GAMBIA PARTICIPATES

OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS

Investigation of the COVID-19 Food Aid (Rice, Sugar and Cooking Oil) Distribution by the Government of The Gambia

31st June, 2021

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1. Executive Summary

As a developing country, The Gambia's economy was not spared by the impact of the global pandemic; Corona virus. The Gambia government had to take swift emergency measures to control the spread of the virus (in a country that is struggling with a weak health system) by establishing emergency response fund with more than a billion dalasi already committed to it.

During the early days of covid-19 in The Gambia, I led a team that investigated the spending of the D500m covid-19 emergency funds with concerning outcomes over the misappropriation of this fund in a report called "Corona the Gambia and the Millions". With the not-so-good record of health sector corruption in the Gambia, the question we asked ourselves at Gambia Participates is; how do we ensure high level of transparency in the management of these funds during emergency crisis? Thus, we commissioned this survey to establish how transparent, corruption free and effective the government's distribution of the food aid package is.

While vulnerable citizens were preventing themselves from contracting the corona virus, their main source of revenue was affected due to the pandemic. Most of these vulnerable citizens in rural communities needed financial and food aid. The government of The Gambia created the D734m to support these families by procuring more than a million food products (rice, sugar and oil) in April 2020. There is limited comprehensive information on the government's procurement and spending on the D734m emergency food aid meant for the distribution of food products to the 84% of the population. More concerning is the discrepancies in government's report on covid-19 expenditures.

For us, we take these deficiencies as factors that compromises credible budget, widespread public sector corruption with no accountability. Corruption will thrive in an environment where there is no accountability and The Gambia's anti-corruption efforts are largely ineffective which opportunity for improvement.

We commissioned this report, which comes with journalist investigative reports to establish the facts surrounding the management of the food aid emergency funds in order to provide transparency and budget accountability. The findings of the report could also be used by the

government of the Gambia, civil society and development partners to strengthen anti-corruption measures in The Gambia and budget credibility.

I will like to thank the Open Society Foundation for supporting this survey, the 1176 families in rural communities who answered our survey questions and CepRass for coordinating the data collection activities.

Marr Nyang

Founder and Executive Director
Gambia Participates

2. Background

The Gambia with a population of 2.2 million is faced with rising food insecurity, poverty and malnutrition, despite a promising environment for improved growth, stability and partnerships. The rapid assessment report by WFP indicated that 733,000 people would be vulnerable to food insecurity during the lean season due to poor 2019 cropping season as well as the effect of COVID-19. After the first Covid-19 case, the government of The Gambia responded with containment measures that included restrictions on economic activities such as closure of open markets "lumos", and other businesses. The impact of Covid-19 on food security was quite imminent.

Following the high demand of food aid by Gambians, President Barrow launched a D734m COVID-19 food aid to support 84% "deserving households" in the Gambia. On April 23rd 2020, the government of The Gambia through the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment called for bidders to apply for the procurement and distribution of 230,000 bags of 50kg rice, 230,000 bags of 50kg sugar, and 148,000 10 litre drums of refined oil and the dateline was set at April 24th 2020 noon (24hrs after the call for bidding). By April 26th 2020, the food package was already procured and distributed. The whole process of calling for bids, vetting, procurement and distribution took less than 96 hours.

The households that are food poor were arrived at using the IHS estimates for food poor households and scaling this to match the 2020 population estimates. In total, there is an estimate that there are about 141,000 households in the country that are food poor, with Brikama and Kanifing having the highest number of households and Janjangbureh having the highest proportion. Using the National Nutrition Agency's (NaNA) recommendation of a bag of rice (GMD1,400), a 20-liter bottle of oil (GMD600) and GMD1,000 in cash to purchase other items, to ensure a diverse /balanced diet for the household, this would cost GMD3,000 per household. It is estimated that providing the above to these households would cost GMD423 million per month to the government. For a cash transfer or food assistance of 6 months, this would cost GMD2.5 billion; 2.6 percent of GDP and 10 percent of government's budget.

Many Gambians have criticized the design of the food relief strategy with predicted ambiguities. At more than one year into the food distribution, the government food support strategy seems to have a slow bearing. Primarily, the food relief program projection of 84% of the Population in the Gambia as the number of people who will need food support was not met. According to the Government of the Gambia COVID 19 Food Assistance, All Households in NBR, LRR, CRR,

URR and large parts of WCR will receive the Food Assistance. Vulnerable Households in Banjul, Kanifing Municipality and some communities in West Coast Region will also receive the food assistance. Some of vulnerable households have not benefited from the food distribution exercise, including urban poor and rural dwellers scattered in different regions of the Gambia.

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic raises many challenges for governments around the world, with Gambia making no exception. The critical consequences of the pandemic have particularly affected vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and communities. The need for urgent action with a rapid impact has been identified as a factor potentially leading policy and decision makers to overlook oversight and accountability mechanisms. Hence, the adoption and implementation of

emergency support packages risks becoming a thriving ground for misuse, fraud and corruption.

3. Methodology

To achieve the research objectives, a sound methodology was employed. This is important not only to ensure reliable data is collected and analyzed, but also that valuable lessons are fed back into The Gambia Covid-19 Food Assistance response. Hence, the research hinges on the network of document reviews, questionnaire administration, key informant interviews and focus group discussion. The data was collected from 1176 households across the country.

Eight Local Government Areas (LGAs) and municipalities; namely Brikama, Kerewan, Mansa Konko, Kuntaur, Jangjangbureh and Basse and KMC and BCC were targeted. The sample respondents for the food aid investigation was obtained from the sample frame of NDMA Distribution points.

2.1 Research design

A number of research questions underpinned this study, including:

- Household Socio-Economic Demographic
- Poverty Level indicators
- Covid-19 Food AID
    - Did household receive the FOOD AID
    - How many of each item received?
    - Where were the items received?

- Who received the items
- Perception about the distribution process
- Did they receive coupons
- Any discrepancies between amount on coupon and amount received
- Collection of their information for the coupons
- Experience at the distribution center

4. Section A: Socioeconomic Background of the Household

This section presents data on the socio-economic background of the households included in the study with focus on the household heads. The socio-economic indicator includes age, marital status, gender, educational level, occupation, as well as household composition and size.

As seen in **Figure 1**, about 67% of the respondents in the households visited are heads of their households. In the 33% of households where the respondents were not the head of the household, **Table 1A** shows that the respondents are mostly either the spouse or parent of the household head. In addition, the results show that the individuals interviewed were mostly the most knowledgeable member of their household. Since the right respondents were interviewed, there was a higher probability of collecting the right information from the households.

Figure 1A: Head of the Household

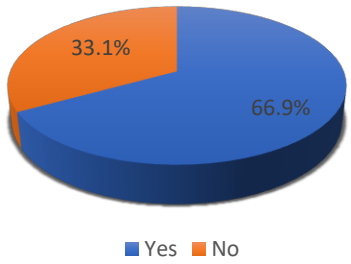
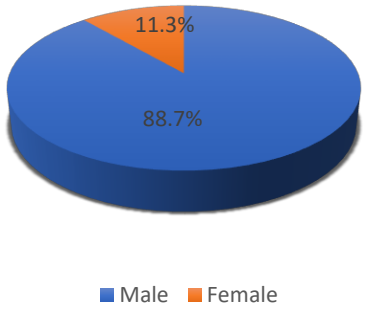


Table A1: Relationship with Household Head

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Parent	64	17.85	15.88
Sibling	28	7.35	22.83
In-Law	22	5.77	28.29
Relative	25	6.56	34.49
Spouse	237	62.22	93.30
Other	27	7.08	100.00
Total	381	100.00	

In term of gender, the households surveyed were mainly male-headed households; only 11.3% of the households were female headed households. This information resonates the Gambian setting where most households are headed by a male rather than a female member.

Figure 2A: Gender of the Household Head



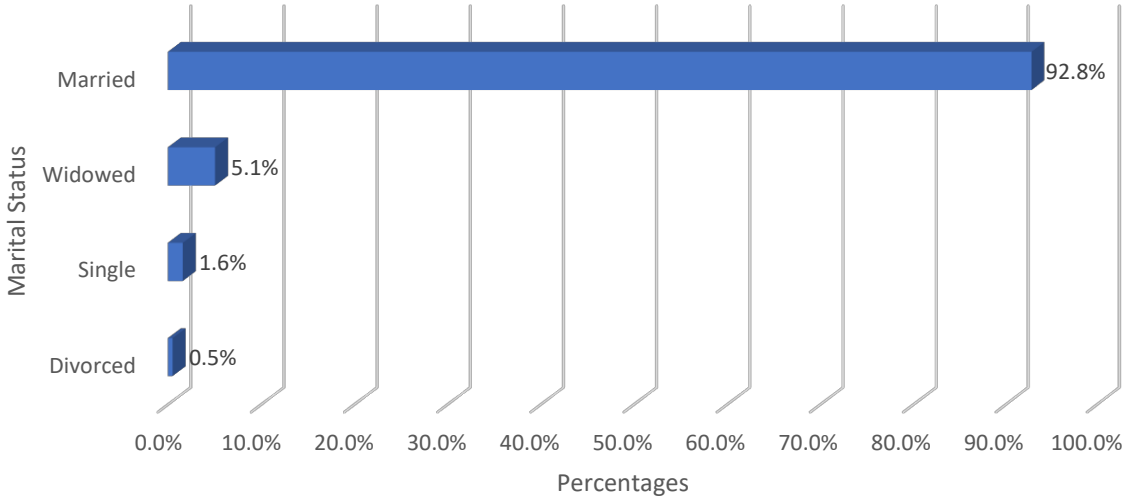
A summary of the data on the age of the household heads is presented in **Table 2A**. The results show that over 57 percent of household heads are of age 51 and above with only about 4% being in the youth category of 20-30 years. This is not surprising given that the Gambian social setting is such that age defines who in a household can be the household head; normally, headship of the household is given to the eldest male member of the household. In this regard, the finding from the survey on this indicator is line with expectation of the context.

Table 2A: Age of the Household Head

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
20-30 years	45	3.80	3.80
31-40 years	167	14.09	17.89
41-50 years	287	24.22	42.11
51 and above	686	57.89	100.00
Total	1185	100.00	

On marital status of the household head, **Figure 3A** shows that most of the household heads (about 93%) were married. Hence, there is a high correlation between being married and being a household head. This is also expected in the local context; being a household head is synonymous to taking up the responsibility of running a family as well as being the bread winner for the family. In addition, the results also show that up to 5.1% of the household heads surveyed are windowed and only 1.6% of the household heads surveyed are single.

Figure 3A: Marital Status of the Household Head



Regarding the physical condition of the household head, the results are given in **Table 3A**, which shows that about 93% of the household heads interviewed were able bodied with about 5% and 2 % being Chronically ill and disabled respectively.

Table 3A: Physical Condition of Household Head

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Disabled	16	1.35	1.35
Chronically ill	63	5.32	6.67
Able bodied	1106	93.33	100.00
Total	1185	100.00	

For educational level of the household, **Figure 4A** shows that highest education level attained by most of the household heads (about 74%) surveyed is non-formal Arabic education such as "Daras" and "Magelis." While this maybe as a result of lack opportunity and available resources to attend formal education by these individuals, it signifies the substantial lack of formal education in the Gambian population. Having said that, a substantial proportion (about 21%) of the heads surveyed have attained basic and secondary education. These statistics corroborates the high illiteracy rates in The Gambia.

