



RESEARCH NETWORK PROGRAM  
SOCIOECONOMIC STUDIES

# DUAL BURDENS

on Women from Socioeconomic  
and Climate-Conflict Crises

NOVEMBER 2024



PHOTO: AFP

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Research Network program conducts monthly studies on Myanmar's socioeconomic conditions and trends. The research spans 110 townships, representing one-third of the country's 330 townships. This survey, "Dual Burdens on Women", reports findings from March 2024 to August 2024, divided into five sections: Everyday Socioeconomic Hardships, Inflation and Commodity Crisis, Public Service Delivery, Drugs and Gambling, and Climate Crisis.

Survey findings indicate that people have been struggling with inflation, job scarcity, low wages, and psychosocial distress for a long time. The healthcare system, which is fundamental and vital, has deteriorated to the point where only the wealthy can access lifesaving care, leaving the grassroots to endure severe hardships. The State Administration Council's (SAC)

healthcare provision services are a lost cause. Meanwhile, criminal activities are on the rise, with rampant robberies, muggings, and burglaries. Victims' reports often go unresolved, with cases being handled informally within communities. These conditions, faced by the broader public, also challenge women. Amidst these struggles, women also face added burdens, ranging from struggling with household chores to unequal pay and domestic violence.

ISP-Myanmar released the survey report "Facing the Tailspin, the Country Shall Fall Upside Down: Post-Conscription Law Survey Findings" in July 2024. The ISP Research Network program engaged 1,000 survey participants across 110 townships to gauge public opinion—the current research report leveraged data from an earlier opinion poll to underscore the burdens faced by women. ■

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The original Burmese version of "Dual Burdens on Women" was published in November 2024, and its English translation was published on December 24, 2024.

## PART 1

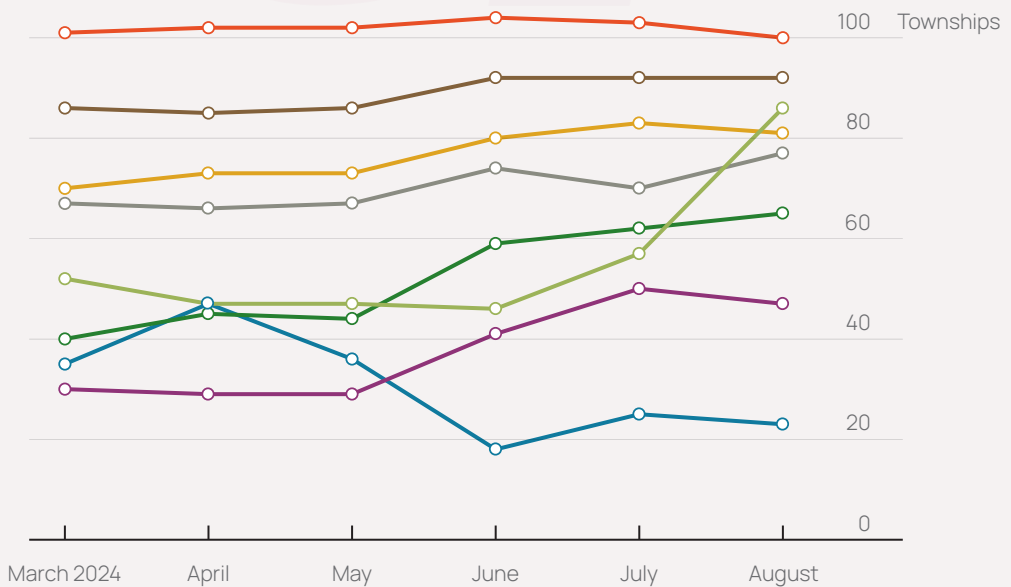
# EVERYDAY SOCIOECONOMIC HARDSHIPS

**S**ocioeconomic studies of ISP-Myanmar reveal that electricity outages are the most common daily challenge for the population. The study, which covered 110 townships, found that 100 townships experienced power cuts every month. Many townships experienced power outages lasting between four to eight hours daily, with some areas suffering from even more prolonged disruptions of nine to thirteen hours. These extended blackouts affect Magway, Aunglan, and Yesagyo townships in the Magway Region; Kyaukse, Myingyan, and Nyaung-U townships in the Mandalay Region; Thaton ▶

### Daily Socioeconomic Struggles

Over 100 townships experience electricity outage

- 1 Electricity outage
- 2 Psychosocial distress
- 3 Transportation challenges
- 4 Extortion
- 5 Fuel shortage
- 6 Medical supply shortage
- 7 Drinking water shortage
- 8 Basic food shortage



- ▶ township in Mon State; Falam township in Chin State; Thayarwady and Thegon townships in Bago Region; Langkho, Monghsu, and Ywangan townships in Shan State; Mingaladon and South Okkalapa townships in Yangon Region; and Maubin, Myaungmya, Bogale, and Danubyu townships in the Ayeyarwady Region. In August 2024, the SAC announced an increase in the electricity charges despite irregular electricity provision. The rate was increased to 35 to 50 Kyats per unit for households and 125 to 250 kyats per unit for businesses. An average of 85 townships (77 percent) of the 110 that ISP-Myanmar has been studying rely heavily on SAC's electricity provision.

The second most prevalent issue facing the population is psychosocial distress. Nearly everyone has encountered psychosocial distress during the three years of the coup. An average of 89 townships (81 percent) of the 110 studied by ISP-Myanmar deal with this problem. Moreover, other daily obstacles include fuel shortages, transportation challenges, and extortions. Fuel shortages peaked in August 2024, affecting 86 townships (78 percent) of the 110. Furthermore, there are also shortages of medicine, essential food, and drinking water. Medicine shortages have steadily increased each month, with 65 out of 110 townships (59%) reporting shortages in August 2024, the highest level observed.

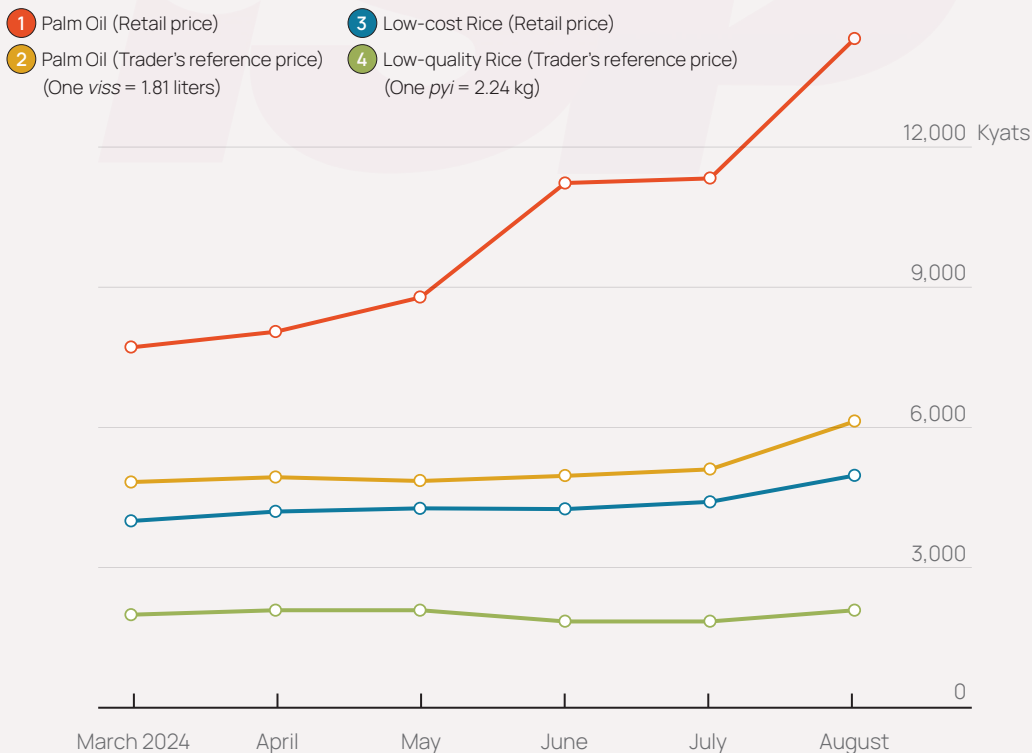
All the people encounter the conditions mentioned above, yet they place even more strain on women. For instance, women are notably prominent among those expressing psychosocial distress following the implementation of the Conscription Law. In an opinion poll conducted in July 2024 by ISP-Myanmar, 326 female individuals (60 percent) out of 542 reported psychosocial distress. Moreover, alongside these insecurities, women are also affected by high inflation and commodity crises.

