

MIMU



Disability in Myanmar – 2014 to 2019

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Introduction

Introduction

- **People with disabilities** are considered one of the **most vulnerable** and **marginalized groups**, facing systemic impediments to equal participation in society.
- As of 2019, an estimated **5.9 million people** in Myanmar – or **13% of the population**, were living with disabilities, and this figure is expected to increase.
- Myanmar's definition of persons with disabilities comes from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:

“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”


Measuring disability

- **Measurement** of disability is **challenging** due to its nature as a **complex and changing *phenomenon with multiple factors***.
- **Multiple factors:** The WG questions are based on self-reported difficulties to perform the following core domains:
 - **seeing,**
 - **hearing,**
 - **walking/climbing steps (mobility),**
 - **remembering/concentrating (cognition),**
 - **communicating and**
 - **self-care (washing, dressing, etc.)**
- **Continuous measurement:** Answers are categorised by degree of difficulty: “No difficulty”, “Some difficulty”, “A lot of difficulty” and “Cannot do at all.”
- **No use** of the word “disability” in the questionnaire which leads to **underreporting**.

Measuring disability

- The Washington Group set of questions has its **limitations**. It does not measure:
 - **social** or **psychological** disabilities, or
 - disabilities connected to **upper body movements**.
- The WG questions are also **not adapted for children**, whose inability to perform functions at a young age can be confused with disability.
- Due to cultural stigma and sensitivities regarding disability, it is preferable that questions are **asked by professionals** and not in a more general census-type survey.

Measuring disability

- WG's self reported **difficulties are collected differently** between the Census 2014 and Intercensal Survey 2019. The disability types are:
 - seeing,
 - hearing,
 - walking/climbing steps (mobility),
 - remembering/concentrating (cognition),
 - communicating and
 - self-care (washing, dressing, etc.)

Census 2014

Intercensal Survey 2019
- One combined disability type is calculated: the **Disability Prevalence Rate**.

Key concepts

- **Disability Prevalence** refers to the *number* of people with one or more disabilities of any type.
- **Disability Prevalence Rate**, or DPR, is the *percentage* of the population with one or more disabilities of any type.
- *Notes:*
 - A person can have **one or more disabilities** at any given time but would be considered as one individual in the disability prevalence or DPR.
 - In this Analytical Brief, the **DPR**, refers to the percentage of people with **one or more disabilities** of any type, unless a specific disability type is indicated (i.e. “disability prevalence rate in seeing”, “DPR in hearing”).

Approach used

Approach used

- **Use of two datasets:** Census 2014 and Intercensal Survey 2019
- **Levels:**
 - Countrywide, State/Region, District and Township levels and
 - Union, Urban and Rural levels.
- **Harmonization of two datasets:** aged 5 and over
- **Indicators available/calculated:**
 - Percentage of population with disability (*Disability Prevalence Rate*) by disability type
 - Population/Estimated population with disability by disability type

Data limitation

- **Urban and rural levels are not available** at state/region and district level in the **Intercensal Survey 2019**
- **DPR** is not available at the **township level** in the **Census 2014**
- **Communication and self-care** disability types were not available in **Census 2014**
- **DPR for combined disabilities** cannot be compared between Census 2014 and 2019. Only **DPR ranks** can be compared.
- **DPRs for individual disabilities** can be **compared**. There is an **unexpected increase between 2014 and 2019**. Further research is needed but we suspect there is a difference in the data collection.

