

Myanmar Migration in a Time of Transformation

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Introduction





Motivation

- Many Myanmar citizens are working abroad
- Myanmar's cities are growing fast
- We look at the impacts “back home”
 - Source side of the story
 - Rural areas throughout Myanmar
- Collect data at household level:
 - Systematic and complete information on migrants

Survey Locations



- Dry Zone Survey, 1600 HHs, 2017
- Delta Region Survey, 1100 HHs, 2016
- Mon State Survey, 1600 HHs, 2015
- *Preliminary: Shan Survey, 1600 HHs, 2018*



Outline

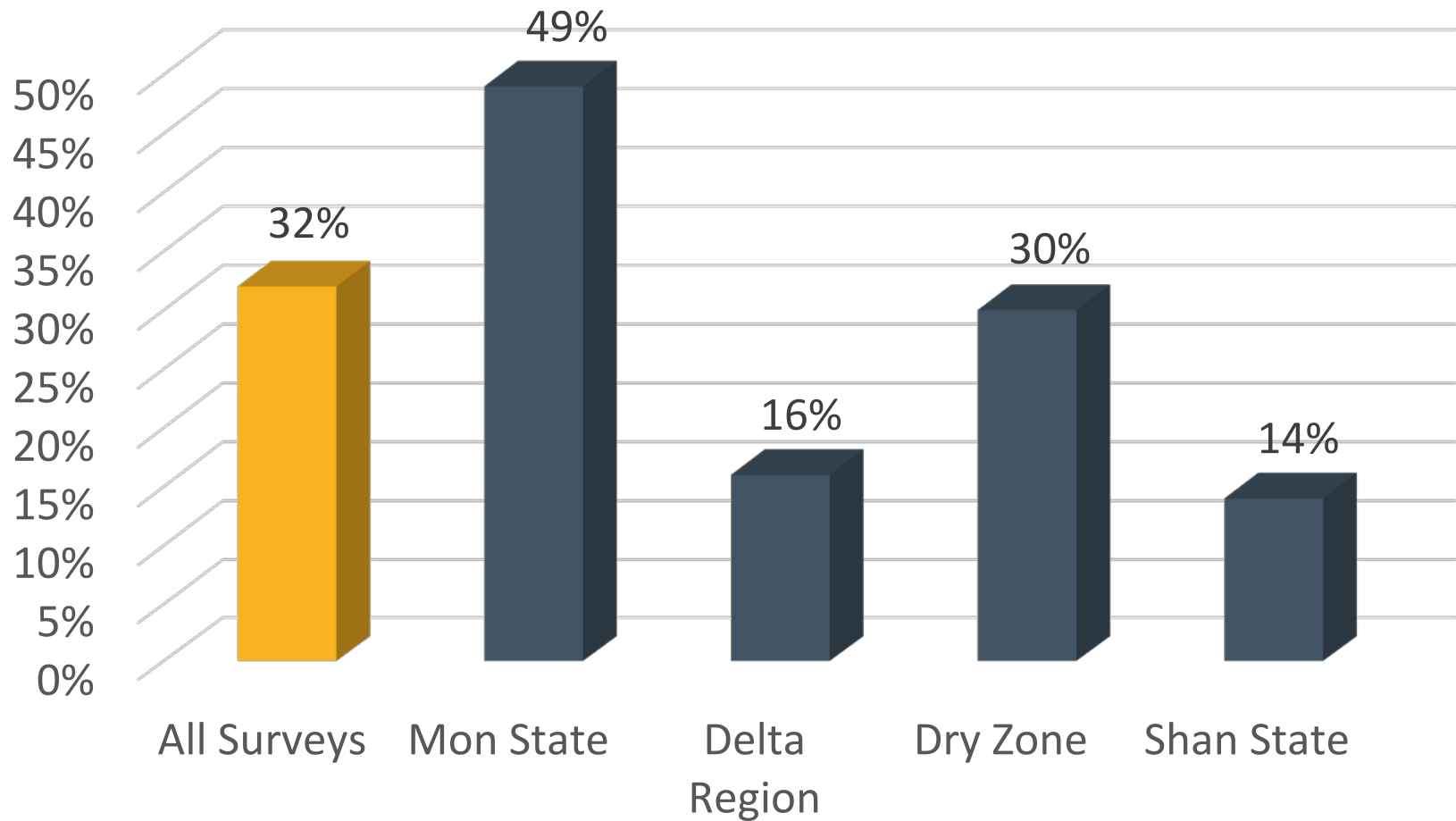
- **Key figures** on migration:
 - Who is leaving?
 - Why they are leaving?
 - Where are they going?
- **Impacts** of migration on economy:
 - Migration and **Labor Markets**
 - Migration and **Agriculture**
 - Migration and **Remittances**
- Conclusions and implications