## PART 2

### HIGH INFLATION AND COMMODITY CRISIS

Women grapple with mounting hardships in the severe inflation following the coup. The prices of rice and oil, among other staple foods, highlight the high inflation. Before the 2021 coup, one *pyi* of low-quality rice (2.24 kg) was priced at 825 kyats. By August 2024, the lowest price of that rice had tripled to 2,330 kyats. The price above reflected only the reference price of Myanmar Rice Federation, while the market prices were much higher. ISP-Myanmar’s research shows that rice prices averaged 5,100 kyats in August 2024, double the reference price. In the townships of Rakh- ▶

#### Inflated Rice and Palm Oil Prices



- ▶ In Kachin and Chin States, even low-cost rice was sold at 8,000 kyats per *pyi*. Before the 2021 coup, palm oil was priced at 2,357 kyats per *viss* (1.81 liters). By August 2024, the SAC set its reference price at 6,375 kyats, representing a threefold increase from the original price. The palm oil price reached its highest in August 2024. Certain townships experienced higher palm oil prices, with residents paying approximately 30,000 kyats per *viss* in Kachin State and around 25,000 kyats per *viss* in Rakhine and Shan States.

However, labor wages do not increase along with the increased commodity prices. The basic salary in Myanmar averaged 4,800 kyats until August 2024, when it was changed to 6,800 kyats. Yet, some workers, especially women, are not getting the basic earnings of 4,800 kyats. Some months, women workers earn less than 4,800 kyats. Consequently, even regularly putting food on the table seems challenging for most people. Some choose to reduce their meat and fish consumption, while others focus solely on preparing and eating wild vegetables.

Women are more likely to save during these crises. Women participating in ISP-Myanmar's research reported saving more to prioritize the provisions for other family members. Consequently, they encounter worrying health conditions and nutrition levels. Similar findings were found in the International Food Policy Research Institute's (IFPRI) research reports. The study conducted by IFPRI in 2022 found that adult women, especially those in rural areas, suffer from nutritional deficiencies. It is a harsh reality for all women, including mothers who manage the household kitchen and women who share the family burdens amidst daily challenges.

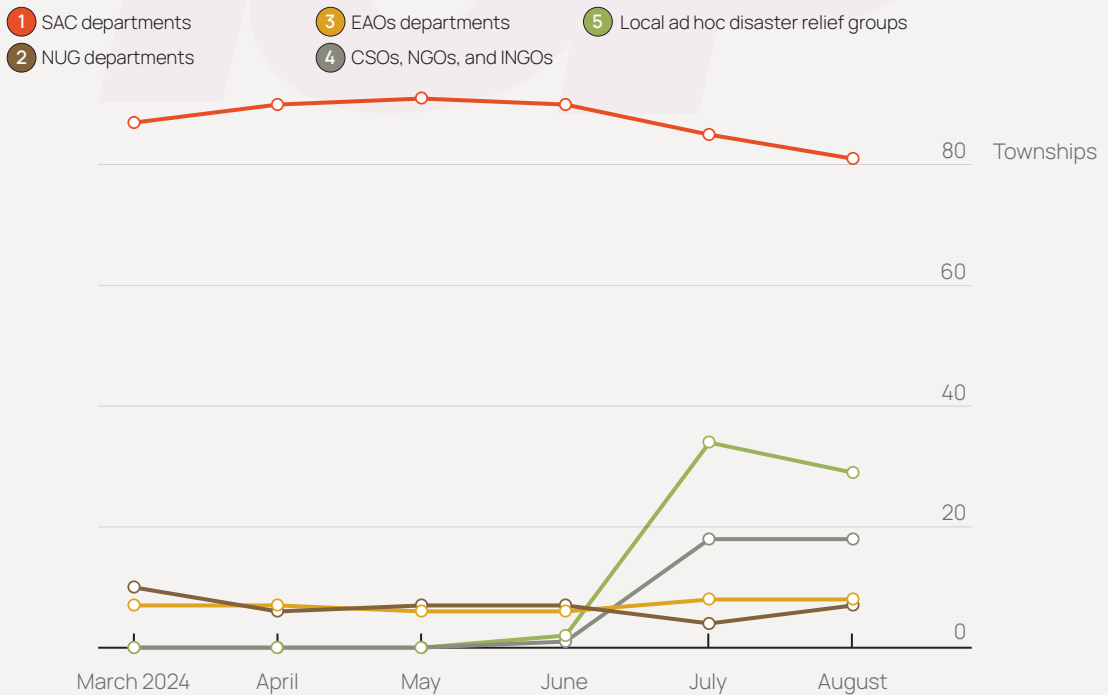
## PART 3

# PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

**A**s conflict intensifies, assessing the capability of public service operations becomes increasingly crucial. ISP-Myanmar's Socio-Economic Studies found that in an average of 87 townships (79 percent) out of the 110 surveyed, the SAC's health and education public services continue to function. However, its capabilities have been declining since June 2024. According to ISP-Myanmar's Conflict, Peace, and Security Program, conflict impacts indexes indicate that the intensity of public service absence has escalated in 120 out of 330 townships nationwide. During this period, local ad hoc vol- ▶

### Public Service Delivery

SAC's public service departments still operate in 80 townships and above.



► unteers and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have increased their public service provisions. However, the capabilities of Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) and the National Unity Government (NUG) remain limited. This study also explored corruption related to public services, cases, crimes, and reporting mechanisms that reflect the rule of law.

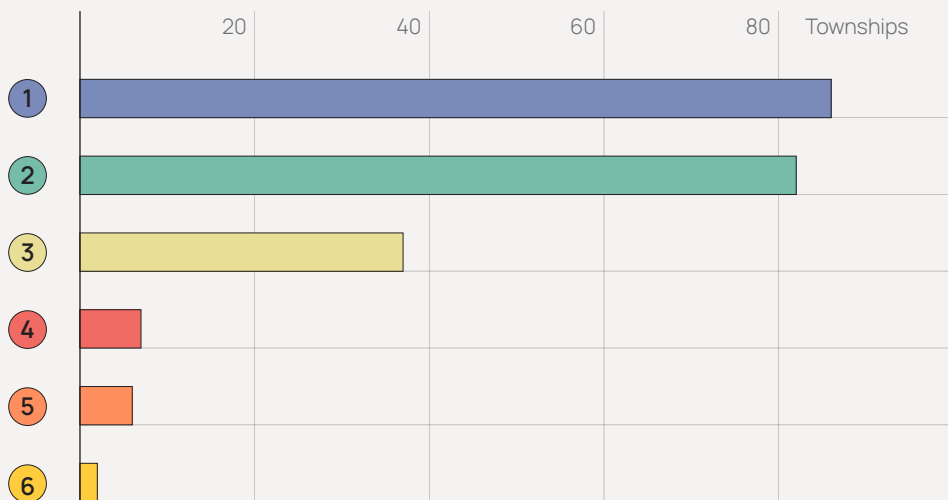
● Healthcare

In the healthcare sector, private hospitals and clinics are increasingly relied on. The public still depends on hospitals and clinics run by the SAC; however, the quality of care is deteriorating. For instance, among the 110 surveyed townships, only 42 (38 percent) have access to essential healthcare services, while just five (five percent) are equipped ►

Healthcare Service

In over 85 townships, people rely heavily on private hospitals and clinics.

