

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN AND MEN IN KADUNA AND CROSS RIVER STATES OF NIGERIA

COVID-19 in Nigeria

The Government of Nigeria declared a partial lockdown in late March 2020 in the states of FCT, Lagos and Abuja, with the lockdown expanding to other states shortly afterwards. Since early June, movement restrictions were relaxed considerably, and businesses reopened gradually following social distancing procedures. Nigeria has faced two surges of COVID-19 infections, with the first surge from April to August 2020 and the second from December 2020 to February 2021; this was followed by further surges in the August and December of 2021.

Study description

The study was conducted in Kaduna State and Cross River State in Nigeria. It was designed as a longitudinal panel study with five rounds of data collection. The study used primary quantitative data collected using structured questionnaires administered through phone-based surveys. The study sample was drawn using systematic random sampling from an earlier in-person survey conducted by IFPRI for the Agro Processing, Productivity Enhancement and Livelihood Improvement Support' (APPEALS) project. Figure 1 provides a detailed description on the study timeline and sample size covered in each round.

KEY FINDINGS

- The COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown have severely affected household income (including remittances) and exacerbated household food and water insecurity.
- Gender disparities are not as discernible in Nigeria as compared to other countries. However, if conditions persist, women will likely suffer more compared to men given their limited adaptive capacities.
- Men shared that they used their own savings to deal with the income loss as compared to women, which suggests that women had lower savings/assets and needed to depend on their spouses in times of crisis.
- Over one third of women did not have minimally adequate diet diversity and over 75% of respondents reported a change in food access due to the pandemic.
- Around one-third of respondents across all rounds shared that they were worried about water availability, changed plans due to (lack of) availability, and did not have enough drinking water.

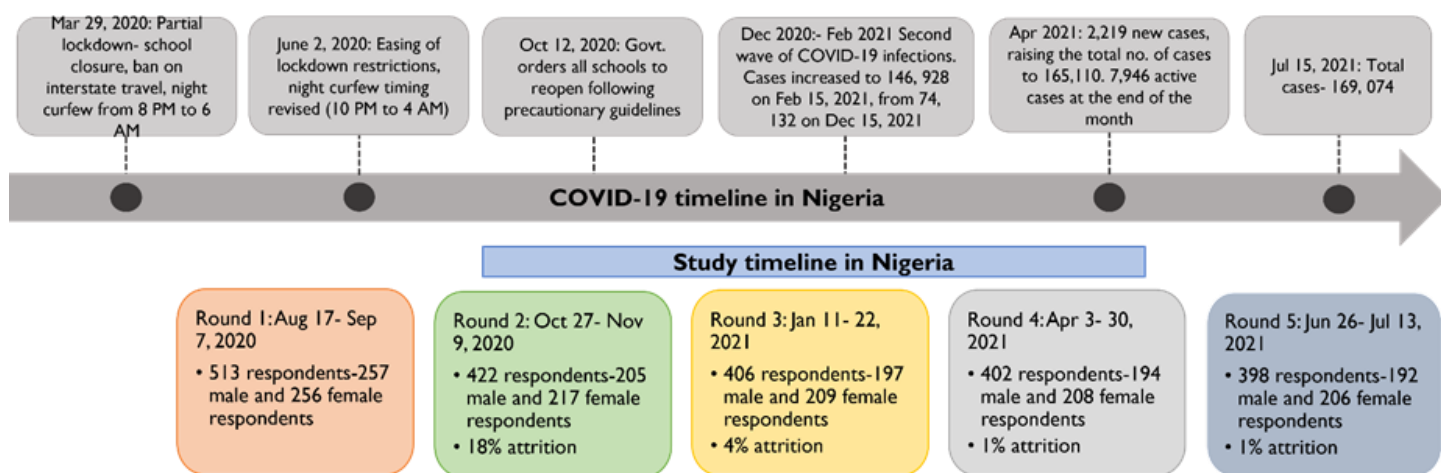


Figure 1: Nigeria: COVID-19 lockdown and study timeline

Study findings

a. Economic impact

Nearly one-third of all respondents were engaged in farming and raising livestock as their primary occupation, mostly cultivating staple crops. Around one-third of respondents were self-employed. Men were mostly engaged in agriculture (39%) and salaried jobs (23%), whereas women were mostly self-employed (44%). More women (16%) than men (3%) were unemployed.