Key Figures on Migration in Rural Myanmar



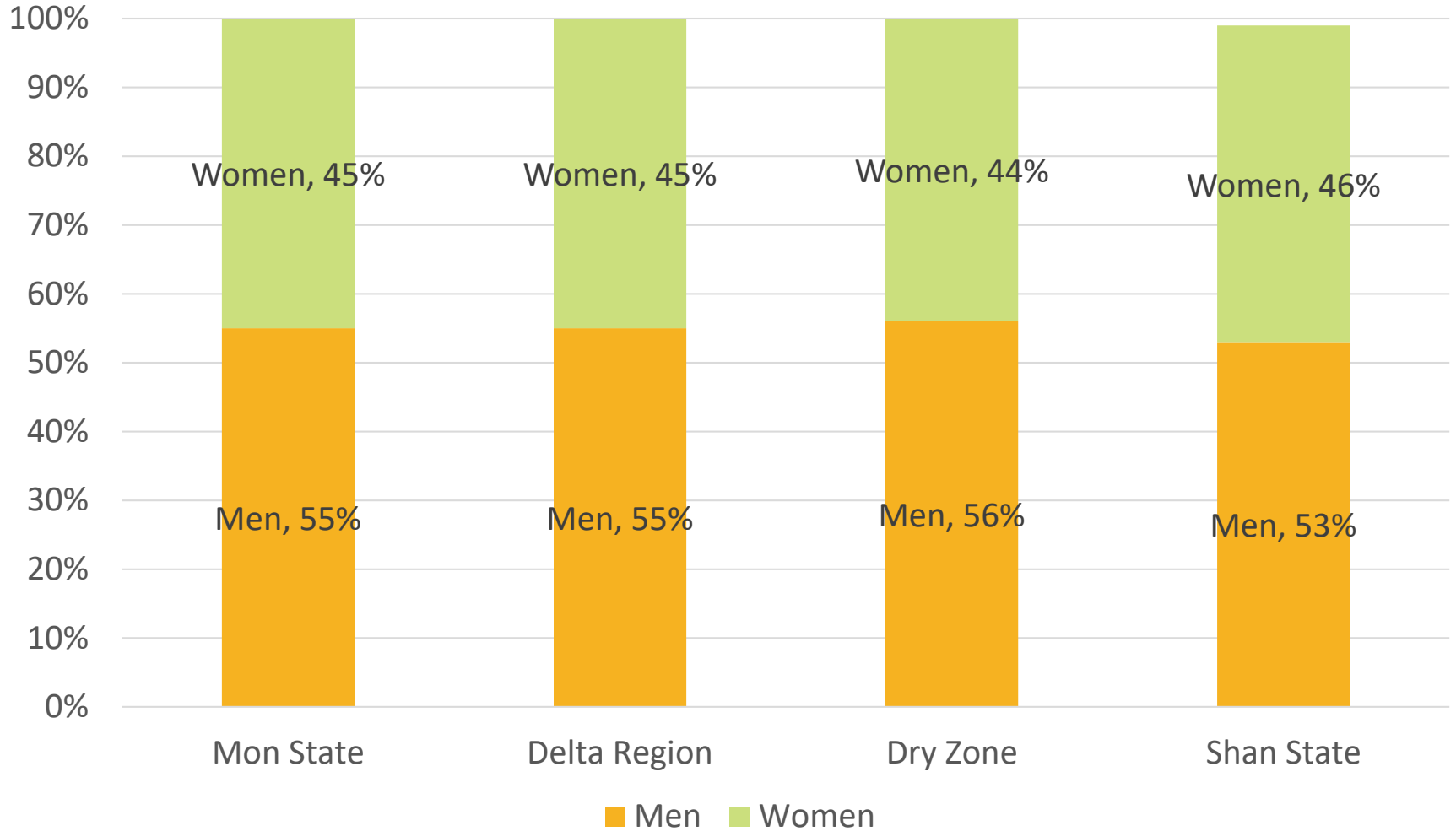
Migration is very prevalent

Share of Households with a migrant

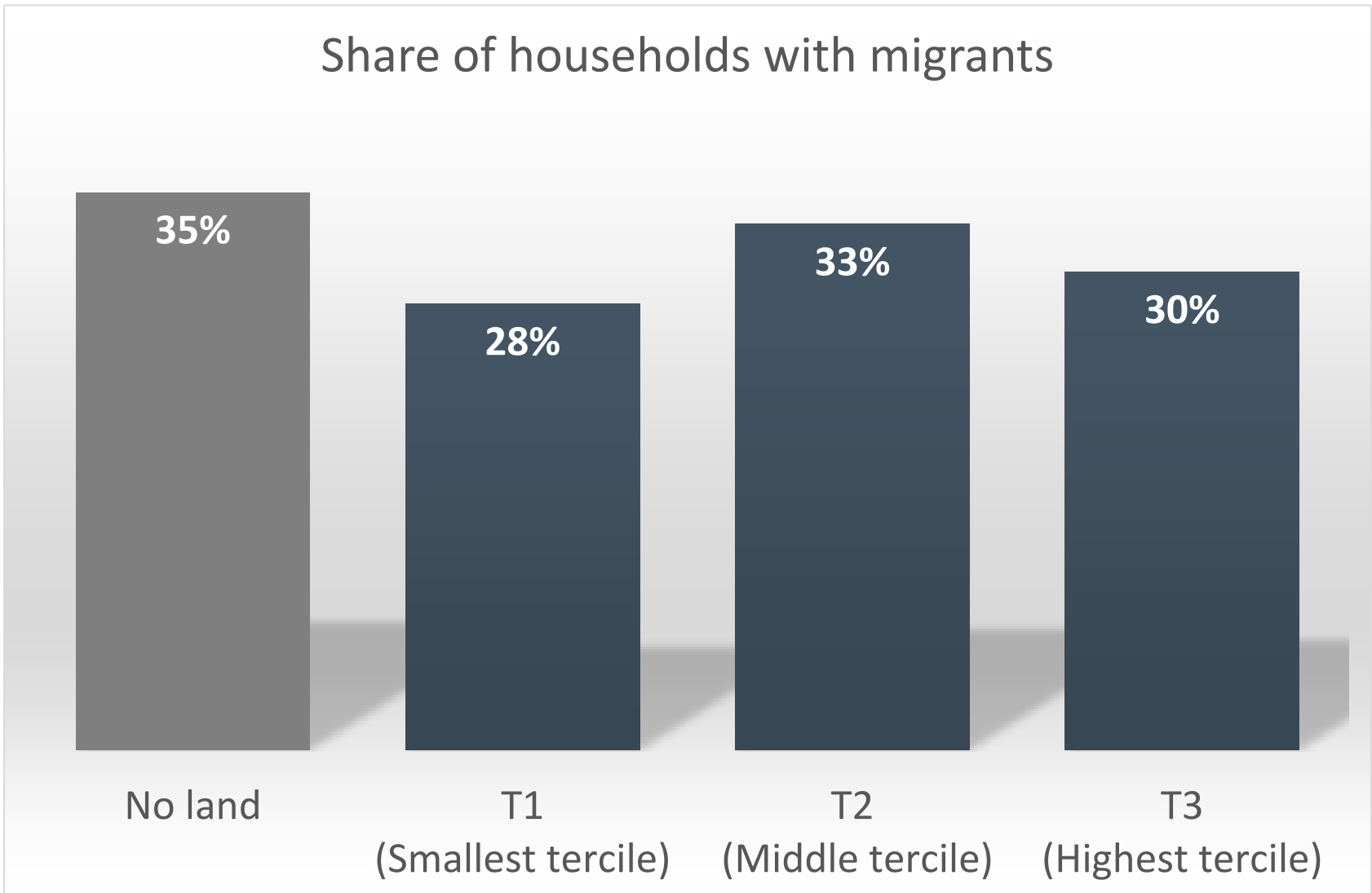




Nearly half of migrants are women

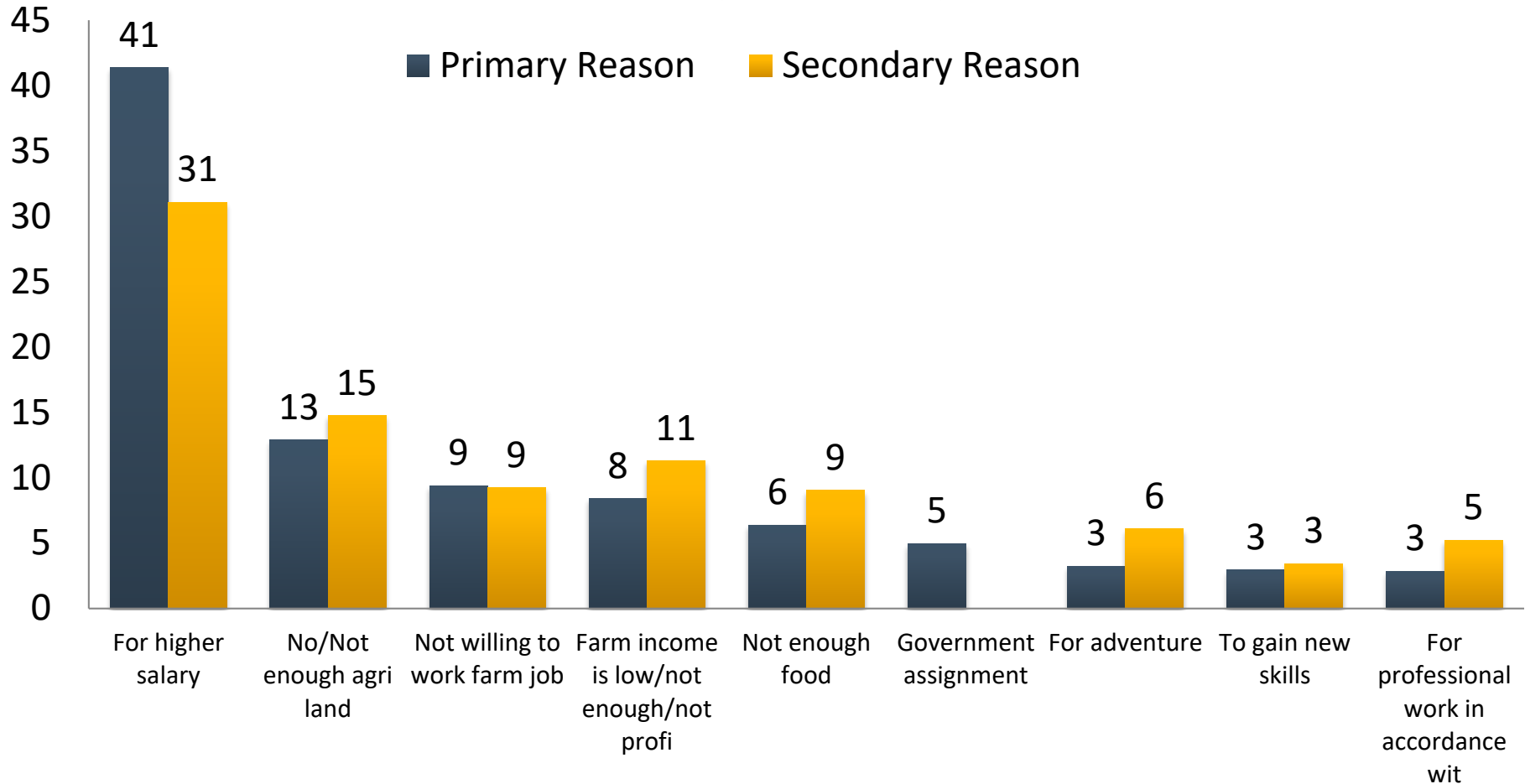


