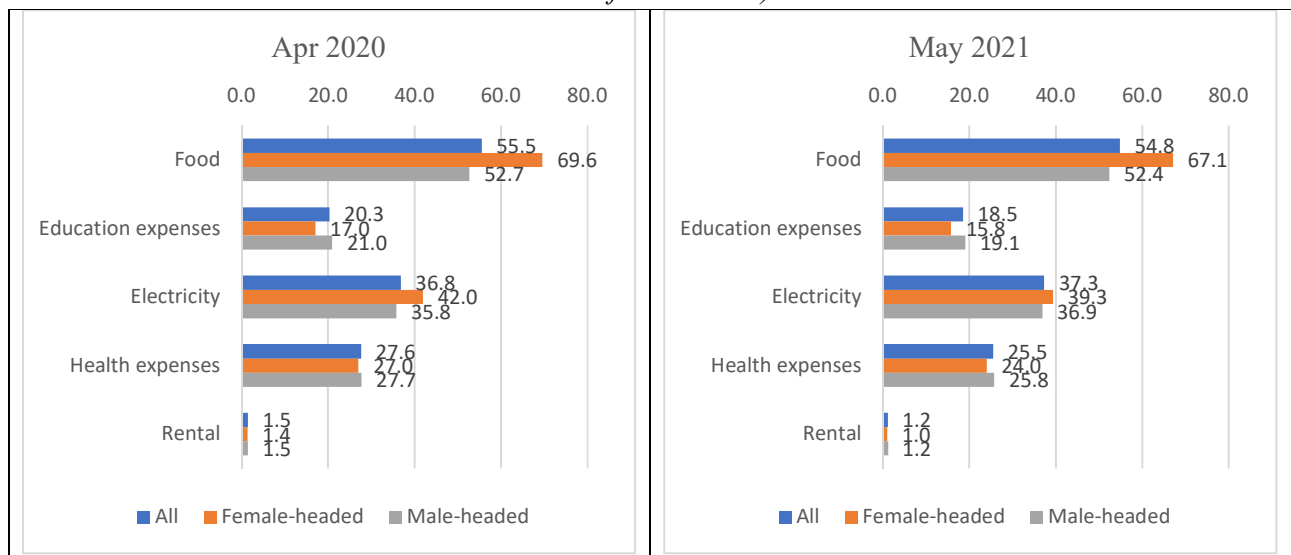
Source: IDRC Survey 2021

The household spending cut are mainly on food (over half of households), electricity (1/3 of households), health care and education expenses (about 1/5 of households).

In April 2020, 55.5% of households chose to cut food costs, 36.8% of households cut electricity bills, and 27.6% cut medical service expenses and 20.3% cut education expenses (Figure 18). This situation is unlikely to change much in May 2021. A slight reduction in the percentage of households choosing to cut food costs (54.8% of households), medical service expenses (25.5% of households), and education expenses (18.5% of households). In contrast, there was a slight increase to 37.3% of households cutting electricity bills.

The gender difference is most evident in the reduction of food spending. Many female-headed households cut food and electricity costs more than male-headed households do. In contrast, less female-headed households cut spending on education and health services than male-headed households. It can be seen that women prioritize education and health over other expenditures.

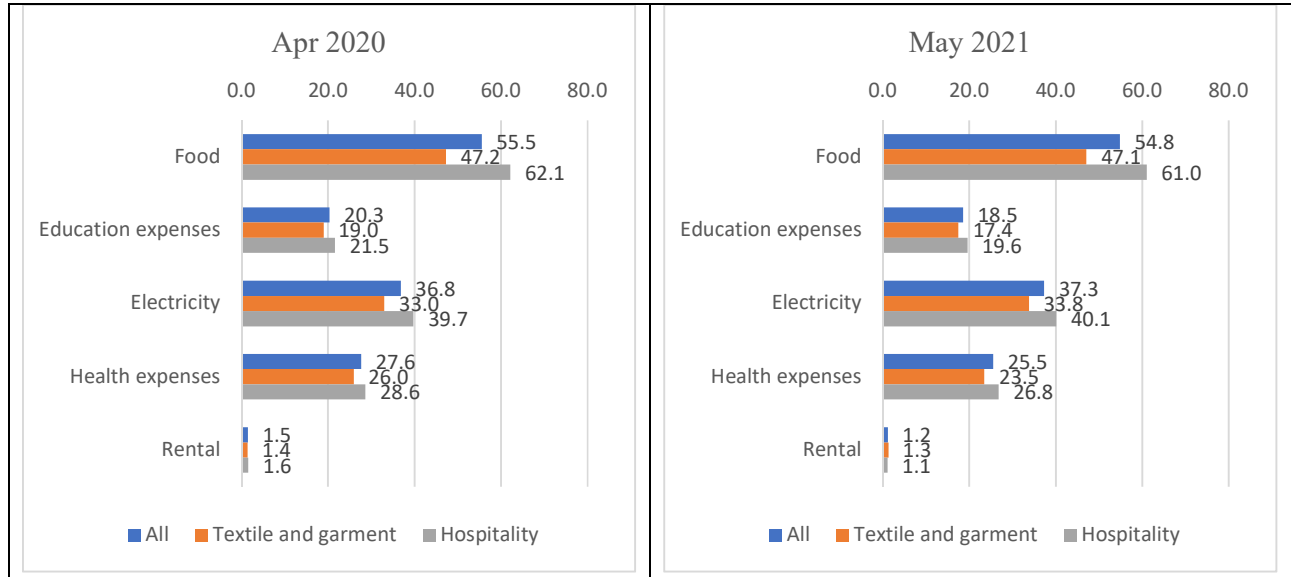
Figure 18. Spending cuts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by gender of head of household (% of households)



Source: IDRC Survey 2021

In April 2020, for households with members working in the textile and garment industry, the percentage of households cutting expenditures was less than that of households with members working in the hospitality industry. This situation has no significant change in May 2021 (Figure 19).

