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Those Who Leave and Those Who Stay: Individual Migration in Myanmar During a Time of Crisis

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on data from five rounds of the Myanmar Household Welfare Survey (MHWS) collected between December 2021 and June 2023 with more than 12,000 respondents per round, this report analyzes individual migration, migration in which one or a few household members leave the household. To complement this analysis, we utilize data from the Myanmar Migration Assessment, carried out in June and July 2023 in a sub-sample of MHWS households with household members who have migrated since 2013.

Over the year and a half period, from December 2021 to June 2023 an estimated 6,451,394 household members 15 and older, 11.8 percent of the population and 19.9 percent of the adult population, left their households. Kayah had the highest percentage of migrants, followed by Kachin, Kayin, and Mon, with migration rates over 25 percent of the adult population. Significantly more men migrated than women. Over the period, more individuals left for work within Myanmar than for overseas work or for other reasons including marriage, education, or to join family.

Using the Myanmar Migration Assessment sub-sample of 5,455 of individuals who have migrated since 2013, we analyze the migration process and destination characteristics. Most migrants in our sample only migrated once, 91 percent. Between 2021 and 2022, there was a huge jump in migration from 10 percent of the sample to 24 percent. Further, migration was already 23 percent of our sample in June 2023. Therefore, individual migration is likely to be much higher in 2023 than 2022. Between 2021 and 2023, most of the individual migration was internal, 79 percent versus 21 percent overseas. Internal migration and migration abroad are increasing at the same rate.

Most internal migration was to Yangon, followed by Mandalay, and Shan. Around 27 percent of all individuals migrated to Yangon over the whole period. Migration to Mandalay decreased from 2010 to 2023, while migration to Shan increased. Migration abroad is mainly to Thailand and Malaysia. Most individuals migrated to find better employment. Employment was the most important driver of migration across all years, all destinations, all age groups, and for men and women. In 2021-2023, 34 percent of individuals left their homes to find more work opportunities, 18 percent left their home to find a higher paid job, and 7 percent left to find better working conditions. At the same time, an increasing number of individuals migrated for education, as well.

In 2021-2023, 12 percent of migrants were household heads, most other migrants were either sons or daughters of the head. While between 2013 and 2016 only 44 percent of migrants had children when they migrated, in 2021-2023, 91 percent of migrants had children before they migrated. Overall, most migrants, regardless of their primary reason for migrating, had friends or relatives who had migrated to their destination before them, this includes 55 percent of internal migrants, and 58 percent of migrants abroad. Most migrants participated in most or all of the decisions to migrate. This was true for 85 percent of migrants that went abroad and 79 percent of migrants that remained within Myanmar. In Mandalay and Shan, fewer migrants fully participated in the decision to migrate.

The most common difficulties migrants faced include coming up with the money for migration, followed by travel restrictions, checkpoints, or roadblocks. The latter challenge became much more prominent after the coup. Other challenges include transportation related problems, unreliable agents, and a lack of housing during travel. Households incurred significant costs to be able to send individuals to live outside of their houses. Fifteen percent of households with internal migrants took out loans to pay for the cost of migration, and 6 percent of internal migrants themselves took out loans. Forty-seven percent of households took out loans to send household members overseas, and 18 percent of migrants themselves took out loans to move overseas. Migration costs were

significantly higher to send migrants abroad versus to send migrants within Myanmar, 1.8 million MMK (885 USD) versus 181 thousand MMK (USD).

Migrants used agents to travel abroad not within Myanmar. This includes 56 percent of migrants who travelled to Thailand, 73 percent of migrants who travelled to Malaysia, and 44 percent who travelled to other countries. Over the entire period, 45 and 43 percent of migrants who travelled to Thailand and Malaysia had memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with an employer. Further, a larger percentage of migrants who travelled to Japan, Korea, and Singapore travelled with MOUs. Whereas 100 percent of migrants who travelled to Japan, Korea, and Singapore had passports, only 74, 81, 68, and 63 percent of migrants who moved to Thailand, Malaysia, China, and India brought passports.

Most migrants work in non-farm wage/salaried work. This includes 60 percent of internal migrants and 85 percent of overseas migrants. Forty-three percent of migrants abroad work in factories, compared to 18 percent within Myanmar. In Yangon, 35 percent of migrants work in factories, compared to 17 percent in Mandalay, six percent in Shan, and five percent in other states/regions. Seventeen percent of internal migrants work in construction. Construction is also an important source of income for migrants overseas, 20 and 23 percent of migrants in Thailand and China work in construction, respectively.

Sixteen percent of migrants who moved to other states/regions of Myanmar, excluding Yangon, Mandalay, and Shan, work in agriculture. Seven percent of migrants abroad work on a farm or a planation including 26 percent of migrants in China. Many overseas migrants are also employed in the hospitality sector, including 21 percent of migrants in Malaysia and 14 percent of migrants in other countries abroad. Other migrants are employed as domestic workers, including 21 percent of migrants in Japan, Korea, and Singapore.

In terms of the sector of the factory, most internal migrants work in garment factories, 58 percent. Factory work in the garment sector is less common abroad, 14 percent. Migrant factory workers abroad work in a wide range of factories including 22 percent in food and beverage factories, 16 percent in electronics factories, 11 percent in construction materials factories, and 11 percent in goods factories.

Of the individuals who migrated in 2019 and 2020, only 31 and 27 percent, respectively, have returned home, and most returned home the year after departure. Further, of the individuals who left in 2022 and 2023, thus far, 23 percent, and nine percent have returned home. Most migrants returned home because their jobs ended or because they lost their jobs. More male migrants returned home than females as well as more migrants with children compared to those without.

Conflict is an important driver of household member migration. The number of battles within a township that occurred during the three months prior to the interview is positively associated with the number of households sending migrants. Economic factors are also key drivers. Households who reported being negatively affected by high food prices are more likely to send migrants. Further, a higher average unskilled agricultural wage within the community is associated with less migration.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2017, an estimated 25 percent of Myanmar's population were internal migrants, while five percent were international migrants (World Bank 2017). Some moved with their entire households, either because they were displaced due to conflict, or in search of employment. Others left their households and moved alone, either for employment, marriage, or to join their family (World Bank 2017).

In February 2021, the military took over in a coup and Myanmar fell into a political crisis. After the coup, security conditions declined rapidly, and economic conditions deteriorated. As of September 1, 2023, UNHCR (2023) estimated that there were 1.6 million internally displaced persons in Myanmar, and 1.1 million refugees and asylum seekers from Myanmar in other countries. But this is only part of the migration story. Households are not only being displaced by conflict but are also being negatively affected by the weakening economy. The global crisis triggered largely by the war in Ukraine in February 2022 combined with the financial mismanagement by the Myanmar military government led to a rapid increase in food, fuel, and fertilizer prices. As a result, welfare for most people in Myanmar further deteriorated. One coping strategy that households employ is to migrate in search of employment or to send household members to find work within Myanmar or abroad. The extent and characteristics of this migration in search of employment is largely unknown.

In this working paper, we analyze the characteristics and the drivers of individual migration in Myanmar, or migration in which one or a few household members leaves the household. To do this we rely on data from two surveys, the Myanmar Household Welfare Survey (MHWS) and the Myanmar Migration Assessment (MMA). We consider anyone who left their household to be a migrant, except for those individuals who left for vacation, health, or whose departure is temporary.

The paper proceeds as follows. In section 1, we introduce the data and define how we estimate migration. In section 2, we explore individual migration rates between December 2021 and June 2023 using MHWS data. In section 3, we present the characteristics of migrants from a subset of MHWS households. We explore the reasons behind individuals' decisions to migrate, challenges during migration, and destination characteristics. In section 4, we analyze which households are most likely to send migrants, and which individuals are more likely to migrant. In section 5 we conclude.

2. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

This analysis employs rounds 2 through 5 of the nationally representative MHWS to better understand the drivers of individual migration in Myanmar, as well as data from a sub-sample survey of MHWS on migration. The MHWS rounds cover a recall period from December 2021 to June 2023. The survey intends to monitor household and individual welfare through a range of different indicators including wealth, livelihoods, food insecurity, diet quality, health shocks, and coping strategies. The sampling strategy and household and population weights provide estimates that are nationally, regionally, and urban/rural representative (Lambrecht et al., 2023). In each of these rounds, respondents were asked whether household members 15 years or older had migrated from the household since the previous round's interview date. This binary migration outcome is used as the key variable of interest throughout the analysis.

A roster was used to capture who left the household in each MHWS round. However, the way and to whom the roster was administered differed across rounds. In rounds 2 and 3, respondents were only asked if household members migrated if their household had been surveyed in a prior MHWS round. Therefore, the households added to the sample in rounds 2 and 3 were not asked about migration and hence have been excluded from this analysis. This includes 4,356 households in round 2 and 2,498 households in round 3. We re-weighted the remaining respondents in round 2 and round 3, so that the estimates would come closer to being nationally representative. Further, in round 2, the migration questions were only asked to households that had a change in the number of members within a certain demographic and age group. So, if one member migrated and one member joined within the same group, migration would be zero.

In round 4, households added to the sample were asked if anyone left the household in the three months prior to the interview. Therefore, all migrants are included in the general round 4 analysis. But new respondents were only asked if a member had recently migrated for work, not for other reasons. Further, the round 4 questionnaire only allowed for a maximum of two migrants per new household, one internal migrant and one international migrant. This presumably leads to an underestimation of migration among households added to the sample. Additionally, households added to the sample were not asked about the demographic traits of the recent migrants, so an additional 3,738 households from round 4 were removed from the sample for gender-based analysis. Round 5 contains a detailed roster for both households added to the sample and re-surveyed households.

The final pooled sample includes 43,266 households across the four rounds and 39,528 households when conducting gender-based analysis. We also conduct analysis using three panel samples, or households that were surveyed in multiple MHWS rounds. The year and a half panel which spans December 2021 to June 2023, consists of households that were surveyed in every round from round 1 to round 5. The year panel from December 2021 to December 2022 consists of households interviewed in rounds 1 through 4. Finally, the year panel from June 2022 to July 2022-June 2023, is all households in round 3 through round 5. For this analysis we analyze if the household had at least one migrant over the year and a half or year period, instead of in a three-month period, the average for the pooled sample.

While the MHWS collects information on whether a household member left the household, it does not collect information on the member who left other than basic demographic characteristics. To bridge this knowledge gap, we conducted the Myanmar Migration Assessment (MMA) to collect data across all states and regions of Myanmar to better understand the process and consequences of migration. The MMA interviewed households that participated in previous MHWS rounds if either a

household member attempted to migrate or migrated in the previous 10 years (since 2013) or if the whole household moved since January 2021.

Between June 8th and July 14th, 2023, a total of 4,296 interviews were conducted with either the migrants, the households of migrants, or the migrating households. In the MMA survey, we defined migrant as a member who left their household for more than two months for the purpose of employment, marriage, safety, studies, and other reasons that do not include vacation, travel, health, or temporary visits with relatives. Many of the households had more than one migrant over the period, therefore, among the 4,296 households interviewed there were 5,455 migrants, with 3,505 still outside of the household and 1,487 that had already returned (Table 1). We collected the full migration history of each respondent, including each time they migrated in the past ten years, why they migrated, and where they migrated. We also collected characteristics of the migrants, including their gender, age at the time of migration, educational background, and work status prior to migration.

Table 1. Number of individual migrants from the MMA survey, overall and by state/region of departure

	Total sample of migrants		Migrants who are still outside of the house		Migrants that have returned	
	Obs.	% of sample	Obs.	% of sample	Obs.	% of sample
Overall	5455	100	3505	100	1487	100
Kachin	211	4	158	5	53	4
Kayah	69	1	52	1	17	1
Kayin	138	3	106	3	32	2
Chin	79	1	57	2	22	1
Sagaing	589	11	367	10	222	15
Tanintharyi	141	3	110	3	31	2
Bago	474	9	325	9	149	10
Magway	529	10	383	11	146	10
Mandalay	528	10	377	11	151	10
Mon	160	3	121	3	39	3
Rakhine	271	5	170	5	101	7
Yangon	611	11	440	13	171	11
Shan	541	10	386	11	155	10
Ayeyarwady	529	10	363	10	166	11
Nay Pyi Taw	122	2	90	3	32	2

Note: Migrants that have returned include any migrant that left the household between 2013 and 2023 but has since returned.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

3. OVERVIEW OF MIGRATION FROM MHWS

Over the year and a half period, from December 2021 to June 2023 an estimated 6,451,394 household members 15 and older, 11.8 percent of the population and 19.9 percent of the adult population, left their households (Table 2). Respondents report migration that occurred since the previous MHWS survey round, yet the time between survey rounds is not consistent. Table 2 provides an overview of the periods between rounds as well as total and average monthly migration. Round 1 was conducted in December 2021-February 2022, while Round 2 was collected in April-June 2022. Therefore, between the two rounds there are 7 months maximum between interview dates and an average of 4 months between interview dates. Over this period, around 2 million migrants left their households, or about 535,035 every month. Round 3 was conducted in July-August 2022. Therefore, the average duration between Round 2 and Round 3 interview dates is much smaller, around 2 months. Nonetheless, 1.4 million migrants left their households over this period. Round 4 was conducted in October-December 2022. There were on average 4 months between Round 3 and Round 4. Over this period, 1.8 million migrants left. Round 5 was carried out

between April and June 2023. The length between Round 4 and Round 5 was the longest (average of 5 months), and migration was 1.1 million, the lowest of any round-to-round period.