Migration prevalent at all levels of wealth



Migration is motivated by higher wages

Reasons for Long-term Migration



Source: Dry Zone Survey

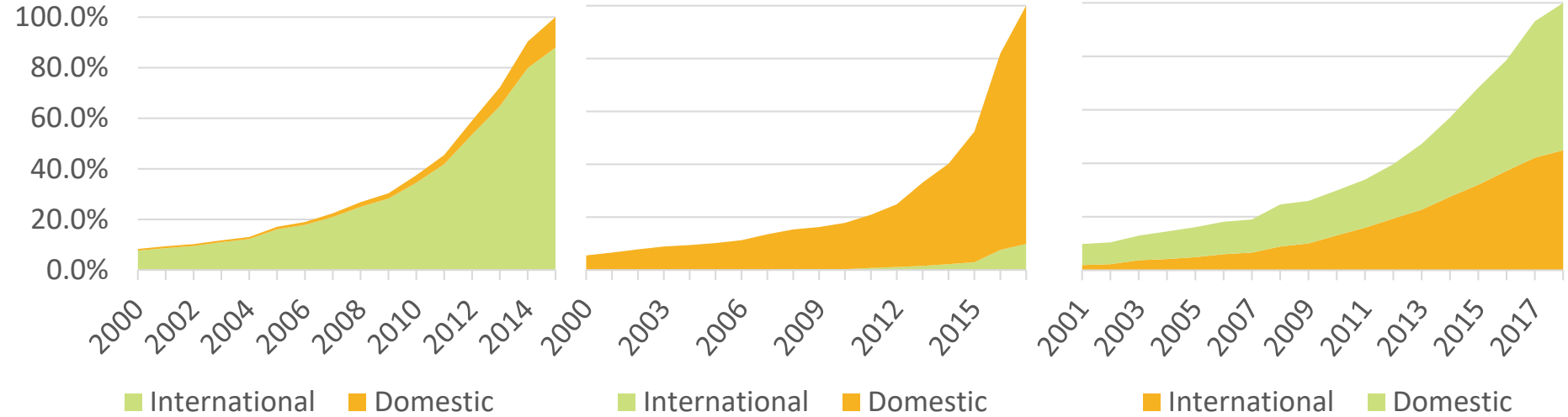


Migration is accelerating

Mon State

