

# Migration and Food Security in Rural Myanmar

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*These are preliminary findings – please do not cite*



Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund



European Union



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# Overview

- Myanmar context
- Why might migration affect food security?
  - Transmission channels
- CHIME survey
- Migration patterns in 4 states/regions
- Defining and Measuring Food Security with HH survey data
- Modelling the impact of migration on food security

# Myanmar context

- Poverty and under-development
  - [Poorest country in Southeast Asia: 25% of the population are below the national line](#)
  - Over 80% of the working population receive less than US\$3.10 (PPP) a day
  - Country ranks 145 out of 188 on [HDI](#) 2016
- Increasing migration, both abroad and internally
- Concerns over food security in a low income country with high levels of risk

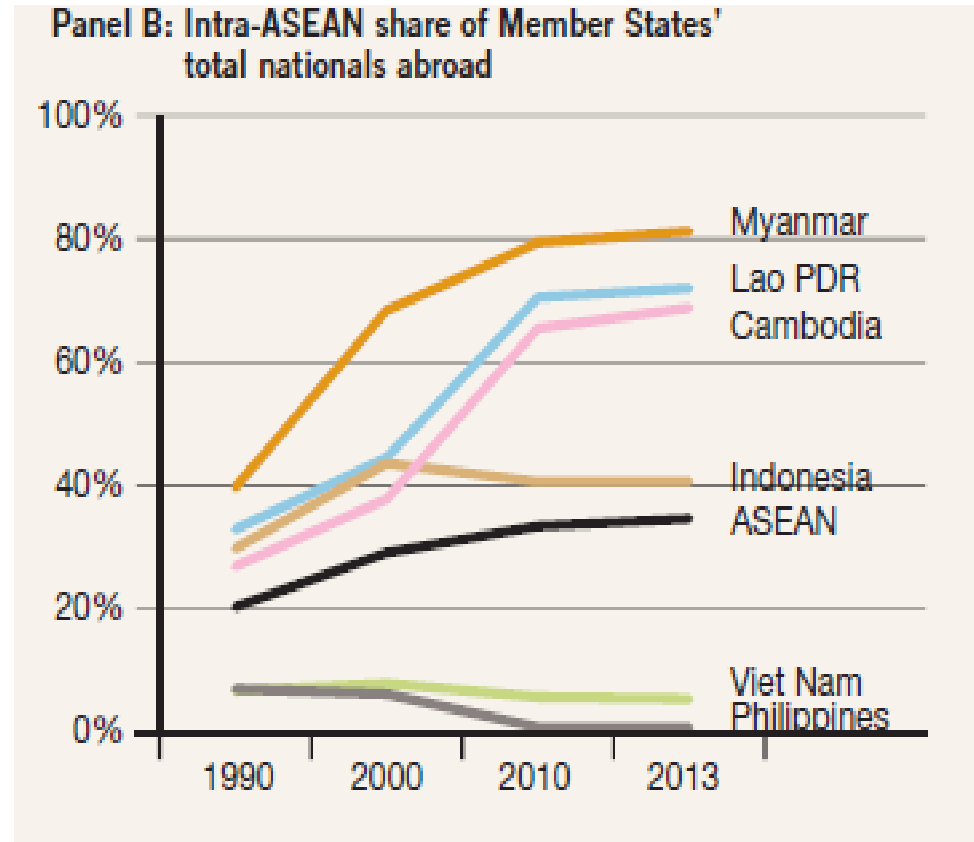
# Increasing *international* Migration flows

There are estimated 4.25 million Myanmar migrants abroad – **10 % of Myanmar's total population**

According to 2014 census, **67 % of all migrants in Myanmar have migrated abroad in the last 5 years.**

Myanmar is the biggest source country in ASEAN - almost **33% of all intra-ASEAN migrants come from Myanmar.**