Data limitation

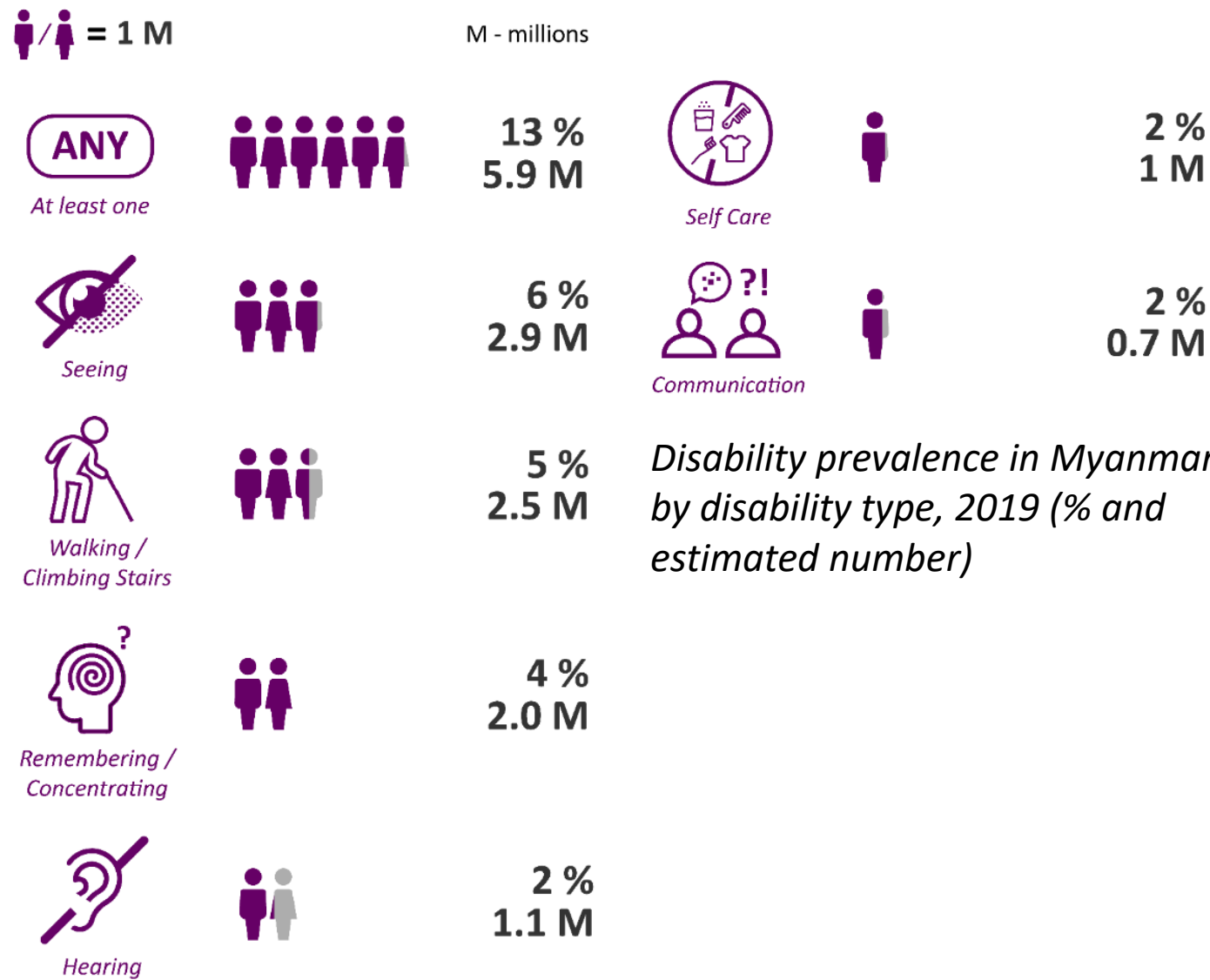
- Comparisons of DPRs for individual disabilities

Disability prevalence rate by type at the state/region level, 2014 & 2019 (%)