Figure 19. Spending cuts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by industry (% of households)

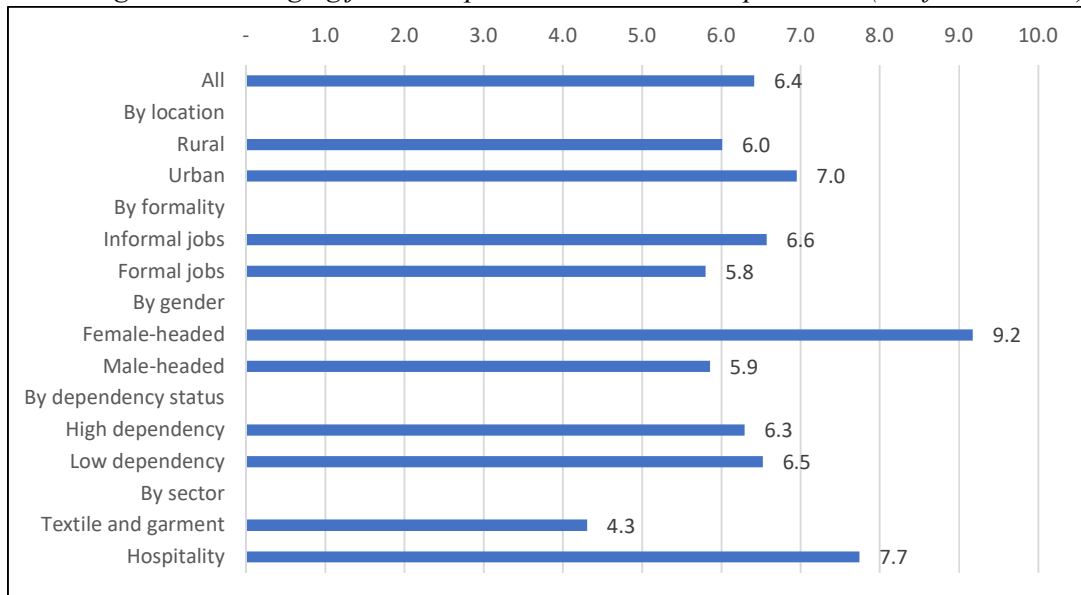


Source: IDRC Survey 2021

Very low rate of job mobility (only 6.4% of households). Changing jobs are critical within the province and industry.

6.4% of households have members who carry out job mobility (Figure 20). This percentage is slightly higher (up about one percentage point) in urban areas, the informal sector, as for households with a high dependency, more than those in rural areas, the formal sector, and households with a low dependency, respectively.

Figure 20. Changing jobs to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic (% of households)

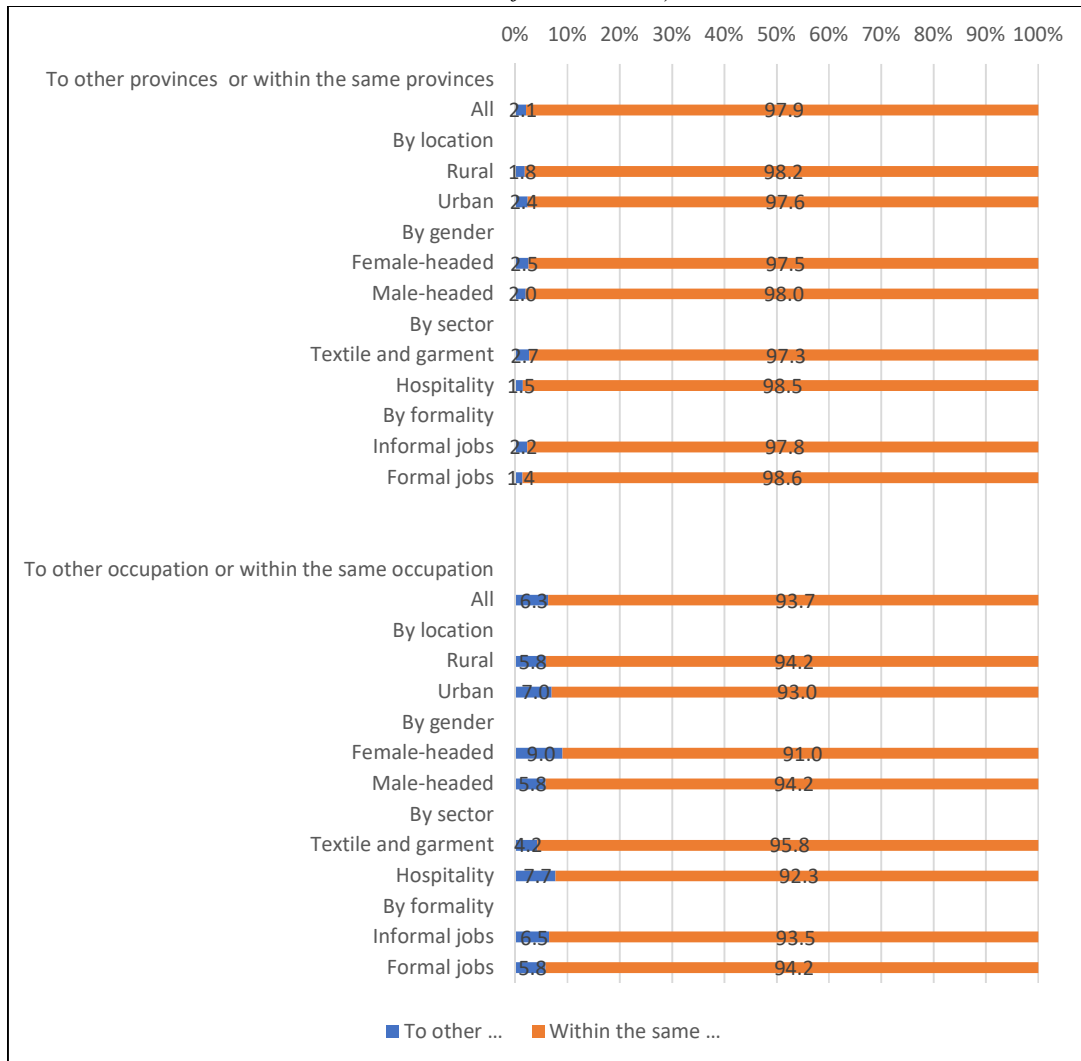


Source: IDRC Survey 2021

There are considerable differences in job mobility by gender and by industry. When 9.2% of female-headed households changed their jobs, at a higher rate than that of 5.9% of male-headed households. 7.7% of households in the hospitality industry changed their jobs, while only 4.3% of those in the textile and garment industry do this. In the context of the pandemic, women and those in the hospitality industry are more active, or the employment impact pushes them to switch to new jobs more.

Among the members who changed their jobs, most were intra-provincial (97.9% of respondents) and in the same occupation (93.7%) (Figure 21). The reason for moving only within the province is because when the pandemic breaks out vigorously, it limits the movement between provinces and cities. This percentage is hardly different by gender, industry, and region.