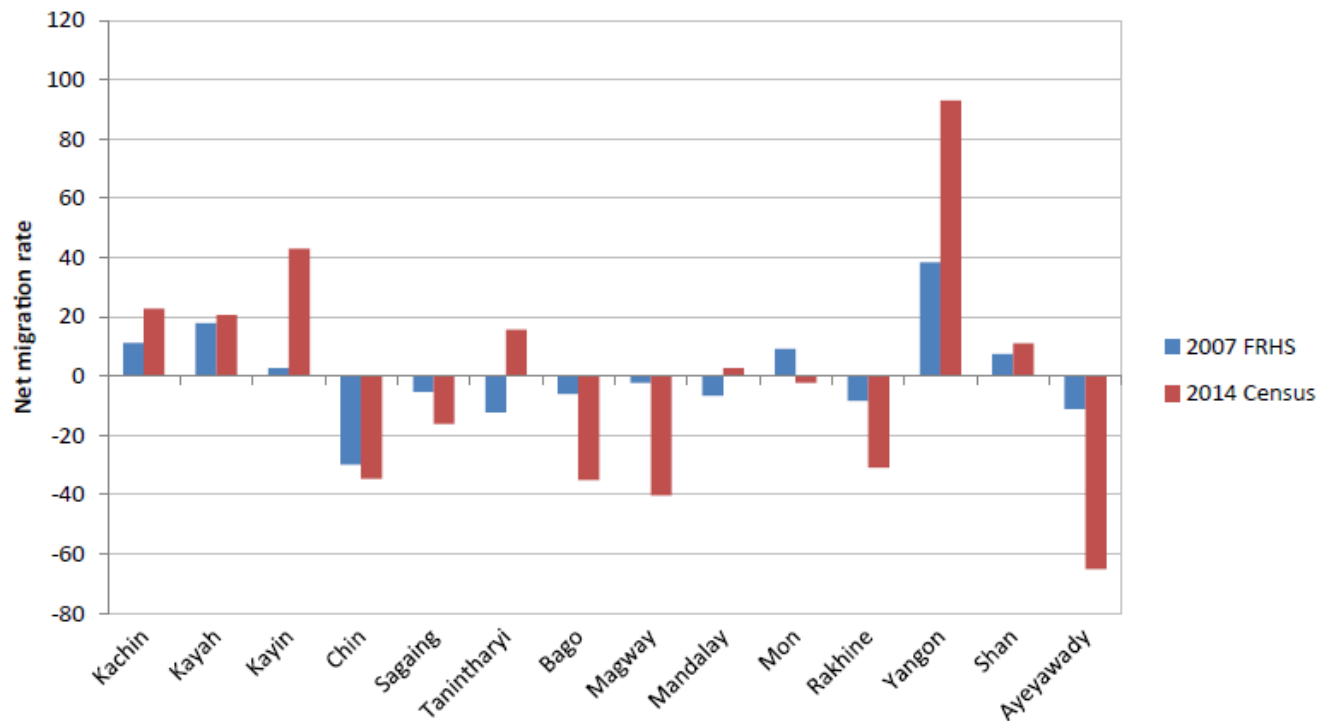
Most of Myanmar's international migrants are within ASEAN (graph)- **Myanmar-Thailand corridor largest in ASEAN**



# Also increasing *internal* migration (inter-state)

**Figure 4.6**

Net migration rates for recent inter-State/Region migrants per 1,000 population by State/Region, 2007 FRHS and 2014 Census



- Positive net flows are observed in Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Mandalay, Nay Pyi Taw, Shan, Tanintharyi and Yangon.

**Source:** Data from the 2007 FRHS are from the Department of Population (2013). Five year migration in the 2007 FRHS is based on a question that asks where the respondent lived five years prior to the survey. Recent migration from the 2014 Census is the last move that occurred in the five years before the Census.

# Food insecurity and risk

- WFP reports serious concerns over food security
  - 29% of children are chronically malnourished (stunting)
  - Only 16% of children aged 6-23 months have a minimally acceptable diet
- High risks from cyclones and flooding
  - Myanmar ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in world on Global Climate Risk Index
- On-going violent conflict in Rakhine, Chin, Kachin and Shan states

# Why might migration affect food security of the family left behind?

- Income effects
  - Income from remittances
    - Cash, in-kind or *social*
  - Income pooling/sharing
- Household effects
  - Composition of household
  - Decision making
  - Time allocation between productive and reproductive activities

# Migration

Income  
and  
remittan  
ces

Income  
pooling  
and  
consum  
ption  
smoothi  
ng

Health  
knowled  
ge

HH  
composi  
tion &  
decision  
making

Time  
allocatio  
n

Access to  
food/purchasing  
power

Availability of  
food market/own  
production

Stability: shocks,  
seasonality

Water &  
sanitation

# HH Food Security and Nutrition



# CHIME Project

- Capitalising Human Mobility for Poverty Alleviation and Inclusive Development in Myanmar (CHIME)
  - Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund, multi-donor fund in Myanmar
- Mixed-method study combining two rounds of household surveys and qualitative interviews



## Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund



# Sampling and definitions

- Sampling with assistance of Dept of Population
  - Random selection of approx. 43 rural EAs in each state/region using PPS
  - Random selection of households within each EA
- Sample is representative of rural population of both Ayeyarwaddy and Mandalay
  - Permissions not secured for several EAs in Shan and Rakhine states so results come with cautions
- Household definition is the “common pot” – people who usually live together and share meals together
- Migrant definition has both a spatial and temporal dimension (Bilsborrow et al 2001)
  - A migrant is someone who was considered a family member, who left within the last 10 years to live outside the village and has been away for 3 months or more
  - Inclusive of all reasons for migrating; excludes commuting and short term seasonal work away
  - An *internal* migrant is a migrant who is **thought** to be located within the country
  - An *international* is a migrant **thought** to living outside of Myanmar
- Sample size of 2836 households in round 1 (early 2017) with 1155 current migrants

# Migration rates and patterns differ between states

Mostly internal - except Rakhine

Mostly male when international – except Shan

More gender balanced when internal

## Mandalay

HHs with migrants - 36%  
Internal-international ratio – 79:21  
M-F ratio (internal) – 57:43  
M-F ratio (international) – 81:19

## Shan

HHs with migrants – 21%  
Internal-international ratio – 86:14  
M-F ratio (internal) – 43:57  
M-F ratio (international) – 35:65

## Rakhine

HHs with migrants - 26%  
Internal-international ratio – 51:49  
M-F ratio (internal) – 52:48  
M-F ratio (international) – 83:17

## Ayeyarwady

HHs with migrants – 19%  
Internal-international ratio – 89:11  
M-F ratio (internal) – 47:53  
M-F ratio (international) – 73:27



# Migrant Destinations by Origin

Origin	Destination (internal)	Destination (international)
Mandalay	<b>Mandalay (43%)</b> Yangon (28%) Shan (9%)	<b>Malaysia (64%)</b> Thailand (17%) Korea (10%)
Rakhine	<b>Rakhine (46%)</b> Yangon (36%) Kachin (11%)	Thailand (42%) <b>Malaysia (40%)</b> China (11%)
Ayeyarwady	Yangon (65%) <b>Ayeyarwady (23%)</b> Kayin and Mandalay (3%)	Thailand (62%) Singapore (15%) <b>Malaysia (8%)</b>
Shan	<b>Shan (66%)</b> Yangon (13%) Mandalay (7%)	Thailand (100%)

# Reasons for Migration (top 3)

	Mandalay	Rakhine	Shan	Ayeyarwady
Work/income	73%	79%	40%	81%
Family related	24%	19%	28%	16%
Want to live in cities	19%	11%	22%	10%
Education	10%	15%	40%	16%
Livelihood losses at home	9%	5%	0%	4%