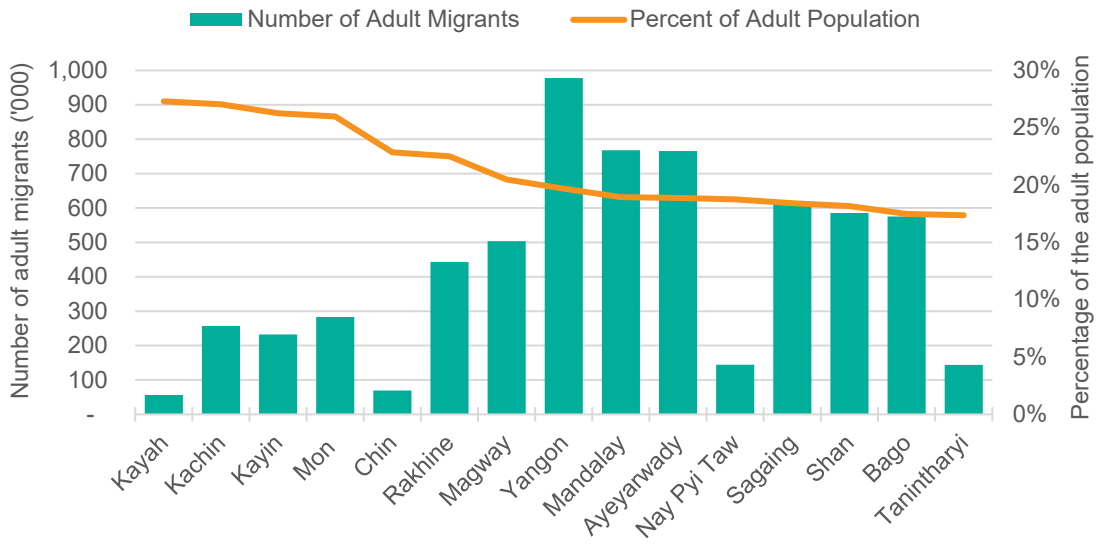
Table 2. Estimated number of individuals 15 and older that have migrated between December 2021 and June 2023

Dates	Maximum months between surveys	Average months between surveys	Number of migrants	Number of migrants divided by average months
R1 Dec 2021-R2 Jun 2022	7	4	2,022,838	535,035
R2 Apr 2022-R3 Aug 2022	5	2	1,438,247	669,531
R3 Jul 2022-R4 Dec 2022	6	4	1,866,653	508,522
R4 Oct 2022-R5 Jun 2023	8	5	1,123,657	210,304
Total			6,451,394	

Note: Maximum months between surveys is the maximum number of months between when a household was interviewed in the current and preceding round of MHWS. The average months between the surveys is the average time between the current and preceding round interviews. For R1 Dec 2021- R2 Jun 2022, this means that one household was interviewed seven months apart, but most households were interviewed 4 months apart.
Source: Author's calculations based on MHWS pooled data.

Figure 1 presents the number of migrants older than 15 that left their households between December 2021 and June 2023 by state/region of departure. The largest number of migrants were from the most populous state Yangon, where over 900 thousand adult household members left their homes (Figure 2). Following this trend, Mandalay and Ayeyarwady, the states with the next largest populations had the subsequent most migrants during the year and a half period. However, when considering the population of each state/region, Kayah had the highest percentage of migrants with nearly 27 percent of the adult population leaving their households over the period. Kachin, Kayin, and Mon also had migration rates over 25 percent of the adult population. Households in Bago and Tanintharyi reported the lowest rates of individual migration. However, this metric does not account for whole household migration, which is prevalent in heavy conflict locations.

Figure 1. Number and percentage of individual migrants older than 15 who migrated between December 2021 and June 2023, by state/region of departure



Note: We estimate that 6,451,394.3 members 15 and older have left their households.
Source: Author's calculations based on MHWS pooled data.

Using the pooled data from the five rounds of data collection between December 2021 and June 2023, an average of 10.5 percent of households had a member leave since the previous round (Table 3). The migration rate was the highest between December 2021 and June 2022 (Round 2), where 13.5 percent of households had at least one member leave the household. Even considering the slightly longer recall period, the migration rate was the lowest between October 2022 and June 2023 (R5), where 7.7 percent of households had at least one member leave. Individual migration from rural areas was significantly greater than urban migration in the pooled sample, but this was not the case across all periods.

Table 3. Households with at least one migrant across MHWS rounds

	Dec 2021-Jun 2022	Apr 2022-Aug 2022	Jul 2022-Dec 2022	Oct 2022-Jun 2023	Pooled
National (%)	13.5	8.0	12.8	7.7	10.5
Urban (%)	13.9	6.1	12.0	6.5	9.6
Rural (%)	13.4	8.7 ***	13.0	8.2 ***	10.9 ***
Obs.	7,786	9,603	12,924	12,953	43,266.0

Note: Asterisks on rural show significant differences between rural and urban at p-values * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.
Source: Author's calculations based on MHWS pooled data.

When we look at just the panel, or the households that have remained in the sample across all rounds, spanning the year and a half period between December 2021 and June 2023 (Table 4), 28.5 percent of households had a migrant over the year and a half period. When we consider the one-year panel between December 2021 and December 2022, 25.4 percent of households had at least one migrant over the year. Finally, when we consider the one-year panel between July 2022 and June 2023, 26.1 percent of households had at least one migrant over the year. Rural migration was significantly greater than urban migration in each panel group.

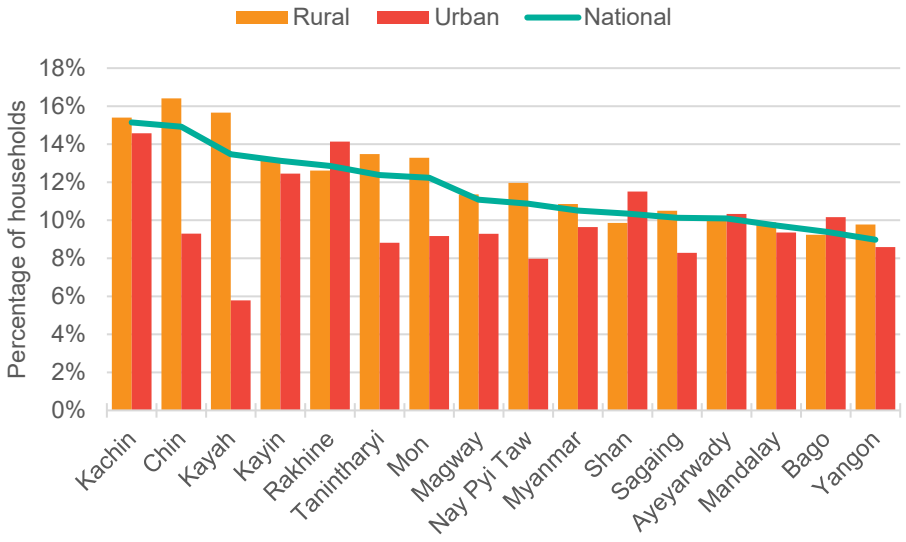
Table 4. Panel households with at least one migrant

	Panel Dec 2021-Jun 2023	Panel Dec 2021-Dec 2022	Panel Jul 2022-Jun 2023
National (%)	28.5	25.4	26.1
Urban (%)	27.8	25.2	24.8
Rural (%)	29.3 *	26.1 *	27.2 ***
Obs.	3,981.0	4,831.0	5,654.0

Note: Asterisks on rural show significant differences between rural and urban at p-values * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.
Source: Author's calculations based on MHWS panel data.

While Yangon had the highest number of migrants (Figure 1), it had the smallest percentage of households with a migrant in any given period between December 2021 and June 2023 (Figure 2). In the pooled sample, Kachin had the highest percentage of households with at least one migrant in a three-month period, followed by Chin and Kayah. Rural migration was higher than urban migration in all states/regions but Rakhine, Shan, Ayeyarwady, and Bago. Chin and Kayah also experienced the largest difference in rural and urban migration rates, with significantly more rural households migrating.

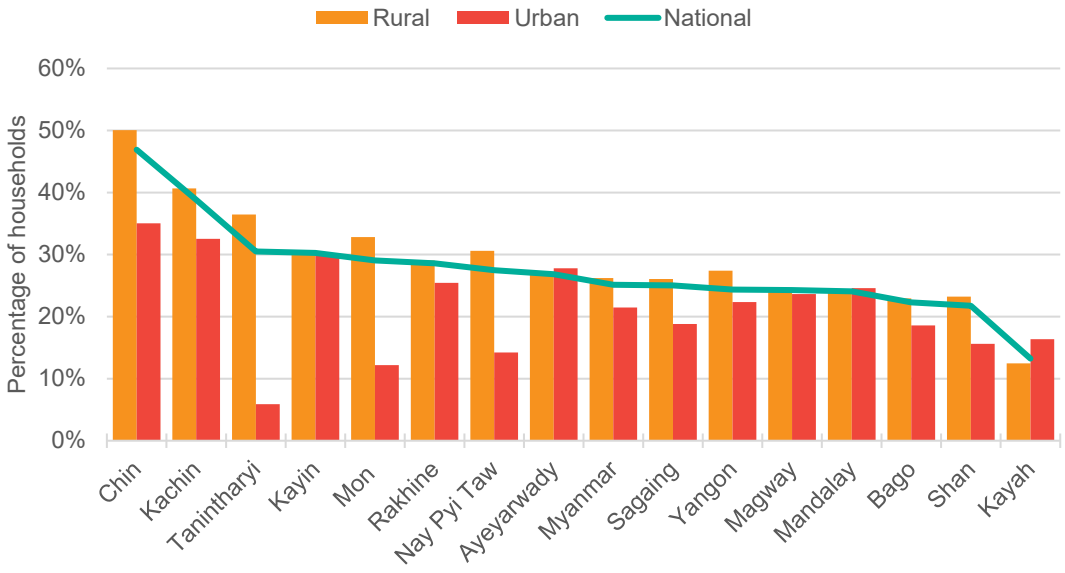
Figure 2. Percentage of MHWS households with a migrant in the pooled sample by state/region, December 2021-June 2023



Source: Author's calculations based on MHWS pooled data.

When just considering the panel households between July 2022 and June 2023, the percentage of households who had a migrant over the year period in some regions was well over the 26.8 percent average for Myanmar over the period. Chin had the highest rate of migration over the period; over 50 percent of rural households had a migrant and 46 percent of all households had a migrant (Figure 3). In Kayin, Tanintharyi, and Kachin, more than 30 percent of households had at least one individual leave over the period. At the same time, there were some issues with our panel sample. Kayah has the lowest rate of migration according to Figure 3. But this was due to a very large percentage of the households with a migrant in Kayah dropping out of the panel (75 percent).

Figure 3. Percentage of MHWS households with a migrant in the panel sample by state/region, July 2022-June 2023



Source: Author's calculations based on MHWS data.

More men migrated than women in all rounds and in the pooled and panel datasets. In the pooled data, 52.5 percent of migrants were men and 47.5 percent of migrants were women (Table 5). This difference increased over time. Compared to women, men left at the highest rate between October 2022 and June 2023 when 57.2 percent of migrants were men.

Individuals left for work within Myanmar significantly more often than for overseas work and other reasons over the course of December 2021 to June 2023. During that period, 42.8 percent of migrants left to find work within Myanmar. Another 15.9 percent left abroad to find work. Forty-one percent left for other reasons including marriage, safety, and education. The percentage of migrants leaving to find work abroad increased across the period.