Figure 21. Changing jobs to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic in the province and the industry (% of households)



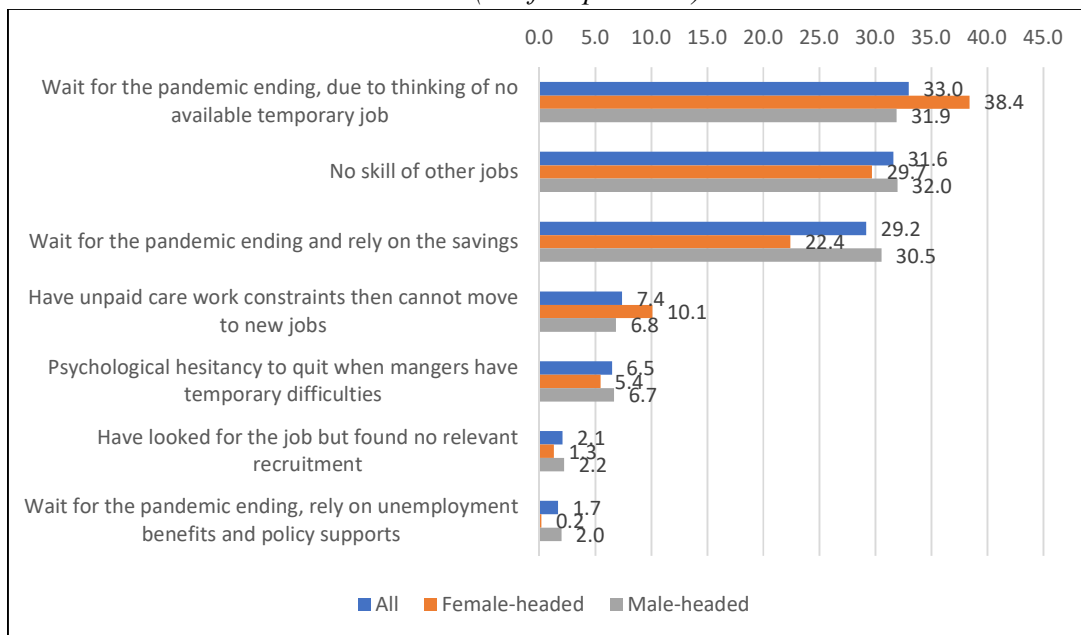
Source: IDRC Survey 2021

However, it can be seen that there is a slight difference in job mobility for women's groups and the hospitality industry. 9% of female-headed households are moving to other jobs in the same industry, while this rate is only 5.8% of male-headed households. 7.7% of households working in the hospitality industry moved to other jobs in the same industry, while this rate was only 4.2% of those in the textile and garment industry. This ratio also reflects that when the pandemic broke out, the hospitality industry was the one that was more heavily affected due to its higher direct contacts.

Waiting for the pandemic to pass was the most common reason for the “no job mobility” response, followed by the reason of a skill shortage for other jobs.

33% of respondents said that temporary jobs are not available, so they are not looking for new opportunities (Figure 22). On the other hand, 31.6% of respondents have no other skills to switch to another job. 29.2% of respondents wait for the pandemic to pass and use their savings to cope with economic difficulties. A small percentage of 7.4% of respondents have difficulties due to the burden of unpaid care work for their families, so they cannot look for a new job. It should promote the Government's intervention on the access to vocational training classes to increase opportunities for job mobility while they suffer from layoffs and reduced income. This can be done through online learning channels, learning apps, or television-based training.

Figure 22. Reasons for no job mobility in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by gender (% of respondents)

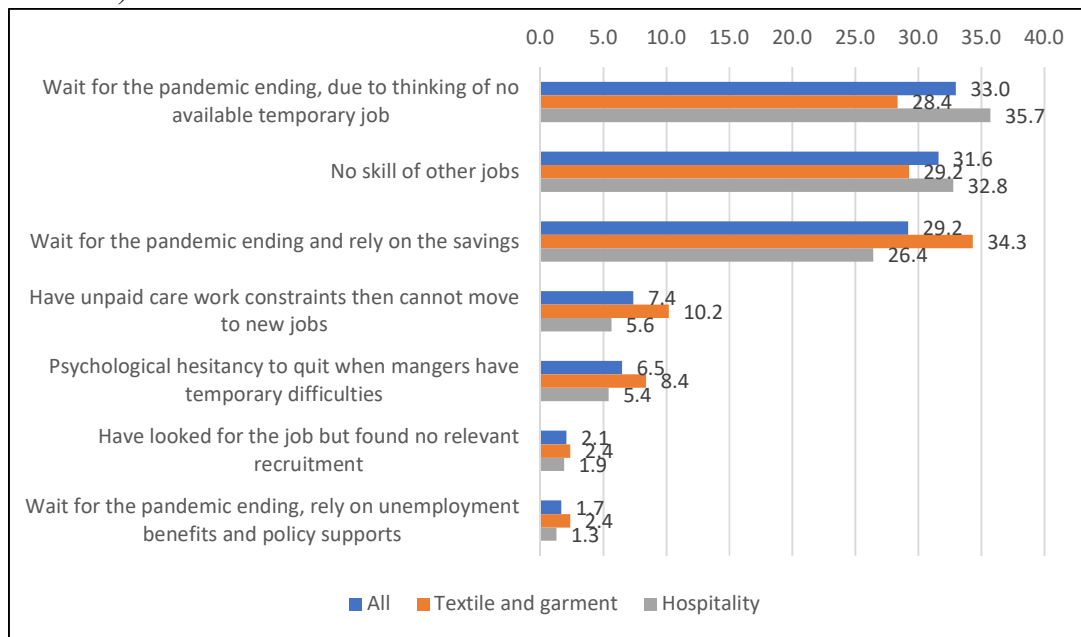


Source: IDRC Survey 2021

It can be seen that these coping responses differ by gender. Women's vulnerability is higher than that of men when (1) a higher proportion of women than men share that there are no temporary employment opportunities, and too more burden of unpaid care work to find a new job; and (2) a lower proportion of women than men being able to rely on savings for household spending in the pandemic outbreak.

In addition, these responses vary by industry (Figure 23). The vulnerability of households in the hospitality industry is higher than that in the textile and garment industry when (1) the proportion of households in the hospitality industry reporting no temporary job opportunities, and no skills to find new jobs, is higher than that in the textile and garment industry; and (2) the proportion of households in the hospitality industry, sharing their ability to rely on savings in the pandemic outbreak, is less than that in the textile and garment industry.

Figure 23. Reasons for not changing jobs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by industry (% of households)