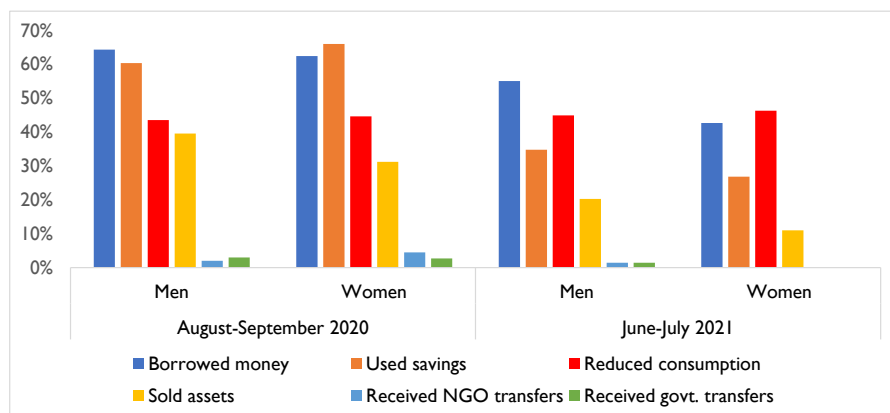


Figure 2: Coping strategies for households to deal with income loss

About 79% of households reported an income loss due to the pandemic in the first survey (August/September); this reduced to 50% in the second round (October/November). Experienced losses declined further, to 38% in June-July 2021. Women respondents consistently expressed higher losses than male respondents. Early on, households mostly relied on using their savings to cope with income loss, followed by borrowing money and selling of assets. In later rounds, borrowing and reduced consumption increased in relative importance (Figure 2). No gender-based differences were observed with respect to the type of coping strategies used.

Early on, men noted that their own assets were sold to deal with the pandemic (84%), as compared to those of women (54%). While this trend continued in October-November of 2020, the difference between men and women was not statistically significant. These findings suggest that women perhaps have lower savings/assets and therefore needed to depend on their spouses in times of crisis. Households largely relied on family members, neighbors, or friends for borrowing money; in later rounds, there was increased reliance on informal lenders.

Around 44% households in October-November 2020 also reported reducing their food consumption due to the income loss. Around 32% shared that they had reduced expenditures on food (93%), recharging mobile phones (57%), clothing (51%) and transportation (46%) to cope with the income loss. A significantly higher proportion of men as compared to women controlled their own income before the pandemic as well as in the two weeks preceding the first and second surveys rounds. Women, on average, spent around 3 hours per day more on caring for other household members in the 24 hours preceding the survey than men respondents. This gap declined to 2.5 hours in October-November 2020 with males putting in 7.6 hours of care work and women spending almost 10 hours.

b. Impact on mobility

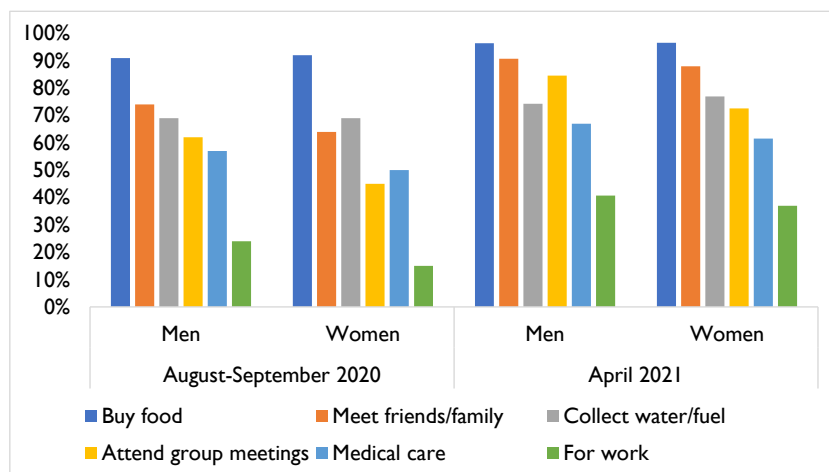


Figure 3: Mobility in the 2 weeks preceding the survey

Given that the lockdown restrictions in Nigeria were not as strict, particularly in Kaduna State and Cross River State, respondents could comfortably go out to buy food and seek medical care when needed. However, only 24% of men and 15% of men respondents went out for work during August-September 2020; this increased to 41% and 37%, respectively in April 2021 (Figure 3). More people started going out to participate in group meetings and to meet friends/family in the later rounds of survey. More men than women across all rounds went out for most activities with the exception of water/fuel collection and food purchases, which involved more women respondents. Over 60% of respondents across all rounds of survey felt that their mobility had reduced due to the pandemic.