Table 5. Migrant characteristics across MHWS rounds

	Dec 2021-Jun 2022	Apr 2022-Aug 2022	Jul 2022-Dec 2022	Oct 2022-Jun 2023	Pooled	Panel Jul 2022-Jun 2023
Gender						
Female (%)	49.1	48.9	48.2	42.8	47.5	45.5
Male (%)	50.9 ***	51.1 ***	51.8 ***	57.2 ***	52.5 ***	54.5 ***
Obs.	1,053	759	1,218	1,015	4,045	1,895
Reason for migration						
Work within Myanmar (%)		42.7	41.5	44.8	42.8	45.3
Work overseas (%)		10.6 ***	15.6 ***	21.5 ***	15.9 ***	15.2 ***
Other reasons (%)		46.6 ***	42.9 ***	33.7 ***	41.3 ***	39.5 ***
Obs.		759	1,218	1,015	2,992	1,893

Note Asterisks on male denote significant differences between the percentage of male and female migrants. Asterisks on overseas work denote significant differences between work within Myanmar and work overseas. Asterisks on other reasons denote significant differences between work within Myanmar and other reasons. Asterisks show significance at p-values * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.
Source: Author's calculations based on MHWS pooled data.

When looking at gender and migration across states in the panel in the one-year period between July 2022 to June 2023, several states break the trend of majority male migrants (Table 6). Migrants in Tanintharyi were 20.4 percentage points more female and migrants in Yangon were significantly more female as well. Migrants in Kayah were more female in our sample, but there were too few observations in the panel for the estimate to be significant. In all other states/regions, migration was significantly more male, with the most unbalanced regions being Rakhine, Nay Pyi Taw, and Kachin.

Table 6. Male and female migrants across states/regions from the July 2022 to June 2023 MHWS panel

State	Female	Male	P-value difference	Observations
Ayeyarwady (%)	40.1	59.9	***	251
Bago (%)	48.0	52.0		158
Chin (%)	42.8	57.2	**	23
Kachin (%)	39.9	60.1	***	92
Kayah (%)	61.5	38.5		13
Kayin (%)	47.8	52.2	***	57
Magway (%)	43.7	56.3	***	210
Mandalay (%)	46.7	53.3	***	253
Mon (%)	47.2	52.8	***	61
Nay Pyi Taw (%)	39.6	60.4	***	55
Rakhine (%)	25.2	74.8	***	96
Sagaing (%)	48.2	51.8	***	183
Shan (%)	54.0	46.0	***	175
Tanintharyi (%)	60.2	39.8	***	56
Yangon (%)	50.6	49.4	***	212

Note: Asterisks show significance at p-values * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Asterisks denote significant differences in each round between male and female.
Source: Author's calculations based on MHWS panel data.

Table 7 shows the migrant characteristics collected in MHWS in the pooled sample between October 2022 and June 2023 by location type. This timeframe is used for the table because additional demographic information was only collected beginning in October 2022. Nationally, migrants were most likely to have left for work within Myanmar (42.7 percent of migrants). Rural migrants (45.9 percent) left for this reason more often than urban migrants (32 percent). At the national level, the second largest reason for leaving was marriage or divorce. However, this was much more prevalent among urban migrants (26 percent) than rural migrants (16.5 percent). Men migrated for work significantly more often than women while women migrated for marriage, school, and other reasons significantly more often than men.

On average, migrants were 28.2 years old. However, rural migrants were generally younger than their urban counterparts. Unsurprisingly, migrants that left for school were the youngest with an average age of 18.4. Women that left for work were significantly younger than men who left for work. Migrant household members were usually sons or daughters of the household head (63.6 percent) and this is even more pronounced amongst rural migrants (67.0 percent). All other relations to the household made up less than ten percent of the migrant population.

Table 7. Characteristics of migrants, October 2022-June 2023

	National	Rural	Urban	Female	Male
Percentage of Migrants					
Lives elsewhere in Myanmar for work (%)	42.7	45.9 ***	32.4	39.4 ***	45.4
Lives abroad for work (%)	16.7	17.5 *	14.1	12.0 ***	20.6
Lives elsewhere after marriage/divorce (%)	18.7	16.5 ***	25.7	23.7 ***	14.5
Lives elsewhere for school (%)	7.6	8.1 *	6.0	9.0 **	6.4
Lives elsewhere for other reasons, including safety (%)	14.4	12.0 ***	21.9	15.9 *	13.1
Average Age					
Lives elsewhere in Myanmar for work	26.4	26.0 **	28.1	25.0 ***	27.4
Lives abroad for work	26.9	27.1	26.1	26.1	27.3
Lives elsewhere after marriage/divorce	27.7	27.0 **	29.1	27.1	28.5
Lives elsewhere for school	19.1	18.6	21.1	20.0 **	18.0
Lives elsewhere for other reasons, including safety	40.2	39.4	41.7	42.4 *	38.1
All migrants	28.2	27.4 ***	30.6	28.0	28.3
Percentage by relation to head					
Head (%)	7.7	7.7	7.5	1.3 ***	13.0
Spouse (%)	3.2	2.8 *	4.5	5.4 ***	1.4
Son/Daughter (%)	63.6	67.0 ***	52.9	67.6 ***	60.2
Son-In-Law/Daughter-In-Law (%)	8.4	8.3	8.9	6.6 ***	10.0
Grandchild/Great Grandchild (%)	3.4	4.0 **	1.8	3.7	3.3
Parent/ Parent-In-Law (%)	2.7	2.0***	5.1	3.7 **	1.9
Brother/Sister (%)	5.0	3.8 ***	8.8	5.0	5.1
Other Relative (%)	5.8	4.4 ***	10.4	6.7	5.1
Obs.	2,802	2,083	719	1,309	1,493

Note: This is the pooled sample from round 4 and round 5 of MHWS. We only have detailed migrant characteristics from these two rounds. Asterisks show significance at p-values * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Asterisks on rural show significant differences between rural and urban areas. Asterisks on female show significant differences between female and male migrants.
Source: Author's calculations based on MHWS data.

4. ANALYSIS OF A SUB-SAMPLE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH MIGRANTS

The following analysis is based on a sub-sample of 5,455 migrants, 3,505 of whom are still abroad, and 1,487 who have rejoined their households. In the MMA, we collected information on the migration history of everyone who migrated at any point in the past ten years (Table 8). Most migrants in our sample only migrated once, 91 percent, while seven percent migrated twice, and one percent migrated three times. These patterns were consistent among men and women. Internal migrants were slightly more likely to migrate more than once, compared to migrants travelling abroad.

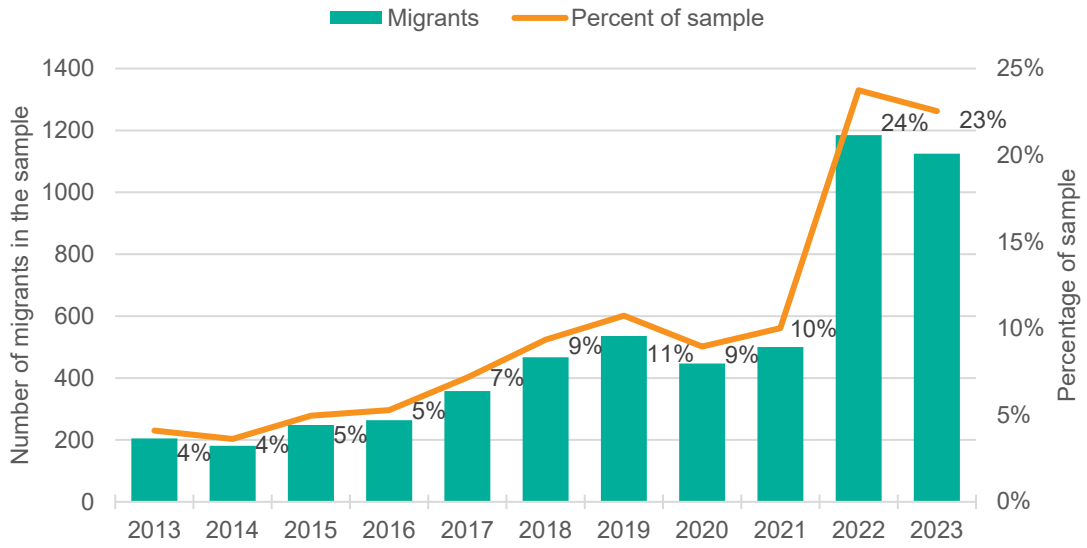
Table 8. Number of migration events per individual

Number of migration events	Overall	Male	Female	Abroad	Within Myanmar
One time (%)	91	91	92	94	91
Two times (%)	7	8	7	6	8
Three times (%)	1	1	1	0	1
Four or more times (%)	0	1	0	0	0
Obs.	4990	2869	2121	1082	3695

Note: We only collected information for those abroad and domestic for households who did not also migrate as an entire household, to limit the survey size. Hence the sample sizes are slightly different.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Figure 4 presents the number of individuals who migrated by year as well as the percentage of the sample who migrated in that year. The figure includes every migration event, whereas Table A.3 presents the year that each migrant first left Myanmar. Between 2021 and 2022, there was a huge jump in migration from ten percent to 24 percent (Figure 4). In our sample, four percent of migrants left in 2013 or 2014 and five percent left in 2015 or 2016. This increased to seven percent in 2017, nine percent in 2018, and 11 percent in 2019. This upward trend was temporarily halted by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, migration remained high throughout the pandemic, around nine percent in 2020 and ten percent in 2021. Following the coup, and the end of lockdowns, migration increased dramatically to 24 percent. Migration was already 23 percent of our sample in 2023, but our data is only for half the year, January to July. Therefore, individual migration is likely to be much higher in 2023 than 2022, but we do not yet have estimates.

Figure 4. Percentage of the MMA sample that migrated between 2013 and 2023



Note: Data for 2023 ends in July, so this estimate is only for half of 2023.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

In the MMA sample, migration in every year was consistently higher for male than female (Table 9). In 2013 and 2023, 60 percent of the migrants were male, and 40 percent were female. When we look at the migration trends by gender, we see that both men and women followed similar patterns in terms of the percent who left in any given year.

Table 9. Male and female migrants by year of migration

	Sample Obs.		Percent of migrants (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
2013	123	82	60	40
2014	114	67	63	37
2015	147	101	59	41
2016	144	120	55	45
2017	205	153	57	43
2018	273	194	58	42
2019	330	206	62	38
2020	262	185	59	41
2021	281	219	56	44
2022	647	538	55	45
2023	676	449	60	40

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Although there was a rapid rise in migration following the February 2021 coup, for the most part the characteristics of the migrants have remained consistent, regardless of their date of departure. Table 10 presents the descriptions of the migrants before their first migration event. On average and across time, individuals were 24 years old before they first migrated. While between 2010 and 2016 only 44 percent of migrants had children when they migrated, in 2021-2023, 91 percent of migrants had children before they migrated. This demonstrates that there has been a shift in the willingness of individuals with children to migrate and to leave children behind. Only one percent of our sample migrated with their children in 2021 to 2023.

While in 2010-2016, 21 percent of migrants were household heads, in 2021-2023, this decreased to 12 percent. Instead, an increasing percentage of migrants were either sons/or daughters of the head or other household members. Across the three periods, migration of the female spouse of the head was less common, five percent of the sample, or less.

The education level of the migrants was similar regardless of the year of the first departure of the migrants. Focusing on 2021-2023, very few migrants had no education, three percent or less. Sixteen percent had only primary education (standard 1-4), 26 percent had secondary school education (standard 5-8), and 35 percent had some high school education (standard 9-10). Eleven percent graduated from either high school, technical school, or college with a diploma, and ten percent, which decreased compared to 2010-2016, had university level education or higher. According to the MHWS, in Myanmar, between December 2021 and June 2023, roughly four percent of the population had no education, and 54 percent only had primary education. Migrants were therefore more educated than non-migrants, as they had more years of schooling than non-migrants.

In terms of the income source of the migrant before they migrated, 30 percent worked as wage or salaried workers in the non-farm sector. Thirteen percent worked as wage or salaried workers in the agricultural sector. Twenty-five percent worked on their own farm, livestock, or fishing business. Another 15 percent worked in a non-farm business. Finally, 28 percent were either students or were unemployed before they left. A comparable proportion of wage/salary earners migrated relative to the overall population of Myanmar. In contrast, fewer individuals engaged in farm and non-farm businesses migrated, as compared to the respective percentages of individuals overall employed in these sectors.