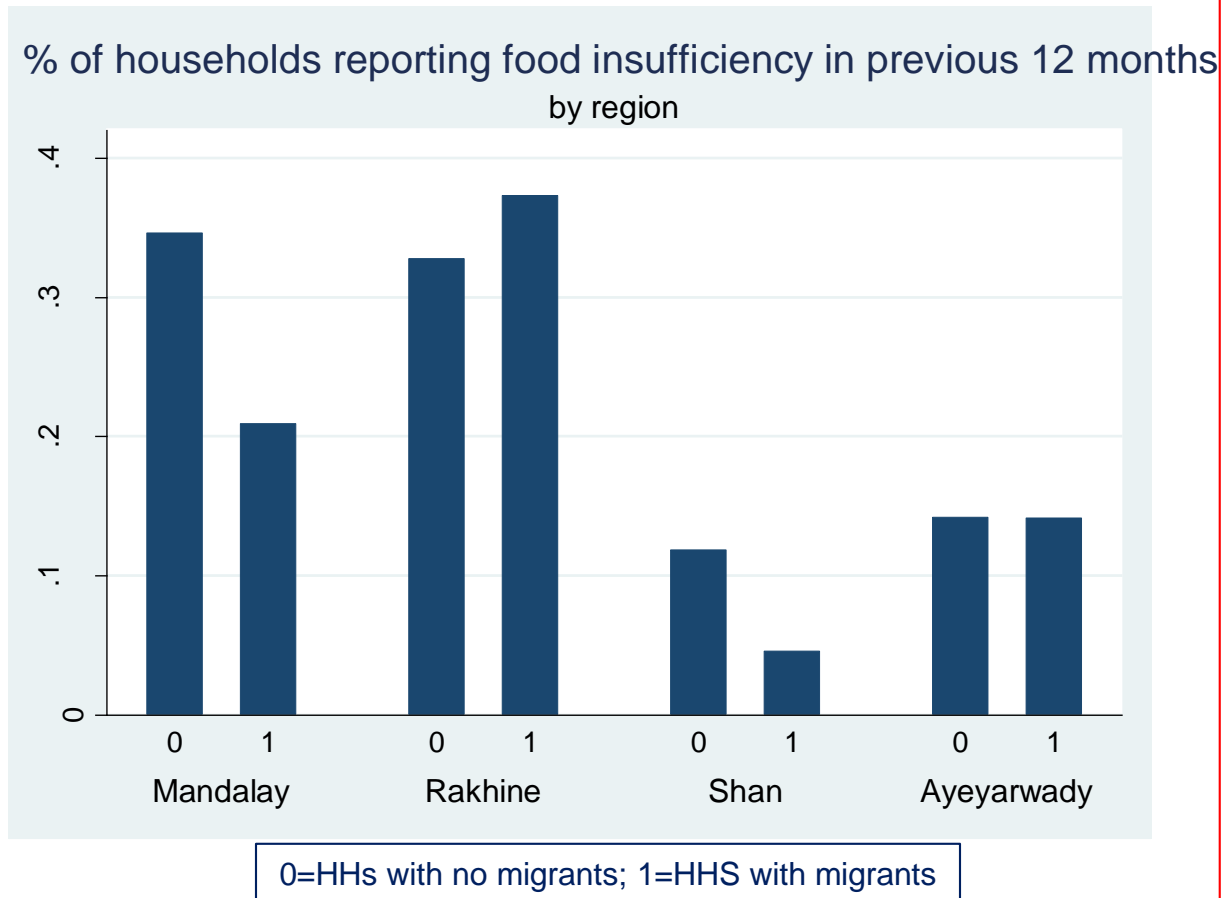
# Remittances

	Mandalay	Rakhine	Shan	Ayeyarwady
Male	59%	38%	14%	68%
Female	54%	43%	33%	66%
Both	57%	39%	25%	67%

# Measuring food security

- Subjective measures: responses to perception questions
  - “Were there any months in the past 12 months during which your household did not have enough food?”
  - *“how would you compare your household’s food availability from all sources in the past 12 months with the previous year?”*
- Objective measures
  - Household Diet Diversity Score based on recall of consumption over past 7 days – construct a score based on at least daily cons of each food group (0-7)
  - *Percentage of income spend of food*

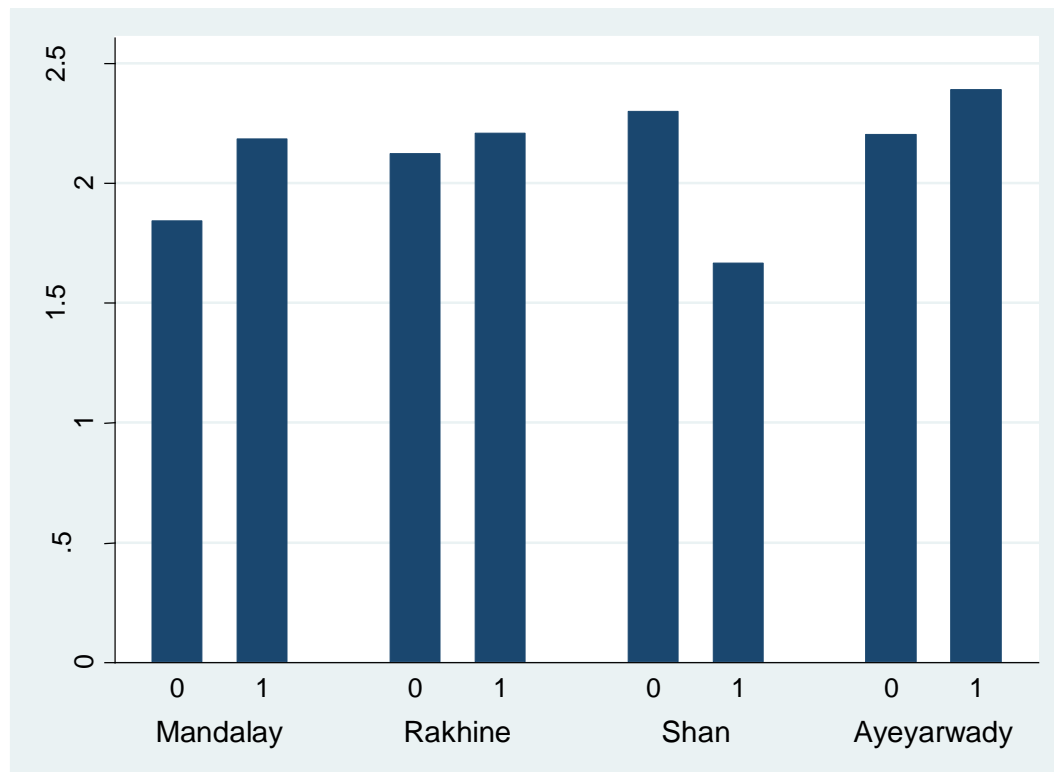
# Food security measures by HH migrant type: one or more months food insecure in last 12