Figure 4A: Highest Educational Qualification of Household Head

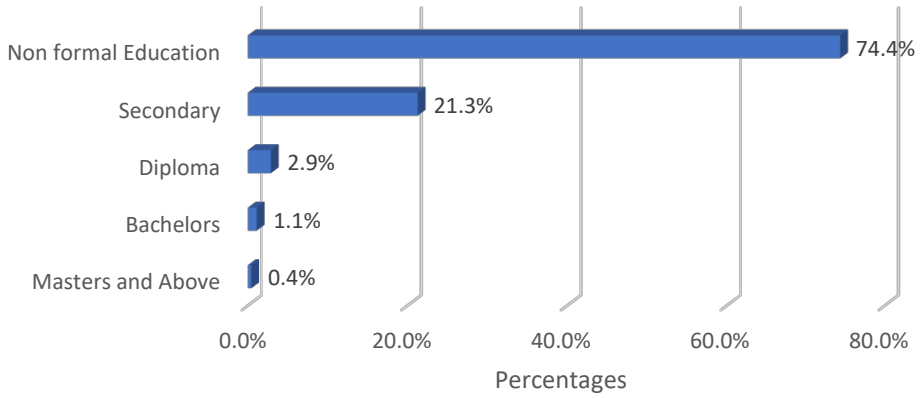


Table 4A reveal that the occupation status of most household heads is farming as it constitutes the occupational status of about 51% of the household heads. This result is driven by the fact that about 91% of the sampled households are in rural Gambia and farming is the primary activity of most households in the rural areas[1]. We also see that about 5%, 13% and 17% of household heads are public servant, unemployed and in business respectively. Hence, a substantial proportion of the household heads surveyed are also entrepreneurs.

Table 4A: Occupation of the Household Head

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Farmer	600	50.63	50.63
Business	197	16.62	67.26
Public servant	58	4.89	72.15
Private sector employee	28	2.36	74.51
Unemployed	148	12.49	87.00
Other	154	13.00	100.00
Total	1185	100.00	

From **Table 5A**, we see that the primary income source of most households (about 67%) is self-employment. About 9% and 4% are from relative's support and Remittances respectively. In

[1] This was necessitated by the fact that the food aid targeted households mainly in the rural areas.

addition, the results show that support from government constitutes the lowest source of income for the households surveyed. At national level, this result is in line with the evidence that government supported social programs are lacking in The Gambia. Therefore, low-income household depends on informal channels of supports for meeting their day-to-day needs.

Table 5A: Primary Income Source of the Household Head

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Employment (including self-employment)	790	66.67	66.67
Support from relatives	109	9.20	75.86
Remittances	51	4.30	80.17
Support from government	4	0.34	80.51
Other	231	19.49	100.00
Total	1185	100.00	

Table 6A summarizes household size by age category. The age category 11-17 is the age category with the highest maximum number of individuals (100 members) in a given age category per household. However, on average each household surveyed has about 4 individuals in this age category. It is followed by age-category 5-10 and age-category 18-29 which has a maximum number of individuals per household of about 50 members with a mean size of 4 member respectively. In terms of maximum number of individuals per age-category per household, the age-category 65 and above, is the lowest with a maximum of 25 members and a mean of 1.98 members per household. Meanwhile, the mean household size is 18.36 members with the minimum of one and maximum of 200 members. The average household size obtained here is higher than what is reported in other surveys such as the IHS. This is might be due to oversampling of households in the rural communities, where household size is typically high. Also, the average number of household members in a full-time job in the surveyed households is one. Hence, very few household members have a full-time employment.

Table 6A: Household Size by Age Category

	Mean	min	Max	variance
Age 0-4	3.788	0	45	10.715
Age 5-10	4.335	0	50	15.772
Age 11-17	3.895	0	100	21.59
Age 18-29	3.912	0	50	13.311

Age 30-64	4.101	0	49	14.976
Age 65 and above	1.98	0	25	12.918
Overall Houseold Size	18.356	1	200	232.841
Household memebers with full time job	1.021	0	32	4.136

Table 6A shows that a substantial number of households surveyed have school going children. Specifically, 866 households have both boys and girls school going children with 118 households having no school going children.

Table 7A

Do you have school going children in the following gender categories: Boys	Do you have school going children in the following gender categories: Girls		
	No	Yes	Total
No	118	111	229
Yes	90	866	956
Total	208	977	1185

5. Section B: Household Income and Poverty Level Indicators

This section presents results on the income and poverty level indicators of the households. Since poverty was one of the main indicators considered in targeting households for the government food aid, it is an important for this study to collect information on poverty related indicators. The poverty level indicators included in this study are those used to constitute a poverty probability index: main source of drinking water, nature of toilet facility, source of lighting, source of cooking energy, household ground/floor type, material used for wall, number of assets owned, and number of livestock owned.

Household income was eliciting using income brackets that range from less than GMD1000 to above GMD 100,000. The results are reported in Figure 1Ba, where we see that a substantial proportion (about 45%) of the households interviewed received reported that their monthly income is between GMD 1,001 to 5,000. However, approximately 17% received reported that they receive less than GMD 1,000 while less than 2% received GMD 25000 or higher as monthly income. Thus, a significant number of households included in this study can be regarded as low-income earners.

In addition, there is evidence that the COVID-19 food aid distribution highly targeted the poor and middle-income earners. As seen in Figure 1Bb and **Table 1B**, more than half (about 61%) of the food aid were distributed to the households receiving a monthly income of GMD 5,000 or less. 24% of these food items were distributed to those whose monthly income ranges from GMD 5,001 to GMD 10,000, 13% was distributed to those earning from GMD 10,001 to GMD 25,000 while the rest of the 2% of these food items was distributed to those receiving above GMD 25,000.

Figure 1Ba: Monthly Income of the Household (Range)

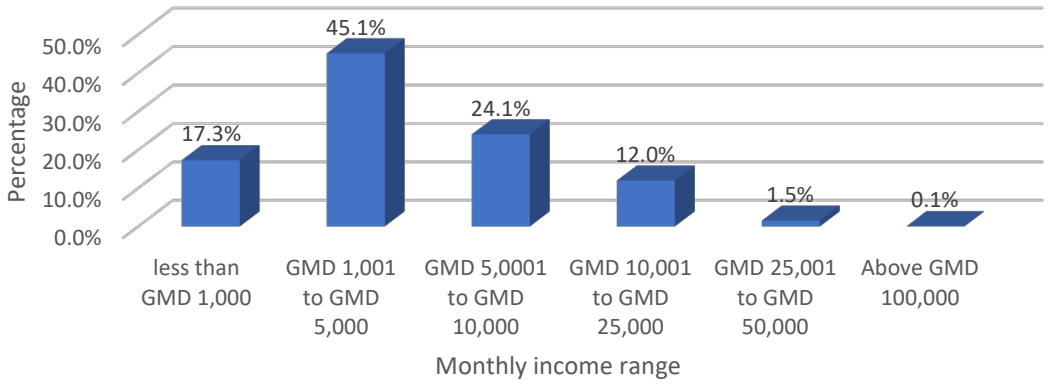
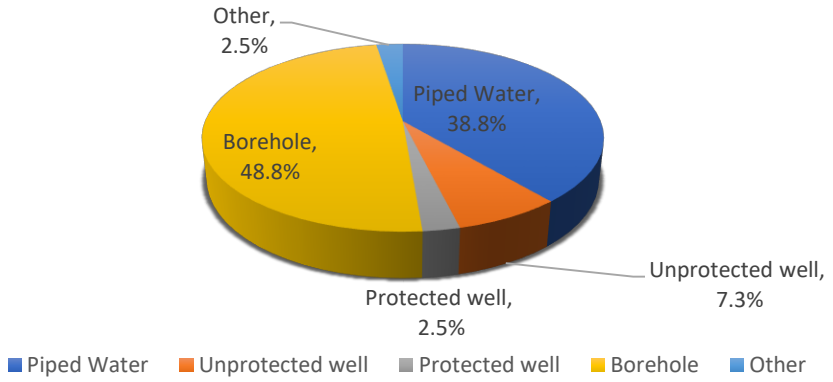


Table 1B: Monthly household income range and food aid received

Monthly household income range	Did the household receive the government food aid in 2020?		
	Yes	No	Total
less than GMD 1,000	166	39	205
GMD 1,001 to GMD 5,000	456	78	534
GMD 5,0001 to GMD 10,000	243	42	285
GMD 10,001 to GMD 25,000	129	13	142
GMD 25,001 to GMD 50,000	16	2	18
Above GMD 100,000	1	0	1
Total	1011	174	1185

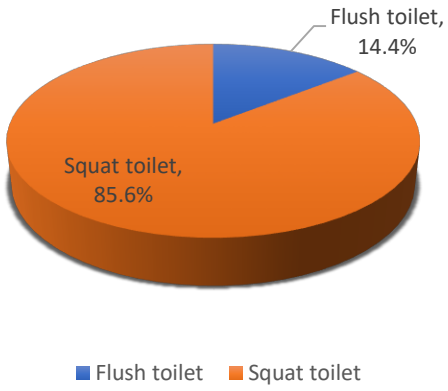
The results on the main source of drinking water for households interviewed are presented in **Figure 2B**, which shows that majority of the households surveyed get their drinking water mainly from borehole and piped water, about 49% and 39% respectively. In addition, 7% of the households source their drinking water from unprotected well with less than 3% reporting that they source their drinking water from protected well. Therefore, access to clean drinking water is high among the households surveyed, which is in line with evidence from nationwide representative surveys. Notwithstanding, a non-negligent proportion of households included in this study do get drinking water from unsafe sources such as unprotected wells.

Figure 2B: Households' Main Source of Drinking water



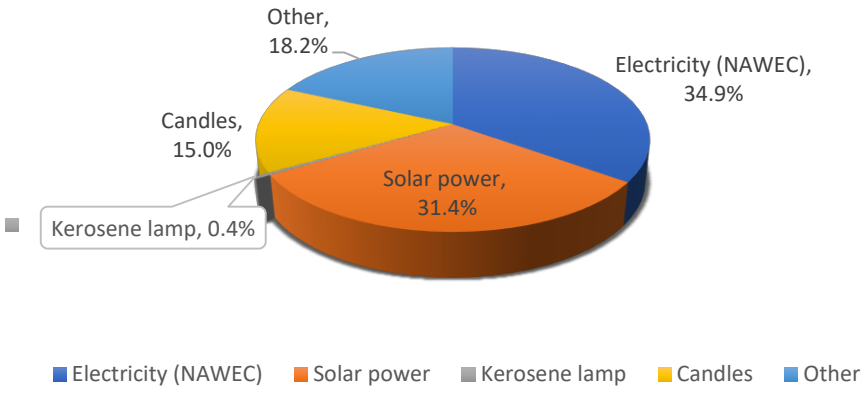
In terms of the nature of toilet facilities used, results indicate that all the households interviewed have either flush or squat toilet facilities in their homes. However, as seen in **Figure 3B**, majority (about 86%) of the households interviewed used squat toilet in their compound while just about 14% have flush toilet. Unpaved squat toilet facilities are sources of worm related illnesses that can severely affect the health of pregnant women and children. Therefore, they are concerns for health of households. The fact that most households surveyed used squat toilets resonates with the fact that most of the households surveyed are on average poor.