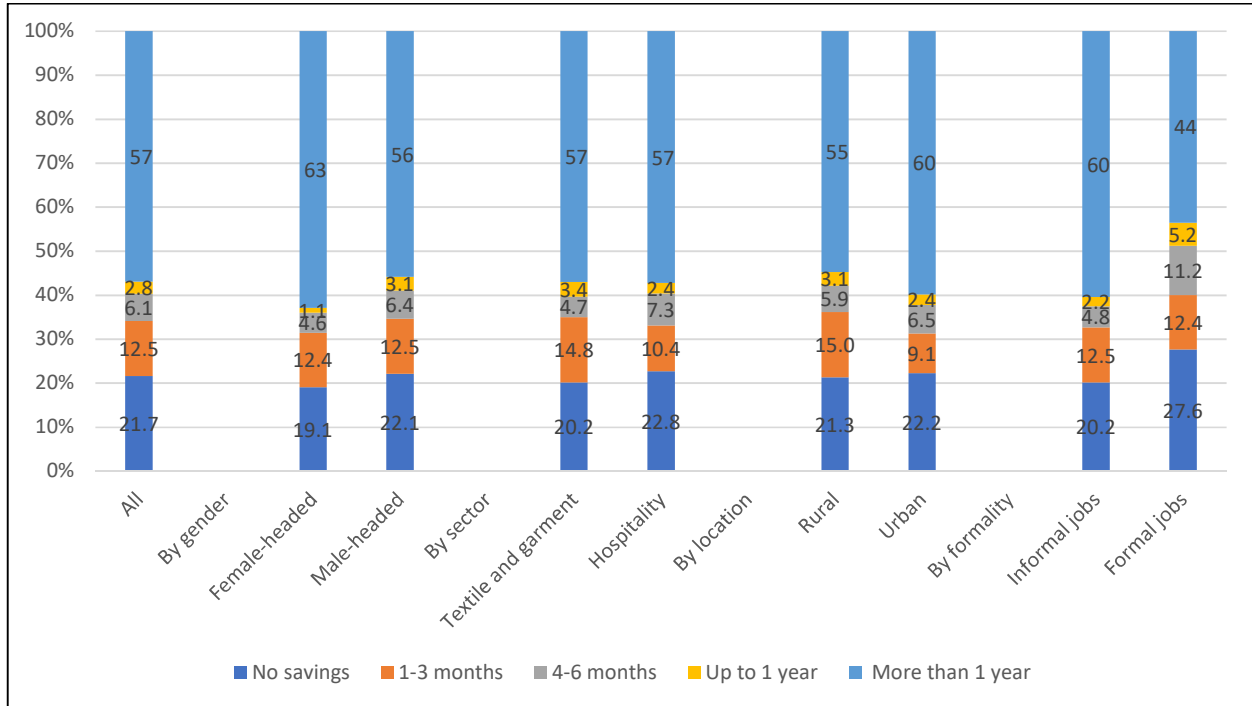


Source: IDRC Survey 2021

Using savings to cover household spending during the pandemic outbreak is the choice of 1/5 of the interviewed households, but the number of months that the household can rely on savings is limited.

Vulnerability is evident, with 21.7% of households having no savings (Figure 24). Nearly 60% of households have abundant savings resources, enough to last more than one year for household expenses. However, because only 1/5 of households have to use savings, most of these households fall into the group with few savings resources. This situation did not differ significantly between the groups of different characteristics by gender, industry, or other characteristics.

Figure 24. Resources of savings to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic (% of households)

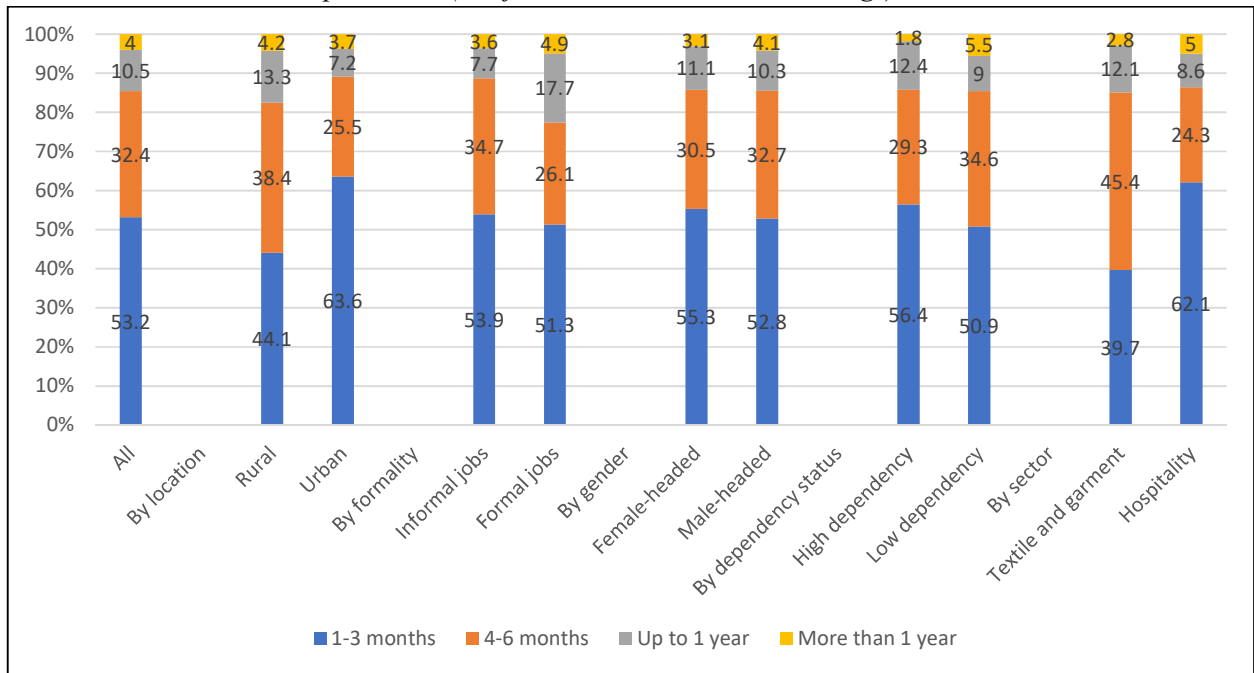


Note: Number of months for households to rely on available savings for household spending
 Source: IDRC Survey 2021

Households that had to use savings to pay for their expenses mainly fell into the group of households with meager savings resources. For example, 53.2% of these households only have enough resources to save for 1-3 months of family life.

If difficulties caused by the pandemic outbreak continue beyond three months, they will be forced to reduce spending further, increase debt, or sell assets. 32.4% of households can rely on savings for household spending within the next six months if the difficult situation does not improve (Figure 25). Relying on savings to pay for household expenses, only 10.5% of households can survive for up to 1 year and 4% for more than one year. This situation is quite similar across different household groups. The rates of households in urban areas and the hospitality industry relying on savings in the next three months (63.6% and 62.1%) are much higher than those in the rural areas and the textile and garment industry, respectively. However, in terms of relying on savings in the next six months, the proportion of households in the textile and garment industry is double that in the hospitality industry (45.4% versus 24.3%, respectively).