HHS with migrants less likely to be food insecure during the year in Mandalay and Shan\*



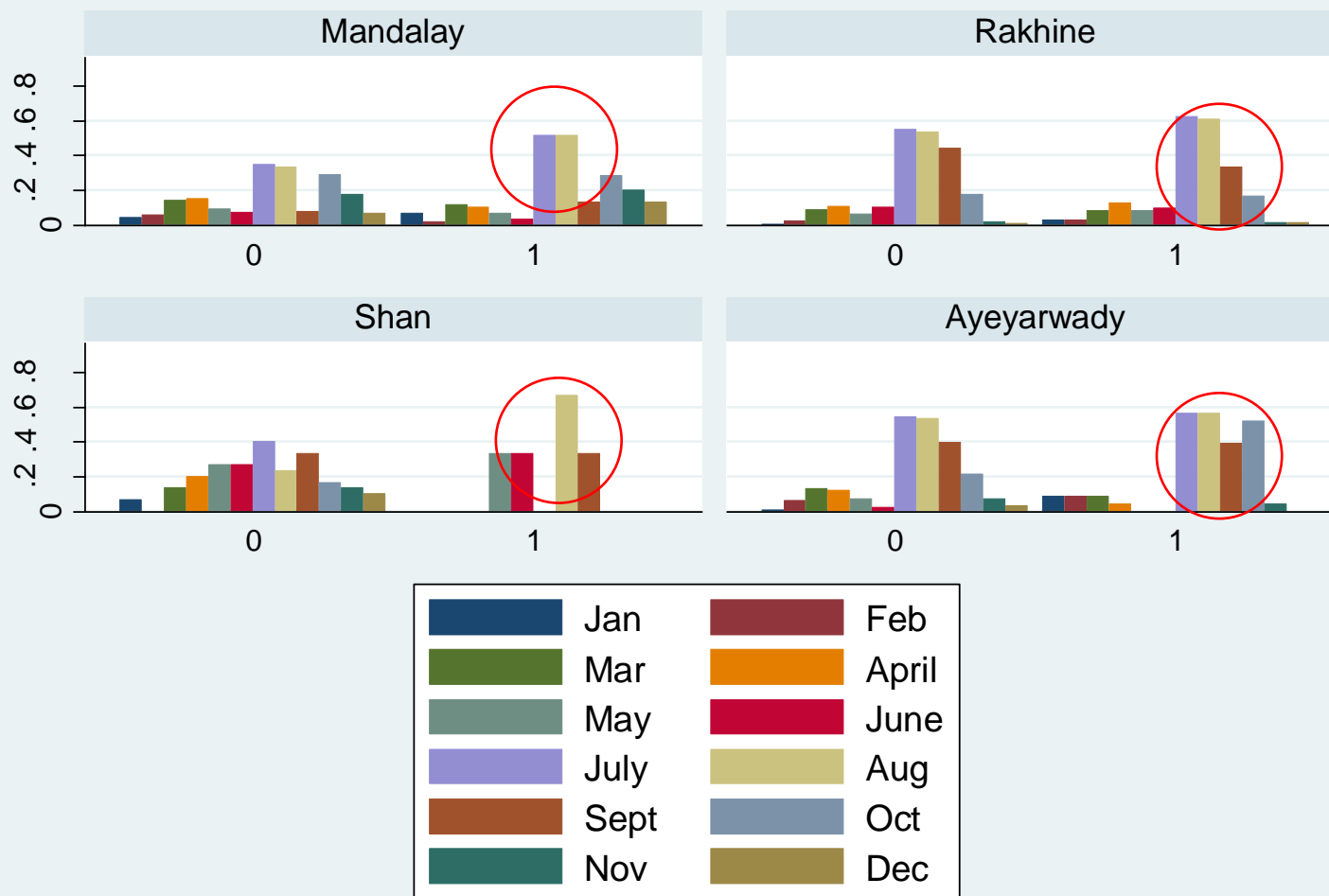
# Number of months in past 12 when HHs were food insecure, by HH migrant status