- ① Private hospitals and clinics
- ③ Charity clinics
- ⑤ EAOs' hospitals and clinics
- ② SAC's hospitals and clinics
- ④ NUG's hospitals and clinics
- ⑥ No healthcare services



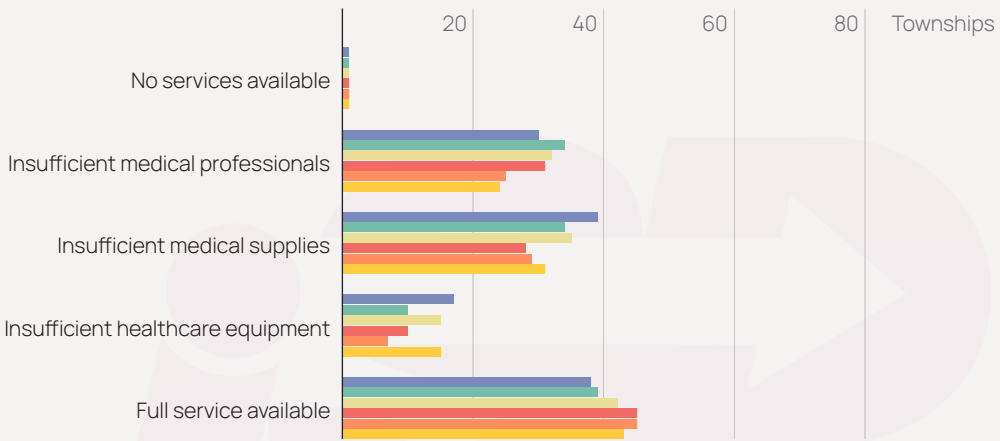


## Healthcare Service

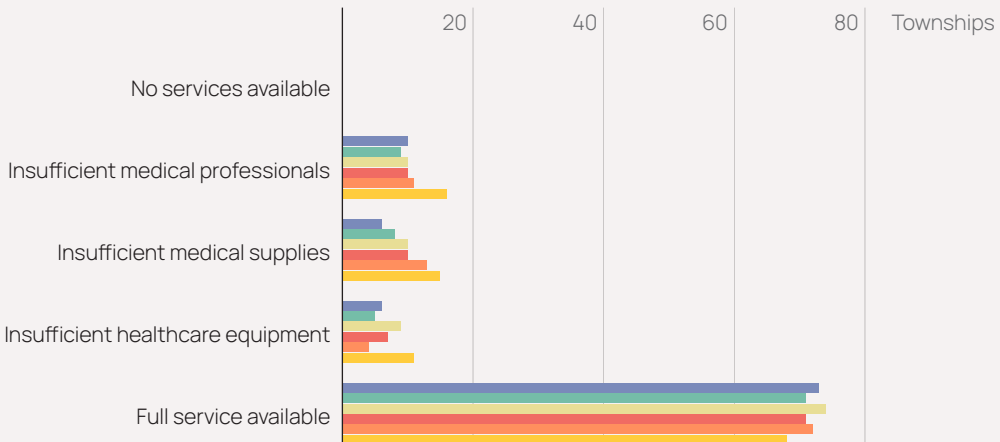
Healthcare service for common cold and illnesses per township

2024 ● March ● April ● May ● June ● July ● August

### ■ SAC's hospitals and clinics



### ■ Private hospitals and clinics

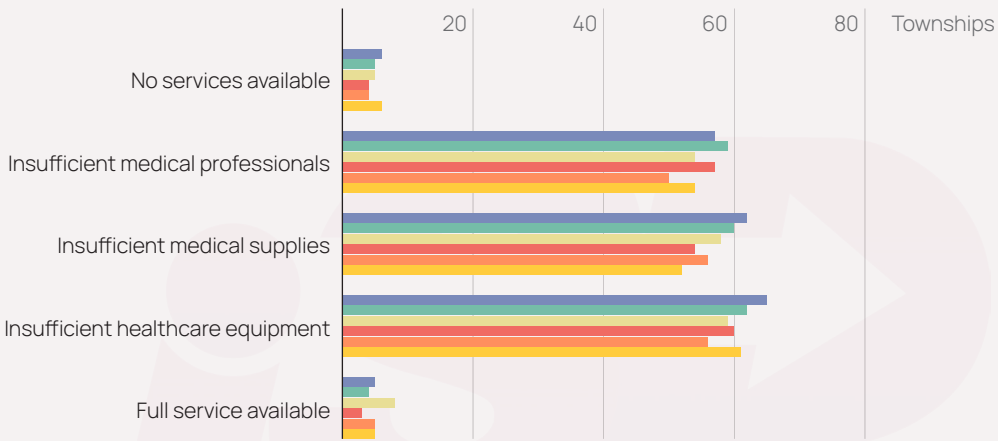


## Healthcare Service

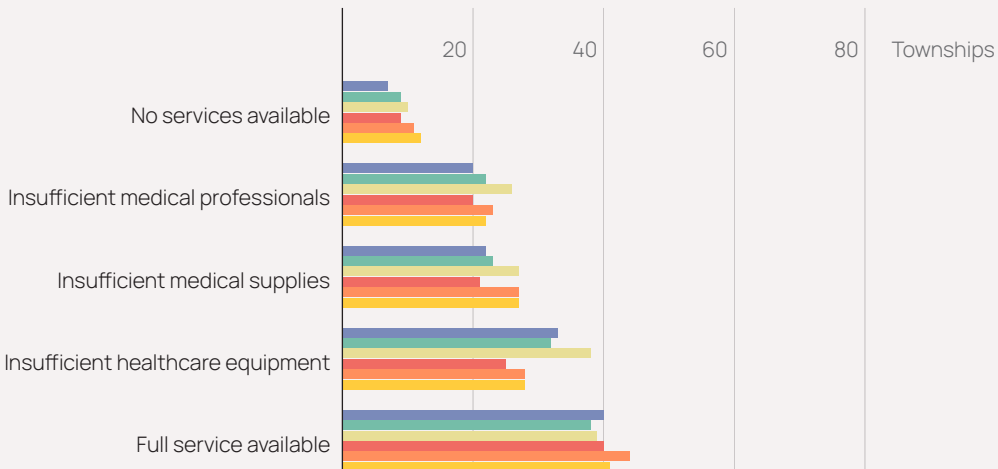
Surgical service provisions per township

2024 ● March ● April ● May ● June ● July ● August

### ■ SAC's hospitals and clinics



### ■ Private hospitals and clinics

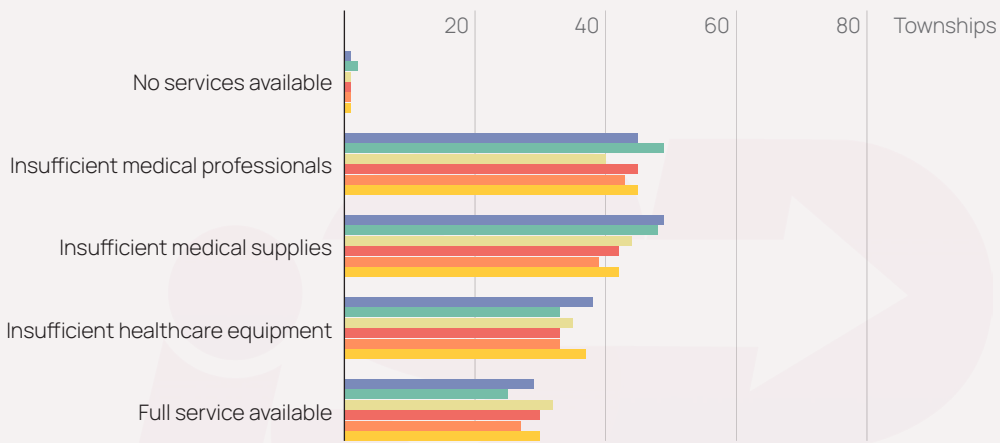


## Healthcare Service

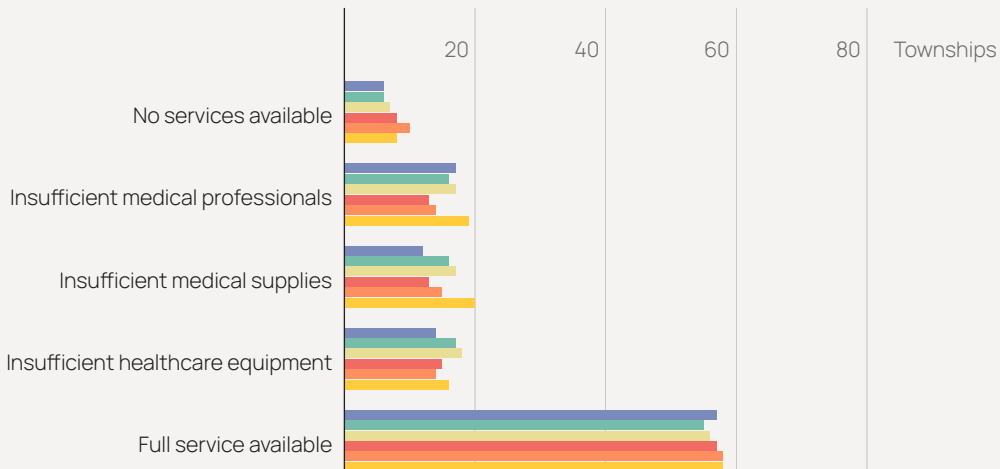
### Maternity care services per township