Figure 25. Number of months remaining to rely on savings to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic (% of households had to use savings)



Source: IDRC Survey 2021

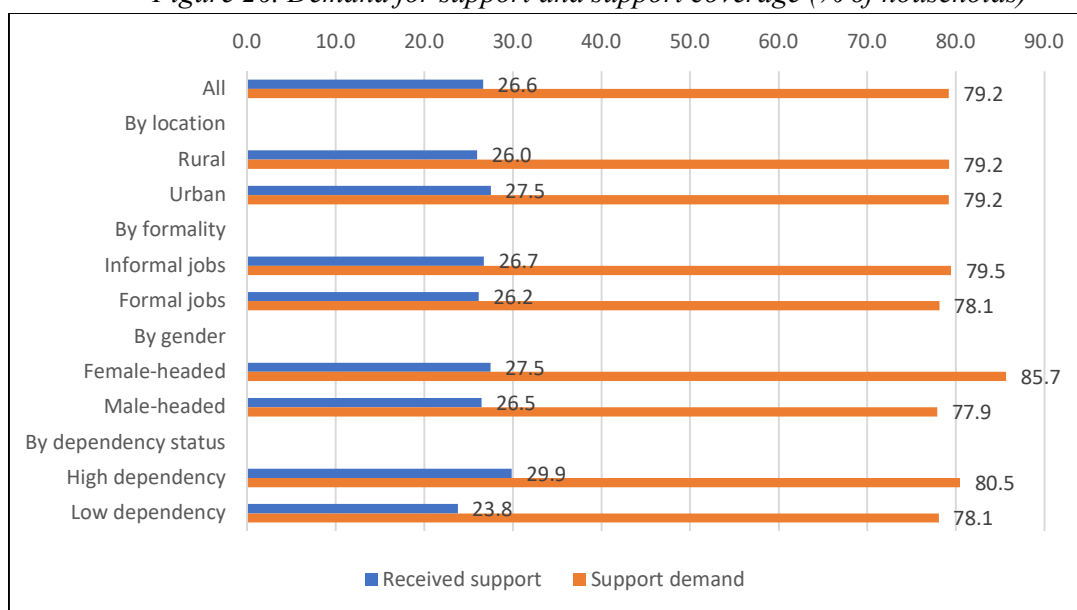
3. Support against the COVID-19 outbreak

In the situation of the COVID-19 outbreak, to gradually remove difficulties for the economy, the Government issued Resolution No. 42/NQ-CP dated April 9, 2020, on measures to support affected people facing difficulties in employment and income reduction due to the pandemic⁵ (social assistance package at about VND 62,000 billion). However, this support package has not reached a large coverage of affected people experiencing profound income reduction, job loss, underemployment, temporary poverty due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The majority, accounting for 4/5 of the households, facing difficulties, demand for support, especially for female-headed households. However, only 1/4 of households said they had received support.

79.2% of households wish to receive support (Figure 26). This ratio is quite similar across different household groups, except for a significant gender difference. The percentage of female-headed households demanding for support is 85.7%, while only 77.9% of male-headed households want to receive support. However, contrary to the high demand for help, the coverage of households receiving the support is low, i.e., 26.6% of surveyed households. This ratio is quite similar across different groups. The coverage is better for households with a high dependency when 29.9% of them receive support, much higher than that of households with a low dependency (23.8%).

Figure 26. Demand for support and support coverage (% of households)



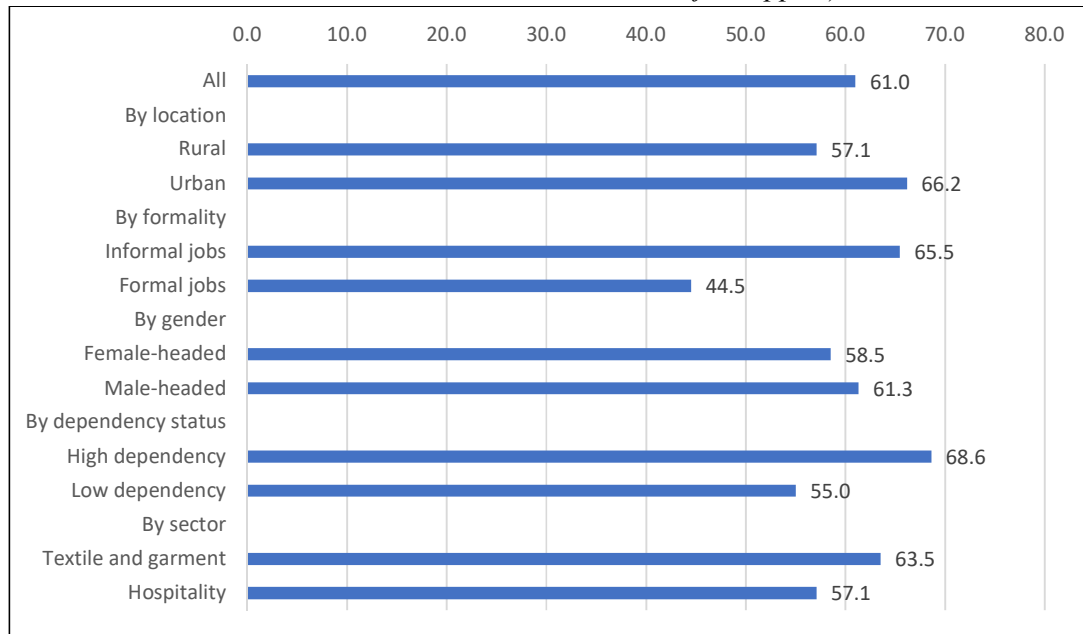
Source: IDRC Survey 2021

⁵ This support package has three main components: direct cash transfer with a budget of VND 35,880 billion from the central and local state budgets; indirect support through the refinancing loan of the Bank for Social Policies with VND 16,200 billion; through the suspension of contributions to the retirement and survivorship fund with VND 6,500 billion and support for training and fostering to improve vocational skills to maintain jobs for employees from the Unemployment Insurance Fund, estimated at VND 3,000 billion.

For 20% of households with no demand for support, most of them (i.e., 61%) are willing to give their support to those who are more disadvantaged. The remaining few said they could accommodate themselves, had savings in place, or were not affected by the pandemic.

The spirit of reciprocity between households is evident. 61% of the households do not need to receive support because they are willing to give their support to those who are more disadvantaged (Figure 27). This rate is low in the groups in the hospitality industry, in rural areas, and with a high dependency, and female-heads (about 55-58.5%), and much lower in the formal sector (44.5%). In these groups, they self-adjust better in their daily life, have a higher level of savings, or are not affected by the pandemic.