Figure 3B: Households' Nature of Toilet Facility



The results on sources of lighting are reported in **Figure 4B**, which shows that the main sources of lighting for different households are Electricity from NAWEC (31%) and solar power (31%). However, a significant number of respondents (about 15%) reported that their main source of lighting is candles. About 18% of the households surveyed get lighting from other sources such as torchlight and battery lamp (see **Table1B** for other sources).

Figure 4B: Households' Main Source of Lighting



The type of energy used for almost all these households is wood. As **Figure 5B** shows, more than 87% of the households used wood as source of cooking energy, 11% used charcoal and only 1% used gas or electricity to cook.

Figure 5B: Households' Main Source of Cooking Energy

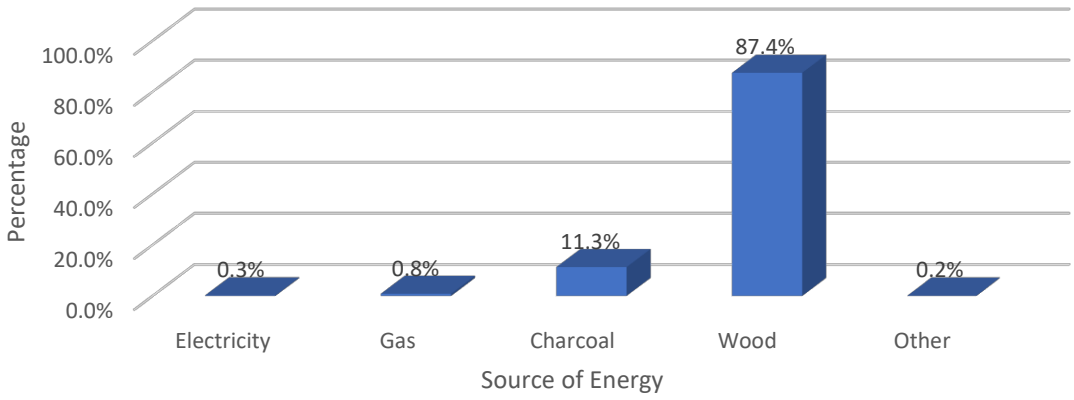
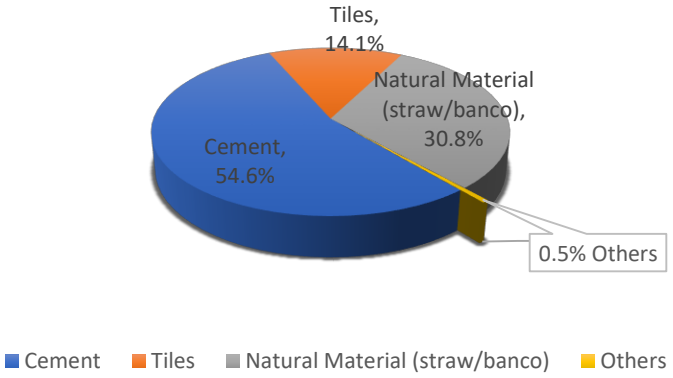


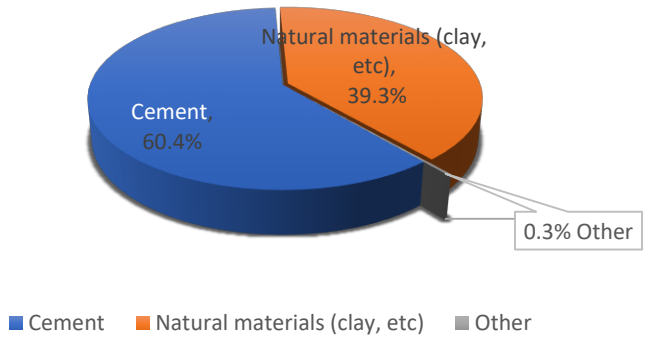
Figure 6B shows the type of ground/floor of households interviewed. More than half (about 55%) of the households reported that their floor is made up of cement, including 14% of the households indicated that their floor is tiled and about 31% reported that their floor is made up of natural materials (straw/banco).

Figure 6B: Households' Ground/Floor Type



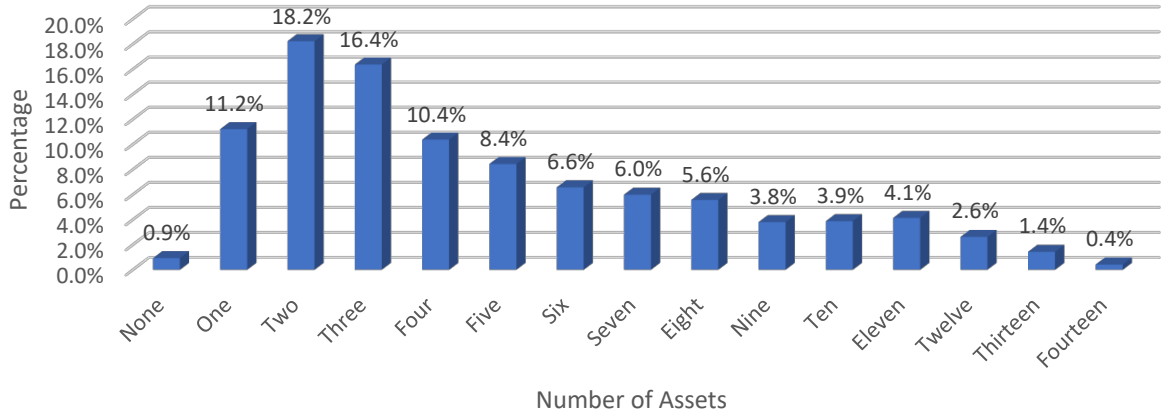
The main material used for the construction of the households' wall are cement and natural materials like clay, with cement being the highest (64%), as seen in the Figure 8B below.

Figure 8B: Types of Material Used by Households for Wall



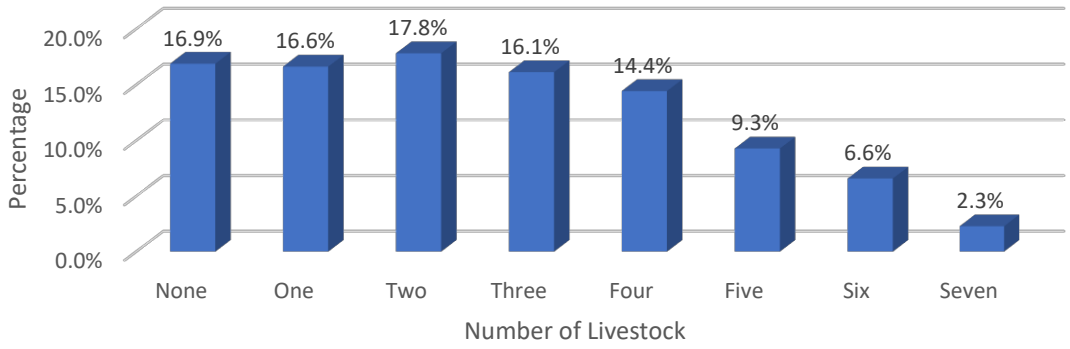
For asset ownership, the results are shown in **Figure 11B**. The different types of assets asked were Electricity, Radio, Television, Table, Fridge, Fan, Home internet, Desktop, Sofas, Gas stoves, Bed net, Air, Conditioners, Bicycle, Car, Motorbike and Cupboard. As can be seen in the figure, less than half (about 46%) of the household do not own more than four of the aforementioned assets with about 1% owning neither of the assets. The average number of these assets owned by a household, as reported in Table 2B, is about 5 assets.

Figure 11B: Asset Ownership by Households



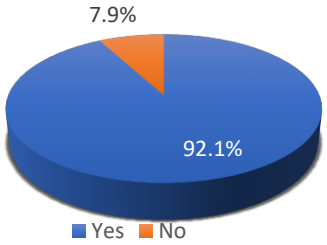
The survey also collected data on livestock ownership by the households, which is shown in **Figure 12B**. The type of livestock asked are cows/bulls, cow, goats, sheep, chicken, horses and donkeys. The results indicate that less than half (49%) of the households own more than three of the livestock asked and about 17% of them own neither of the livestock. The average number of these livestock owned by households (see Table 3B) is about 4.

Figure 12B: Livestock Ownership by Households



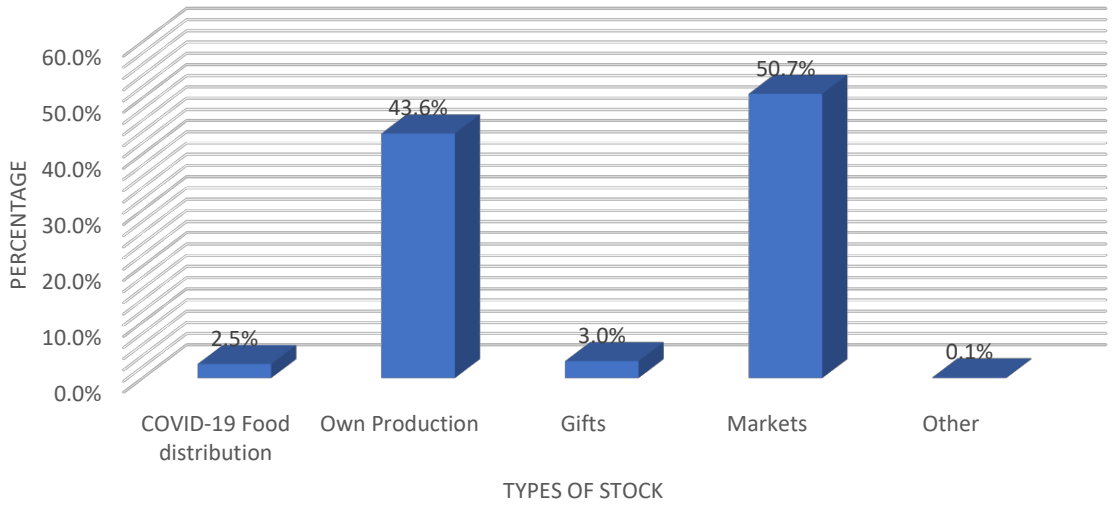
The survey also collected information on the difficulty in meeting food needs during the COVID-19 lockdown of 2020 as well as where household source their stockpile of food items. The results on difficulty of meeting food needs are reported in Figure 5A. We see that about 92% of households find it difficult to meet their food needs during the lockdown, while only 8% were able to meet their food needs during that period. Therefore, the lockdown seems to have increased food insecurity in the surveyed households. Hence, there was indeed a need for households to be provided with food aid. In this regard, the government intervention can be regarded as apt.

Figure 5A: Difficulty in meeting food needs due to COVID-19 lockdown in 2020



The result on stockpile of food items is summarized in **Figure 14B**. Majority of the households surveyed get their stockpile by buying from the market and keeping it (about 51%) and from own production (about 44%). Together these two sources constitute about 95% of sources of food stocks for the households. Interestingly, about 2.5 % reported that the COVID-19 food aid they received was a source of their stockpile for food items. This highlights the important the COVID-19 food aid was for some households.

Figure 14B: Source of Households' Stocks



Regarding how long they expect their food stocks to last, all the households interviewed that had stockpiles of the basic food items reported that they expect their stockpiles to last at least between a week and a maximum number of 48 weeks, see **Table 3B**. On average, the expected number of weeks for the longevity stockpiles of food items is about 7 weeks (about 2 months), which is indeed.