2024 ● March ● April ● May ● June ● July ● August

#### ■ SAC's hospitals and clinics



#### ■ Private hospitals and clinics

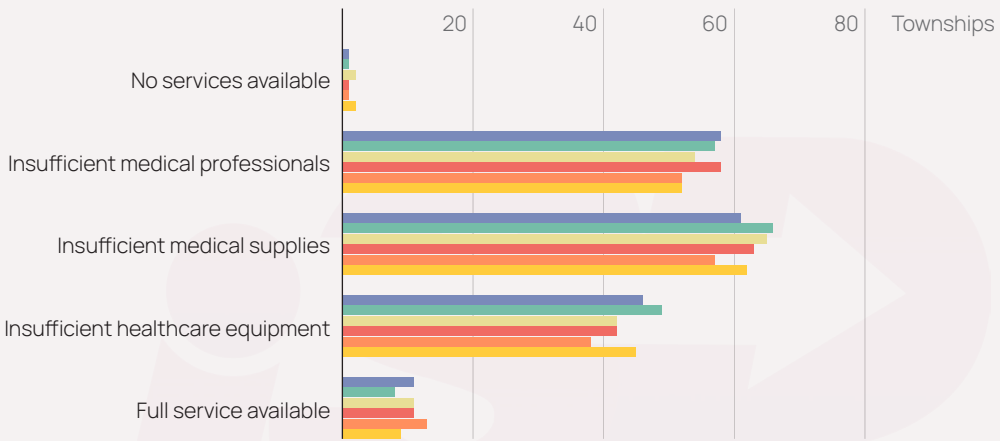


## Healthcare Service

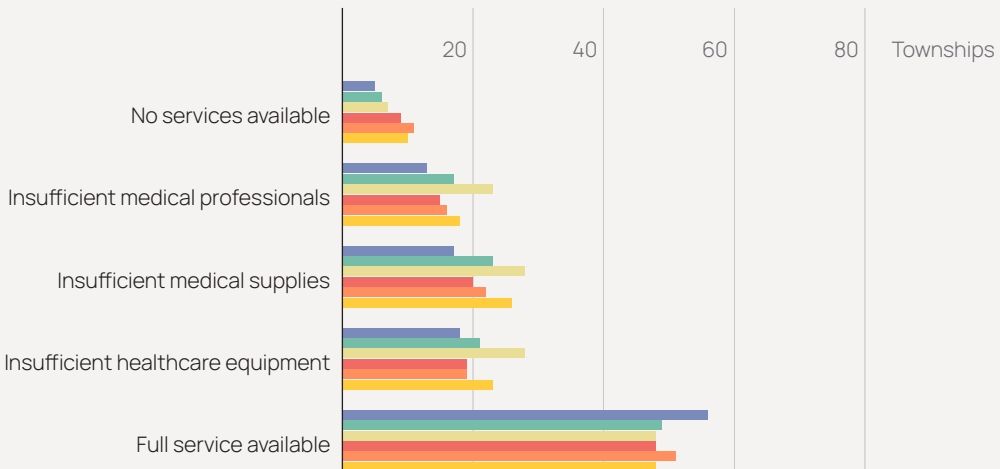
Hospital admission capacity per township

2024 ● March ● April ● May ● June ● July ● August

### ■ SAC's hospitals and clinics



### ■ Private hospitals and clinics

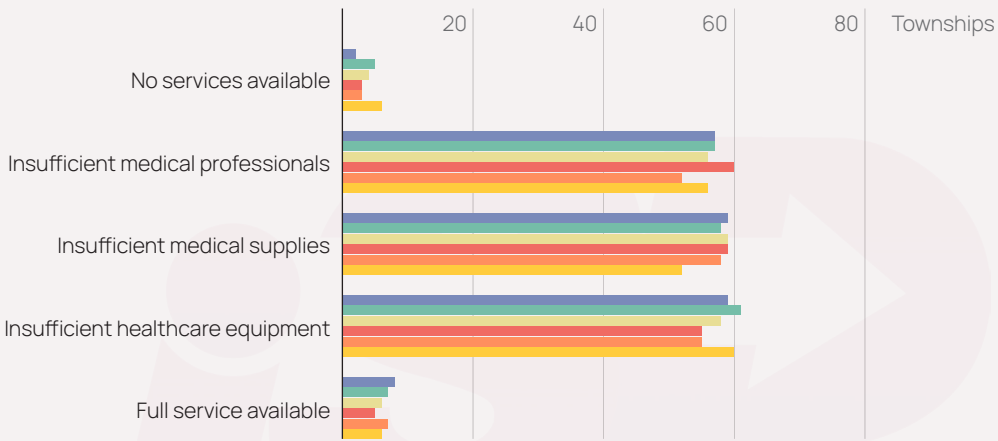


## Healthcare Service

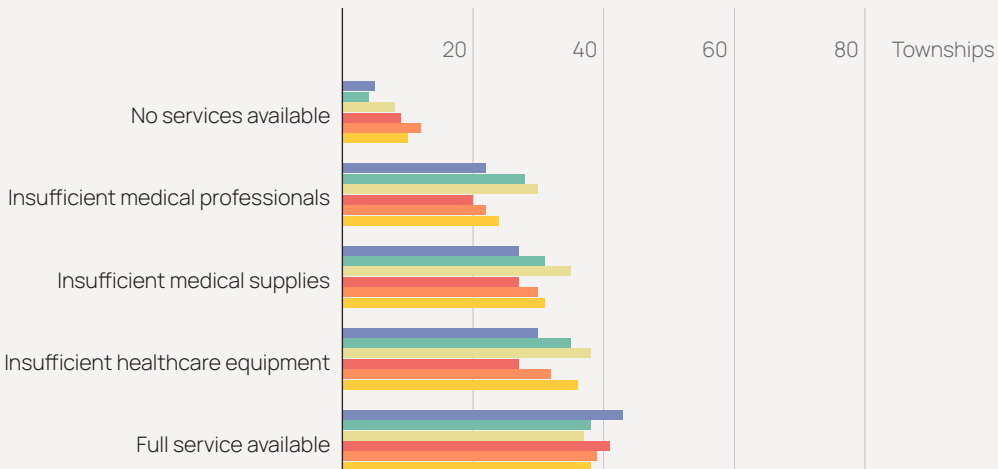
Emergency healthcare service provisions per township

