

# Covid-19 and Youth: Bangladesh Case

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# Outline

- Context
- The sample
- Income and employment
- Skills acquisition during COVID
- Aspirations & Mental Well-Being
- Key takeaway/ Policy implications

# Context: Youth in Bangladesh

- A third of population in Bangladesh are youth (15–35)
- 30% of youth are NOT in education, employment or training (**NEET**)
- **Unemployment** among youth (15-29) **more than twice as high** as general population – 10.6% compared to 4.2%
- **High gender disparity** among youth
  - Unemployment: Women (**15%**) and Men (**8%**)
  - 87% NEET** are women.

Data source: LFS, 2016-2017



# Income & employment

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# Samples: BRAC SPA survey

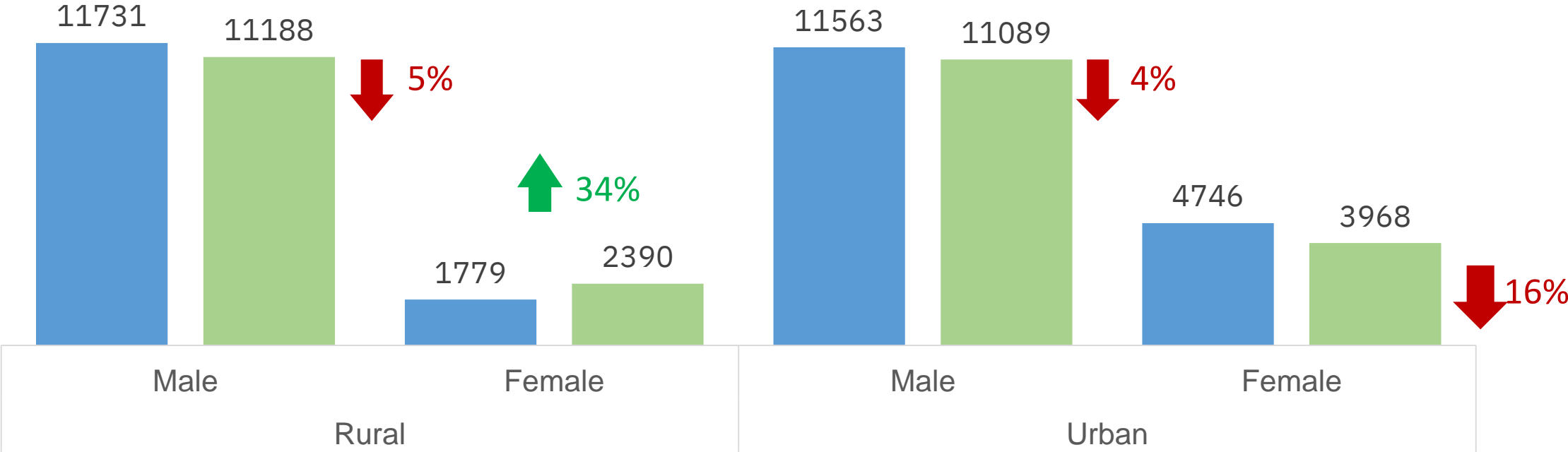
- Rural (65%) Urban (35%)
- 52% Female
- Nationally representative
  - 2017 with 33,600 HHs
  - 2021 with 7510 HHs, recall data for pre-covid period (Feb '20)
- In person survey
- For youth analysis – sample of 5553 youths aged between 18-35 years