0=HHs with no migrants; 1=HHS with migrants

Mandalay  
HHs with migrants which were insecure suffer from insecurity for longer

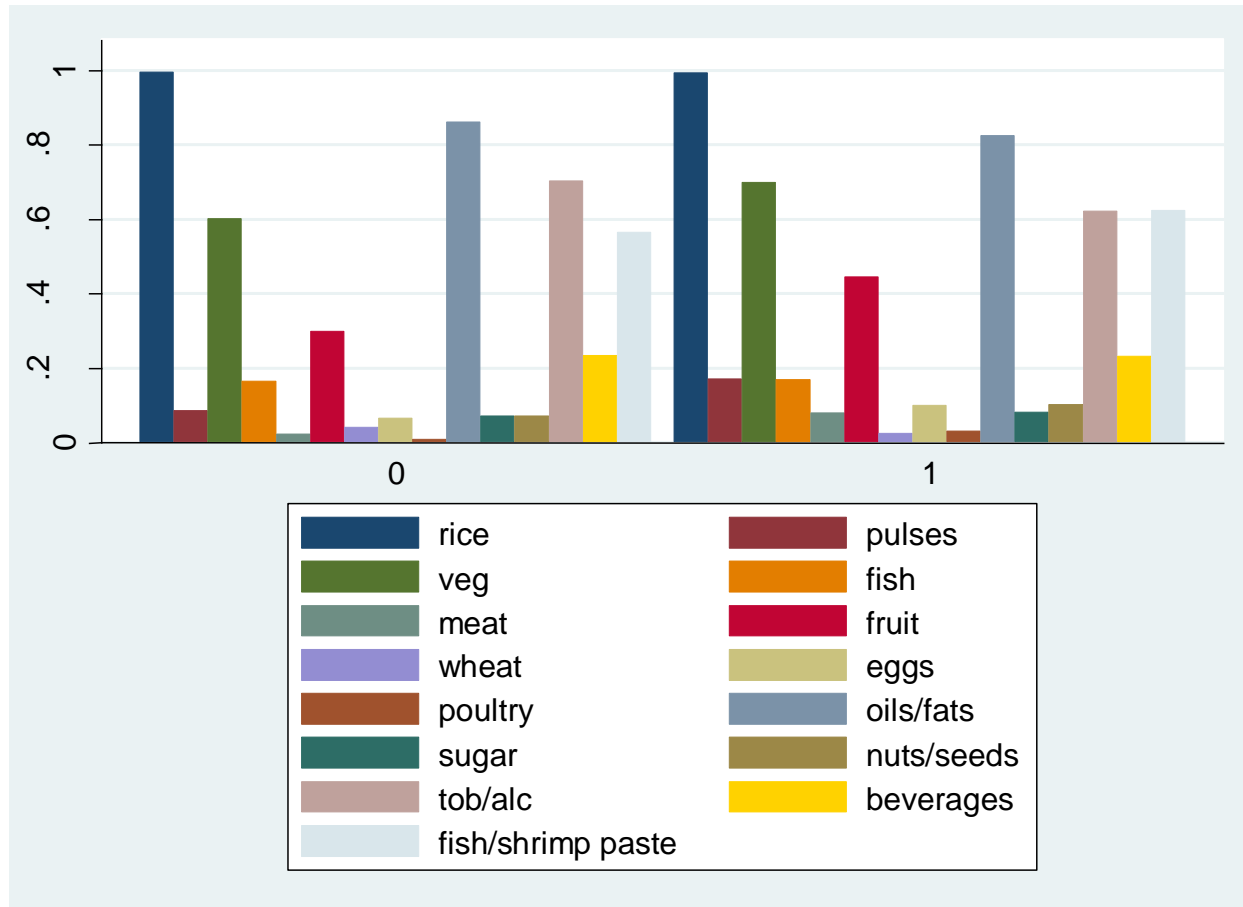
# Food Insecurity by month: rainy/cyclone season apparent