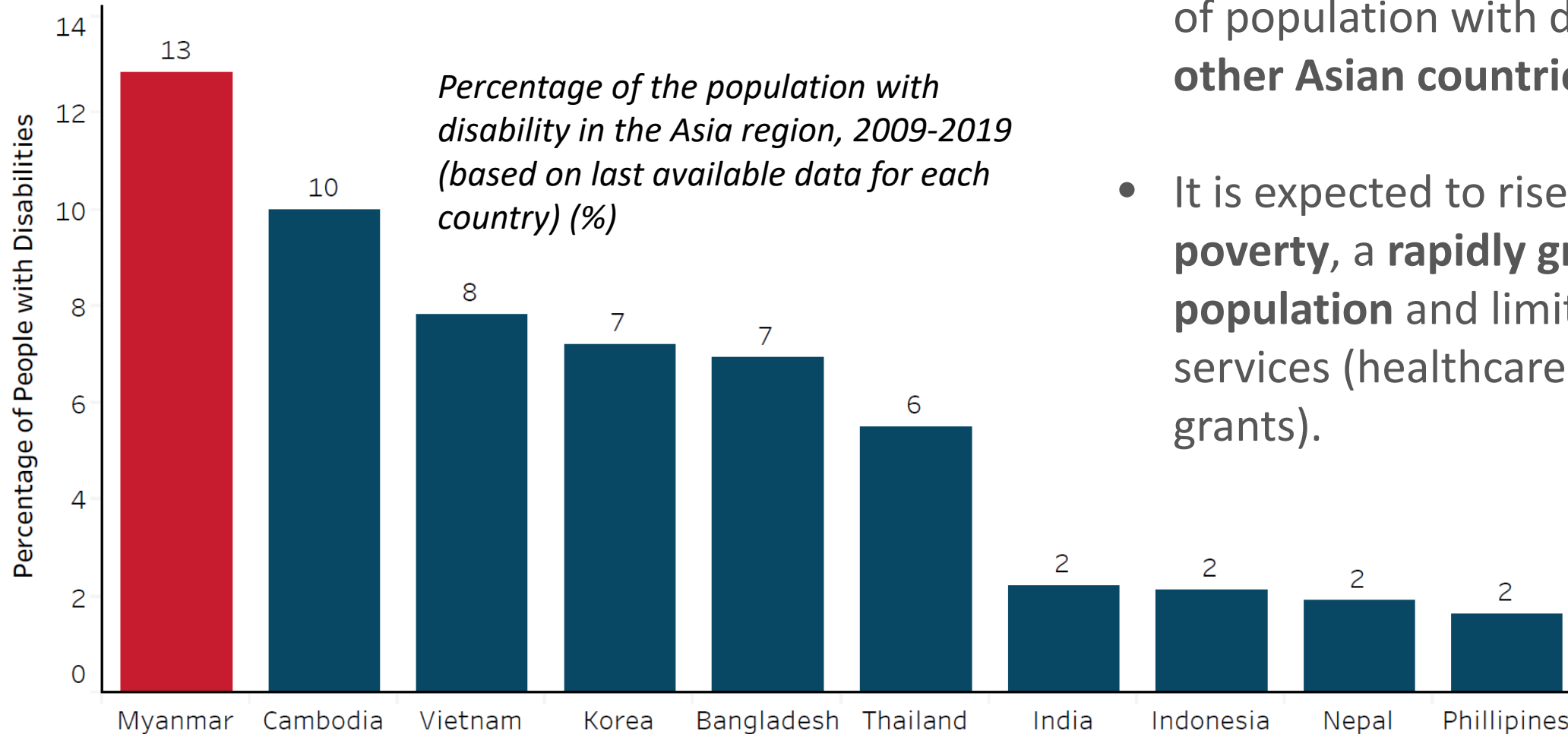
Key findings

Almost six million people in Myanmar have one or more disabilities



- Myanmar’s disability prevalence rate in 2019 was **13%**, meaning nearly **5.9 million people**, five years and older, have at least one disability.
- The **percentage** of the population with disability is **similar** in rural and urban areas; however, there are many **more persons** with disabilities living in **rural areas**.

Myanmar has a higher percentage of population with disabilities than other Asian countries, and this is expected to rise