2024 ● March ● April ● May ● June ● July ● August

### ■ SAC's hospitals and clinics



### ■ Private hospitals and clinics

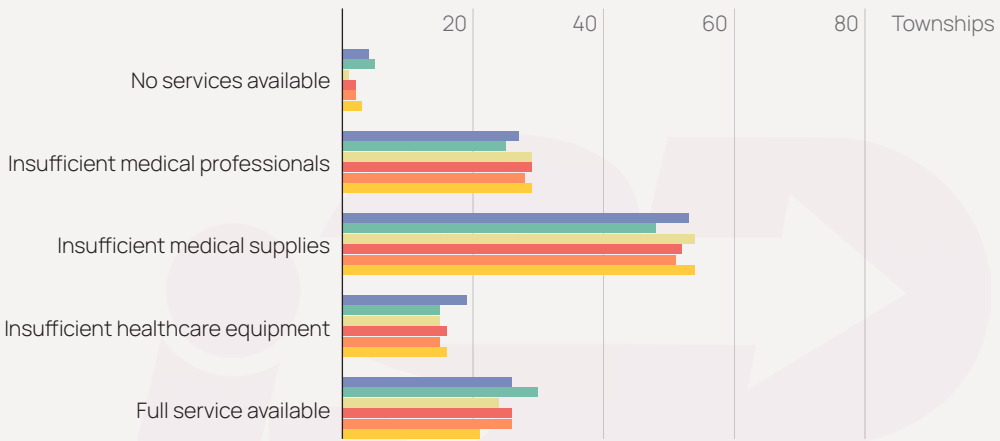


## Healthcare Service

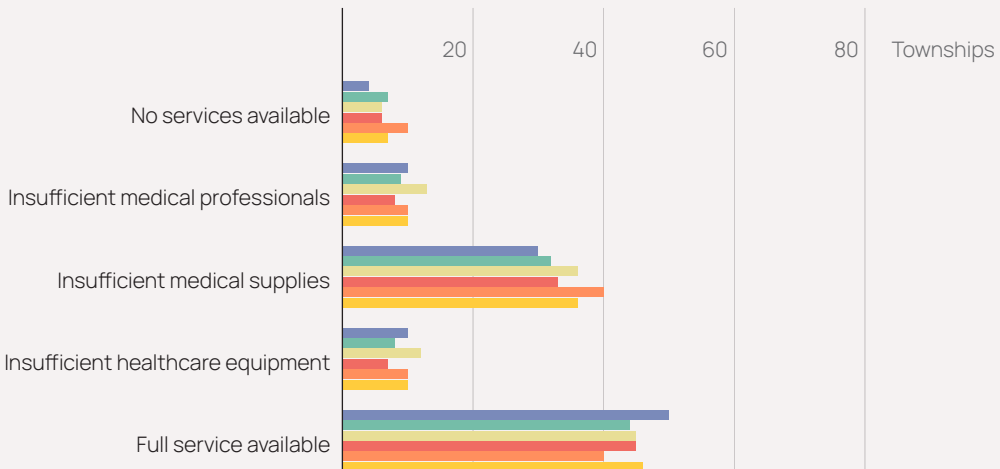
Vaccination programs per township

2024 ● March ● April ● May ● June ● July ● August

### ■ SAC's hospitals and clinics



### ■ Private hospitals and clinics



- ▶ to perform surgical procedures. These conditions highlight a noticeable gap compared to private healthcare. Regarding childbirth, only 29 townships (26 percent) have SAC-run hospitals and clinics capable of accommodating deliveries, compared to 57 townships (52 percent) with private facilities. This condition reflects a significant disparity, with private facilities serving twice as many townships as their public counterparts. The public increasingly relies on charity clinics, which operate in roughly one-third of the 110 townships observed by ISP-Myanmar. Meanwhile, the capability of hospitals and clinics established by the NUG and EAOs remains limited.

## ● Education

Regarding basic education, some people choose SAC-run schools and other alternatives. Private schools play a much more significant role in non-SAC basic education alternatives. The second most commonly chosen option is monastic schools. Online learning platforms initiated by the NUG ranked third. The NUG established schools in at least 16 townships, primarily in the Sagaing and Magway Regions. Additionally, community-based and charity schools, as well as schools operated by religious organizations, are active. However, attendance in these institutions has notably declined during June and July 2024. In some townships, no educational opportunities are available, especially in high-intensity conflict areas where access to basic education has completely ceased. Women show a stronger preference for private education when choosing educational options. According to ISP-Myanmar's study in July 2024, which surveyed public opinions (from a total of 542 female respondents), 260 women expressed ▶

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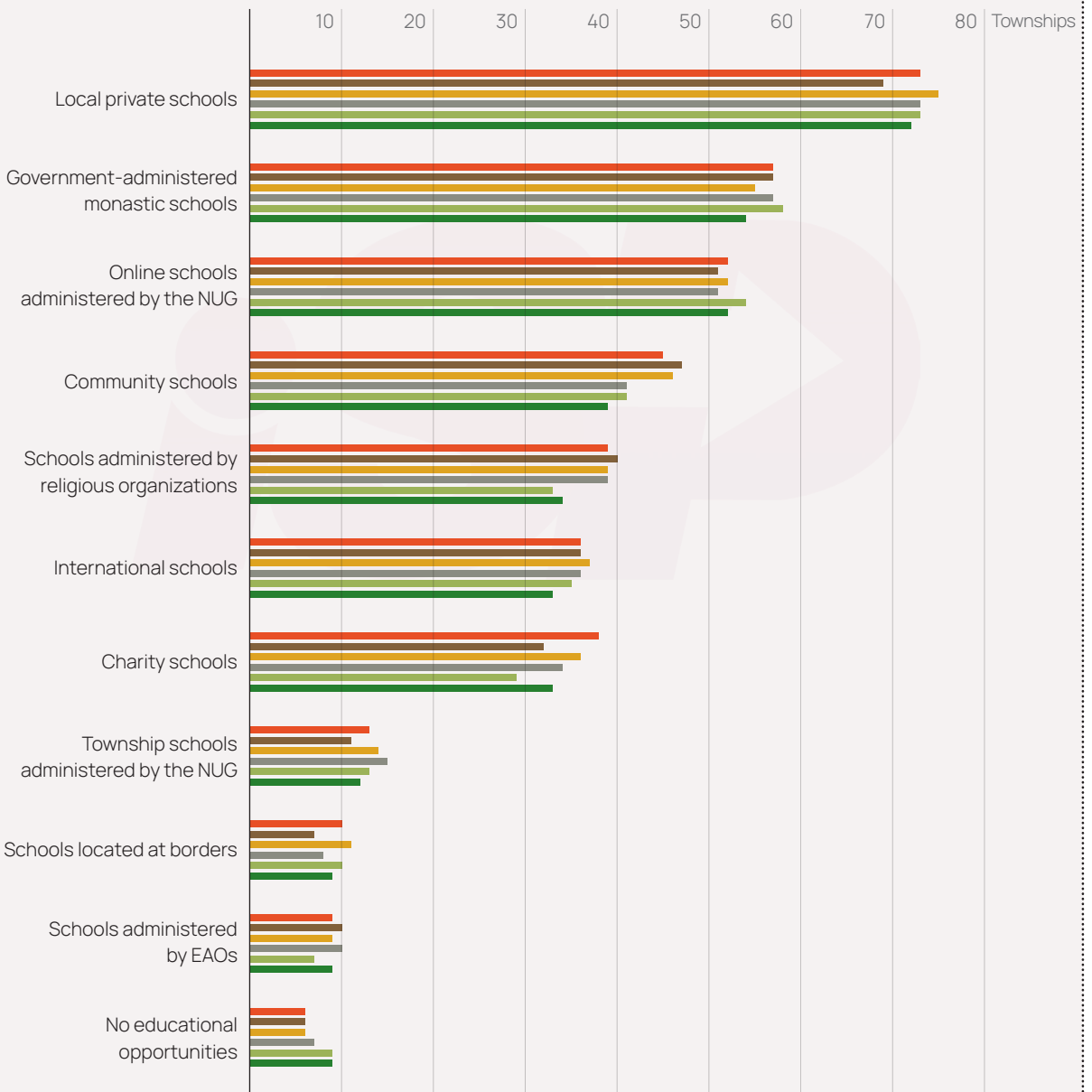
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## Basic Education By Non-SAC Schools

Most townships mainly depend on private schools for their basic education needs.

2024 ● March ● April ● May ● June ● July ● August





▶ their trust in private schools. In contrast, 110 women stated their confidence in SAC-run schools.

### ● Corruption

Corruption is widespread across various SAC administrative departments in nearly every township. Immigration offices (*Lawaka* offices) receiving bribes were found in most townships, with an average of 93 townships out of 110 over the studied period. For instance, in Muse, a border town in northern Shan State, many people seeking to move or work in China often pay substantial bribes to immigration offices. The SAC's township courts, administration, municipal, and internal revenue (taxation) offices are also heavily bribed, with at least 90 out of the 110 townships surveyed observing corruption. Bribery for electricity, ▶

### Bribery

Most bribes occur at immigration offices (*Lawaka* offices), administration offices, and courts.



- ▶ education, and health services also exist in over 80 townships. Bribes mainly involve money and gifts; in some townships, valuable items like gold are also given as bribes.

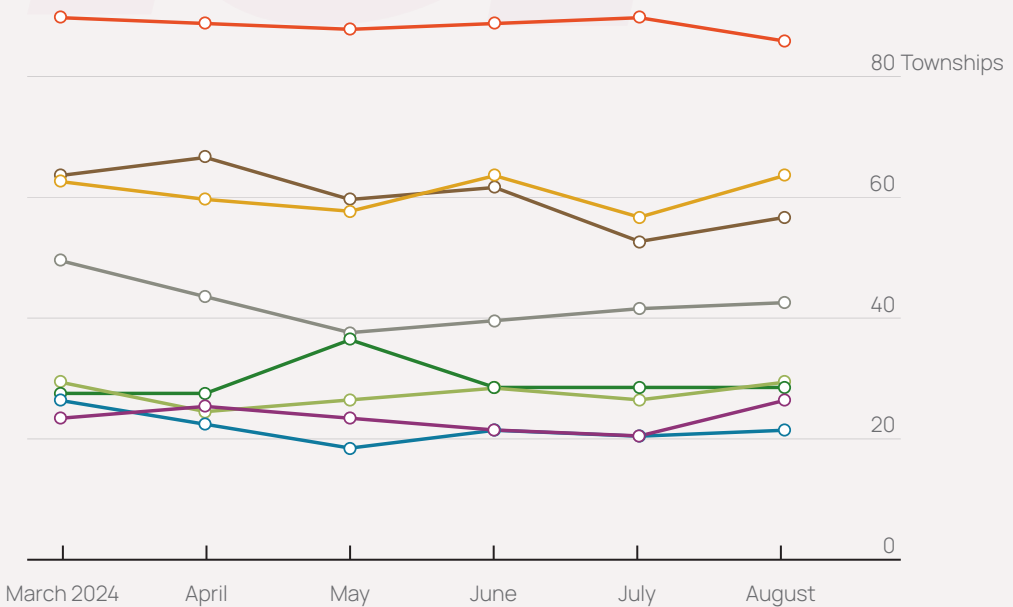
● **Disputes and Criminal Cases**

On average, thefts occur monthly in 86 of the surveyed 110 townships. The second most common crimes are burglaries and robberies in approximately 58 townships. Cases of missing persons are present in 40 townships, and there are also numerous murder cases in at least 20 townships. The reasons for these killings include serving as SAC ward administrators, being accused of acting as SAC's informants, alleged associations with the NUG/PDFs, and various social and economic issues.