Table 3B: Summary statistics on Household Level Indicators

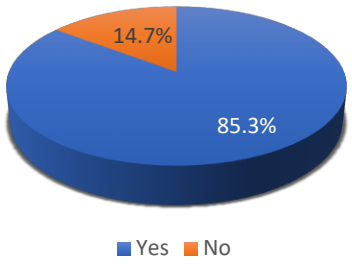
	Mean	variance	min	max
Number of rooms in house	6.526	28.872	1	51
Number of assets	5.142	10.441	0	14
Number of livestock	2.558	3.721	0	7
longevity of stocks	6.532	55.845	1	48

6. Section C: Covid-19 Food Aid

This section of the surveyed collected information on the government COVID-19 food aid. Information collected is focused on the following areas: receipt of the food aid, distribution of the food aid, coupons for the food aid, and household perception about the procurement process for the food aid.

Concerning receipt of the food aid, the results (reported in Figure C1) shows that about 85 percent of the households surveyed reported that they received the food aid with about 15 percent reporting that they didn't receive, which indicates that the food aid has indeed delivered to more than three quarter of households in The Gambia.

Figure C1: Household Received the Government Food Aid in 2020



In terms of when they received the food aid, Figure C2 shows that majority of the households reported that they received the government food aid few months after the COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020. In particular, about 78% reported that they received their supplies of the food items between May and July 2020 and only 1.3% reported that they received theirs in October 2020 with about 21 percent reporting that their food supply was delivered between August and September.

Figure C2: When was the government food aid received in 2020

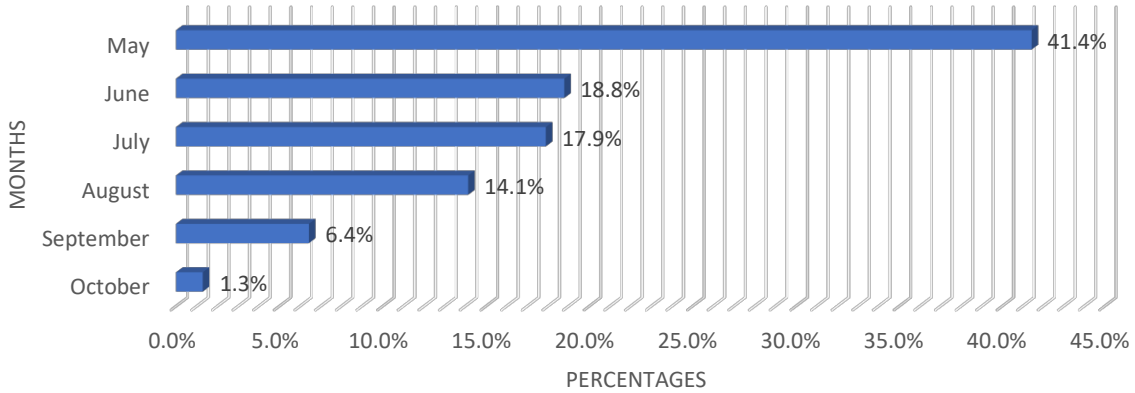


Table C1 reports the respondents' responses on where their household received their supplies. About 87% of respondents revealed that their household received the food items from the distribution point in their community. About 9% received it outside their community and only 4 of respondents reported that their households received the food items in their compound.

Table C1: Where Food Items Received

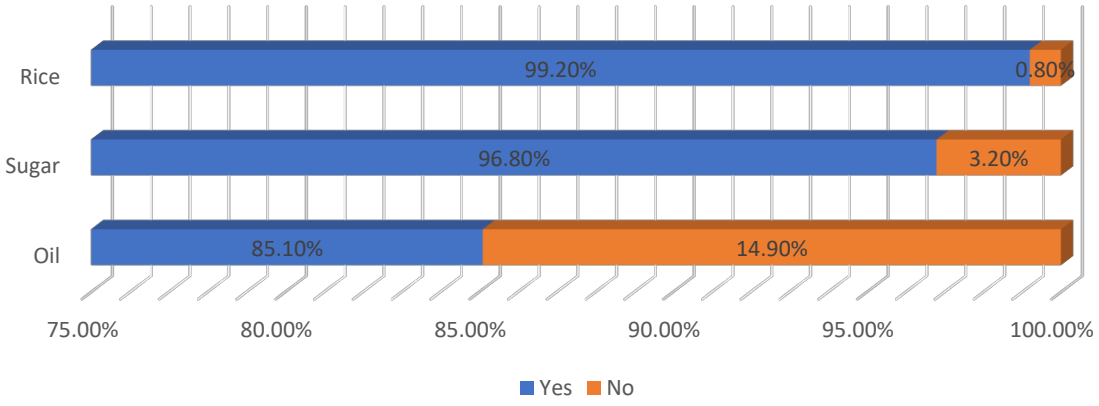
	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Distribution points in my community	882	87.24	87.24
Distribution points out of my community	86	8.51	95.75
Delivered to my compound by the distributors	4	0.40	96.14
Other	39	3.86	100.00
Total	1011	100.00	

Figure C3 shows the food items received by households. We see that about 99% of households that received the food aids said they got the rice, about 97% said they received the sugar, and about 85% said they received the oil. Therefore, the results indicate that, among the three (3) food items distributed, the percentage of respondents that reported that their household didn't receive oil is the highest. Furthermore, as reported in **Table C2**, about 83% of respondents, equivalent to 842 households, said their household received all of the food items. However, about 2% and 15% of respondents indicated that their household received just one or two of the food items, respectively. Also, **Table A1** in the appendix shows the quantity (in Kg) of food items received by the households, which is based on a template developed by NDMA on how much a household should receive depending on its size. Respondents from households with 4 people or less received on average 50kg of rice, 50kg of Sugar, and 9liters of Oil. When compared to the NDMA food distribution recommendation, on average these households received about twice of what they were supposed to receive. Household size of 5 to 10 People received almost the same amount from the three food items as specify by NDMA. Household size of 11 to 15 people received approximately the actual amount of rice and Oil, but less of Sugar, household size of 16 to 20 people received about the same amount of rice but less of sugar and oil, household size of 21 to 40 people received less of all the three food items, household size of 40 to 100 people received almost the actual amount of rice but less of sugar and oil, household size of more than 100 received almost less of all the food items about 236kg of rice, 144kg of sugar and 20 liters of oil.

Table C2: Number of Item Received

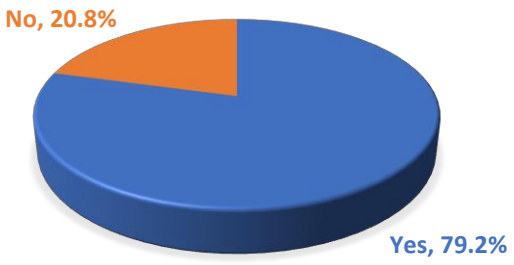
Number	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
1	22	2.18	2.18
2	147	14.54	16.72
3	842	83.28	100.00
Total	1011	100.00	

Figure C3: Type of Food Item Household Received



Before the supply of the food items, NDMA were supposed to issue coupons to all eligible households. As a result, the survey also collected information on coupons receipt. **Figure C4** reveals the results. About 79% of households surveyed said they received the coupon before the distribution of the food items. Hence, about 21% of households surveyed reported that their household didn't receive a coupon, which is staggering. Although, a substantial number of households received a coupon, the survey results shows that not all household got a coupon before receiving the food items.

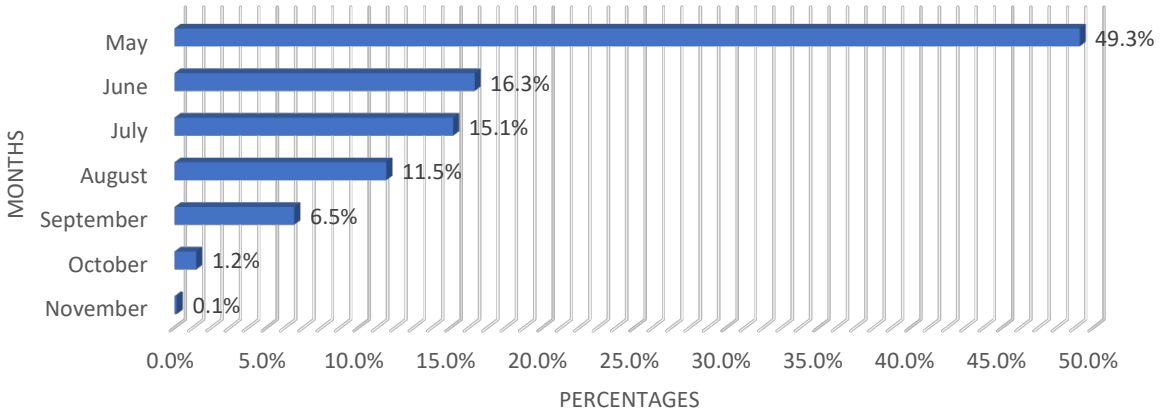
Figure C4 Household Received Coupon



The relationship between coupon receipt and household self-reported income levels, asset ownership, and livestock ownership are presented in **Table A2, E3 and E4**, respectively, in the appendix. Looking at income for instance, the results show that majority of the households surveyed who received a coupon (about 53) indicated that their household income is between GMD 1,001 and GMD 5,000 per month, about 27% of households of such households reported that their family income is between GMD5,0001 and GMD 10,000 per month, and about 20% of them have a monthly income less than GMD1000. Similar results are obtained for the other welfare indicators such as asset and livestock ownership. Therefore, there is some evidence from this survey that there was a good correlation between coupon distribution and poverty level (measured using income, asset and livestock ownership); in particular, poor families were most likely to have received the coupons than rich families.

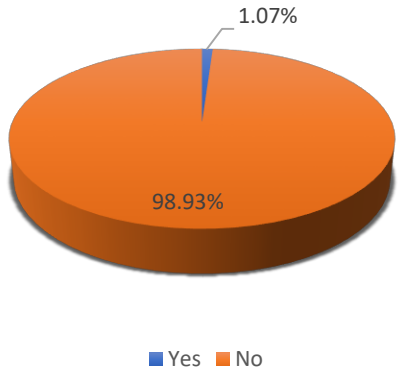
Regarding when the coupon was received, **Figure C5** reveals that approximately 49% of households received the coupon on May, followed by 16% in June, and the list goes on in a chronological order to November, which is about 0.1%. **Table A5** in appendix shows whether the households received the coupon early (between May to June) or late (after July). The results indicate that about 65% of households surveyed received the coupon early while about 35% received the coupon late. Furthermore, the study also compared whether coupon was received early or late to the probability of reporting a missing food item. The two-sample t-test with equal variance results are reported in Table A6, E7 and E8 in the appendix. They reveal that households who received the coupon late have a higher probability of having missing rice and sugar and difference was significant on rice but insignificant on sugar at the 5% significance level. Also, the households that received the coupon early have a higher probability of having missing oil and this was significant at 5% level.

Figure C5: Month in Which Coupon was Received



The survey also collected information from households surveyed on whether payment was requested during coupon disposal. From Figure C6 shows that about 99% of households surveyed said that officials who were distributing the food aid did not request for any payment while only about 1% said payment were requested for the coupons.