Table 10. Characteristics of migrants before their first migration event

	2010-2016	2017-2020	2021-2023
Characteristics			
Female (%)	42	41	44
Male (%)	58	59	56
Age (mean)	24	24	24
Migrants with children (%)	44	63	91
Relation to HH head			
Head (%)	21	14	12
Spouse of Head (%)	5	4	4
Son/Daughters (%)	62	68	68
Other HH members (%)	12	14	15
Level of Education			
None (%)	2	2	3
Primary school level (%)	19	17	16
Secondary school level (%)	27	27	26
High school level (%)	29	35	35
Diploma (%)	7	9	11
University graduate (%)	15	11	10
Type of Income activities			
Wage/salaried work in agriculture, livestock, fishing (%)	15	16	13
Wage/salaried work in non-agriculture (%)	29	27	30
Owned farming, livestock, fishing (%)	27	27	25
Owned non-farm business (%)	14	13	15
Remittance, pensions, assistance (%)	0	1	0
Students, No employment (%)	27	28	28

Note: Individuals could select multiple income sources.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Most of the individual migration in the sample occurs within Myanmar, 79 percent versus 21 percent overseas in 2021-2023. From 2017 to 2020, migration abroad increased compared to internal migration (Table 11). But that trend slowed down in 2021-2023, and the percentage of migrants abroad versus within Myanmar in 2021-2023 is similar to the level in 2010-2016. Around 27 percent of individuals migrated to Yangon over the whole period. Migration to Mandalay decreased from 13 percent in 2010-2016 to ten percent in 2017-2023. Migration to Shan increased slowly from eight percent in 2010-2016 to 13 percent in 2021-2023. Migration to other states and regions is around 28 percent over the entire period. Migration abroad is mainly to Thailand and Malaysia. Migration to Thailand makes up 13 percent of migration in our sample. Migration to Malaysia declined over the period, from seven percent in 2010-2016 to four percent in 2021-2023. Migration to other countries includes China, India, Japan, Singapore, Korea, and was about five percent of the sample in 2021-2023.

Table 11. Destination location by year of migration

	2010-2016	2017-2020	2021-2023
Within Myanmar (%)	**80**	**74**	**79**
Yangon (%)	27	28	27
Mandalay (%)	13	10	10
Shan (%)	8	9	13
Other states/regions (%)	32	26	28
Abroad (%)	**20**	**26**	**21**
Thailand (%)	10	14	13
Malaysia (%)	7	6	4
China (%)	2	3	1
Other countries (%)	2	3	4
Obs.	720	1477	2580

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Women and men travel to different destinations when they migrate (Table 12). Over the entire period, 45 percent of internal migrants were female, and 55 percent were male. Among migrants to Yangon, 52 percent were female, while 48 percent were male. This is the only location where there were slightly more female migrants than male migrants. In Mandalay, there were slightly more male migrant than female migrants, 53 percent compared to 47 percent. On the other hand, in Shan and other states and regions, 59 and 60 percent, respectively, of migrants were male. There were fewer female overseas migrants than internal migrants. Thirty-three percent of overseas migrants were female, and 67 percent were male. In Thailand, 64 percent of migrants were male, compared to 61 percent in other countries, and 82 percent in Malaysia.

Table A.4 shows how these patterns have evolved overtime. The percentage of female migrants who migrated to Yangon decreased from 59 percent in 2010-2016 to 51 percent in 2021-2023. At the same time, female migration to Mandalay and Shan increased by six and 11 percentage points, respectively. Female migration abroad increased from 26 percent among those departing in 2010-2016 to 37 percent among those departing in 2021-2023. This is driven by increasing female migration to Malaysia, China, and to a lesser extent, Thailand.

In terms of education, compared to internal migrants, overseas migrants are less educated. Fewer have high school diplomas, and fewer have undergraduate or postgraduate degrees. In Thailand, only two percent of migrants overall have university degrees and five percent have diplomas. Table A.5 in the appendix shows the education groupings in more detail.

Table A.6 shows migration by destination in terms of the age of the migrant prior to departure. For the most part, the patterns are consistent across age groups. Forty-seven percent of internal migrants were 19 to 25 years and 43 percent of overseas migrants were in that age range. Twenty-four percent of internal migrants were 26 to 39 years while 27 percent of overseas migrants were in that age range. At the same time, there is a large portion of internal migrants who are 18 years old or less, 22 percent, compared to nine percent abroad and six percent in other countries abroad.

Table 12. Gender and education level of migrants by destination location

	Female	Male	Some or No School	Some High School	High School Diploma	University Graduate
Within Myanmar (%)	**45**	**55**	**61**	**16**	**10**	**13**
Yangon (%)	52	48	62	13	11	13
Mandalay (%)	47	53	63	16	11	11
Shan (%)	41	59	64	16	9	11
Other states/regions (%)	40	60	59	17	10	14
Abroad (%)	**33**	**67**	**68**	**19**	**7**	**6**
Thailand (%)	36	64	69	23	5	2
Malaysia (%)	18	82	74	18	4	3
China (%)	29	71	58	29	6	8
Other countries (%)	44	56	57	1	16	26
Obs.	2292	3163	3397	938	509	611

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Most individuals migrated to find better employment. Employment was the most important driver of migration across all years, all destinations, all age groups, and for men and women. In 2021-2023, 34 percent of individuals left their homes to find more work opportunities, 18 percent left their home to find a higher paid job, and seven percent left to find better working conditions. At the same time, an increasing number of individuals migrated for education, from 14 percent in 2010-2016 to 19 percent in 2021-2023. A decreasing number of individuals migrated for marriage. Sixteen percent of migrants also left because they wanted to support their families. Some migrants left with other family members or to join family members abroad. Finally, only two percent of migrants reported that they left their households to avoid conflict.

Table 13. Drivers of migration by date of most recent departure

	2010-2016	2017-2020	2021-2023
Employment (%)	72	70	68
More work opportunities (%)	36	34	34
Higher income (%)	20	21	18
Better working conditions (%)	8	7	7
Relocation of Jobs (%)	35	33	33
Education (%)	14	17	19
Give support to family (%)	15	16	16
Marriage (%)	10	10	6
Migrated with family (%)	3	2	3
Avoid conflict (%)	0	1	2
Join family (%)	1	1	1
Other (%)	2	3	2

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Around 65 percent of internal migrants left to find better employment, while 85 percent of individuals who migrated abroad left to find better employment (Table 14). More migrants travelled to Yangon to find better employment than to other states/regions, 70 percent versus 62 percent. This was driven by 38 percent of migrants travelling to Yangon for more work opportunities versus only 26 percent of migrants in other states/regions listing this as their main migration driver. Migrants who travelled abroad were not only more likely to travel there for more work opportunities, but they also

left to earn a higher income. Forty percent of migrants who travelled abroad listed higher income as one of their main drivers compared to 13 percent who travelled within Myanmar. Further, a significantly higher number of migrants travelled abroad to be able to support their families, compared to those who migrated within Myanmar, 30 percent versus 11 percent. On the other hand, migration for education was much more common within Myanmar 22 percent, versus four percent abroad.

Table 14. Drivers of migration by destination of the migrant

	Within Myanmar	Yangon	Other	Abroad	Thailand	Malaysia
Employment (%)	65	70	62	85	86	84
More work opportunities (%)	31	38	26	47	47	48
Higher income (%)	13	16	12	40	40	42
Better working conditions (%)	7	8	6	8	10	7
Relocation of Jobs (%)	34	31	35	31	31	31
Give support to family (%)	11	13	10	30	31	36
Education (%)	22	19	23	4	2	1
Marriage (%)	10	8	11	1	1	0
Join family (%)	1	1	1	2	2	1
Migrated with family (%)	3	3	3	1	2	0
Avoid conflict (%)	1	1	2	1	1	1
Other (%)	2	2	2	4	5	4

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

More men left to find higher income/ better employment, whereas more women left for education, for marriage, and with other family members (Table A.7). Most individuals who previously worked as agricultural wage/salaried workers left to find better employment, 83 percent (Table A.8). But this is also true for non-farm wage workers, own farm earners, and non-farm business owners, 76, 77, and 75 percent, respectively. Many students or those previously unemployed also left for work, 55 percent, but many also left for school, 38 percent.

Most migrants chose where to migrate because they heard that there were work opportunities in that location. This is the case for 49 percent of respondents who migrated between 2021 and 2023 (Table A.9). Another 25 percent of migrants during the same period migrated because they had a family member already living there. Further, 19 percent chose their destination because they had a friend living there. Finally, 12 percent migrated because of education or training opportunities. This number increased from 8 percent in 2010-2016. Few individual migrants chose their next destination based on its proximity to their household, safety, cost of living, or recruitment by an agent.

In terms of gender (Table 15), some interesting patterns arise. First, more women compared to men migrated to a location where they had a family member living, 29 percent versus 23 percent. More men migrated because they heard about work opportunities, 57 percent of men compared to 42 percent of women. At the same time, more women migrated for education or training, 13 percent versus seven percent. Regardless of their age, a quarter of migrants moved to a location where they already had family. Migrants 18 and under migrated because of education, 25 percent, compared to 11 percent for those 19 to 25 years, and less than two percent for those older than 26 years. Instead, older migrants left because they heard about work opportunities.

Table 15. Decision of where to migrate by gender and age

	Overall	Female	Male	Age 0-18 years	Age above 18 years
Heard that there were work opportunities (%)	50	42***	57	31	56
Family member already lives there (%)	26	29***	23	27	24
Friend already lives there (%)	18	16**	19	19	18
Education/training opportunities (%)	10	13***	7	25	7
I heard about a position from word of mouth (%)	4	3***	5	3	4
Village member/ neighbor already lives there (%)	3	3*	4	3	4
The closest place to migrate to (%)	3	3**	2	3	2
It is much safer then where we live (%)	1	1	1	2	1
Informal recruitment by agent (%)	1	1	1	0	1
Low cost of living (%)	1	1	1	1	1
Other	4	3	4	3	4

Note: Asterisks on female show significant differences between female and male migrants. Asterisks denote significance at p-values * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Asterisks on female show significant differences between female and male migrants.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Overall, most migrants, despite their primary reason for migrating, had friends or relatives who had migrated to their destination before them, this includes 55 percent of internal migrants, and 58 percent of migrants abroad (Table A.10). Sixty-four percent of the individuals who moved to Thailand had a friend or relative already living there. Further, sixty-two percent of the individuals who moved to Yangon had a friend or relative there. Significantly fewer migrants who moved to other countries had a friend or relative already living there, 45 percent. According to UNDP (2023), further, almost 95 percent of migrants who travelled to Thailand obtained information about migration from friends of family.

Many challenges can arise during a migration event regardless of the reason for leaving. The most common difficulty was coming up with the money for migration followed by travel restrictions, checkpoints, or roadblocks. The latter challenge became much more prominent after the coup. Other challenges included transportation related problems, unreliable agents, and a lack of housing during travel.

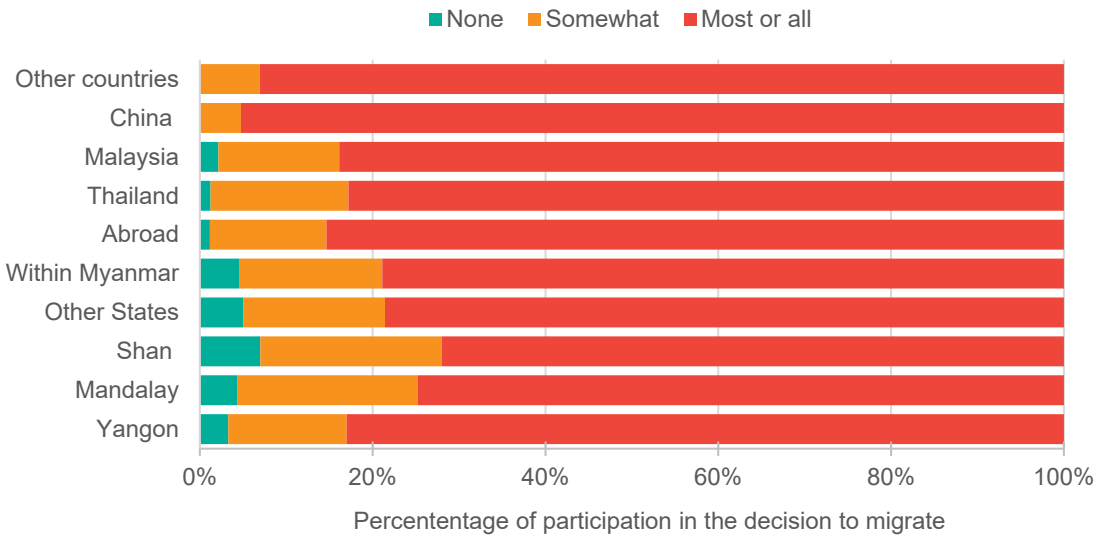
Table 16. Challenges during the migration process by year of departure

	2010-2016	2017-2020	2021-2023
Difficulties coming up with money for the migration (%)	25	27	29
Travel restrictions/check points/roadblocks (%)	16	18	29
Transportation related problems (%)	13	11	12
Lack of housing options/Limited safe housing options along the way (%)	11	10	10
Unreliable agents (%)	5	3	3
No challenges (%)	30	31	17

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Most migrants participated in most or all of the decisions to migrate. This was true for 85 percent of migrants that went abroad and 79 percent of migrants that remained within Myanmar. In Mandalay and Shan, fewer migrants fully participated in the decision to migrate, 75 and 72 percent of migrants, respectively. Instead, 21 percent of migrants who travelled to those destinations participated only somewhat in the decision making, while four and seven percent respectively did not participate at all in the decision to migrate.