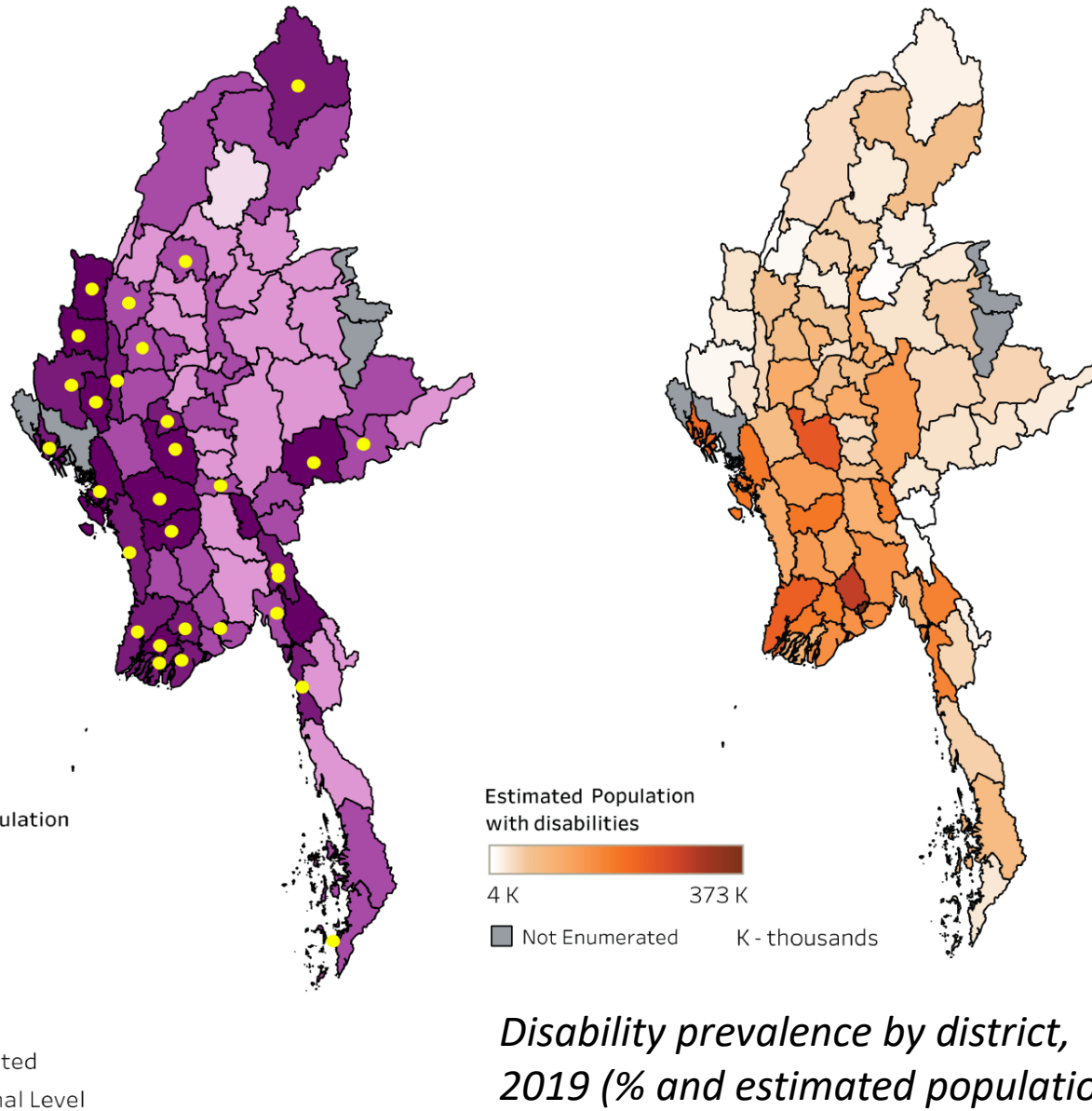
- Myanmar has a **higher percentage** of population with disabilities than **other Asian countries**.
- It is expected to rise with **increasing poverty**, a **rapidly growing aged population** and limited support services (healthcare and disability grants).

Myanmar's western areas and Kayin State show the highest levels of disability

Myanmar's western states/regions (**Chin, Ayeyarwady, Rakhine and Magway**) and **Kayin** have the highest percentage of population with disabilities, particularly **Chin and Ayeyarwady**.

- National level **13%**
Chin **21%**
Ayeyarwady **17%**
- **1 in 6 persons** of the Myanmar population with disability is located in **Ayeyarwady**.