Figure C6: Payment Request During Coupon Disposal



On who in the household received the coupon, Table C5 shows that about 87% of households surveyed reported that the coupon for their household was received by the head of their household. Furthermore, about 3% and 5% reported that the Son or daughter of the head and Brother of the head, respectively, received the coupon for the household. Out of the estimated 6% of the Other who received the coupon majority of them are the Spouse of the household head

Table C5: Who Received the Coupon for the Household

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Head	814	86.69	86.69
Brother of the head	23	2.45	89.14
Son or daughter of the head	43	4.58	93.72
In law of the head	4	0.43	94.14
Other	55	5.86	100.00
Total	939	100.00	

For the place of receipt of the coupon, the results presented in Table C6 shows that about 52% of households surveyed said they received the coupon at the issuing center in their community. About 36% reported that the coupon was delivered to their home and 9% said they received it in other places.

Table C6: Place of Receipt of the Coupon

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Home	338	36.00	36.00
Issuing center in the community	489	52.08	88.07
Issuing center outside the community	26	2.77	90.84
Other	86	9.16	100.00
Total	939	100.00	

The respondents were also asked whether there were discrepancies between the amount indicated in their voucher (coupon) and the amount of each food item they actually received. The results are shown in Figure C7, which shows that about 86% households surveyed said there were no discrepancies. Hence, about 14% of the respondents reported that they were discrepancies, which is substantial. Out of those who said there were discrepancies, about 95.3% reported that they received less than what they were supposed to receive, and about 4.7% said they received more than what they were supposed to received.

Figure C7: Discrepancy between Amount of Food Items Received and Amount on the coupon

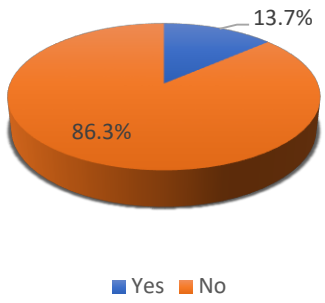
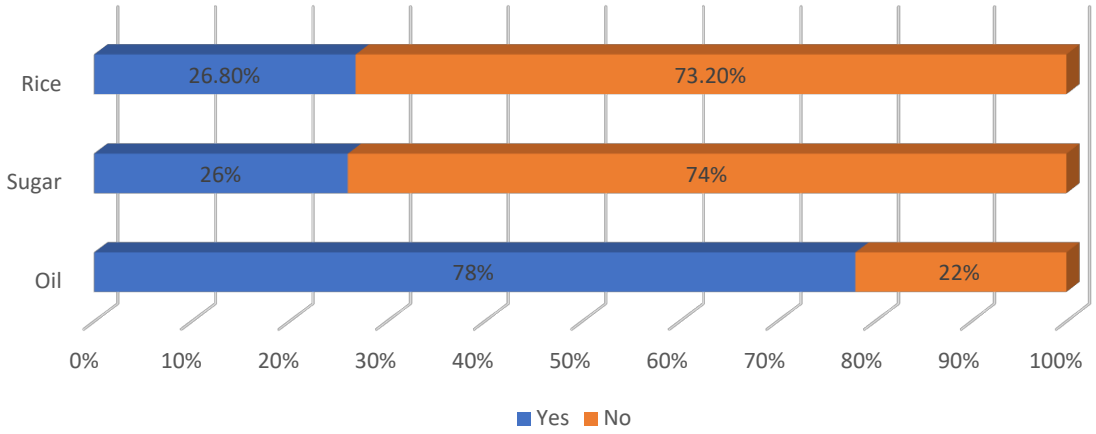


Table C7: Nature of Discrepancy Between Coupon and Amount of Food Item Received

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Less	125	95.42	95.42
More	6	4.58	97.71
Total	134	100.00	

Reports on missing food items from the households surveyed are summarized in **Figure C8**, which shows that about 78% of the households reported that they have a missing oil. About 26% and 27% of the respondents indicated that they have missing sugar and missing rice respectively. Thus, oil is the most reported missing food item, which resonates with informal discussion with some NDMA staff. Information on missing food item by household size are reported in **appendix E9**. Households with 4 or less and 41 to 100 members reported all had a missing oil. All the other household size categories have higher probabilities of missing oil except household size of more than 100 which had 0% of missing oil. Another interesting result is that households with more than 100 members surveyed all reported that they had not received all the rice they were supposed to receive. The missing food item was also analyzed by region, the results are reported in Table A10 of appendix. We see disparities in reports of missing food items across region. Of the households that reported missing food items, about 9% of them are in CRR North did and about 22% in CRR South. In addition, about 6% are in LRR, 8% in NBR, and 12% in URR.

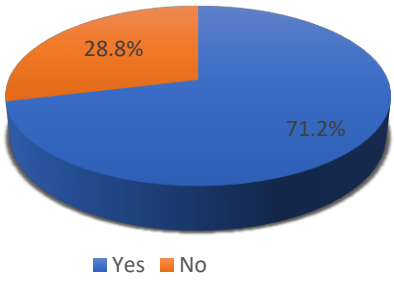
Figure C8: Food Items where there was a Discrepancy



There is evidence of disparities of missing rice across the various regions. In particular, as seen in **appendix E11**, out of the total households who claimed discrepancies in amount of rice received and amount they were supposed to receive, about 6% are from CRR South, 50% from LRR, about 9% from NBR while about 12% of these households are from URR. However, all the households from CRR North and KMC revealed there wasn't any form of discrepancy in the rice distribution. There is also evidence of discrepancy during the distribution of sugar across the various regions. As seen in appendix E12, out of 33 of the total households claiming discrepancy in the sugar distribution, about 6% are from CRR North, 12% are from CRR South, 36% are from LRR, about 6% from NBR while about 9% of these households are from URR. In conclusion, there was discrepancy in the sugar distribution in all the region. There is strong evidence of discrepancy in oil during the food aid across the various regions. As seen in **appendix E13**, 99 out of the 127 households interviewed claimed discrepancies in the oil. About 55% of the households are from CRR North, about 6% are from LRR, about 18% are from NBR while about 2% of these households are from URR. Thus, CRR North, one of the poorest regions of the country, has the highest proportion of households with missing oil. However, all the households from CRR south revealed that there wasn't any form of discrepancy in the Oil distribution.

When asked generally, whether they received the food assistance on time or not, **Figure C9** indicates that approximately 71% of the respondent said they received the food aid on time while about 29% reported that the food aid was not delivered to them on time.

Figure C9: Food Items were Delivered on Time



On the extent to which the food was helpful in addressing the food scarcity problem household face during the COVID-19 lockdown, the results in Table C8 show that about 74% of household reported that the food aid had benefited them Greatly, about 25% said it benefited them to some extend and only about 1% said it made no difference at all. Overall, a substantial majority of the households surveyed found the food assistance helpful.

Table C8: Extent to Which Food Aid Assisted the Household in Addressing Food Scarcity during COVID-19 Outbreak

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Greatly	754	74.58	74.58
To some extent	249	24.63	99.21
Not at all	8	0.79	100.00
Total	1011	100.00	

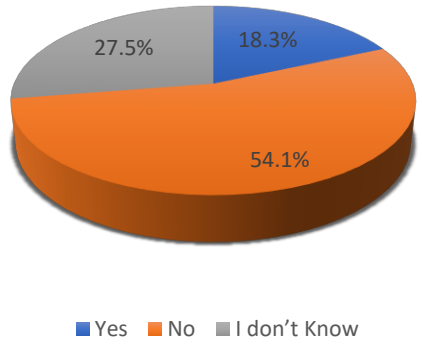
On the quality of the food items, about 33% said the food items were of an excellent in quality and about 0.1% said the food items were very poor in quality and about 6% said the quality of the food items is average. Overall majority of the respondents reports that the food items were of a good quality. The households surveyed were also asked whether the distribution of the food items was gender sensitive. While about 28% of the respondents said they can't tell, about 54 percent said it was not gender sensitive, which is staggering. Hence, it appears the distribution of the food items did not put a lot of emphasis on gender inclusiveness.

Table C9: Quality of food item

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0	1	0.10	0.10

1	14	1.38	1.48
2	13	1.29	2.77
3	25	2.47	5.24
4	34	3.36	8.61
5	60	5.93	14.54
6	33	3.26	17.80
7	85	8.41	26.21
8	165	16.32	42.53
9	243	24.04	66.57
10	338	33.43	100.00
Total	1011	100.00	

Figure C10: Gender Sensitivity of the Food Distribution



7. Section D: Food Aid and Corruption

In this section, the study looked at household perception on corruption in the procurement, delivery, and distribution of the food items. As seen in Figure 1D below, about 38% of the households interviewed did not believed that there were no corruption practices during the distribution process of the COVID-19 food aid by the government. As Figure 2D shows, about 4% believed that there were corruption practices during the procurement of the COVID-19 food aid items, 8% sighted such practices ware present during the transportation to distribution of these items, while about 32% of them said it was more common during the distribution of the items in the community. In fact, as seen in Figure 3D, almost 29% of the households were aware of such practices in their respective collection points. However, almost half (46%) don't know about the presence of corruption practices during the distribution processes.

Figure 1D: Procurement, Transportation, and Distribution of the food aid free of corruption

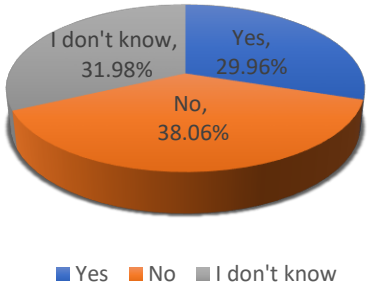


Figure 2D: Aspect of the process susceptible to corruption

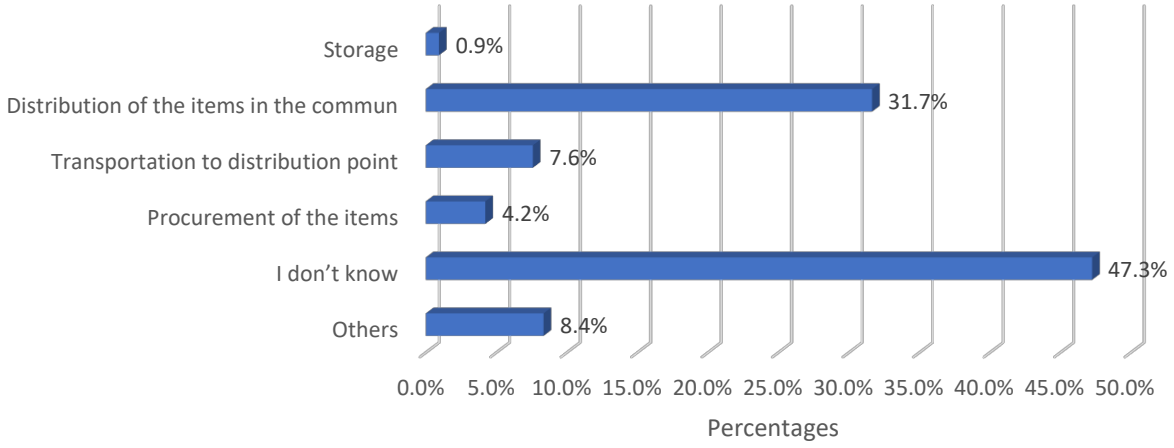
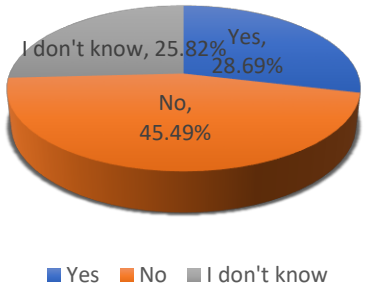


Figure 3D: Aware of any form of corruption at the distribution points



Another information collected, was whether respondents are aware of instance where staff are warned to desist from corrupt practices. As seen in Figure 4D, about 65% of the households interviewed were not aware of any staff been caution on corruption practices during the distribution of the COVID-19 food items. Only 5% attested that staffs were warned on corruption practices. In addition, 11% of the households interviewed exposed that almost all (or most) of the officials were involved in corruption practices, about 18% of the households said only few officials were involved while 16% of them revealed that hardly any officials were involved in such practices, as shown in Figure 5D.