c. Impact on migration

Only 21% of the surveyed households had migrant members who lived away for work in the last one year. Most migrants were male (66%), whereas 34% were female migrants. Many migrants (53% of male migrants and 41% of female migrants) had returned home due to the pandemic by August-September 2020, while 62% of households with migrants had members that continued living away for work. Almost 30% of households received remittances. Of these, 74% reported receiving less in remittances than prior to the pandemic. By October-November 2020, the share of households with migrant members reduced to 55%, with 17% of these households receiving remittances. Migrants who had not gone back to work shared that they were facing difficulty in finding new jobs. Additionally, 8% of households reported new migration, mostly men, in the period between round 1 and 2. Of the households reporting new migration, 38% were receiving remittances.

d. Impact on food security and dietary diversity

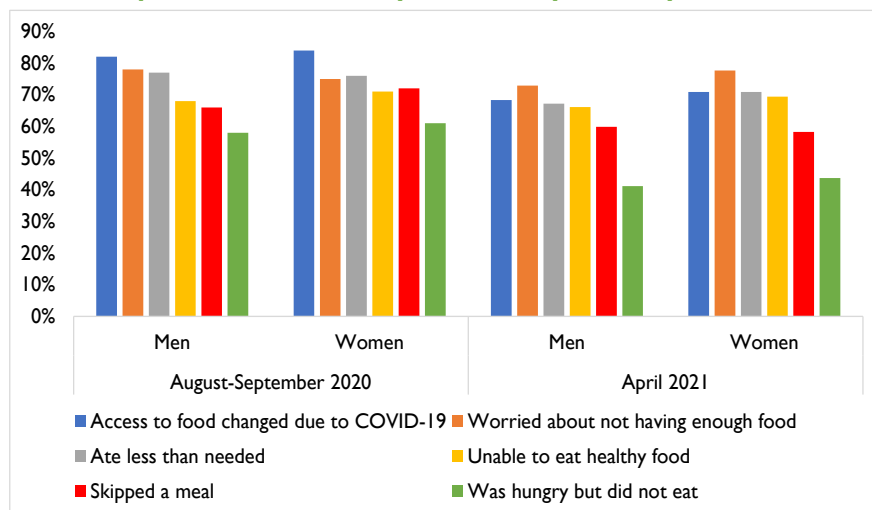


Figure 4: Food insecurity in the 2 weeks preceding the survey

More than two-third respondents across all rounds were worried that they would not have enough food to eat (Figure 4). A large share of respondents also skipped a meal in the two weeks preceding the survey, ate less than required, and did not eat even when they were hungry. However, the share of people who had to face these circumstances slightly declined over the survey rounds, suggesting that the health shock was less of an impact as compared to the economic shock (lockdown) in terms of food security.

Around 34% of women respondents in August-September 2020 did not have minimally adequate diet diversity;¹ this increased slightly to 37% in October-November 2020 and to 39% by January 2021. Consumption of vegetables, nuts and seeds, eggs, and dairy decreased across rounds.