Figure 5. The migrant's level of participation in the decision to migrate



Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Households incurred significant costs to be able to send individuals to live outside of their houses. Fifteen percent of households with internal migrants took out loans to pay for the cost of migration, and 6 percent of internal migrants themselves took out loans. More households sending migrants to Shan state took out loans compared to households sending migrants to other locations within Myanmar. Forty-seven percent of households took out loans to send household members overseas, and 18 percent of migrants themselves took out loans to move overseas. Migration costs were significantly higher to send migrants abroad versus to send migrants to locations within Myanmar, 1.8 million MMK (885 USD) versus 181 thousand MMK (85 USD). Migration costs were highest to send migrants to Malaysia, and 56 percent of households took out loans to cover those costs. According to UNDP (2023), costs to migrate to Thailand varied significantly depending on the route. The average cost of using a certified recruitment agency is 766 USD, compared to 403 USD for migration supported by a Thai employer, and 348 USD when relying on family and friends.

Table 17. Loans for migration and their cost by destination

Location	Mean cost of migration (USD)	Mean cost of migration (MMK)	Household took out loan %	Migrant took out loan %
Overall	**239**	**508,494**	**22**	**9**
Within Myanmar	**85**	**181,175**	**15**	**6**
Yangon	73	155,844	13	5
Mandalay	99	209,665	13	5
Shan	83	175,966	21	7
Other states/regions	93	197,205	16	7
Abroad	**885**	**1,882,099**	**47**	**18**
Thailand	751	1,598,024	46	19
Malaysia	1222	2,599,693	56	17
Other countries	905	1,925,776	40	15

Note: MMK to USD is converted at 2,127.66 MMK to 1 USD.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table 18 shows the percentage of migrants that utilized a service to help them migrate. Agents facilitate the travel process and assist migrants to find employment until they are employed in exchange for a service charge. Overall, 19 percent of the individuals in our sample used an agent for their migration process. However, the percentage of migrants who contacted the agent for migration within Myanmar is remarkably small, amounting to only one percent. On the other hand, most migrants in our sample who migrated to another country used agents to facilitate their migration process. Fifty-six percent of migrants who travelled to Thailand used agents compared to 73 percent who travelled to Malaysia, and 44 percent who travelled to other countries. An increasing number of migrants are using agents to travel to Thailand and China. Migrants learned about the agents from friends (40 percent), neighbors (28 percent), and family members (20 percent) who have migrated.

Table 18. Migrants that used an agent by destination, 2013-2023

Location	Use of an agent (%)
Overall	19
Within Myanmar	1
Abroad	57
Thailand	56
Malaysia	73
Other countries	44

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Migrants can travel abroad legally through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This is a prior agreement of employment between an employer in another country and the migrant and their originated government. Over the entire period, 45 and 43 percent of migrants who travelled to Thailand and Malaysia had MOUs (Table 19). This is compared to 27 and 13 percent of migrants who travelled to China and India. On the other hand, compared to these four destinations, a larger percentage of migrants who travelled to Japan, Korea, and Singapore travelled with MOUs. The percentage of migrants travelling to Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, Korea, and Singapore with MOUS decreased across time (Table A.11). In Thailand and Malaysia, whereas 59 and 51 percent of migrants had MOUs in 2017-2020, that declined to 34 and 22 percent in 2021-2023.

Historically, both formal and informal channels were taken by Myanmar migrants to enter Thailand. To limit irregular migration from Myanmar, in 1996, the Royal Thai Government launched a policy which permitted migrants to register for work in Thailand temporarily. In 2001, the Thai government announced "an amnesty policy" that allowed migrants to register as many times as they like, which also included self-employed individuals across the country. At present, the Thai government continues to permit some groups of migrant workers in Thailand to register to stay and work legitimately (Bangkok Post 2021). But even though Myanmar migrants are in theory able to access either an official channel to migrate to Thailand or a way to stay regularly, especially if they are employed, many migrants are still irregular. This is because many migrants proceed through informal routes and when they arrive may lack the documents necessary to apply for residence. Further, the Myanmar Embassy in Thailand is making it increasingly difficult for migrants to register to stay in Thailand, both because of high fees, the documents required, and the new taxation laws.

Individuals need to have passports to travel legally from one country to another. One hundred percent of migrants who travelled to Japan, Korea, and Singapore had passports, compared to only 74, 81, 68, and 63 percent of migrants who moved to Thailand, Malaysia, China, and India. Whereas you need a plane to travel to the first group of countries, the other group can be accessed via a land border from Myanmar. The percentage of migrants travelling to Thailand, and Malaysia with passports has decreased across time. In Thailand and Malaysia, 79 and 90 percent of migrants had

passports when they migrated in 2017-2020, which declined to 71 and 70 percent in 2021-2023 (Table A.11).

Once migrants are in their new country of residence, some do have the opportunity to apply for a work permit. However, those without passports must return to Myanmar to obtain a passport. To apply for a work permit, they may also need a birth certificate or a national registration card (NRC) to get the certificate of identification (CI) from their related embassy. However, not all migrants have these documents. Five percent of migrants who travelled to Thailand did not bring them, compared to 15 percent who travelled to Malaysia.

Table 19. Migrants with a MOU, passport, or birth certificate by destination, 2013-2023

Countries (%)	MOU	Passport	Birth certificate or NRC
Thailand	45	74	95
Malaysia	43	81	85
China	27	68	96
India	13	63	88
Japan	58	100	86
Korea	64	100	86
Singapore	71	100	92
Other	35	74	82

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Slightly more male migrants than female migrants travel with MOUs (Table 20). But a similar number of women and men carried passports and NRCs with them. Fewer migrants 18 and under as well as migrants older than 40 had MOUs, travelled with passports, or carried their birth certificate/NRC card with them when migrating. The more education the migrant had prior to leaving the more likely they brought their passport or birth certificate/NRC. Ninety-six percent of migrants with undergraduate or postgraduate degrees brought passports compared to 65 percent of those with no education.

Table 20. Migrants with a MOU, passport, or birth certificate by gender, age, education, and relation to head

	MOU	Passport	Birth certificate or NRC
Gender			
Female (%)	43	77	92
Male (%)	48	80	92
Age group			
0-18 years (%)	33	66	88
19-25 years (%)	46	79	91
26-39 years (%)	49	81	93
40+ years (%)	33	65	92
Education level			
None (%)	33	65	90
Primary school level (%)	44	70	93
Secondary school level (%)	42	74	93
High school level (%)	50	82	91
High school diploma (%)	38	84	91
University graduates (%)	49	96	85
Relationship to head			
Head (%)	47	73	89
Spouse of Head (%)	40	77	86
Son/Daughters (%)	45	79	93
Other HH members (%)	44	79	91

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

As we saw above, most individuals who left home did so to find a job. Overall, most migrants work in non-farm wage/salaried work (Table 21). This includes 60 percent of internal migrants and 85 percent of overseas migrants. Fewer migrants work in the other sectors. While 9 percent of migrants overseas work in farm wage or salaried work, almost no one worked in the remaining sectors. Further, very few are students or are unemployed. Nine percent of internal migrants work in a non-farm business, four percent work in wage/salaried agricultural work, three percent work in an owned agricultural business, while some rely on donations. A further 15 percent of internal migrants are either students or unemployed.

Again, since more females migrated to study, fewer are employed and earning income (Table A.12). More individuals 18 years or younger receive assistance, have no income, or are students. Fewer individuals 40 and older are employed in non-farm wage and salary work, compared to younger migrants, and instead are employed in non-farm businesses (15 percent).

Table 21. Main sector of employment for migrants by their destination

	Wage agriculture	Wage non-agriculture	Own-farm	Own non-farm	Assistance	Student
Overall (%)	**5**	**66**	**2**	**8**	**7**	**13**
Within Myanmar (%)	**4**	**60**	**3**	**13**	**8**	**15**
Yangon (%)	2	70	1	14	5	15
Mandalay (%)	4	59	1	16	11	16
Shan (%)	6	65	3	9	9	11
Other states/regions (%)	6	50	5	11	10	18
Abroad (%)	**9**	**85**	**0**	**3**	**1**	**2**
Thailand (%)	10	87	0	3	1	1
Malaysia (%)	6	88	0	4	0	1
Other countries (%)	10	78	0	5	3	7

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Most migrants, both within Myanmar and abroad, work in factories (Table 22). A detailed list of jobs by internal and overseas migrant can be found in Tables A.13 and A.14. In Yangon, 35 percent of migrants work in factories, compared to 17 percent in Mandalay, six percent in Shan, and five percent in other states/regions. Seventeen percent of internal migrants work in construction, 12 percent in Yangon compared to 28 percent in Shan. Many internal migrants work in agriculture on farms or plantations, 16 percent of migrants in other states/regions work in agriculture. Other important jobs for internal migrants include hospitality in Yangon, Mandalay, and Shan; sales, working in a bank, NGO, or large company, working for the government, working in a shop/stall, or mining. In other states/regions 12 percent of migrants are employed in mining. In Shan, two percent of migrants were employed in internet gambling/fraud.

For migrants abroad, factory work is the most common job for migrants. Forty-three percent of migrants abroad work in factories, compared to 18 percent within Myanmar. Fifty and forty-seven percent of migrants in Thailand and Malaysia work in factories. Construction is another important source of income for migrants overseas; 20 and 23 percent of migrants in Thailand and China work in construction, respectively. Many overseas migrants are also employed in the hospitality sector, including 21 percent of migrants in Malaysia and 14 percent of migrants in other countries abroad. Seven percent of migrants work on a farm or a planation, including 26 percent of migrants in China. Other migrants are employed as domestic workers, including 21 percent of migrants in other countries abroad, and sales.

Table 22. Principal occupation of migrants by destination

	Factory work	Construction	Non-farm business	Agriculture	Hospitality
Within Myanmar (%)	**18**	**17**	**13**	**8**	**6**
Yangon (%)	35	12	14	2	8
Mandalay (%)	17	15	16	8	8
Shan (%)	6	28	9	10	9
Other State/Region (%)	5	18	11	16	3
Abroad (%)	**43**	**18**	**3**	**7**	**10**
Thailand (%)	50	20	3	6	5
Malaysia (%)	47	9	4	6	21
China (%)	26	23	5	26	8
Other countries (%)	19	18	4	5	14
Obs.	940	648	383	309	280

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

There are some notable differences in the jobs of men and women (Table A.15). First, four percent of men worked as mechanics and six percent worked as miners, whereas nearly no women in the sample held these jobs. Further, 25 percent of men worked in construction compared to only three percent of women. On the other hand, five percent of women were domestic workers and seven percent of worked in shops or stalls, whereas nearly no men were domestic workers and merely two percent worked in shops or stalls. Thirty-four percent of women worked in factories compared to 19 percent of men.

In terms of the sector of the factory, most internal migrants work in garment factories, 58 percent (Table 23). In Yangon, 70 percent of migrants who work in factories work in garment factories. Seventeen percent of internal migrants who work in factories work in food and beverage factories, including 41, 53, and 37 percent of factory workers in Mandalay, Shan, and other states/regions, respectively. In Mandalay 17 percent of factory workers make construction materials, and in Shan nine percent of factory workers manufacture electronics or automotive parts (Table A.16).

Factory work in the garment sector is less common abroad (14 percent). Migrant factory workers abroad work in a wide range of factories, including 22 percent in food and beverage factories, 16 percent in electronics factories, 11 percent in construction materials factories, and 11 percent in goods factories. In Thailand, 8 percent of migrants employed in factories work in fish canning factories (Table A.17).

Table 23. Sector of factory employment for migrants employed in factories

	Garment	Food and beverage factory	Electronics	Construction materials	Goods
Within Myanmar (%)	**58**	**17**	**4**	**4**	**3**
Yangon (%)	70	9	4	2	3
Mandalay (%)	19	41	2	17	0
Shan (%)	4	52	9	9	4
Other State/Region (%)	37	37	3	3	11
Abroad (%)	**14**	**22**	**16**	**11**	**11**
Thailand (%)	15	23	13	9	12
Malaysia (%)	10	20	25	15	8
China (%)	11	11	22	28	17
Other countries (%)	12	35	15	12	12
Obs.	334	180	89	67	64

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Within Myanmar, the percentage of migrants working in factories declined from 21 percent among those who departed in 2017-2020 to 16 percent among those who migrated in 2021-2023 (Tables A.18 and A.19). The percentage of migrants working in own non-farm businesses and as a government employee also declined over time. Abroad, the percentage of migrants working in factories declined from 49 percent among those who departed in 2017-2020 to 39 percent among those who migrated in 2021-2023. This decline in factory work abroad, was led by a decline in the percentage of workers working in electronic, construction materials, and automotive parts factories (Table A.20).