Figure 4D: Aware of Staff Being Warned on Corrupt Practices

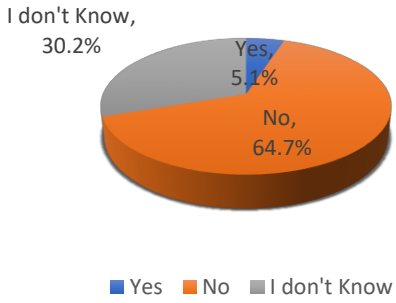
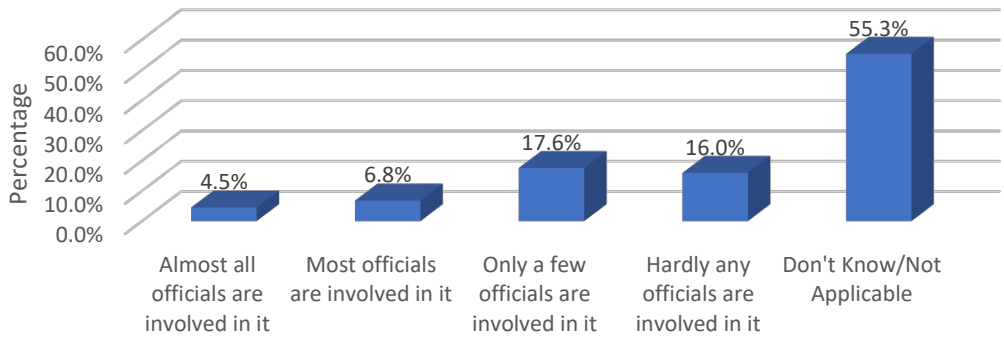


Figure 5D: In your own assessment, how widespread is corruption among the officials of COVID 19 Taskforce during food distribution?



The survey also looked at the knowledge of what strategies were adopted by their community to curb the COVID-19 Menace. As seen in Figure 6D, about 7% of the of the respondents indicated that their communities expose perpetrators, about 6% of the respondents said their community puts in place internal as part of the routine system and 5% of respondents think that communities liaising with the law enforcement agencies to curb the menace with COVID-19 food aids can curb the menace with the COVID-19 aid. However, 41% of the households interviewed revealed that their respective communities did none of the strategies to curb the menace with COVID-19 food aids, which shows that overall, not much is being done at the community level to tackle corruption with government assistance at the community level.

Figure 6D: Community's Strategy to Curb the COVID-19 Menace

Another perception indicator on corruption collected in the survey is perception on the level of corruption with the food aid. Figure 7D shows that about 23% of the households rate the level of corruption with the food aid as very high while about 16% and 21% of these households rate it moderately and low, respectively. In addition, 55% reported that their rating is based on personal experience, about 22% of respondents said their assessment was based on discussion with colleagues or others and about 3% said it was based on information received from the media, as seen in Figure 8D. Taking together these results highlight that the COVID-19 Food aid was not free of corrupt practices.

Figure 7D: Perception on the Level of Corruption with the Food Aid

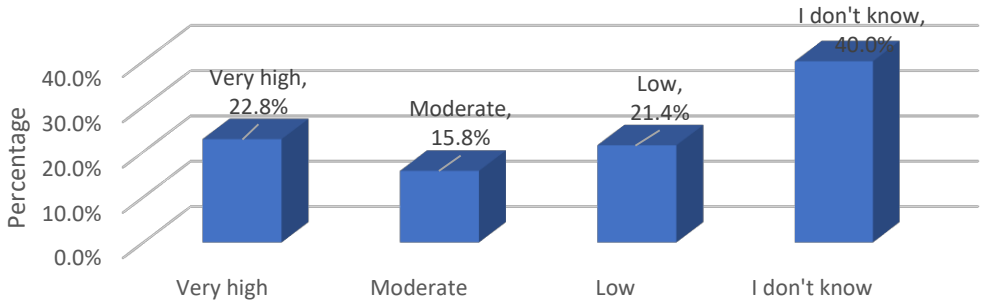
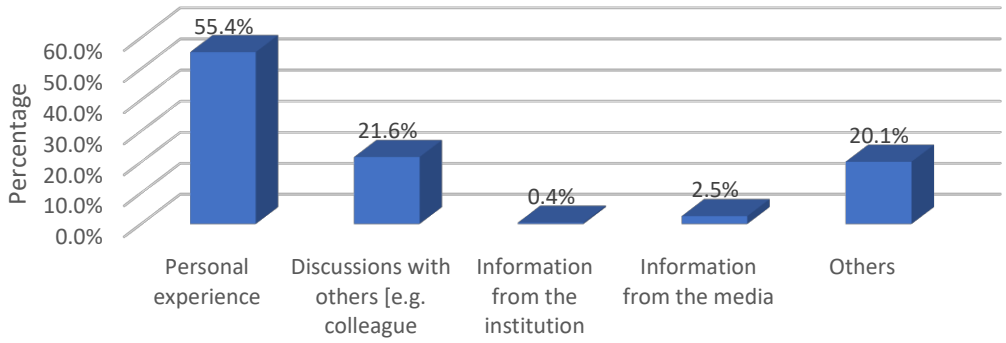


Figure 8D: Source of Information on Perception on the Level of Corruption with Food Aid



Regarding, how corruption could be tackled, as seen in Figure 9D, about 19% of the respondent recommended the call for the removal of immunity from office holders to enable law enforcement agencies to go after any perpetrator of crimes, 20% recommended government to set up due process mechanism in order to allow the award of contract to be in accordance with the lay down rules and regulations, 15% requested the law enforcement agencies be equipped so that they can carry out their duties effectively, 10% suggested the public be enlighten on the consequences of perpetrating financial abuses and economic crimes while 18% recommended participation of local authorities or leaders throughout the disaster relief cycle. Interestingly, setting due process mechanism and removal of immunity on public officers are the most rated options for measures to curb corruption.

Figure 9D: Measures to be Adopted for Curbing Corruption

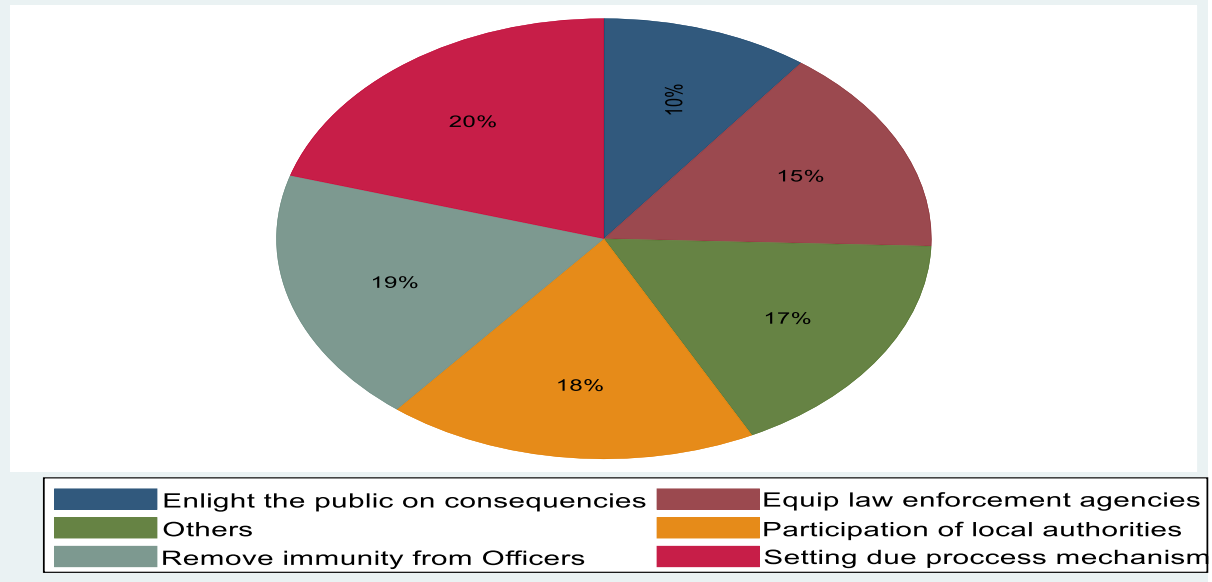


Figure 10D shows that 45% of those who recommended the government and law enforcement agencies to adopt these strategies in curbing the mismanagement of COVID-19 food aid distribution strongly agreed that their respective measures identified above can be addressed. Specifically, about 38% of the respondents only agreed while about 4% never agreed at all. In addition, about 85% agreed or strongly agreed that the performance will be improved if these measures are address, as seen in Figure 11D. However, about 3% are pessimistic that these measures will improve performance.

Figure 10D: Belief on the Extent to Which Appropriate Measures Can Curb Corruption

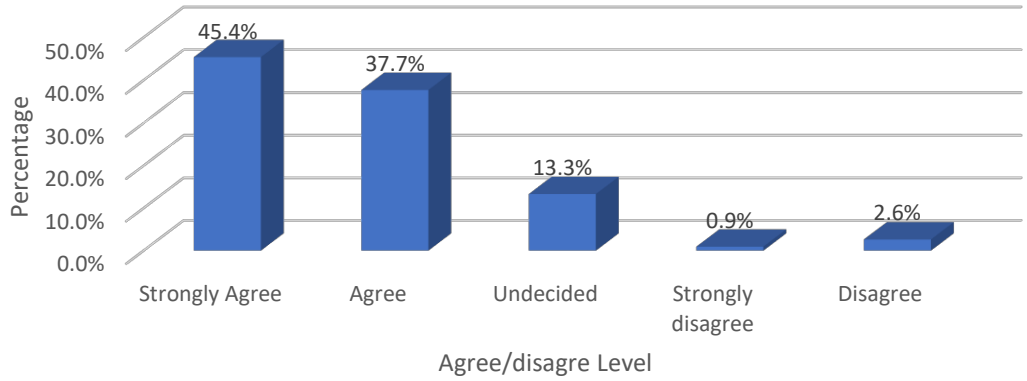
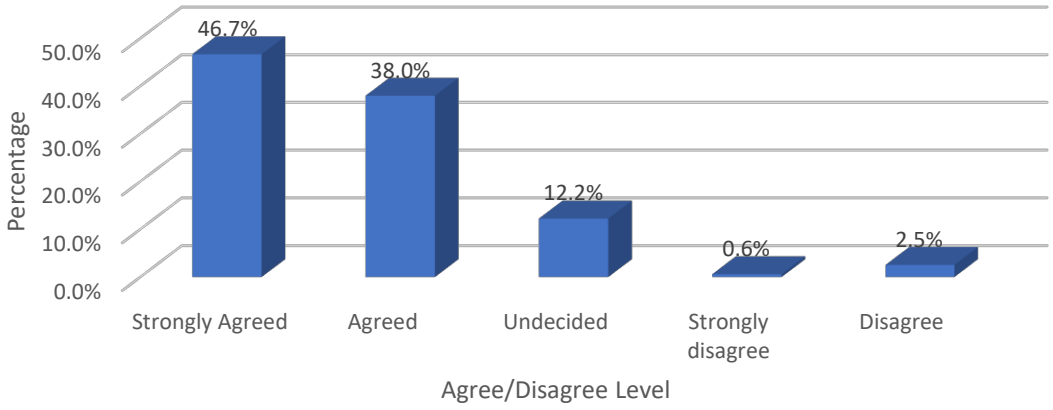