e. Impact on water security

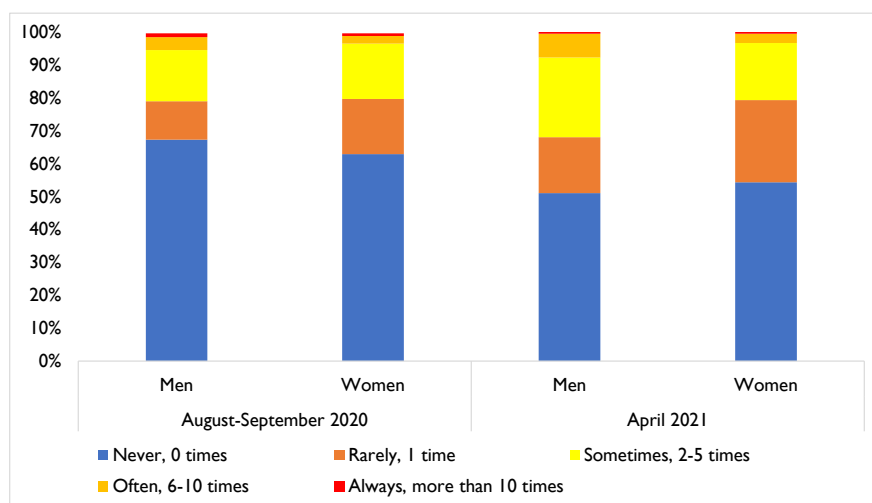


Figure 5: Frequency of worrying about water availability

The primary sources of drinking water for households were piped water (54%) and dug wells (30%). Eleven percent of households reported a change in their primary source of drinking water between August-September and October-November 2020 and a further 10% reported a change in source to January 2021. For nearly half of the households surveyed, the source of drinking water was located outside their household premises. Among those, 25% of respondents noted that it took them more than 30 minutes to fetch drinking water.

Around half of all respondents noted that their household consumption of water increased compared to the previous year, and a majority of respondents attributed the increase to the pandemic. About 45% of households paid for the water that they used for domestic purposes and

more than 60% of those paying felt that their expenditure on water had increased. Around one-third of respondents across all rounds shared that they were worried about water availability (Figure 5), changed plans/activities due to water unavailability, and lacked access

¹ Minimum dietary diversity for women (MDD-W) was calculated for female respondents based on a 24-hour recall period to assess impacts on nutrition.

to drinking water. No gender-based differences in terms of water insecurity were observed. Concerns around water insecurity were more pronounced in April 2021 as compared to the initial rounds, possibly due to the dry season. During that survey round, levels of water insecurity increased by close to 10%. Almost all respondents had heard about hand washing recommendations to avoid contamination of COVID-19.

f. Impact on children's education

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Nigeria has one of the highest share of children who are not attending school, of which around 60% are girls. The COVID-19 crisis seems to have made the situation worse. Around 58% and 55% of boys and girls, respectively, who were attending school before the pandemic, were not going to school in October-November 2020. While the majority of respondents (54%) shared that they were not sending their children to school because schools were closed, it is important to note that around 17% of households could not financially afford to send their children to school.

Conclusions

The severe impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were felt in both Kaduna State and Cross River State, with pervasive income shocks across rural areas. In order to develop effective responses to income losses and other impacts, early suggestions of policy interventions should address the large food insecurity and nutrition challenges, consider credit support programs at highly favorable rates and rural asset development programs, address the poor water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) environment, and provide conflict resolution support for rural households.

Taking cognizance of these negative impacts, the Government of Nigeria has developed an economic sustainability plan for post-COVID growth, published in late 2020. It emphasizes the need for job-creation for women and youth through agriculture and agro-related economic activities and includes social protection for vulnerable groups. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) has identified six priority areas for mitigating risks during and post the COVID-19 pandemic: improve varieties of crops and livestock/fisheries; enhance seed systems; revitalize extension service delivery; expand storage infrastructure; empower women and youth; and provide social safety net policies.

If implemented effectively, the plans would redress some of the adverse impacts identified in this study in the medium-term. However, for building resilience in the longer-term, and for improving livelihoods beyond the pre-pandemic status, deeper reforms and strategies are required. The FMARD is currently developing a National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Plan (NATIP), and the Ministry of Budget, Finance, and Planning is leading the development of a Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) for 2025, 2030, and 2050. An important step towards building resilience is to ensure that the process of prioritizing policies and actions within these strategies accounts for the realities identified in this study.

This publication was prepared by Muzna Alvi, Shweta Gupta and Prapti Barooah, all at the New Delhi office of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), under the Gender, Climate Change, and Nutrition Initiative (GCAN). The survey was coordinated by Finmark and implemented by IPSOS. We appreciated comments from Elizabeth Bryan, Emily Larkin, Aslihan Kes and Claudia Ringler. GCAN was made possible with support from Feed the Future through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and is associated with the CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security, which is carried out with support from CGIAR Fund Donors and through bilateral funding agreements. The fact sheet has not been peer reviewed. Any opinions are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IFPRI, USAID, or Feed the Future. Copyright ©2021 International Food Policy Research Institute. Licensed for use under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0)