# Occupational Distribution: Feb '20 vs Jan '21

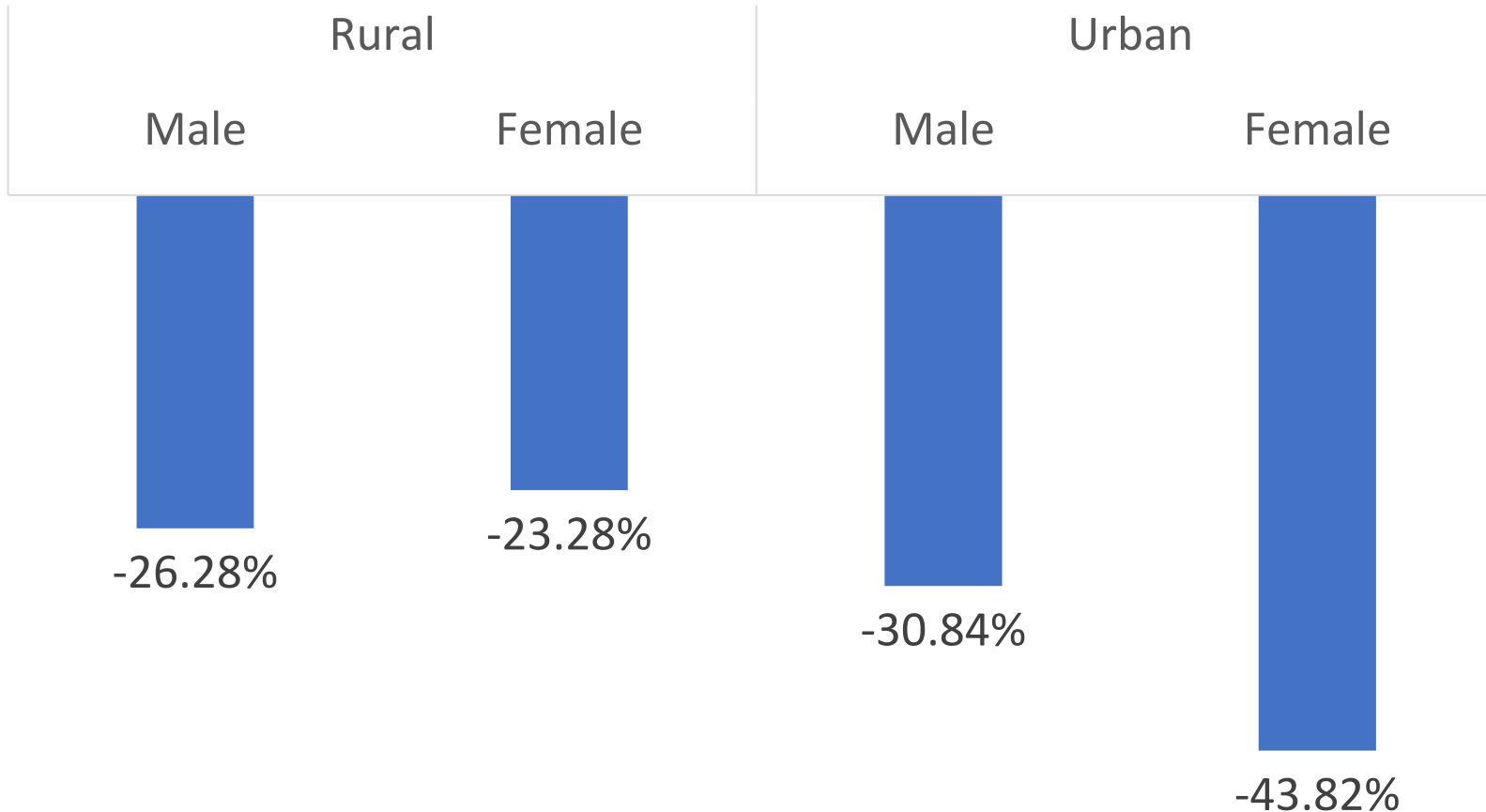
	Rural				Urban			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
Agriculture	26.82	29.02	<b>53.63</b>	<b>58.09</b>	1.21	1.86	5.71	7.71
Remittance	0.29	0.4	1.13	1.4	0.33	0.33	0.38	0.38
RMG	1.79	1.91	0.38	0.38	2.63	2.41	4.67	5.71
Labourer	20.12	21.73	1.67	2.26	13.71	15.9	1.14	1.52
Housemaid	0.0	0.0	0.59	0.54	0.0	0.0	7.24	7.71
Skilled labourer	13.18	14.91	<b>6.56</b>	<b>8.97</b>	14.91	14.58	<b>7.71</b>	<b>9.62</b>
Job	14.34	15.55	1.93	1.99	22.7	23.03	7.05	7.14
Business	11.73	12.77	0.64	1.02	14.58	14.8	3.52	4.19
Transport	7.86	8.55	0.0	0.0	12.83	13.49	0.1	0.0
Others	3.47	3.41	1.88	1.99	2.41	3.18	3.52	3.81
Student	20.52	19.25	11.39	11.18	11.07	10.31	6.57	6.1
Unemployed	<b>6.94</b>	<b>5.09</b>	<b>30.57</b>	<b>26.01</b>	<b>8.55</b>	<b>7.68</b>	<b>57.14</b>	<b>51.62</b>