Figure 11D: Belief on the Extent to Which the Adoption of Appropriate Measures to Curb Corruption Can Improve Performance



When the households were asked to state two things they want to change in order to reduce corruption, most stated or recommended:

i. The employment of competent officials
ii. Convict the culprits with the full force of the law
iii. Ensure transparency in the distribution process
iv. Advocate attitudinal change
v. Empower the citizens (especially youths) to revolt against such practices
vi. Requested the government to intervene in order to reduce these corruption practices

8. Respondents Anxiety, Fear, Concerns, and Optimism about COVID-19

In the survey, we also collected information on respondents' level of anxiety, fear, concerns, and optimism with COVID-19. The results are report in Figure 13D, Figure 14D and Figure 15D, respectively. It can be seen that more than 50% of the respondents were very anxious about COVID-19 with less than 10 percent rating their anxiety level below 5. As expected, the level of fear for the illness is also very high as over 84% of respondents rated their level of fear of the pandemic very high (8 and above on a 1 to 10 scale). Similarly, the survey also shows that people are very concerned about the coronavirus pandemic; less 20 percent of respondents have rated their level of concern below 7 on a 1 to 10 scale. In addition, about half (49%) of those interviewed are at least 90% optimistic about the pandemic, as shown in Figure 16D. Therefore, despite people being worried about the pandemic, majority are very optimistic about the future.

Figure 13D: Households' level of Anxiety about the novel coronavirus pandemic

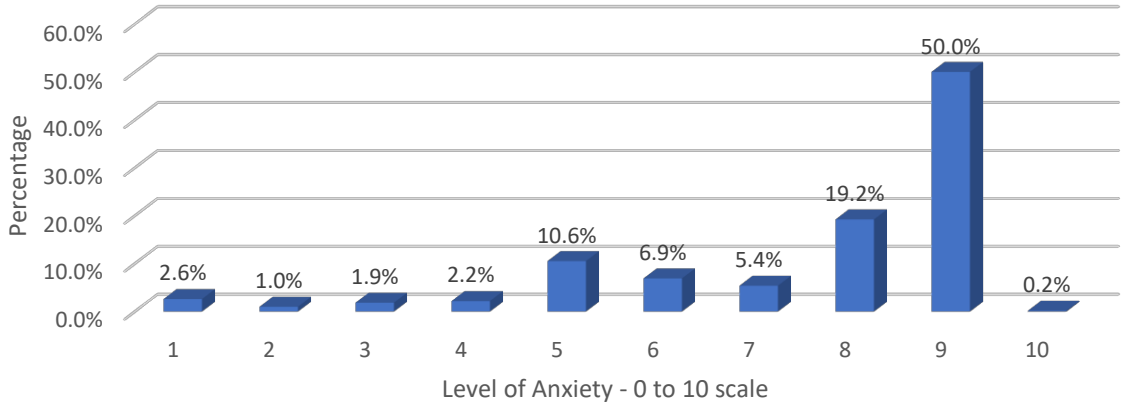


Figure 14D: Households' level of Fear about the novel coronavirus pandemic

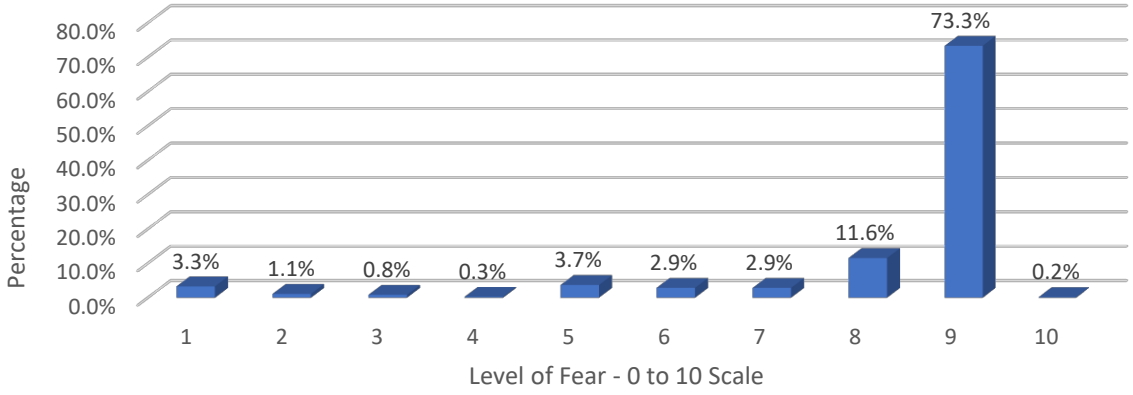


Figure 15D: Households' Level of Concern about the novel coronavirus Pandemic

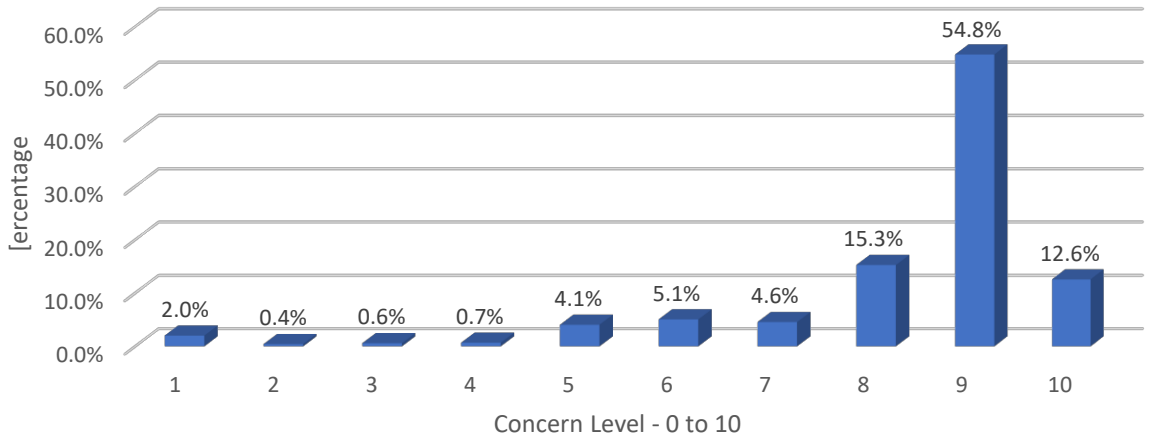
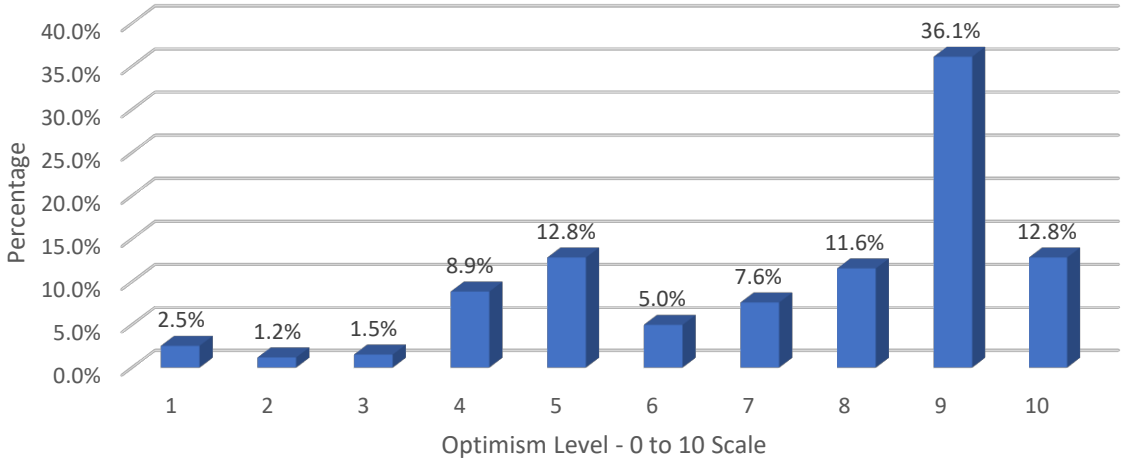


Figure 16D: Households' optimism level about the novel coronavirus pandemic



9. The Potential Macroeconomic Impacts of the COVID-19 Food Relief Package

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of The Gambia has adopted series of measures both to prevent and contain the spread of the virus, but also to dampens its effects on the Gambia's economy, which went through series of lockdowns between March and September 2020 that affected economic activity; between mid-March and late July, the provision of nonessential services was halted that affected many people in The Gambia and their livelihoods. The measures undertaken by the government called for changed in budgetary commitments that affected the fiscal landscape. At the start of the pandemic, the government reallocated GMD 500 Million of the 2020 budget to the Ministry of Health and other relevant Ministries Departments Agencies (MDAs) for implementing the government prevention and containment measures against the pandemic. A significant portion of these funds went into payment for quarantine facilities and procurement of vehicles among other things. Since the lockdown measures restricted economic activity, they were expected to affect food security situation of households, especially the vulnerable ones. As a result, the government deemed it necessary to rolled out a nationwide food distribution package that targeted 84 percent of households. To fund this package, the government had to do further virements or budgetary reallocations. In particular, GMD 800 Million were reallocated from the budget on debt repayment to fund the food relief package; which was possible because of the debt moratorium granted by the multilateral lenders such as the IMF, World Bank, among others2. In July 2020, the National Assembly approved a Supplementary Appropriation Bill to the tune of 2.3 billion as additional measures to curb the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic (IMF, 2021). In this section, we review the macroeconomic impacts of the food relief package.

At the macro level, the food relief package may impact the country's **balance of payment (BoP)**, government spending, debt structure, credit rating among others. Majority of the of the food products consumed in The Gambia are imported as the local production is unable to meet the domestic demand. Given that the food relief package is an unanticipated shock in the demand for the three food items (rice, sugar, and oil) that were distributed, it could increase import of the food

[2] The IMF in 2015 lunched a Catastrophe Containment Relief Fund (CCRT) to provide immediate debt service relief assistance to poor and vulnerable countries when faced with natural disasters including health emergencies. In 2020, the CCRT was revised to also include pandemics like the COVID-19. "The trust provides grants to pay debt service owed to the IMF for eligible low-income member countries that are hit by the most catastrophic of natural disasters or battling public health disasters" (IMF, 2021a).

products as well as the country's BoP. A worsening of the country's BoP problems will lead to further needs for budgetary supports or borrowings to address the shortfalls. In 2018, Gambia's BoP was about USD 78 Million (about 4.7% of GDP). As a result, the food aid program may increase government borrowing in the future, thus, affecting the future debt situation of the country. In 2019, the debt service of external debt (based on World Bank estimates) was about USD 47.6 Million (about GMD 2.3 Billion), which shows that debt financing takes a significant portion of the government budget.