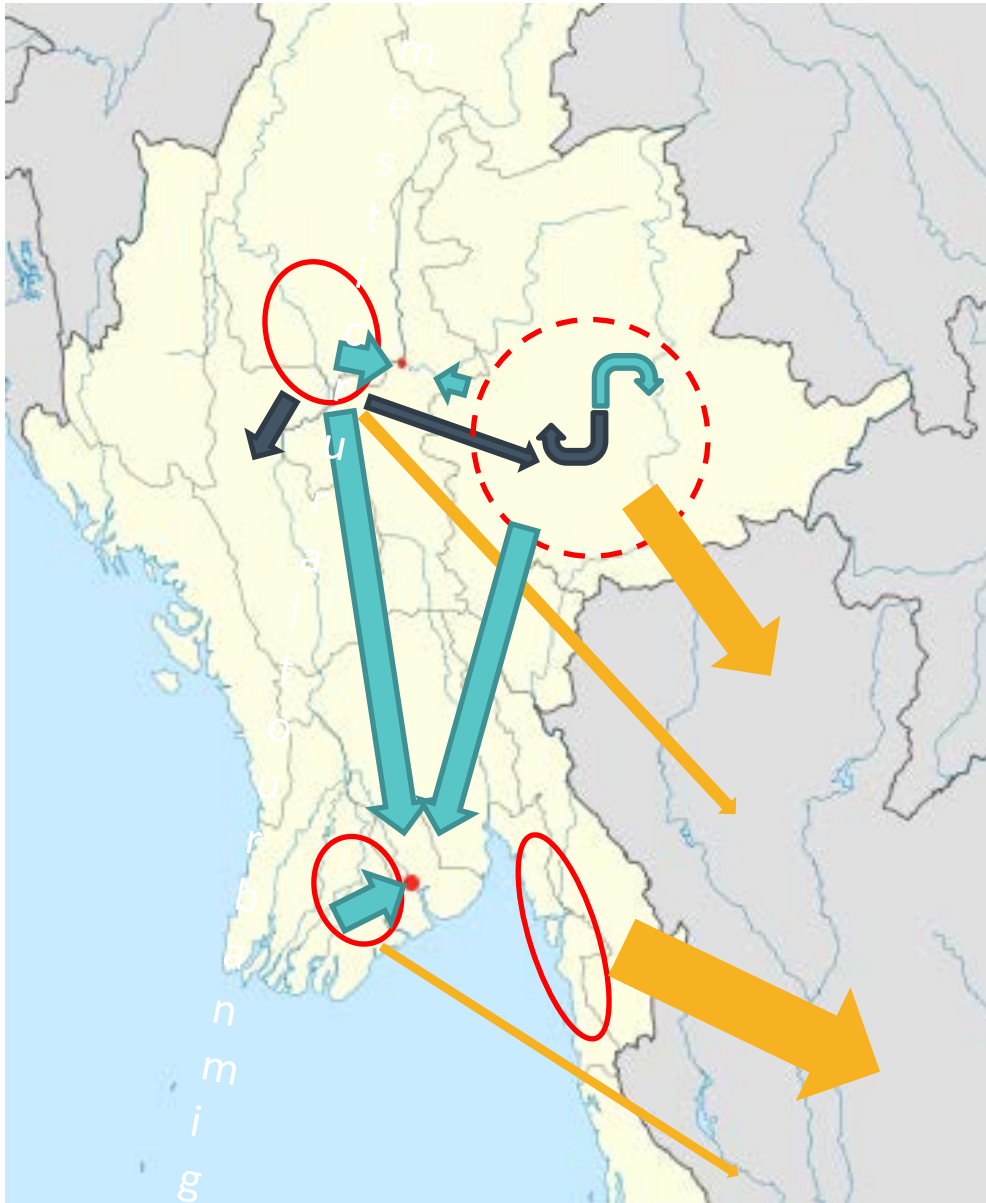
Dry Zone



Shan State



- Rapid growth over the past 10 years
- Destinations differ between surveys
- Delta = similar to Dry Zone

Migrants follow economic opportunities



-  International
-  Domestic Rural -> Urban
-  Domestic Rural -> Rural