Figure 27. The reason for no demand for support during the COVID-19 outbreak: willingness to give support to households with more difficult circumstances (% of households that have no demand for support)

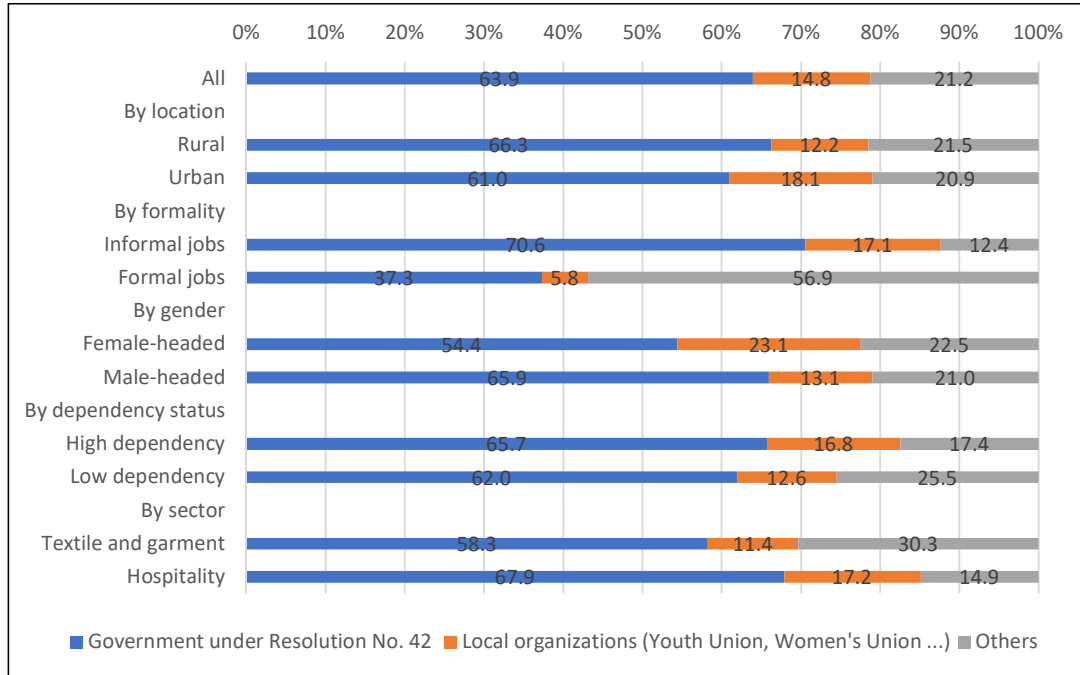


Source: IDRC Survey 2021

Coverage in support for households in difficulty is still modest, but there are many sources of support to households, of which the majority is support from the Government. 63.9% said they had received support from the Government's support package. In addition, the rest also have money and in-kind support from unions, organizations, relatives, and benefactors.

Survey data show that only about 27% of households received assistance (Figure 26). The majority, 63.9%, receive support from the Government's social assistance package (Figure 28). In addition, 14.8% is supported in cash and in-kind from local mass organizations such as Women Union, Youth Union, Farmer Union... 21.2% comes from support from organizations, businesses, relatives, and other benefactors.

Figure 28. Resources during the COVID-19 pandemic(% of households)



Source: IDRC Survey 2021

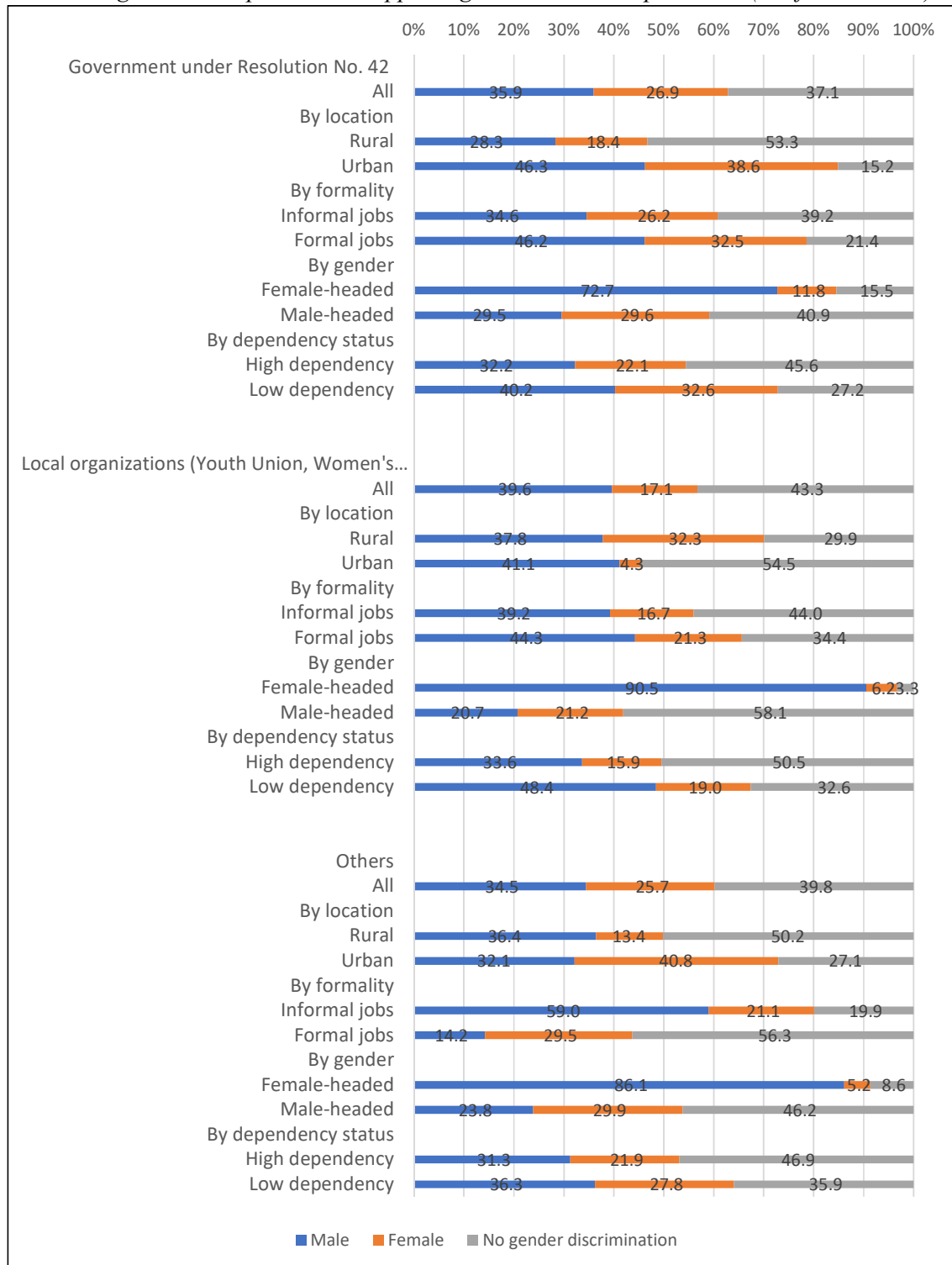
The proportion of support sources is quite similar among household groups. However, there are differences in support sources to those in the formal sector, those with female heads, and in the textile and garment industry, in comparison to those in the informal sector, with male heads, and in the hospitality industry, respectively. In the formal sector, the percentage of households receiving the Government's social assistance package is only 37.3% because other support from organizations, businesses, relatives, and other benefactors take account for 56.9% of households. Similarly, the group of households in the textile and garment industry also has the proportion receiving the Government's social assistance package at only 58.3% due to the ratio of other support from organizations and businesses, relatives and benefactors increased to 30.3%. Female-headed households also received higher support from local mass organizations, up to 23.1%. Therefore, it can be seen that local mass organizations pay attention to female-headed households.