# Except rural young women, income of everyone declined, sharpest decline for urban women

Average monthly income, by gender, across locality



# Actual income in Jan '21 is much lower than predicted income, even for rural young women



If COVID did not happen, income would have been much higher



# Skills acquisition during COVID times

# Sample: Youth Survey

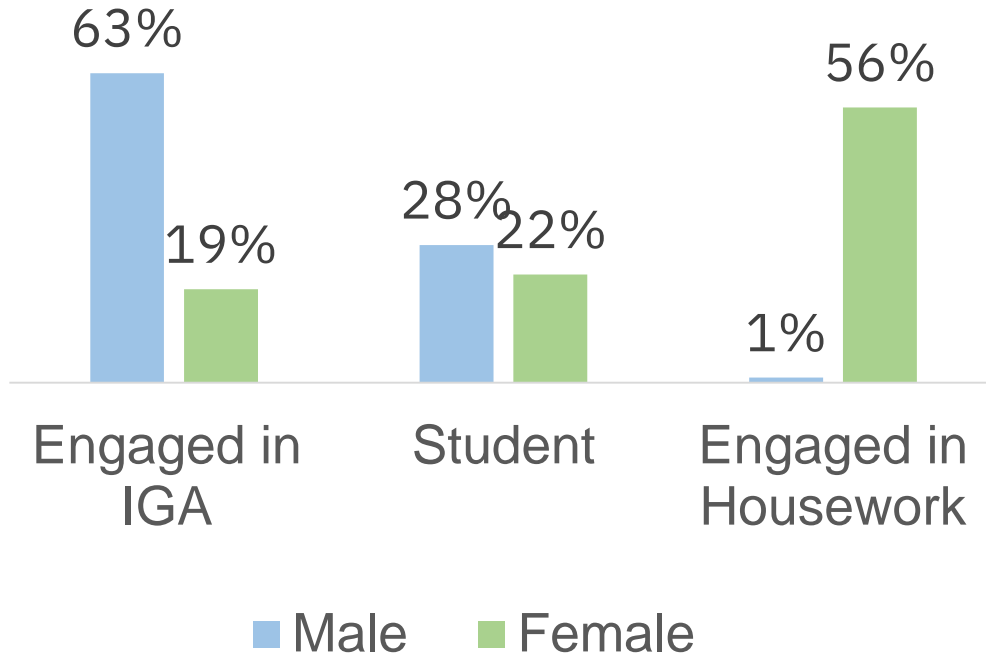
## Phone survey

- Rural (78%) Urban (22%)
- 53% Female
- Nationally representative
  - 2018 with 4,200 youth
  - 2020 with 1929, includes recall data for pre-COVID period (Feb '21)

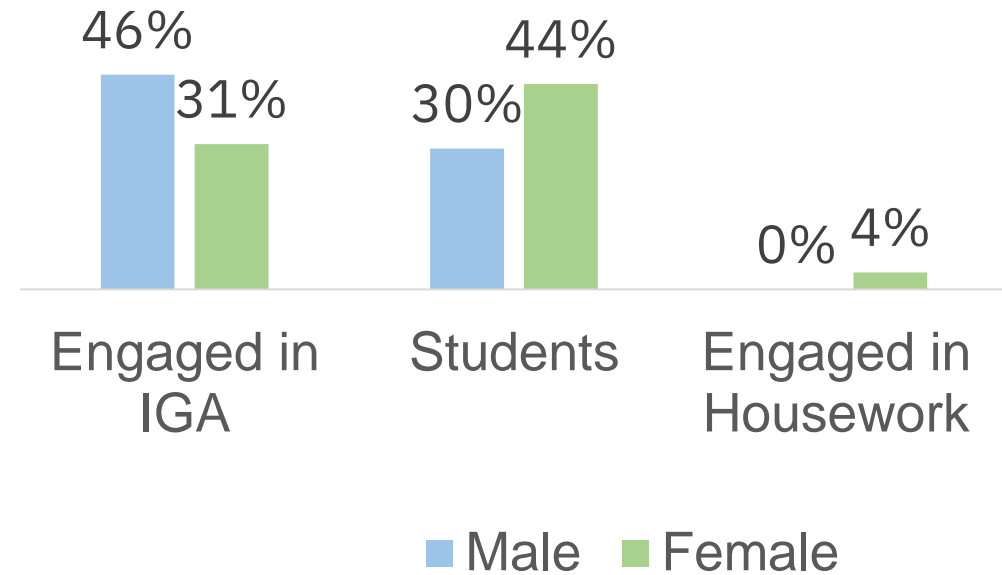
## Social media survey

- 31% Female
- 2020 with 538 youth
- biased towards digitally inclined, possibly wealthier youth