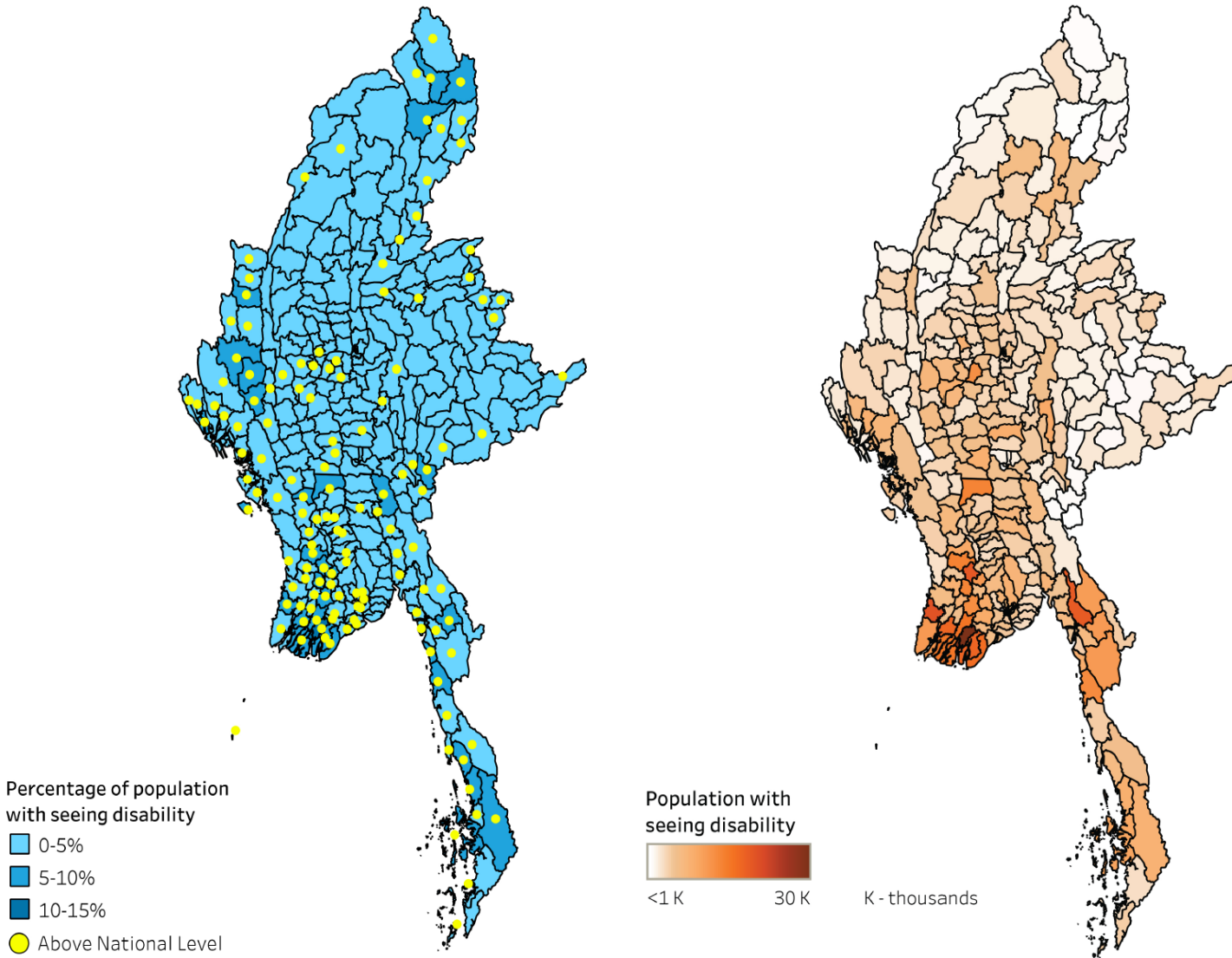
Myanmar's western areas and Kayin State show the highest levels of disability



- At district level, the highest percentages of population with disabilities are also found in the **western states/regions, Kayin, Shan and Bago**.
- The **majority – and sometimes all –** of the districts in the **western states/regions and Kayin** have levels higher than the national level.
- In Shan State, **Langkho** district and in Bago Region, **Pyay** district (above 20%) had particularly high level of disability.