About 40% of households has no discrimination between husband and wife to receive the support. Besides, the proportion of men in charge of receiving support on behalf of households is much higher than that of women.

For different types of support, the proportion of husbands in charge of receiving support on behalf of the household is significantly higher than that of wives (Figure 29). As for receiving support from the Government's social assistance package, 35.6% of households have husbands in charge of this work, higher than that by wives (26.9%). As for receiving other support, not from the Government or local unions, 34.5% of households have husbands in charge of this work, higher than that by wives (25.7%). This gender gap is only 9 percentage points. Meanwhile, this gender gap more than doubled, i.e., 22.5% percentage points, for receiving

support from mass organizations (39.6% of households have husbands in charge of this work, higher than 17.1% that by wives).

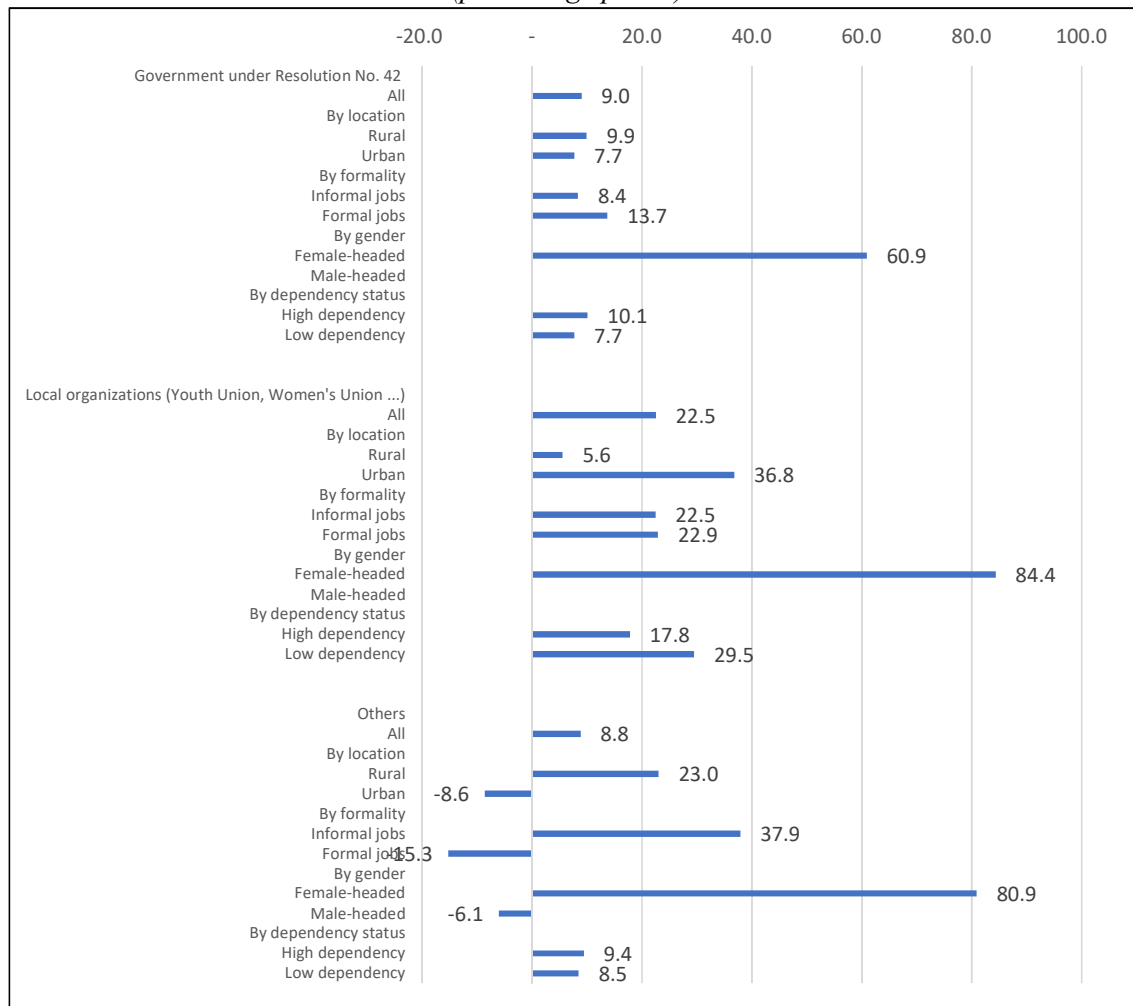
Figure 29. People receive support against COVID-19 pandemic (% of households)



Source: IDRC Survey 2021

The gender difference in receiving support is similar across other population groups, by about 10-30 percentage points (Figure 30). However, the gender gap increases dramatically for female-headed households. As for female-headed households, this gap is up to 84 percentage points in receiving support from local unions, 81 percentage points in receiving other support not from the Government or local unions, and 61 percentage points in receiving support from the Government's social assistance package. These figures also show that, for female-headed households, women has the leading role of the bread winner, then they go to work often, so men are the ones who stay at home more and receive support. In constrast, only for receiving other support not from the Government or local unions, there are three groups with a high percentage of women taking on the primary role of receiving support than men do: households in the informal sector (the gender difference by 15.3 percentage points), in rural areas (the gender difference by 8.6 percentage points) and with male heads (the gender difference by 6.1 percentage points).

Figure 30. Gender difference in receiving support against the COVID-19 pandemic (percentage points)



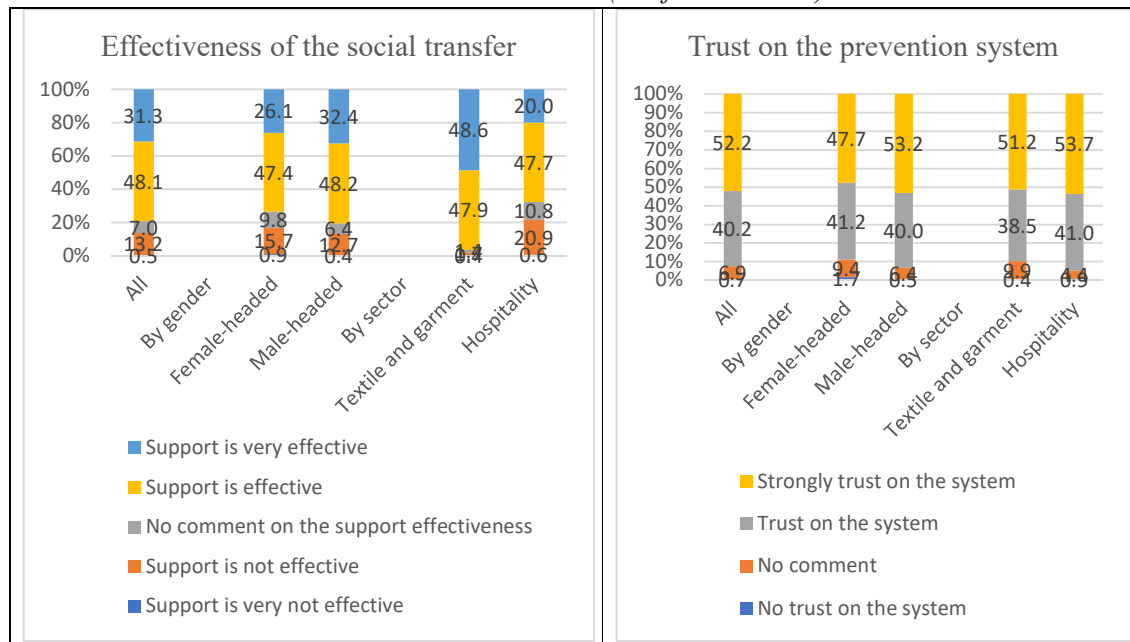
Note: Gender gap = proportion of husbands receiving support – the percentage of wives receiving support