**Crime Conditions**

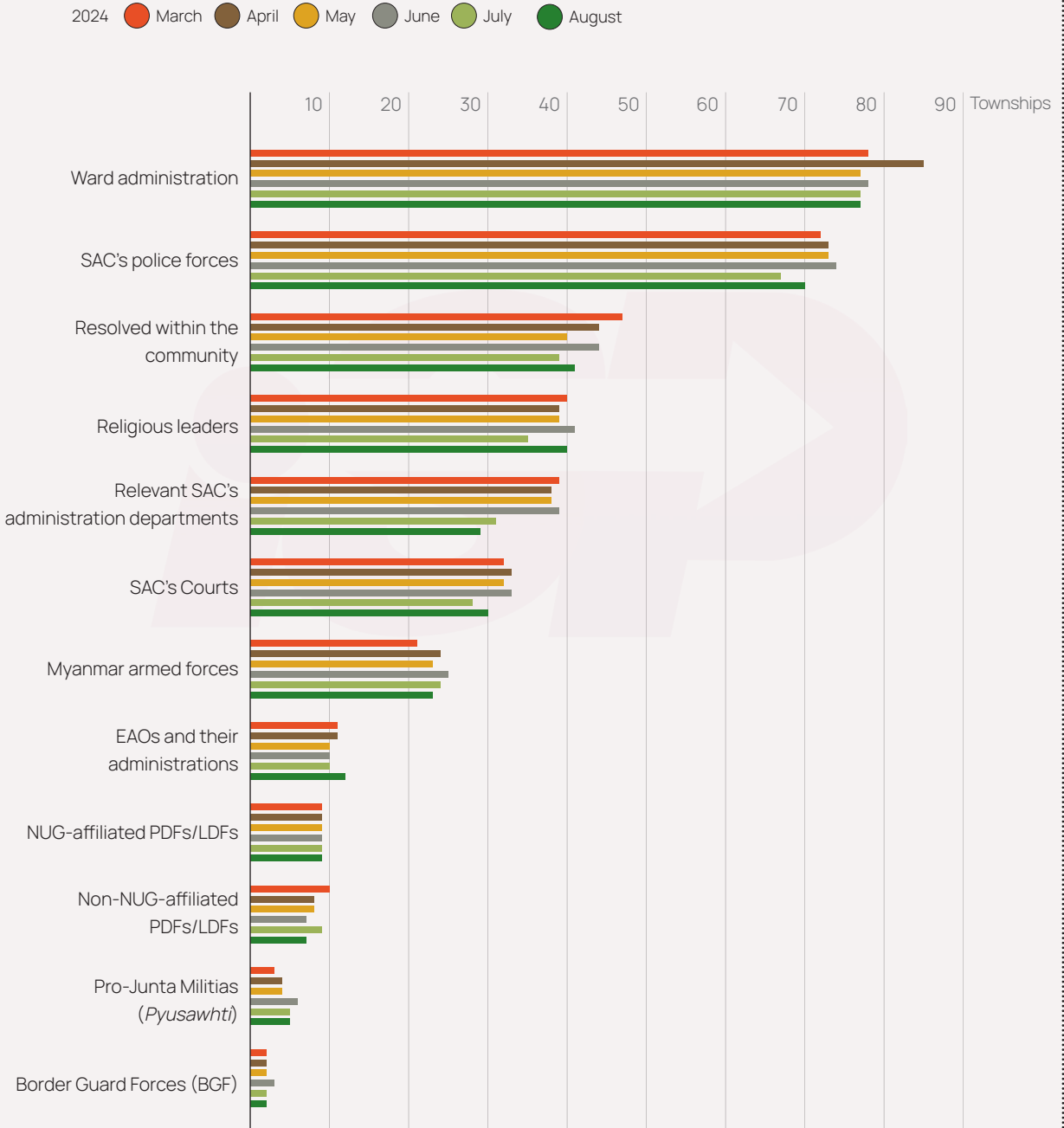
Over 83 townships experience theft incidents monthly.

- 1 Theft
- 3 Burglary
- 5 Alleged association with NUG/PDFs
- 7 Assassination of ward administrators
- 2 Robbery
- 4 Missing persons
- 6 Socioeconomic-related murder
- 8 Accusation of acting as SAC's informant



## Criminal Incidents Reporting Mechanisms

Most townships report crimes to relevant ward administrations.



People reported the disputes and crimes to the SAC's ward administrations the most, followed by the SAC police forces. Many disputes are resolved informally within the community without formal reports to any bodies, ranking as the third most common resolution method among the observed areas. Additionally, religious leaders and community elders are frequently called upon to mediate and resolve disputes. Cases are also reported to the EAOs, NUG, and non-NUG-affiliated PDFs/LPDFs; however, such instances remain relatively rare.

It is alarming that resolving disputes informally between the two parties without filing formal complaints ranks among the top three most common practices. In a July 2024 opinion poll of 1,000 people conducted by ISP-Myanmar, 183 out of 287 respondents who were aware of women experiencing domestic violence in their community reported that the issues were resolved informally between the two parties involved. At the same time, 133 respondents stated that women did not report the case to any authority. This indicates that women facing domestic violence are often helpless to report these incidents formally and instead choose informal resolution strategies.

## ISP RESEARCH NETWORK PROGRAM

Socioeconomic Studies

Post-Conscription Law Survey Findings

### **FACING THE TAILSPIN, THE COUNTRY SHALL FALL UPSIDE DOWN**

September 2024

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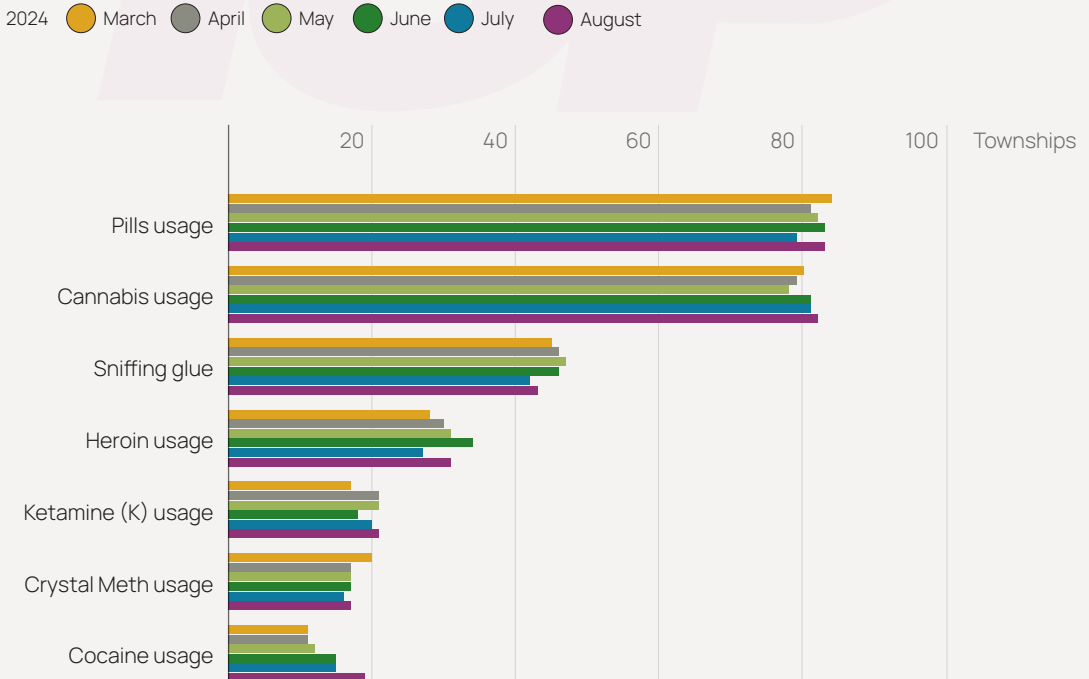
## PART 4

# DRUGS AND GAMBLING

One troubling issue is the increasing prevalence of drug use. The environment easily facilitates the purchase of drugs. It has become common among not only adults but also minors. According to a study by ISP-Myanmar, drug use is widespread in 89 out of the surveyed 110 townships. The most commonly used drugs include WY/Yaba, Ecstasy, and marijuana, which is also widely used in more than 80 townships. Additionally, glue sniffing and heroin use are prevalent. In certain areas, there is widespread use of a concoction ▶

### Drug Use

The uses of pills like WY, Yaba, and Ecstasy, as well as cannabis are widespread in most townships.