Impacts of Migration on Rural Myanmar



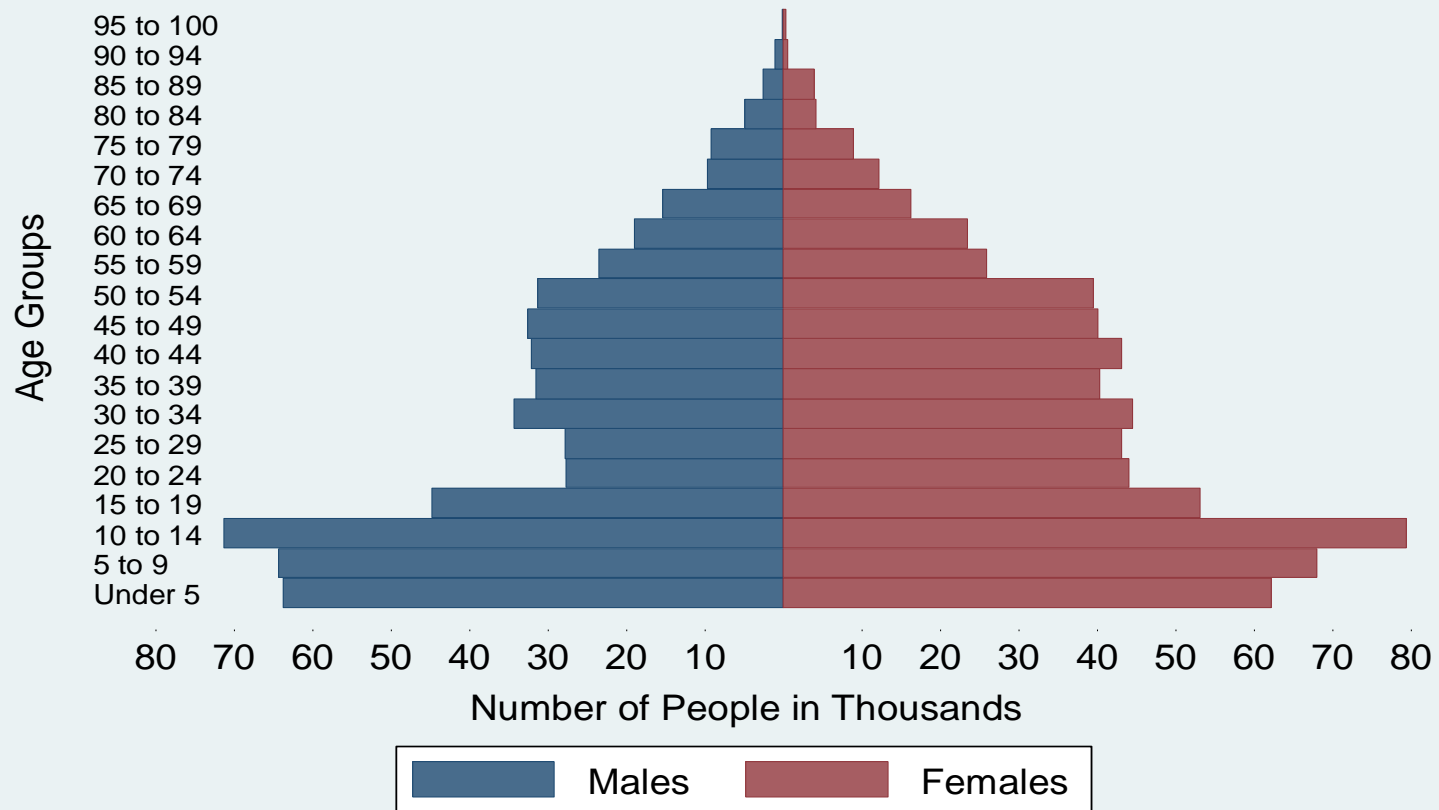
The questions

- How does it impact the **labor availability** and **wages**?
- What are the consequences for **agriculture**?
- What is the role of **remittances**?