Therefore, the food support could also increase public debt via increase in government expenditures. Estimates from the Ministry of Finance indicates that fiscal deficit (excluding grants) increased by 9% between 2019 and 2020 and the increase is attributable to increase in government expenditure due to government's COVID-19 emergency response including the food relief package. An increase in government spending without a commensurate increase in revenue (including grants) will require more borrowing by the government to address the deficit, which consequently will increase the public debt stock. Increase in government borrowing, particularly from the private sector, may crowd out private sector investment.

As the food relief program and other government COVID-19 interventions can affect the public debt stock, it will affect public debt sustainability. Some creditors like IMF have exempted some of their vulnerable member like Gambia from amortization and interest payment outstanding debts until April 2022. But other creditors such as the G-20 lenders, Paris Club, and China introduced just one year debt service suspensions, meaning that all debts owed to these creditors will accumulate after the elimination of the one-year suspension. Private creditors, however, did not agree to any form of short-term debt relief. Hence, all debts owed to such creditors will continue to accumulate interest (Ocampo, 2021). Although not clear how much credit does the government of The Gambia take from these different sources, it is apparent that any expansion in public spending beyond the level that can be covered by debt relief provided by IMF may expand the public debt stock.

However, reports from the Ministry of Finance indicates that the increase in government spending didn't lead to an increased in public debt. In September 2020, the debt to GDP ratio was 71.8% relative to 81% in 2019 (2020 budget speech). The government attributes the lack of increase of the public debt stock to the various financial supports received from the IMF, World Bank, ECOWAS Bank for International Development (EBID), among others. But such arguments ignore

the fact that some of the supports (example debt suspension or deferred debt payments) may not increase public debt in the short term, but will increase it in the medium to long term. For instance, the government received about USD 23 Million credit from the IMF through the IMF Rapid Credit Facility (RCF), which provides low-access, rapid, and concessional financial assistance to low-income countries (LICs) facing an urgent balance of payments need, with low conditionalities. The RCF has a zero interest rate and a grace period of 5.5 years with a maturity of 10 years (IMF, 2021b). Therefore, this credit may not increase the debt stock now, but will increase it in the future. Debt suspensions will have a similar effect on public debt stock. Increase a public debt to unstainable levels, as it was the case before the government came up with a debt strategy (see MoFEA, 2017) that reduced the debt to GDP ratio substantially, will affect the creditworthiness of the government and some restructuring will be required to make the debt level sustainable.

In light of the foregoing, the food relief program that contributed to the increase in public spending in 2020 may not affect public debt in 2021, but it can affect public debt in the long run. Hence, debt sustainability strategies must be adopted post 2021 to ensure public debt does not rise beyond sustainable levels.

10. Appendix

Figure A1: Monthly Income of the Household (Range) for those who Received Food Aid

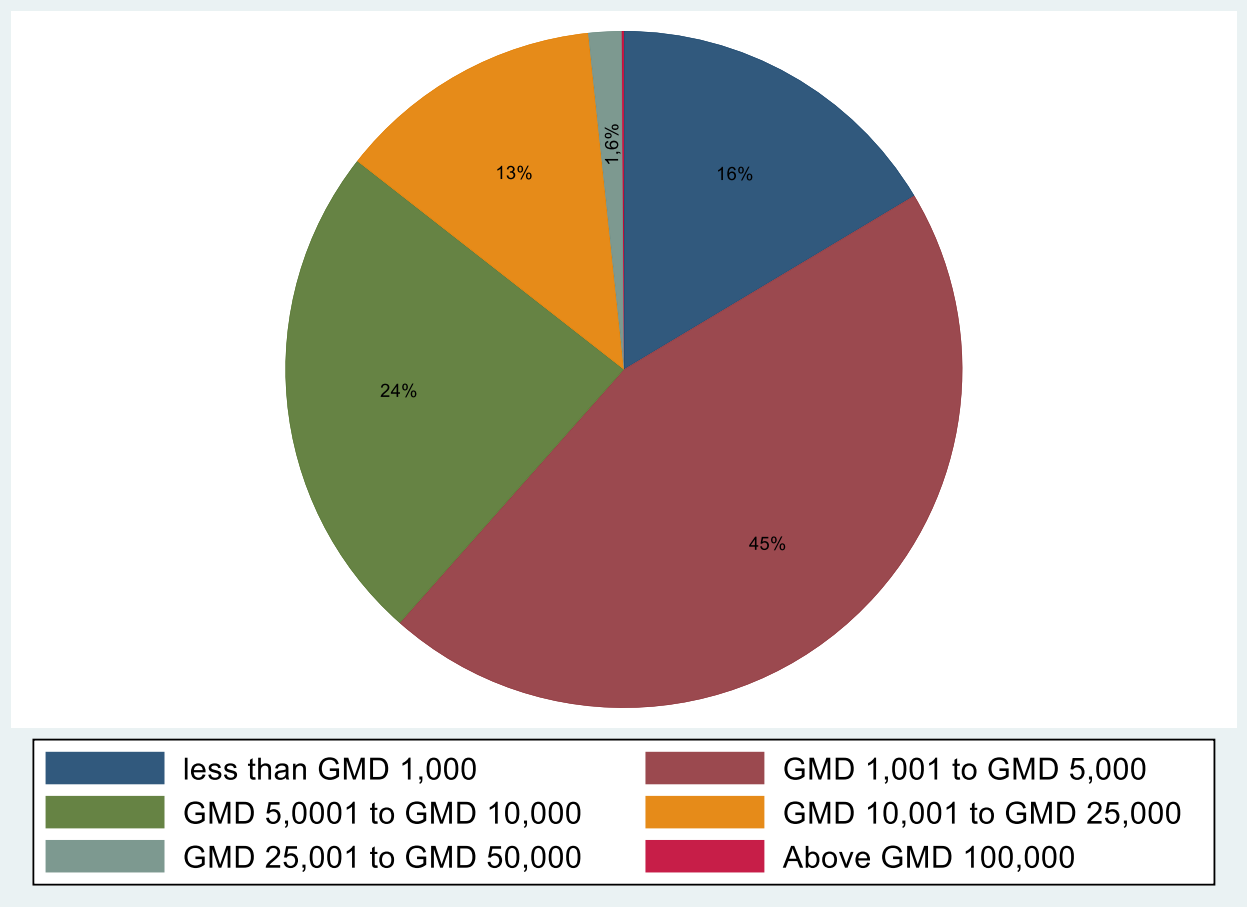


Table A2

Before_receiving_the_food_items_did_the_household_receive_any_coupon?	What is your monthly household income range?						
	less than GMD 1,000	GMD 1,001 to GMD 5,000	GMD 5,0001 to GMD 10,000	GMD 10,001 to GMD 25,000	GMD 25,001 to GMD 50,000	Above GMD 100,000	Total
Yes	161	425	220	119	13	1	939
No	44	109	65	23	5	0	246
Total	205	534	285	142	18	1	1185

Table A3

Before_receiving_the_food_items_did_the_household_receive_any_coupon?	no_assets

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Yes	8	104	102	133	152	103	87	58	54	45	25	33	22	9	4	939
No	4	28	19	39	33	22	11	15	14	15	17	12	12	4	1	246
Total	12	132	121	172	185	125	98	73	68	60	42	45	34	13	5	1185

Table A4

Before_receiving_the_food_items_did_the_household_receive_any_coupon?	no_livestock								
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Yes	116	158	157	168	155	92	70	23	939
No	84	39	54	23	16	18	8	4	246
Total	200	197	211	191	171	110	78	27	1185

Table A5

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Late	320	35.00	27.00
Early	865	65.00	100.00
Total	1185	100.00	

Table A6: Table Two-sample t test with equal variances

	obs1	obs2	Mean 1		Mean 2	dif	St Err	t value	p value
food item missing ~ rice	6	121	.834		.24	.594	.179	3.3	.001

Table A7: Two-sample t test with equal variances

	obs1	obs2	Mean 1	Mean 2	dif	St Err	t value	p value
food item missing ~sugar	6	121	.5	.248	.252	.184	1.35	.172

Table A8: Two-sample t test with equal variances

	obs1	obs2	Mea	Mea	dif	St Err	t value	p value

			n1	n2				
food item missing ~ oil	6	121	.334	.801	-.469	.17	-2.75	.007

Table A10: Tabulation of region for households who received the food aid or not

Region	Did the household receive the government food aid in 2020?		
	Yes	No	Total
BCC	85.00	15.00	100.00
CRR North	90.82	9.18	100.00
CRR South	78.33	21.67	100.00
KMC	41.25	58.75	100.00
LRR	94.44	5.56	100.00
NBR	91.83	8.17	100.00
URR	88.45	11.55	100.00
WCR	84.66	15.34	100.00
Total	85.32	14.68	100.00

Table A11: Discrepancy in Rice by Region

Region	For which of the food item(s) was there a discrepancy?:Rice		
	NO	YES	Total
BCC	0.00	5.88	1.57
CRR North	59.14	0.00	43.31
CRR South	2.15	5.88	3.15
KMC	2.15	0.00	1.57
LRR	1.08	50.00	14.17
NBR	20.43	8.82	17.32
URR	2.15	11.76	4.72
WCR	12.90	17.65	14.17
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table A12: Discrepancy in Sugar by Region

Region	For which of the food item(s) was there a discrepancy?:Sugar		
	NO	YES	Total

BCC	1.06	3.03	1.57
CRR North	56.38	6.06	43.31
CRR South	0.00	12.12	3.15
KMC	1.06	3.03	1.57
LRR	6.38	36.36	14.17
NBR	21.28	6.06	17.32
URR	3.19	9.09	4.72
WCR	10.64	24.24	14.17
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table A13: Discrepancy in Oil by Region

Region	For which of the food item(s) was there a discrepancy?:Oil		
	NO	YES	Total
BCC	3.57	1.01	1.57
CRR North	3.57	54.55	43.31
CRR South	14.29	0.00	3.15
KMC	0.00	2.02	1.57
LRR	42.86	6.06	14.17
NBR	14.29	18.18	17.32
URR	14.29	2.02	4.72
WCR	7.14	16.16	14.17
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Table A14: Household Size by Category

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
4 People or Less	19	1.60	1.60
5 to 10 People	259	21.86	23.46
11 to 15 People	231	19.49	42.95
16 to 20 People	172	14.51	57.47
21 to 40 People	255	21.52	78.99
41 to 100 People	66	5.57	84.56
More than 100 People	183	15.44	100.00
Total	1185	100.00	

Table A15: Who Issued Your Household The Coupon (Others)

	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
No family member returned	1	1.69	1.69
Three members going to Arabic boarding school	1	1.69	3.39
came to teach into the community	1	1.69	5.08
did not receive	1	1.69	6.78
Divorce	1	1.69	8.47
moved to the new apartment	1	1.69	10.17
new born	49	83.05	93.22
some family members were excluded because they traveled	1	1.69	94.92
the households are separated now.	1	1.69	96.61
they separate	1	1.69	98.31
we all traveled	1	1.69	100.00
Total	59	100.00	

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