5. RETURN MIGRATION

While there has been a lot of out-migration, there are also many individuals returning to their households. Table 24 shows the percentage of migrants who have returned home by their year of departure, for migrants who did not re-migrate. Of the migrants who left in 2013, 54 percent have returned home. Most returned home in the three years after migration while some continued to return home across the period. Of the migrants who migrated in 2014 and 2015, 51 and 50 percent have since returned home, respectively. Most of these migrants returned home prior to 2022. Around 44 percent of the individuals who left in 2016, 2017, and 2018 have returned home, with returns scattered across the period. Of the individuals who migrated in 2019 and 2020, only 31 and 27 percent, respectively, have returned home, and most returned home the year after departure. Finally, of the individuals who left in 2022 and 2023, thus far, 23 percent, and 9 percent have returned home. Compared to all other years, the migrants who left in 2022 returned home the year after migration at the highest rate.

Table 24. Year the migrants returned home by year of departure

Year of Return (%)	Year of Departure										
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
2013	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2014	6.9	7.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2015	8.0	4.8	9.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2016	9.7	7.6	10.2	3.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2017	4.6	6.9	7.6	7.2	8.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2018	4.0	4.8	6.1	5.3	5.5	5.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2019	4.0	9.0	7.6	8.7	8.5	11.1	8.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
2020	3.4	5.5	5.6	8.7	8.8	7.6	12.3	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
2021	2.3	3.4	2.0	2.4	6.3	6.8	8.5	10.5	7.6	0.0	0.0
2022	1.7	0.7	0.5	3.9	3.3	4.9	5.0	6.5	10.8	8.0	0.0
2023	4.6	0.7	0.5	3.4	4.0	5.1	5.0	7.4	8.4	14.8	8.6
Never returned	45.7	49.0	50.3	56.5	55.5	59.3	60.4	68.6	73.2	77.3	91.4

Note: Table limited to migrants who did not re-migrate.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table 25 shows the percentage of the sample migrants who have returned home by year, gender, and location, for all the migrants, including those who re-migrated. First, return migration was significantly higher in 2019 and 2020 than the preceding years. This is likely a result of COVID-19 since migration in the two periods was not significantly higher than in the preceding year. At the same time, in 2021 and 2022 this trend continued, and even increased. In mid-2023 there were more returned migrants than in all preceding years.

Table 25. Year the migrants returned home by gender and location

Year of Return (%)	Overall	Male	Female	Abroad	Within Myanmar
2013	1	1	0	1	1
2014	2	2	1	1	2
2015	3	4	3	3	3
2016	4	5	3	6	4
2017	6	6	4	8	5
2018	7	7	8	9	7
2019	13	13	14	17	12
2020	14	13	14	17	14
2021	13	13	13	12	13
2022	16	14	18	10	16
2023	22	23	22	17	23

Note: Table includes all migrants who returned—both those who did and did not re-migrate.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Across the three periods, most migrants returned home because their jobs ended or because they lost their jobs (Table 26). Other important reasons include to be with family or to get married, having trouble integrating into their migration destination, migration with a family member who returned home, or better work at home in the end. From 2019 to 2021 COVID-19 was a significant driver of return migration, with 17 percent of migrants stating they returned home during this period because of COVID-19 work closures.

Women cited their job ending or losing their job more commonly as a reason for them leaving, 21 percent of women versus 12 percent of men (Table A.21). Men were more likely to leave to be with family or for marriage, 16 percent versus 12 percent. There were not many significant differences by the age of the migrant, though older migrants were less likely to leave because of COVID-19 work closures.

Table 26. Reason the migrants returned home by date of departure

	2010-2019	2019-2021 (COVID-19)	2022-2023
Job ended or lost job (%)	19	15	18
Be with family / get married (%)	16	12	13
Returned home with family member (%)	13	13	12
Having trouble integrating/homesick (%)	13	12	11
Better work options at home (%)	13	7	10
Could not find a job (%)	8	7	10
Health (%)	6	7	8
COVID-19 work closures (%)	1	17	6
Could not make ends meet in new community (%)	5	4	6
Visa expired/ could not register (%)	3	2	2
Other reasons (%)	1	1	1

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

In Table 27, we explore characteristics of the migrants who are still away from their households and characteristics of those who returned. We find that compared with those who did not return, more male migrants returned, more older migrants returned, as well as more migrants with children returned, more heads returned, whereas more sons and daughters remained outside of the household. More migrants with MOUs returned. Interestingly, there was not a difference in return numbers for those traveling with a passport or birth certificate and those without. Finally, a larger percentage of returnees worked in construction.

Table 27. Characteristics of migrants still abroad versus those that returned home

	Still migrated	Returned migrants
Characteristics		
Female (%)	45	38
Male (%)	55	62
Age (mean)	24	26
Migrants with children (%)	65	74
Relation to HH head		
Head (%)	9	28
Spouse of Head (%)	3	7
Son/Daughters (%)	73	54
Other HH members (%)	16	11
Travel Documents		
With MOU (%)	43	51
With passport (%)	78	77
With NRC/ With Birth Certificate (%)	92	89
Type of Income activities		
Students, No employment (%)	30	23
Factory work (%)	26	21
Construction (%)	14	25
Family owned- nonfarm business (%)	10	10
Agriculture/farming/ plantation (%)	7	10
Restaurant, hospitality, tourism (%)	9	4

Note: Characteristics are from before first migration event
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

6. WHO MIGRATES

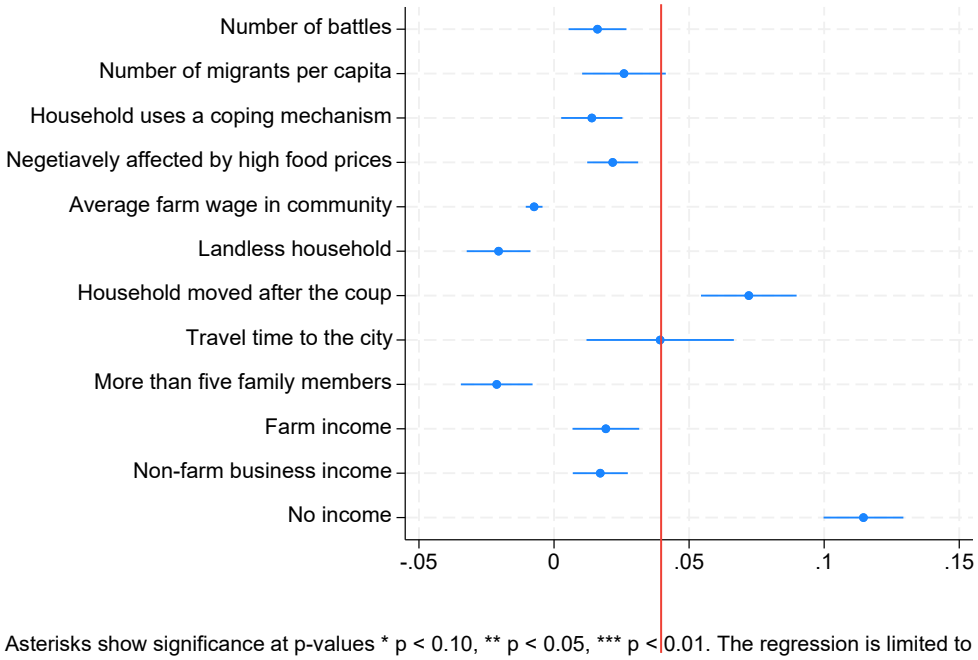
In this section, we use regression analysis to explore how shocks, household characteristics, and geographic locations are associated with migration in the short-term. We start by analyzing the drivers of sending migrants amongst panel households in the MHWS. Figure 6 presents the marginal effects from a random effects panel Probit regression of shocks, household characteristics, and locations on the probability of having a migrant. Additional controls not shown in the figure include climatic shocks, state dummies, round dummies, all income sources, and respondent characteristics such as gender and age (Table A.22).

Conflict is an important driver of household member migration. The number of battles within a township that occurred during the three months prior to the interview is positively associated with the number of households sending migrants. On the other hand, experiencing a climatic shock appears to have no impact on sending migrants in the short-term (Table A.22). Households who live in areas where surrounding households are sending migrants are also more likely to send a migrant (see figure 6 note). Households who resort to using coping mechanisms including reducing expenditure and selling assets are more likely to send a migrant as well. Households who reported being negatively affected by high food prices are also more likely to send migrants. In terms of incentives to migrate, a higher average unskilled agricultural wage within the community is associated with less migration.

Landless households are significantly less likely to send migrants than landed households. On the other hand, households who moved to a new township after the coup are more likely to send migrants in addition to relocating their household. More remote households are more likely to send migrants, as well.

In terms of household composition, having more than five household members, adults and children, decreases the probability of sending a migrant. Households who earn income from their own-farm and households who earn income from a non-farm enterprise are more likely to have a migrant. Finally, households with no income are very likely to send migrants.

Figure 6. Drivers of households sending an individual migrant



Note: Asterisks show significance at p-values * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. The regression is limited to households with a migrant in any MHWS round. Additional controls not shown in the table include climatic shocks, state dummies, round dummies, and respondent characteristics.
Source: Author's calculations based on MHWS data.

Table 28 includes a sub-sample of households with migrants in at least one round. Column 1 is for any migrant, while column 2 is only for rural households with a migrant, column 3 includes urban households with a migrant, column 4 contains any household with a migrant who migrated internally for work, and column 5 includes any households with a migrant who migrated abroad for work. The regressions are fixed effects panel regressions at the household level on the probability of an individual migrating. Additional controls not shown in the table include climatic shocks, state dummies, round dummies, and respondent characteristics.

We find that migrants are less likely to be female, except for migrants from urban areas. Household members who cannot read or write are very unlikely to migrate. Further, household members with a child are less likely to migrate, except for migrants who travel abroad for work. Migrants are less likely to be 15 to 19 years old compared to 25 to 39 years, except for those coming from urban areas. All migrants regardless of type and origin were less likely to be 40 years or older compared to 25 to 39 years.

Compared to household heads, the subset of migrants who travel either internally for work or abroad for work are more likely to be sons or daughters of the head. Further, compared to heads, all migrants are more likely to be sons-in-law or daughters-in-laws. Grandchildren are also more likely to migrate internally and from rural areas, compared to heads. Finally, compared to household heads, the subset of migrants who travel either internally for work or abroad for work are more likely to be other household members, including sisters or brothers of heads, or cousins. The number of battles in a rural area increased individual migration in a given period.

Having new income from a non-farm business decreases migration from urban areas as well as decreases migration for internal work. Having new income from non-farm wage or salary also decreases migration from rural areas as well as decreases migration for work opportunities within Myanmar. Households who receive donations are more likely to send a migrant from an urban area and for work within Myanmar. Finally, households who became asset poor compared to asset low households were more likely to send migrants for work internally.

Table 28. Marginal effects of shocks, individual characteristics, household characteristics, on individuals migrating

	(1) Migrant	(2) Migrant from a rural area	(3) Migrant from an urban area	(4) Migrant with work in Myanmar	(5) Migrant with work abroad
Female	-0.331***	-0.502***	0.098	-0.469***	-1.102***
	(0.067)	(0.080)	(0.130)	(0.112)	(0.206)
Read and Write Sentence	-3.855***	-3.811***	-4.198***	-4.204***	-4.437***
	(0.129)	(0.152)	(0.286)	(0.226)	(0.403)
Has a child or stepchild	-2.058***	-2.068***	-1.406***	-1.638***	-0.343
	(0.207)	(0.291)	(0.355)	(0.428)	(1.033)
15 to 19 years old	-0.220**	-0.312***	-0.107	-0.259*	-0.930***
	(0.092)	(0.108)	(0.197)	(0.142)	(0.299)
Age 40 plus	-1.275***	-1.300***	-1.053***	-0.542**	-1.567***
	(0.123)	(0.154)	(0.220)	(0.222)	(0.382)
Son/daughter	-0.130	0.170	-0.199	1.271***	1.821*
	(0.191)	(0.273)	(0.327)	(0.410)	(1.034)
Son-in-law /daughter-in-law	0.731***	1.051***	0.659*	1.154**	2.013*
	(0.214)	(0.297)	(0.372)	(0.449)	(1.066)
Grandchild /great grand child	0.778***	1.345***	0.274	2.131***	1.816
	(0.301)	(0.397)	(0.560)	(0.570)	(1.281)
Other relative	0.292	0.394	0.455	0.890**	2.270**
	(0.189)	(0.267)	(0.309)	(0.389)	(1.113)
Number of battles	0.143***	0.133***	0.121	0.040	0.160
	(0.035)	(0.043)	(0.087)	(0.065)	(0.136)
Non-farm business income	-0.183	-0.087	-0.628*	-0.417*	0.388
	(0.141)	(0.167)	(0.335)	(0.227)	(0.387)
Non-farm wage	-0.099	-0.498**	0.485	-0.624**	-1.575*
	(0.186)	(0.230)	(0.415)	(0.302)	(0.868)
Farm wage	-0.361*	-0.339	-1.230	-1.076***	-0.128
	(0.199)	(0.208)	(1.230)	(0.297)	(0.680)
Non-farm salary	-0.372**	-0.398*	-0.504	-0.818***	-0.584
	(0.168)	(0.211)	(0.359)	(0.270)	(0.531)
Donations	0.157	0.242*	-0.153	0.576***	-0.287
	(0.119)	(0.146)	(0.239)	(0.193)	(0.428)
Asset rich (7-10 assets)	-0.161	0.164	-0.343	0.390	-0.368
	(0.186)	(0.243)	(0.356)	(0.307)	(0.597)
Asset poor (0-3 assets)	0.301	0.337	0.837	1.237***	0.365
	(0.194)	(0.223)	(0.580)	(0.371)	(0.571)
Observations	17,004	12,188	4,194	7,344	2,740
Number of QNO	1,136	834	309	475	173

Note: Asterisks show significance at p-values * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. The regression is limited to households with a migrant in any MHWS round. Additional controls not shown in the table include climatic shocks, state dummies, round dummies, and respondent characteristics.
Source: Author's calculations based on MHWS data.