- ▶ locally known as "Asean Liquid" drug (also referred to as kratom), which is made by mixing the liquid of boiling kratom leaves with other items.

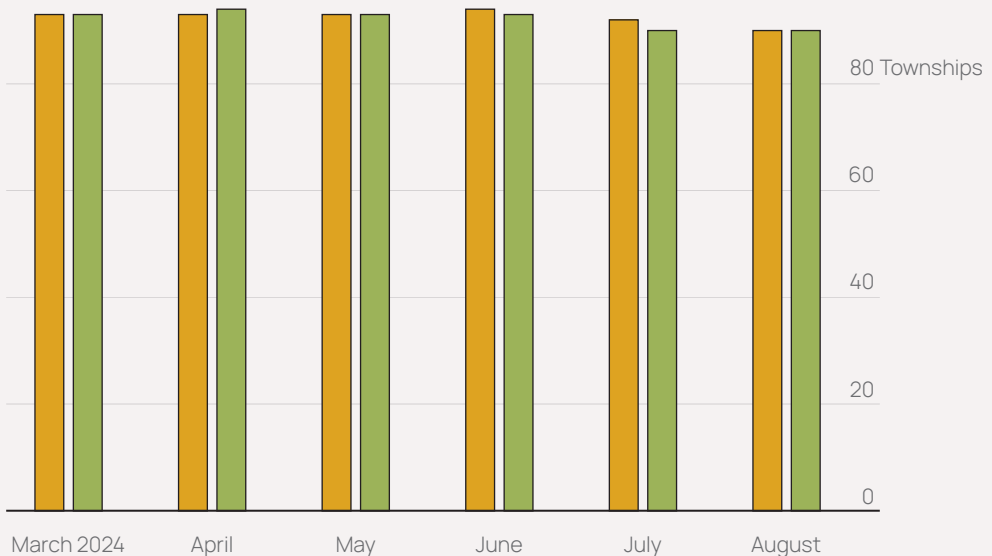
With the increasing use of drugs, gambling activities are also on the rise. In neighborhoods and villages, alongside regular activities like two-digit and three-digit bets, online gambling, such as fish-hunter games, slot games, and gambling businesses like dice gambings, card games, and cockfighting, is expanding. According to ISP-Myanmar's research, such activities are widespread in an average of 92 out of 110 townships.

At a time when people are struggling with basic needs, rising commodity prices, and limited job opportunities, drug use and gambling ▶

## Gambling

Commercial gambling exist in over 80 townships and above.

- 2-digits/3-digits lotteries
- Commercial gambling (dice games, card games, cockfights, online gambings, and soccer bettings)

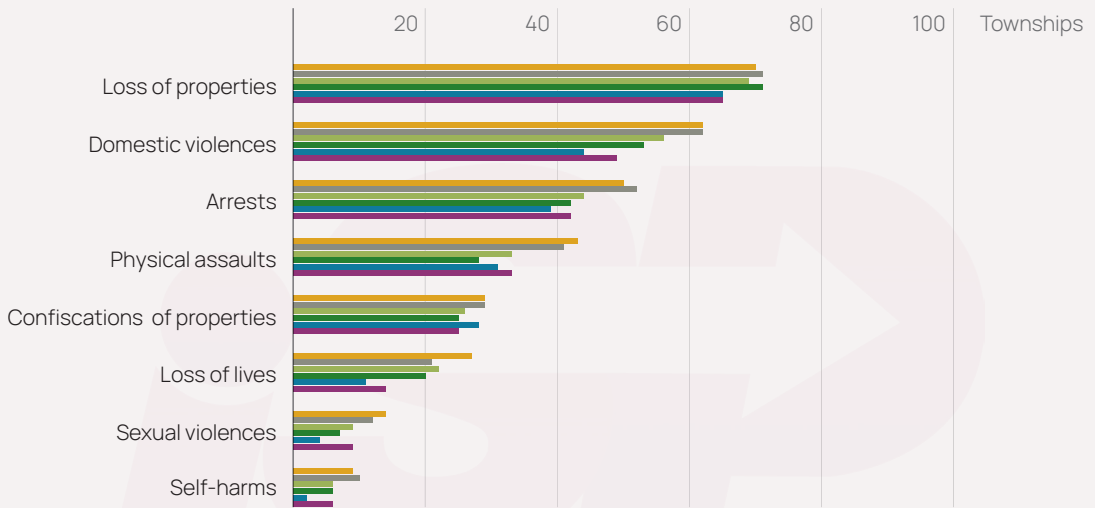


## Consequences of Drug Use and Gambling

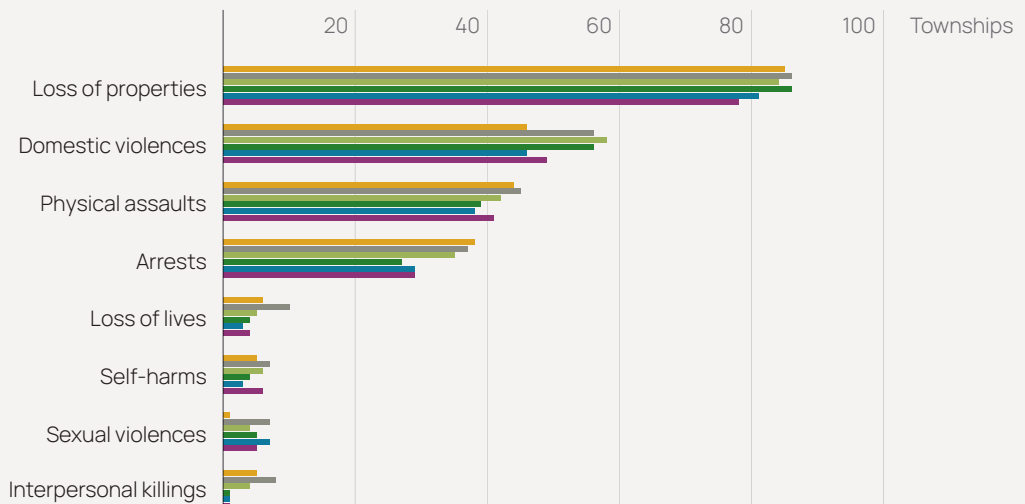
Many have lost personal properties as a result of drug use and gambling.

2024 ● March ● April ● May ● June ● July ● August

### Consequences of Drug Use



### Consequences of Gambling



- ▶ have become coping mechanisms, offering an escape from reality and temporary emotional relief. However, these behaviors bring negative consequences. The most significant of the consequences is the loss of property. For women, domestic violence is the second most common consequence.

According to ISP-Myanmar's research, domestic violence against women has been identified as a consequence of drug use and gambling. As a result of drug use, domestic violence against women occurs every month in at least 44 townships out of 110, with this figure rising to over 60 townships in some periods. Similarly, as a consequence of gambling, domestic violence against women is also reported in at least 46 townships every month.

The majority of women have limited knowledge about domestic violence, which can arise from various causes. Some women are unaware that they are experiencing domestic violence, and they endure it as a standard household issue. They are also unaware they can report the abuse to the relevant authorities. In areas where patriarchal dominance and traditional values prevail, the situation is even worse. Barriers such as a reluctance to divorce or the ineffectiveness of reporting contribute to the challenges. The negative consequences of drug use and gambling include sexual violence, self-harm, deaths, and killings.