## Phone Survey



## Social Media Survey

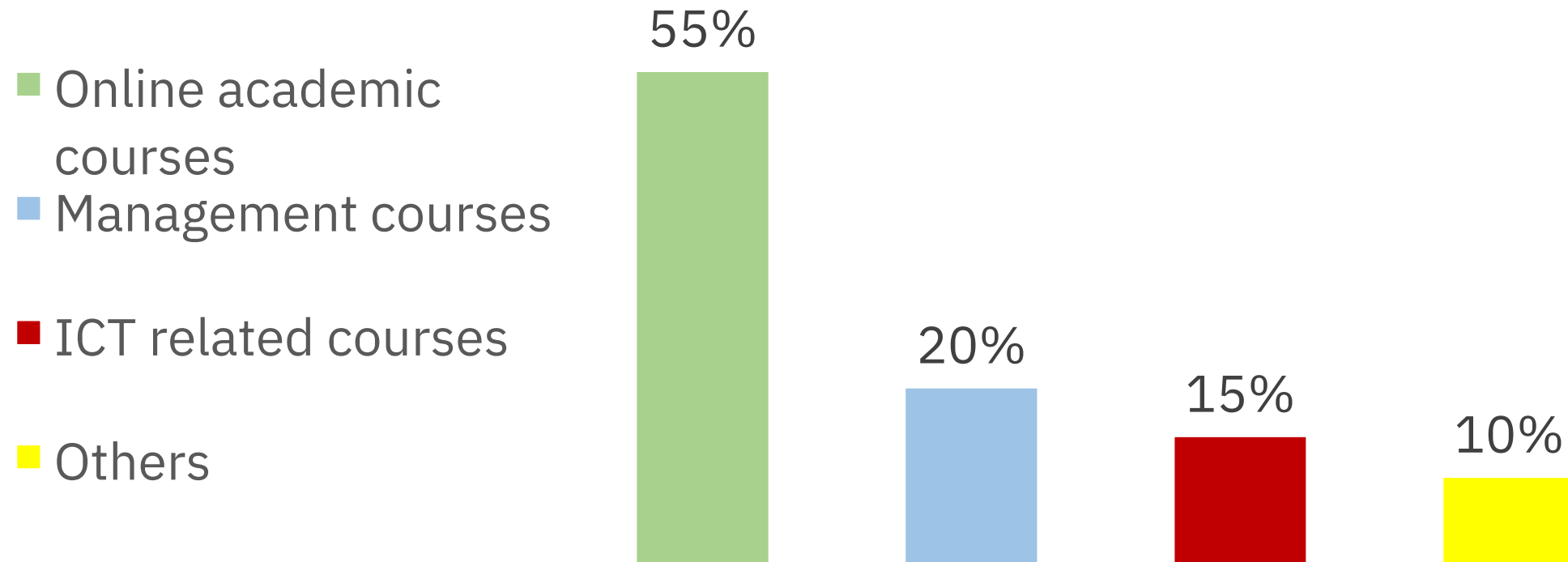


- More men engaged in IGA and majority women in Housework in phone survey
- Most women in IGA and study in social media survey

# Skills acquisition during COVID times

Phone Survey	Social Media Survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 4.9% took some form of new trainings in the past year</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 27% took new trainings</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 46% felt the need for new trainings in post-COVID job market<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 62% among the students</li><li>• 43% among those in IGA</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 85% thought the same<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 80% among the students</li><li>• 87% among those in IGA</li></ul></li></ul>