CONCLUSION

Between December 2021 and June 2023, approximately 6,451,394 household members aged 15 and older—constituting 11.8 percent of the total population and 19.9 percent of the adult population—migrated from their households. Most individuals left their households in search for better employment and migrated within Myanmar. An increasing number of individuals, however, are migrating in search of work abroad. Significantly more men migrated than women. Migration rates were higher in rural areas and in Kayah, Kachin, Kayin, and Mon.

In response to shocks, sons, daughters, and son/daughter in-laws are leaving for better work opportunities, higher income, and better working conditions. Many of them are leaving their children behind, in search of income for their household. Many individuals are also returning to school instead of remaining unemployed; 38 percent of unemployed individuals left to attend school. Households and migrants make significant sacrifices to migrate. First, migration is expensive, especially migration abroad. Seventy-five percent of households that sent migrants abroad either took out loans themselves, or the migrant took out a loan. But 21 percent of households with internal migrants also took on debt, either the household or the migrant. Most migrants travelled abroad through agents, which was costly.

Households and migrants struggled to come up with the money to migrate. Other challenges migrants faced included travel restrictions, including checkpoints and roadblocks, transportation related problems, unreliable agents, and a lack of housing during travel. Further, because we interview mainly households of migrants, our survey does not expose the many issues migrants face when they are living outside of their households. Among others this includes not finding or taking a long time to find a job, not being able to integrate into the community or speak the language, not having a sanitary or safe environment to live in or being in a precarious work situation.

Despite these hardships, many migrants were able to find work, mainly as non-farm wage or salaried workers. Forty-three percent of migrants abroad work in factories, compared to 18 percent within Myanmar. In Yangon, 35 percent of migrants work in factories, but in other areas of Myanmar factory work was much less common. Most internal migrants work in garment factories, while migrant factory workers abroad work in a wide range of factories including food and beverage factories electronics factories, construction materials factories, and goods factories. Other important sectors of employment include construction, agriculture, and hospitality.

The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic only briefly slowed the increase in migration rates. Further, despite financial barriers, and other challenges, migration rates continue to rise. This points to a widespread belief that migration holds the potential to improve household welfare, emerging as one of the few viable pathways to do so amidst the prevailing economic challenges and conflict environment in Myanmar. But whether migration can indeed deliver some relief depends on the ability of the migrant to find a safe, well-paid job, in a secure environment. This requires there to be job creation in safe areas, accessible to migrants. Understanding where employment opportunities lie across Myanmar and Thailand is crucial to being able to migrate with less risk.

The international community can play a pivotal role in facilitating migration. Setting up programs that facilitate access to credit for migrants would help households cover the costs associated with migration and reduce the need for migrants or households to take out high-interest loans. Additionally, ensuring that migrants have access to trustworthy and reasonably priced agents who fulfill their commitments is essential. Support programs should be developed for communities experiencing high out migration to enhance individuals' awareness of the associated risks, processes, and job opportunities linked to migration. Likewise, creating centers in high in migration areas could aid migrants by providing resources, legal assistance, sustenance, shelter, and

community support. Finally, it is essential that migrants abroad have access to counseling so that they can navigate the complexities of the application process for obtaining a legal work permit.

More research is needed to understand the short-term impact of migration on welfare. Specifically, it will be critical to understand how migration driven by conflict compared to migration driven by employment impacts the vulnerability of households across Myanmar. Additionally, exploring the welfare outcomes of migrant households receiving remittances versus those not receiving remittances, may reveal further risks and disparities associated with migration. For household members leaving their household, more research is needed on whether this migration is chosen or forced, documented or undocumented, and safe or unsafe. Finally, interviewing migrants themselves to understand the key issues they are facing is crucial. Given the attractiveness of migration because of its potential to improve household welfare, understanding these factors is key to prescribing policies to help reduce the high risks associated with migration.

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APPENDIX

Table A.1 MHWS households with a migrant by state/region (all rounds)

State (%)	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Pooled
Myanmar	13.5	8.0	12.8	7.7	10.5
Ayeyarwady	12.5	6.5	14.6	6.8	10.1
Bago	10.3	7.1	11.3	8.9	9.4
Chin	25.6	11.2	11.4	11.5	14.9
Kachin	18.3	11.8	18.3	12.1	15.1
Kayah	26.7	13.5	7.7	6.0	13.5
Kayin	15.3	11.3	14.8	11.1	13.1
Magway	10.2	10.9	12.7	10.5	11.1
Mandalay	12.2	6.8	12.7	7.2	9.7
Mon	15.6	7.9	16.1	9.3	12.2
Nay Pyi Taw	16.1	5.5	14.1	7.7	10.9
Rakhine	16.4	12.0	14.7	8.3	12.9
Sagaing	12.5	7.5	11.8	8.7	10.1
Shan	15.0	8.5	12.3	5.6	10.4
Tanintharyi	16.8	12.7	16.3	3.7	12.4
Yangon	14.3	5.8	9.8	6.1	9.0

Note: Asterisks show significance at p-values * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Asterisks for each round denote significant differences compared to the same group in the prior round.
Source: Author's calculations based on MHWS pooled data.

Table A.2 Characteristics of migrants, January-June 2023 MHWS by round

	National	Round 4	Round 5
Percentage of Migrants			
Lives elsewhere in Myanmar for work (%)	42.7	39.8 ***	46.0
Lives abroad for work (%)	16.7	13.5 ***	20.3
Lives elsewhere after marriage/divorce (%)	18.7	15.0 ***	23.0
Lives elsewhere for school (%)	7.6	8.4 *	6.6
Lives elsewhere for other reasons, including safety (%)	14.4	23.3 ***	4.1
Lives elsewhere for other reasons (%)	13.3	22.7 ***	2.6
Percentage of Female			
Lives elsewhere in Myanmar for work (%)	42.1	46.3 ***	37.9
Lives abroad for work (%)	32.8	35.2	31.0
Lives elsewhere after marriage/divorce (%)	57.9	55.4	59.8
Lives elsewhere for school (%)	54.4	54.1	54.8
Lives elsewhere for other reasons, including safety (%)	50.4	50.6	49.0
Lives elsewhere for other reasons (%)	51.0	51.2	48.2
All migrants (%)	45.6	47.8 **	43.1
Average Age			
Lives elsewhere in Myanmar for work	26.4	26.5	26.2
Lives abroad for work	26.9	26.9	26.9
Lives elsewhere after marriage/divorce	27.7	27.1	28.1
Lives elsewhere for school	19.1	19.5	18.4
Lives elsewhere for other reasons, including safety	40.2	40.9 *	35.8
Lives elsewhere for other reasons	40.4	41.0 *	34.4
All migrants	28.2	29.4 ***	26.7
Percentage by Relation to Head			
Head (%)	7.7	10.2 ***	4.7
Spouse (%)	3.2	3.4	3.0
Son/Daughter (%)	63.6	61.1 ***	66.5
Son-In-Law/Daughter-In-Law (%)	8.4	8.3	8.6
Grandchild/Great Grandchild (%)	3.4	3.2	3.8
Parent/ Parent-In-Law (%)	2.7	3.4 **	1.9
Brother/Sister (%)	5.0	4.9	5.2
Other Relative (%)	5.8	5.4	6.3
Observations (%)	2,802.0	1,469.0	1,333.0

Note: Asterisks show significance at p-values * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01. Asterisks for each round denote significant differences between round 4 and 5.
Source: Author's calculations based on MHWS round data.

Table A.3 Migration by gender overtime

Year of departure (%)	Overall	Male	Female	Permanent migration
2013	4	4	4	3
2014	4	4	3	3
2015	5	5	5	4
2016	5	5	5	4
2017	7	7	7	6
2018	9	9	9	8
2019	10	10	9	8
2020	8	8	7	7
2021	9	8	9	8
2022	21	20	23	18
2023	20	20	19	16

Note: Table includes all migrants who returned—both those who did and did not re-migrate.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.4 Destination location by migrant's gender over time

	2010-2016		2017-2020		2021-2023	
Destination of migrations (%)	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Within Myanmar	**46**	**54**	**45**	**55**	**45**	**55**
Yangon	59	41	51	49	51	49
Mandalay	43	57	46	54	49	51
Shan	31	69	43	57	42	58
Other states/regions	40	60	41	59	40	60
Abroad	**26**	**74**	**30**	**70**	**37**	**63**
Thailand	32	68	33	67	39	61
Malaysia	13	87	18	82	22	78
China	25	75	26	74	36	64
Other countries	43	57	43	57	45	55

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.5 Destination location by migrant's level of education

Location (%)	None	Primary school level	Secondary school level	High school level	Diploma	University graduates
Within Myanmar	**2**	**16**	**24**	**35**	**10**	**13**
Yangon	2	13	22	39	11	13
Mandalay	2	16	23	38	11	11
Shan	2	16	33	28	9	11
Other states/regions	2	17	24	32	10	14
Abroad	**2**	**19**	**33**	**33**	**7**	**6**
Thailand	3	23	36	30	5	2
Malaysia	1	18	37	36	4	3
Other countries	1	10	19	37	13	20

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.6 Destination location by migrant's gender and age at departure

Location (%)	Age 0-18 years	Age 19-25 years	Age 26-39 years	Age 40+ years
Within Myanmar	**22**	**47**	**24**	**8**
Yangon	21	52	21	6
Mandalay	25	47	21	8
Shan	23	43	25	8
Other states/regions	21	43	27	9
Abroad	**9**	**50**	**35**	**6**
Thailand	10	50	35	5
Malaysia	7	49	35	10
Other countries	6	52	36	6

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.7 Reasons the migrant left by gender and age at departure

	Female	Male	Age 0-18 years	Age 19-25 years	Age 26-39 years	Age 40+ years
Employment (%)	62	75	47	71	79	81
More work opportunities (%)	30	37	26	36	36	37
Higher income (%)	16	22	11	20	25	19
Better working conditions (%)	6	8	4	8	8	7
Relocation because of job (%)	31	35	22	34	38	44
Give support to family (%)	13	18	12	16	16	17
Education (%)	23	13	44	17	3	1
Marriage (%)	10	6	3	8	11	3
Join family (%)	1	1	2	1	1	2
Migrated with family (%)	4	2	4	1	3	4
Avoid conflict (%)	1	1	2	1	1	2
Other (%)	2	2	1	2	3	4

Note: Reasons of migrants leaving could be selected multiple and the percentage are not up to 100.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.8 Reasons the migrant left by original income source

	Wage/salaried work in agriculture, livestock, fishing	Wage/salaried work in non-agriculture	Owned farming, livestock, fishing	Owned non-farm business	Students/No employment, Remittance, pensions, assistance
Employment (%)	83	75	76	75	55
More work opportunities (%)	43	34	40	36	28
Higher income (%)	25	19	26	21	12
Better working conditions (%)	10	8	9	6	5
Relocation because of job (%)	35	40	33	35	28
Give support to family (%)	23	16	21	13	11
Education (%)	4	8	11	9	38
Marriage (%)	6	12	6	11	5
Join family (%)	1	1	1	1	1
Migrated with family (%)	2	1	1	4	3
Avoid conflict (%)	0	1	1	2	1
Other (%)	2	3	3	2	2