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## PART 5

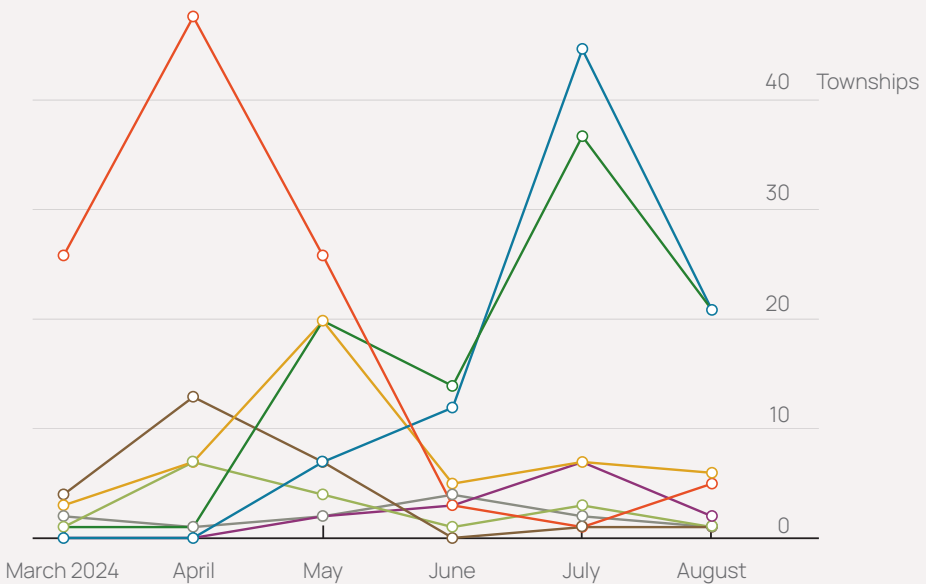
# CLIMATE CRISIS

People are also experiencing the severe impacts of the climate crisis along with the conflict. Myanmar people faced extreme temperatures in April 2024. Out of 110 townships surveyed by ISP-Myanmar, 48 townships experienced extreme heatwaves. Even in May, when temperatures slightly decreased, 26 townships still endured extreme heat. When the heat subsided, heavy rainfalls and floods continued to occur. In July 2024, 45 townships out of 110 townships experienced heavy rainfalls. The number decreased to 21 townships in August, but heavy rainfalls and floods returned with the arrival ▶

### Disaster Caused by Climate Change

Most townships experienced extreme heat, heavy rains, and floods.

- 1 Severe heatwaves
- 2 Heavy rainfall
- 3 Heavy flood
- 4 Heavy wind
- 5 Water shortage
- 6 Drought
- 7 Landslide
- 8 Extreme environmental pollution

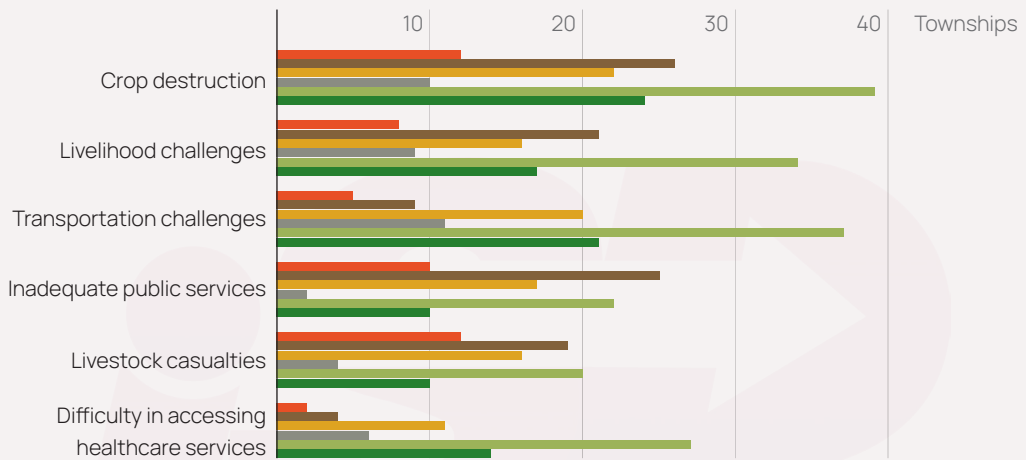


## Damage and Rehabilitation from Climate Disasters

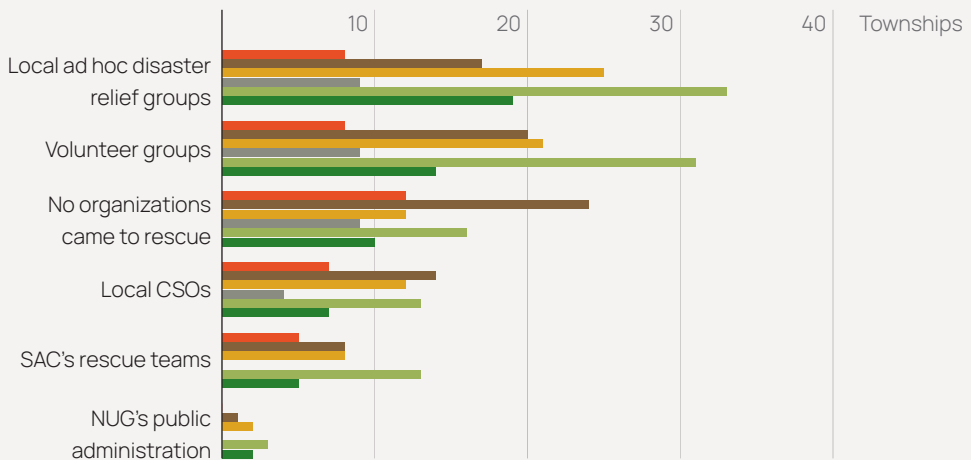
Many solely rely on local ad hoc disaster relief groups for recovery efforts.

2024 ● March ● April ● May ● June ● July ● August

### ■ Damages due to climate disasters



### ■ Organizations dedicated to rehabilitation



- ▶ of Typhoon Yagi in September. According to the UNOSAT S-1 Flood AI Monitoring Dashboard data, at least 10 million acres of agricultural land were flooded due to the climate disaster across the country in 2024. In addition to disaster relief challenges, people also experienced transportation challenges. They also experienced inadequate public services, livestock loss, lack of healthcare services, and delays in education. People impacted by climate disasters like floods had few sources of support. They depended on local, ad hoc disaster relief groups for assistance; however, in some areas, no help was available. In other locations, civil society organizations (CSOs) provided aid. The SAC's Relief teams' efforts were few and far between. The capability of public administrations under the NUG was also limited. ■

ISP နှင့်အတူ မိနစ် ၃၀

**30 MINUTES**  
with the **ISP**

## Breathless in Adversity:

### The Strangling Effects of Conscription Law on Socioeconomic Hardship

ISP-Myanmar showcased the survey results on "Breathless in Adversity: The Strangling Effects of Conscription Law on Socioeconomic Hardship" during the "30 Minutes with the ISP" show on July 14, 2024. Watch the video with English subtitles via our YouTube channel or visit our website to read the Burmese and English recap memo.

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## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The Research Network program conducts monthly studies on Myanmar's socioeconomic conditions and trends. The research covers 110 townships, representing one-third of the country's 330 townships since May 2023 using the observatory method to conduct research and analysis on socioeconomic conditions in Myanmar.






For the selection of townships, district townships were prioritized because SAC's offices, such as the General Administrative Department, are typically located there. This allows for a more comprehensive assessment of service provision levels. Consequently, our study selected 75 district townships. The remaining 35 townships were selected based on population density and economic importance. The selected townships span all states and regions, including the Naypyitaw Union Territory.

The research survey aimed to examine the trends in daily challenges and changes in


socioeconomic conditions affecting the population, assess the adverse effects of drug abuse and gambling, and evaluate SAC's governance effectiveness at the local level. To achieve these three goals, 92 questions were formulated. The questionnaire development and technical implementation were conducted in collaboration with the People's Alliance on Credible Elections (PACE). Focus group discussions were also conducted regularly online during the data collection period. Data validation was conducted by analyzing and cross-checking between the monthly local field data and the contents recorded in focus group discussions. Data collection adhered strictly to the security protocol established by ISP-Myanmar, with respective team leaders ensuring the data collectors followed these guidelines meticulously.


The collected data was securely stored in compliance with ISP-Myanmar's data storage and security policies and procedures. ■

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