Graphs by State/Region

0=HHs with no migrants; 1=HHS with migrants

# Myanmar diet mostly rice, veg, fish paste, and cooking oil.

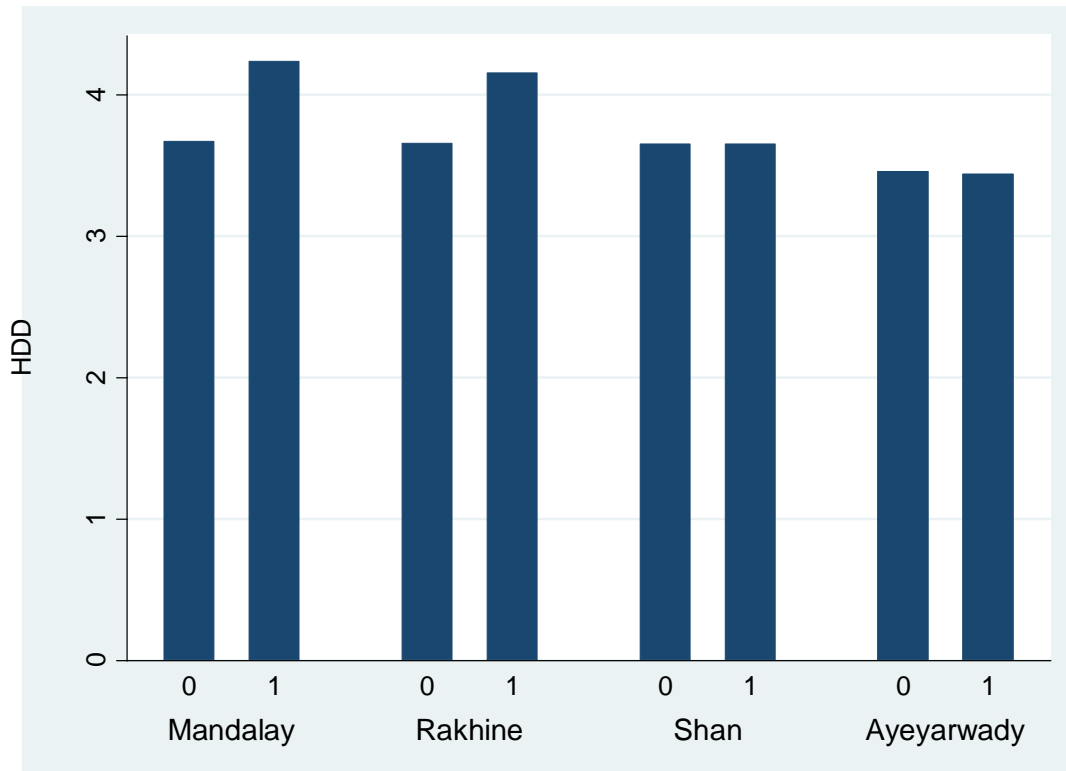


Not very much difference in diets between HHs with and without migrants:

Higher cons of fruit and veg among hhs with migrants

0=HHs with no migrants; 1=HHS with migrants

# Household Dietary Diversity Scores by region and migrant status



0=HHs with no migrants; 1=HHS with migrants

HDD higher among HHs with migrants in Mandalay and Rakhine

But not Shan and Ayeyarwaddy

# Modelling the effects of migration on Food Security of members *left behind*

- Dependent variable
  - Household Diet Diversity score
- Independent variables
  - Two ways of labelling HH migrant status
  - Spec 1: HH has a migrant or not
  - Spec 2: HH has an international migrant; has an internal migrant; both, or none.
- Wide range of HH and HH head characteristics, community characteristics
- Whole sample and by region