Note: Reasons of migrants leaving could be selected multiple and the percentage are not up to 100.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.9 Reasons for migrant chose destination location by year

	2010-2016	2017-2020	2021-2023
Have a family member already living there (%)	31	25	25
Have a friend already living there (%)	19	16	19
Have a village member/ neighbor already living there (%)	4	2	4
Heard that there were work opportunities there (%)	51	52	49
It is the closest place to migrate to from the household (%)	4	3	2
I heard about the position from word of mouth (%)	4	3	4
It is much safer then where we live (%)	0	0	2
Informal recruitment by agent (%)	1	2	1
Advertisement in newspaper/ social media (%)	0	0	0
Education/training opportunities there (%)	8	11	12
Low cost of living, convenient to live in (%)	1	1	1
Assigned to live there by work (%)	0	0	0
Religious purpose (%)	0	0	0
Other (%)	4	3	4

Note: Reasons of migrants chose destination location could be selected multiple and the percentage are not up to 100.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.10 Migrants with friends, relatives, or close acquaintances already living in migration destination

Destination (%)	
Within Myanmar	**55**
Yangon	62
Mandalay	52
Shan	54
Other States	50
Abroad	**58**
Thailand	64
Malaysia	53
China	54
Other countries	45

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.11 Migrants with an MOU, passport, or NRC overtime

2010-2016			
Countries (%)	Percentage with MOU	Percentage with passport	Percentage with birth certificate or NRC
Thailand	55	76	90
Malaysia	46	84	81
China	25	83	100
India	100	100	100
Japan	67	100	83
Korea	82	100	82
Singapore	100	100	100
Other	100	100	0
2017-2020			
Countries (%)	Percentage with MOU	Percentage with passport	Percentage with birth certificate or NRC
Thailand	59	79	94
Malaysia	51	90	85
China	27	72	98
India	0	100	50
Japan	69	100	89
Korea	67	100	86
Singapore	53	100	94
Other	100	100	100
2021-2023			
Countries (%)	Percentage with MOU	Percentage with passport	Percentage with birth certificate or NRC
Thailand	34	71	96
Malaysia	33	70	87
China	29	52	91
India	17	50	100
Japan	48	100	83
Korea	60	100	89
Singapore	77	100	95
Other	40	100	60

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.12 Sector of migrant's employment by destination location abroad

	Wage/salaried work in agriculture, livestock, fishing	Wage/salaried work in non-agriculture	Owned farming, livestock, fishing	Owned non-farm business	Remittance, pensions, assistance	Students/ No employment
Female (%)	4	59	2	7	9	18
Male (%)	6	71	2	8	5	9
Age 0-18 years (%)	4	46	1	3	21	26
Age 19-25 years (%)	5	72	1	6	5	11
Age 26-39 years (%)	7	71	3	12	1	6
Age 40+ years (%)	7	65	4	15	1	9

Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.13 Type of work within Myanmar by destination location

	Myanmar	Yangon	Mandalay	Shan	Others
Animal farming or meat/poultry preparation (%)	1	1	0	1	1
Agriculture/farming/ plantation (%)	8	2	8	10	16
Mechanic and car care (%)	2	2	2	2	3
Cleaner (%)	1	1	1	0	0
Construction (%)	17	12	15	28	18
Domestic work (%)	1	1	2	1	1
Factory work (%)	18	35	17	6	5
Fishing (%)	1	0	0	1	1
Family owned- nonfarm business (%)	13	14	16	9	11
Mining (%)	5	0	5	4	12
Restaurant, hospitality, tourism (%)	6	8	8	9	3
Street seller (%)	1	2	1	2	1
Shop/stall (%)	5	5	6	3	5
Internet gambling/ internet fraud (%)	0	0	0	2	0
Government employee (%)	5	2	4	6	8
Seafarer (%)	0	0	0	0	0
Company/NGO/Bank Employee (%)	5	6	5	5	3
Driver (%)	2	2	3	2	3
Sales (%)	6	9	6	5	4
Trader/broker/miller (%)	1	1	1	0	1
Healthcare (%)	2	2	2	2	1
Other (%)	4	4	4	3	3

Note: Types of work which migrants who work within Myanmar could be multiple selected and the percentage are not up to 100.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.14 Type of work abroad by migrant's destination location

	Abroad	Thailand	Malaysia	China	Other countries
Animal farming or meat/poultry preparation (%)	4	5	2	3	1
Agriculture/farming/ plantation (%)	7	6	6	26	5
Mechanic and car care (%)	2	2	4	1	1
Cleaner (%)	1	1	2	0	1
Construction (%)	18	20	9	23	18
Domestic work (%)	5	3	0	5	21
Factory work (%)	43	50	47	26	19
Fishing (%)	1	1	0	0	1
Family owned- nonfarm business (%)	3	3	4	5	4
Mining (%)	0	0	0	3	1
Restaurant, hospitality, tourism (%)	10	5	21	8	14
Street seller (%)	1	1	0	0	0
Shop/stall (%)	2	2	2	1	1
Internet gambling/ internet fraud (%)	0	0	0	0	1
Government employee (%)	0	0	0	0	0
Seafarer (%)	1	0	0	1	4
Company/NGO/Bank Employee (%)	1	1	2	1	1
Driver (%)	1	0	1	0	1
Sales (%)	3	3	4	0	4
Trader/broker/miller (%)	0	0	0	4	0
Healthcare (%)	0	0	0	0	2
Other (%)	1	1	0	3	3

Note: Types of work which migrants who travel abroad for employment could be multiple selected and the percentage are not up to 100.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.15 Type of work abroad by migrant characteristics

	Female	Male	Age 0-18 years	Age 19-25 years	Age 26-39 years	Age 40+ years
Animal farming or meat/poultry preparation (%)	1	2	1	1	2	1
Agriculture/farming/ plantation (%)	7	9	7	7	10	10
Mechanic and car care (%)	0	4	5	2	2	3
Cleaner (%)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Construction (%)	3	25	13	14	21	29
Domestic work (%)	5	0	2	2	2	2
Factory work (%)	34	19	25	28	23	16
Fishing (%)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Family owned- nonfarm business (%)	9	11	10	10	10	12
Mining (%)	1	6	4	4	5	4
Restaurant, hospitality, tourism (%)	8	7	12	7	6	6
Street seller (%)	1	1	1	1	2	2
Shop/stall (%)	7	2	4	5	4	4
Internet gambling/ internet fraud (%)	0	0	0	1	0	0
Government employee (%)	4	3	1	4	4	4
Seafarer (%)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Company/NGO/Bank Employee (%)	5	2	2	4	4	3
Driver (%)	0	3	1	2	2	2
Sales (%)	6	4	4	6	4	4
Construction (%)	0	1	0	0	1	1
Trader/broker/miller (%)	0	1	0	1	0	2
Healthcare (%)	2	0	1	2	1	0
Other (%)	2	4	3	3	3	4

Note: Types of work which migrants who work within Myanmar could be multiple selected and the percentage are not up to 100.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.16 Type of factory work by migrants within Myanmar if they work in a factory

	Myanmar	Yangon	Mandalay	Shan	Others
Garment (%)	58	70	19	4	37
Fish canning (%)	0	0	0	0	0
Frozen shrimp (%)	0	0	0	0	0
Fruit canning (%)	0	0	2	0	0
Electronics (%)	4	4	2	9	3
Automotive parts (%)	1	1	5	9	0
Rubber (%)	5	7	0	0	5
Food and beverage factory (%)	17	9	41	52	37
Construction materials (%)	4	2	17	9	3
Goods (%)	3	3	0	4	11
Housekeeping stuffs (%)	3	2	5	13	5
Other (%)	3	2	10	0	0

Note: Type of factory work by migrants with Myanmar if they work in a factory could be selected multiple and the percentage may not be up to 100.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.17 Type of factory work by migrants abroad if they work in a factory

	Abroad	Thailand	Malaysia	China	Others
Garment (%)	14	15	10	11	12
Fish canning (%)	6	8	1	0	0
Frozen shrimp (%)	2	2	0	0	0
Fruit canning (%)	2	3	0	0	0
Electronics (%)	16	13	25	22	15
Automotive parts (%)	6	6	7	0	12
Rubber (%)	2	3	1	0	0
Food and beverage factory (%)	22	23	20	11	35
Construction materials (%)	11	9	15	28	12
Goods (%)	11	12	8	17	12
Housekeeping stuffs (%)	5	5	4	11	4
Other (%)	3	2	8	0	0

Note: Type of factory work by migrants in abroad if they work in a factory could be selected multiple and the percentage may not be up to 100.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.18 Type of employment for migrants within Myanmar

	2010-2016	2017-2020	2021-2023
Factory work (%)	17	21	16
Construction (%)	16	15	18
Family owned- nonfarm business (%)	15	11	12
Agriculture/farming/ plantation (%)	7	10	8
Restaurant, hospitality, tourism (%)	5	7	7
Sales (%)	5	6	6
Company/NGO/Bank Employee (%)	6	5	4
Government employee (%)	8	6	3
Mining (%)	5	4	7
Shop/stall (%)	6	4	5

Note: Type of factory work by migrants within Myanmar if they work in a factory could be selected multiple and the percentage may not be up to 100.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.19 Type of employment for migrants outside of Myanmar

	2010-2016	2017-2020	2021-2023
Factory work (%)	42	49	39
Construction (%)	16	18	19
Family owned- nonfarm business (%)	4	3	4
Agriculture/farming/ plantation (%)	8	8	6
Restaurant, hospitality, tourism (%)	11	8	11
Sales (%)	2	3	4
Company/NGO/Bank Employee (%)	3	1	1
Government employee (%)	0	0	0
Mining (%)	0	1	0
Shop/stall (%)	3	1	2

Note: Type of factory work by migrants in abroad if they work in a factory could be selected multiple and the percentage may not be up to 100.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.20 Migrants abroad type of factory work overtime

	2010-2016	2017-2020	2021-2023
Garment (%)	9	14	15
Food and beverage factory (%)	13	24	24
Electronics (%)	25	16	13
Construction materials (%)	15	10	10
Goods (%)	15	10	10
Rubber (%)	1	3	2
Housekeeping stuffs (%)	3	4	6
Automotive parts (%)	10	5	6
Other (%)	1	5	2
Fish canning (%)	1	7	6

Note: Type of factory work by migrants in abroad over the time could be selected multiple and the percentage may not be up to 100.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.21 Reasons migrants returned home by gender and age group

Reasons for returned home (%)	Male	Female	0-18 years	19-25 years	26-39 years	40+ years
Job ended or lost job	12	21	9	15	25	26
Could not find a job	7	11	7	8	11	10
COVID-19 work closures	8	8	9	10	6	6
Visit family / get married	16	12	11	16	15	9
Health	8	7	4	7	10	7
Having trouble integrating/homesick	12	12	13	12	12	9
Returned home with family member	13	12	10	12	14	13
Better work options at home	8	11	10	10	9	14
Could not make ends meet in new community	5	5	4	5	6	5
Visa expired/ could not register	1	3	1	2	4	2

Note: Reasons of migrants leaving home could be selected multiple and the percentages may not be up to 100.
Source: Author's calculations based on MMA data.

Table A.22 Drivers of households sending individual migrants

	Household sends migrants
Number of battles	0.016***
	(0.005)
Number of migrants per capita	0.026***
	(0.008)
Household uses a coping mechanism	0.014**
	(0.006)
Negatively affected by high food prices	0.022***
	(0.005)
Average farm wage in community	-0.007***
	(0.002)
Landless household	-0.021***
	(0.006)
Household moved after the coup	0.072***
	(0.009)
Travel time to the city	0.039***
	(0.014)
More than five family members	-0.021***
	(0.007)

Farm income	0.019***
	(0.006)
Non-farm business income	0.017***
	(0.005)
No income	0.115***
	(0.008)
Non-farm wage	0.006
	(0.005)
Farm wage	0.002
	(0.006)
Rental income	-0.022*
	(0.013)
Respondent is female	0.004
	(0.005)
Respondent has at most primary education	0.002
	(0.006)
Number of children	-0.003
	(0.003)
Rural	-0.010
	(0.007)
Kayah	-0.098***
	(0.018)
Kayin	0.013
	(0.022)
Chin	-0.046**
	(0.021)
Sagaing	-0.046***
	(0.017)
Tanintharyi	-0.034
	(0.021)
Bago	-0.035**
	(0.018)
Magway	-0.019
	(0.018)
Mandalay	-0.032*
	(0.018)
Mon	-0.010
	(0.021)
Rakhine	-0.020
	(0.019)
Yangon	-0.044**
	(0.019)
Shan	-0.037**
	(0.017)
Ayeyarwady	-0.031*
	(0.018)
Nay Pyi Taw	0.009
	(0.024)
Observations	17,625

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