# Social media survey, type of training taken



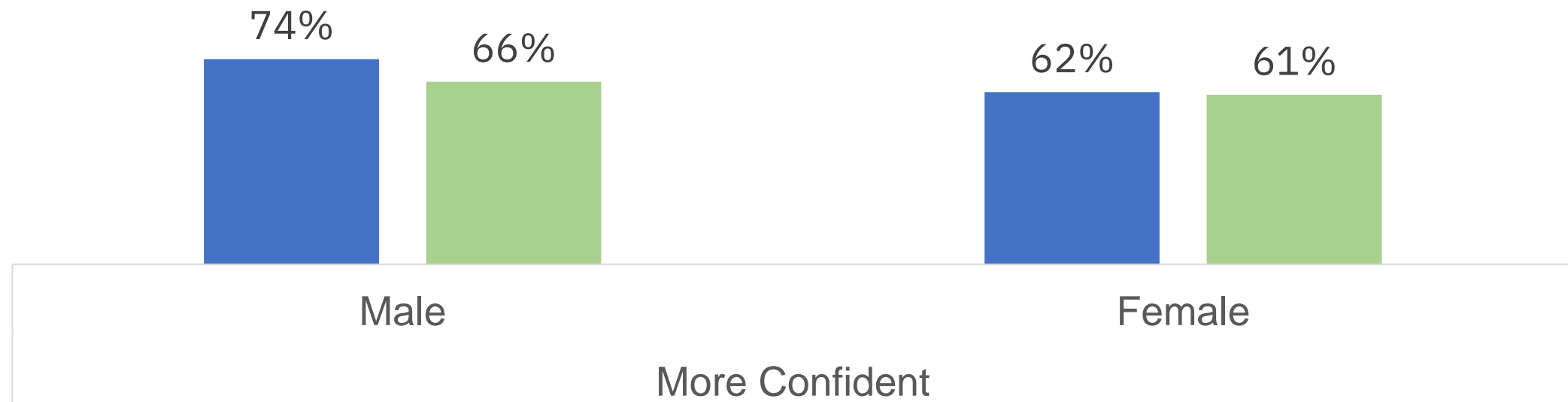
# Implications for Human Capital Building

- **Little skills acquisition:** most did not take any new trainings, though educational institutes closed for 18 months
- Not developing skills that might be required for post-COVID job market
- **Widening the existing gap in skills** among the Bangladeshi youth, e.g., richer vs poorer youth

# Aspirations & Mental Well-Being

# Confidence about future jobs

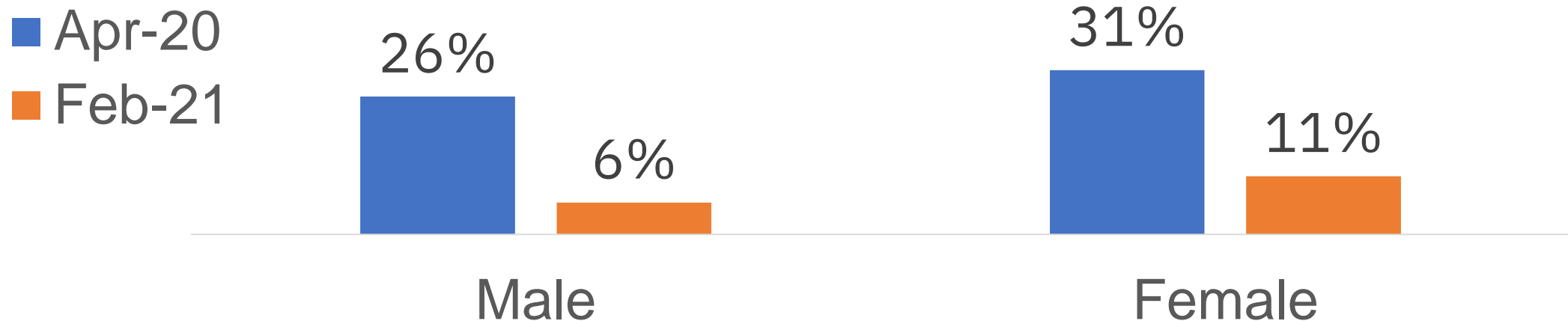
- 62% of expressed confidence about getting into IGA post-COVID
- Young women, students or in IGA, reported lower confidence



# Mental well-being of the youth

Using Short Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale

Percentage of youth in possible anxiety/depression



# Improvement in mental wellbeing—young men are coping better

**20%** of young women vs **12%** of young men were in probable or possible depression/anxiety both during lockdown and in Jan '21

# Key Takeaways

Risk of widening socio-economic gap in skills acquisition

Urban young women more vulnerable to labour market shock of COVID

Gendered approach to mental wellbeing, norms and aspirations need to be integrated as part of recovery interventions.

# Thank You



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# Mental Well-Being: Short Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS)

- We ask respondents their responses on seven positively worded statements; each statement has five possible responses, ranging from “none of the time” to “all the time”.
- Respondents’ final answers were aggregated on a scale of 7-35.
- Higher scores represent better mental well-being.
- Based on these scores, we find the percentage of our sample in each category – probable, possible and no anxiety or depression

**Probable depression  
or anxiety**

Scores between  
7 and 17

**Possible depression  
or anxiety**

- Scores between 18  
and 20

**No anxiety or  
depression**

- Scores above 20