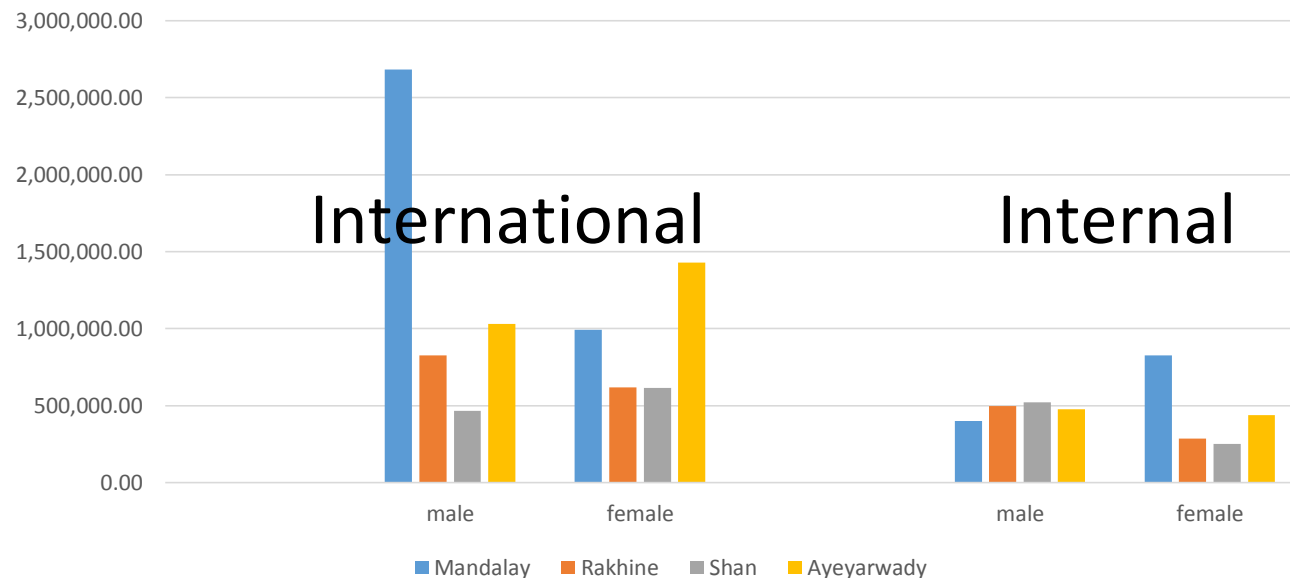
# Summary of regression results

	ALL	Mandalay	Rakhine	Shan	Ayeyarwaddy
HH has a migrant	0.195**	0.292*	0.297**	0.078	0.198
	0.093	0.168	0.154	0.223	0.155
HH has an international migrant	0.212*	0.51***	0.342*	-0.171	0.37
	0.126	0.208	0.188	0.431	0.301
HH has an internal migrant	0.184*	0.21	0.257	0.125	0.161
	0.099	0.178	0.165	0.229	0.155
HH has both internal and international migrants	0.251	0.464	0.481	-0.036	0.128
	0.25	0.532	0.309	0.366	0.346

Cells with + coeffs and \* mean that there is a positive and stat sig correlation between having a migrant (or an international migrant) and HDD

# Importance of Remittances from International Migrants

Annual remittances sent per migrant, by gender of migrant



# Discussion

- We find that using two measures of food security, HDD and whether HH experienced shortages in the year, that households with migrants, and in particular international migrants, are more food secure than households without migrants
  - Particularly so for Mandalay
- We believe this is related to the higher values of remittances that are possible for international migrants that enable HHs to purchase food, and in some cases, food storage
- But food security is multi-dimensional
  - We observe *longer periods* of food insecurity among those HHs with migrants related to bad weather months
    - Questions role of remittances as risk-sharing strategy if much of migration is internal
  - Assumption that food is available to purchase/barter for in rural areas.



# Conclusions and Next Steps

- Migration may improve food security of those “left behind” but not a given
  - Remittances may not offset loss of “local” income
  - Remittances may be slow to materialise when most needed
  - Co-variant risk for internal migrants , many of whom remain with the same state
- Broaden use of different food security measures available in our data
- Explore gender dimensions
  - Gender of HH head does seem to be make a different in our preliminary analysis but more work planned on gender composition of households and of migrants
- Address endogeneity issues
  - selection of migrants from perhaps more food secure households?