One third of the Mon State labor force is abroad

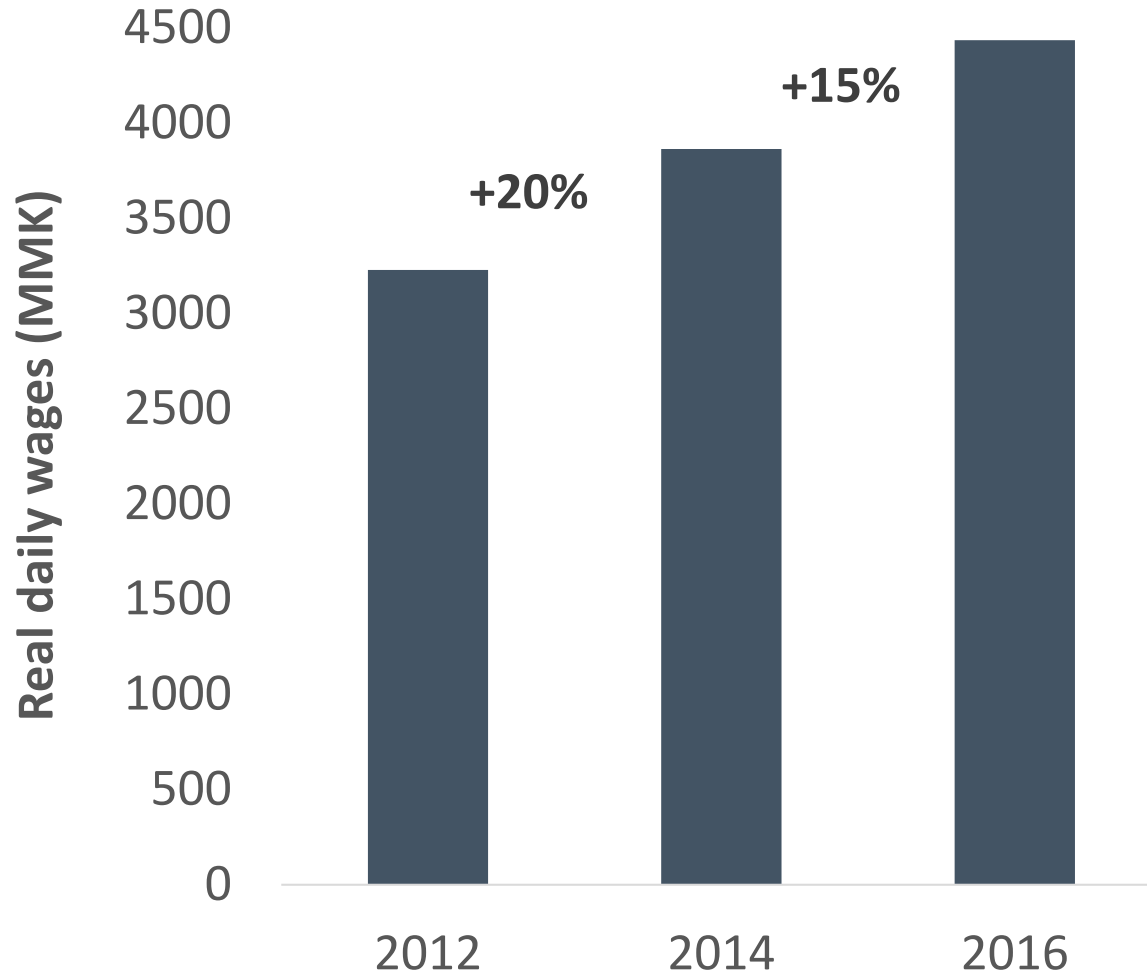
Mon State Rural Male and Female Population by Age, 2015



Source: Mon State Rural Household Survey, May-June 2015



Migration is pushing up rural wages



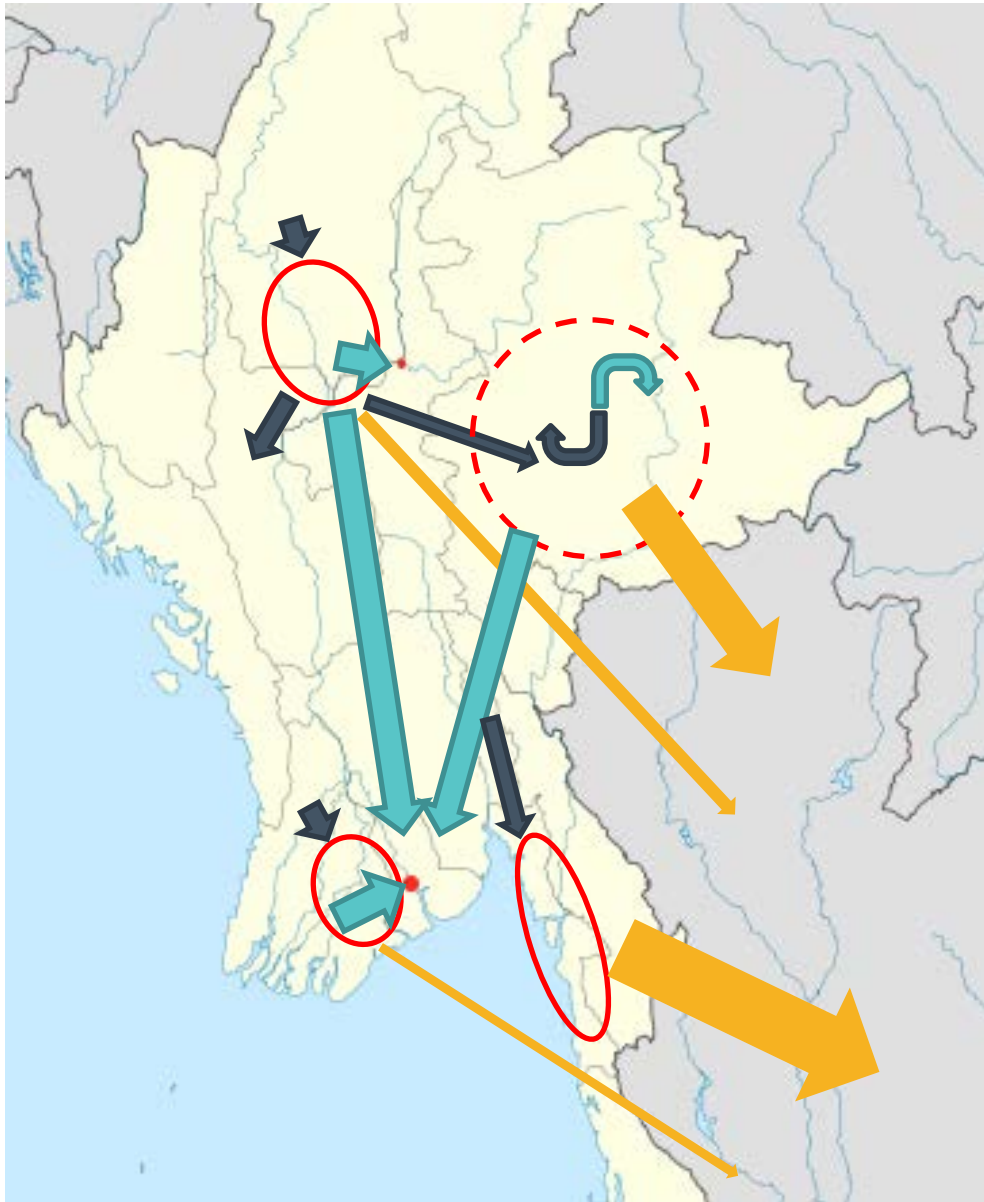
**Change in real daily wages for male casual workers (2012-2016),
Dry Zone Survey**