Source: IDRC Survey 2021

Most households have trust in the Government's COVID-19 prevention system. The majority of social assistance recipients have a positive view of the effectiveness of monetary support packages. This shows the positive assessment of the people about the implementation of Government's measures against COVID-19.

About 90% of households in the survey have trust on the Government's pandemic prevention system, including the anti-pandemic health systems, the local system of pandemic prevention information, and medical reporting (Figure 31). Among the households that have received cash transfers from the Government, 79% of the households highly appreciate the effectiveness of the support packages. Only a 7% of households in the survey did not have trust on the pandemic prevention system, and about 13% of those who received subsidies rated the support packages as ineffective.

Figure 31. Evaluation of the implementation of the Government's support measures during the COVID-19 outbreak (% of households)



Source: IDRC Survey 2021

This situation is not so different between groups of households by gender and by industry. The most obvious difference is in the textile and garment industry when 96.5% of this group think that cash transfers are effective. Meanwhile, in the hospitality group, only 67.7% agree with this view. 32% of households in the hospitality industry do not agree with the idea that social assistance is effective. In the group of female-headed households, 26.5% shared dissenting views on the effectiveness of the support package. This percentage is slightly lower in the male-headed group, at 19.4% of households who disagree about the effectiveness of the support package. The main reason that the support recipients believe that the support packages have not been effective is that the benefit is too low compared to the reduction in income and difficulties of the household. Besides, there are also complaints about the complicated process of getting social assistance.

CONCLUSION

The pandemic breaking out in 2020 has significantly impacted the economy in general and industries, including the textile and garment and the hospitality industries, and households, especially those with female heads. The majority of workers in textile, garment, and hospitality industries have **temporary leave from work, and reduction of working hours and income**. The hospitality industry seems to be more affected when a higher proportion of temporary leave from work, reduction of working hours and income than this proportion of workers in the textile and garment industry.

The income of households has decreased significantly, **the percentage of households falling into poverty is relatively high, especially the female-headed households**. Moreover, essential daily activities such as shopping, health care services, and educational care for household members were also significantly affected, clearly showing the increasing burden of unpaid care work on women.

Strictly following the recommendations of the Ministry of Health on using masks, washing hands with soap and water, canceling meetings, increasing shopping, and paying online are all good signals. Install disease monitoring applications such as Bluezone or nCovy and be ready for vaccination of improved households. Not willing for vaccination is because they have concerns about the reaction after vaccination, about the cost of vaccination and there is no information about this. It should promote information on vaccination registration in urban areas, and information on side effects of vaccination should be taken into account in rural and informal sectors.

Cutting spending, using savings, making new debt, selling valuable assets, deferring subsistence payments are measures that households respond to financial hardship. Cutting costs is found mainly for food, and also for electricity, health care, education. Female-headed households have a reasonable balance of cuts than male-headed households. Households that had to use savings to pay for their expenses fell mostly into the group of households with meager savings resources. Most of these households only have enough savings to pay for household spending in 1-3 months. **A few households choose to change their jobs within the province and the industry**. Most of them choose "no job mobility" when they believe the pandemic will end soon, and partly because of a lack of skills for new jobs.

Most of the affected households, especially female-headed households, **demand for support**. Among households having no demand for support, they are willing to give support to those who are more disadvantaged, or adjust themselves well to the difficulties, or have available savings. **The proportion of men receiving support on behalf of households is much higher than that of women**, especially in female-headed households. Most households have trust in the Government's COVID-19 prevention system. The majority of social assistance recipients positively view the effectiveness of monetary support packages. It shows the people's positive evaluations about the Government's measures against COVID-19. Meanwhile, a proportion of households rated support ineffective because they found the benefit to be low compared to the difficulties in income and household activities, and the complicated support procedure. **Improving the budget affordability for the social transfer package and promoting digital**

technology, connecting citizen databases on a digital platform will help improve this problem.

Support packages were far from adequate, with only 27% of affected households receiving assistance. Moreover, the support packages largely missed the transient income poor. Meanwhile, 44.8% of female-headed households fell into temporary poverty, compared to four in ten male-headed households. In addition, emergency support is most needed when income declines substantially, as transient poverty is associated with adverse non-income impact. Four in ten households reported having difficulty accessing education services, 30.7% for health care services, and 31.9% for the purchase of food, beverage, and other necessities.

Furthermore, the design and implementation of policy support from a gender perspective needs to be given attention properly when the gender gap in unpaid care and domestic work was considerable. Most respondents reported that the burden of unpaid care and domestic work had disproportionately fallen on women's shoulders. The gender gap in unpaid care work, in general, is 16.3 % points. The gender gap was 42.7 percentage points for house chores, 22.9 percentage points for taking care of children's education, and 17.4 percentage points for taking care of small kids (under 5 years old) and the elderly (over 70 years old) in the family.

APPENDIX

Table 1. Distribution of survey sample by the age of household head (% of households)

	< 30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	> 70
Female headed	2.0	12.7	25.4	36.2	15.9	7.9
All	1.1	17.3	32.4	33.2	11.0	4.9

Table 2. Distribution of survey sample by household characteristics (% of households)

	Rural	Urban	Overall
All	57.0	43.0	100.0
Based on the poverty line by MOLISA 2021-2025			
Poor	24.3	26.5	50.8
Non poor	32.3	16.9	49.2
Ethnicity			
Ethnic minority	2.9	1.4	4.3
Kinh-Hoa	54.1	41.6	95.7
Jobs			
Informal	46.5	32.4	78.9
Formal	10.4	10.7	21.1
Gender			
Female headed	15.6	18.9	34.5
Male headed	38.9	26.6	65.5
Dependency			
High dependency	27.5	16.3	43.8
Low dependency	29.1	27.1	56.2

Table 3. Distribution of survey sample by industry (% of households)

Textile and garment	45.7
Hospitality	53.3
Both industries	1.0
All	100.0