Migration impacts agricultural practices

- Rising wages => farm labor becoming too expensive
- Farmers have four main choices:
 - Some scale down / halt production (ex. Mon rubber)
 - Some switch to less labor-intensive crops (ex. Banana vs. chili)
 - Secondary migration flows
 - Mechanization

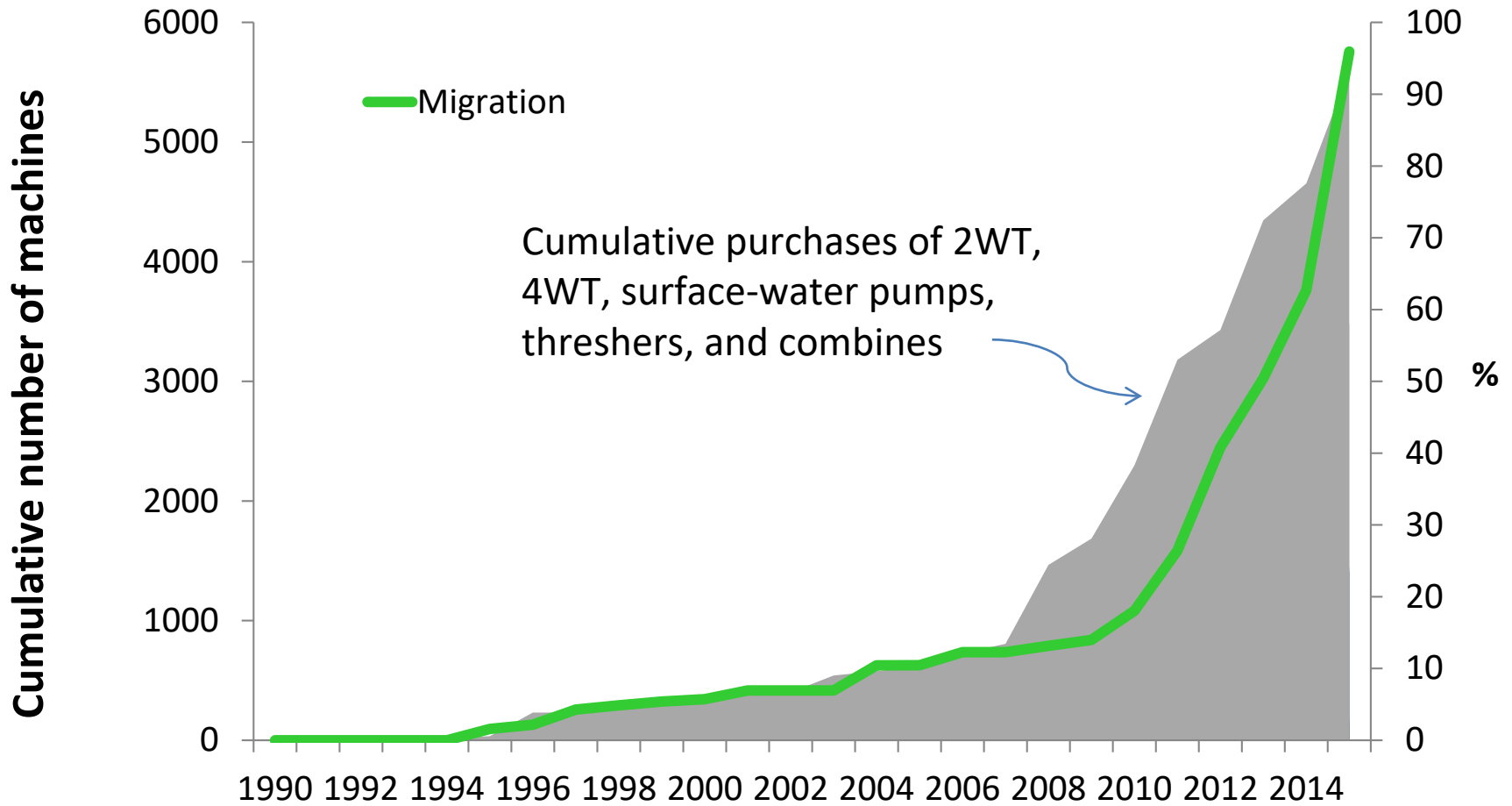
Out-migration begets in-migration



-  International
-  Domestic Rural -> Urban
-  Domestic Rural -> Rural



Labor shortages & rising wages help drive mechanization



Cumulative percentage of migrants and number of machines







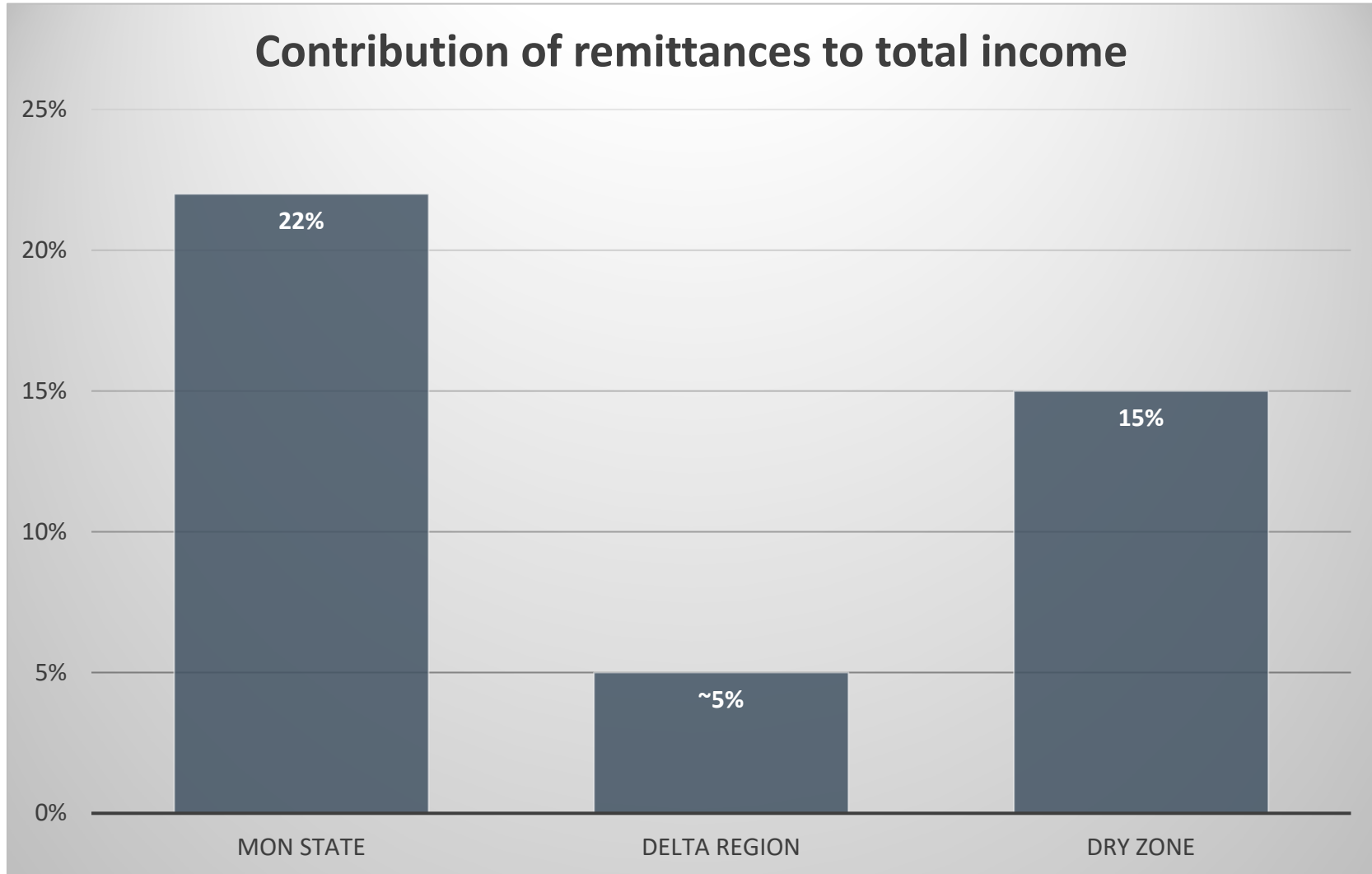
Remittances contribute to growth



Photos taken in Mon State



Remittances can be very significant



Conclusions and Implications



Recap

- Large migration flows:
 - All income levels, all genders
 - Internationally and nationally
 - Rural-urban and Rural-rural
- It creates labor shortages and pushes up rural wages
- Farms are mechanizing to compensate
- Remittances are fueling rural consumption and construction

- Caveat: we only studied 4 areas, not nationally representative



Implications for rural livelihoods

- Incomes are rising:
 - Higher wages help laborers... but hurt smallholders
- “Modernization” of agriculture
 - Mechanization alone does not increase yields!
 - Need seeds + inputs + water control + know-how
 - Remittances mostly used for non-ag investment
- Will this lead to land consolidation?
 - So far, no evidence of that...



Thank you