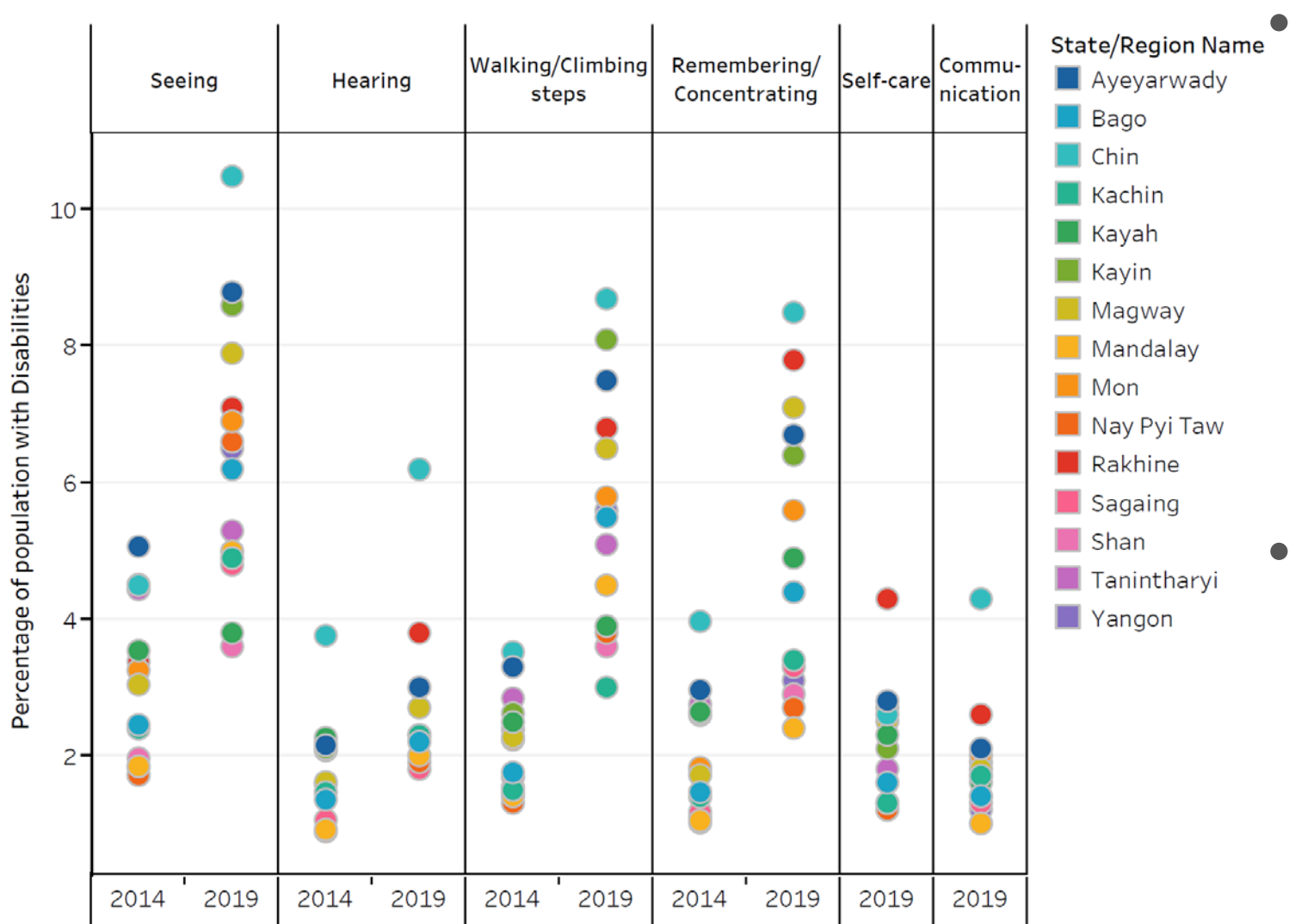
Myanmar's western areas and Kayin State show the highest levels of disability

- The percentage of population with disabilities was **higher than the national level** for each type of disability in **most townships in Ayeyarwady, Chin and Tanintharyi** when last surveyed in 2014.



Disability prevalence by township, 2014 (% and estimated population)

There is an unexpected increase in the percentage of people with disabilities for each disability type between 2014 and 2019



- The 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census **under-estimated** the number of people with disabilities through **not measuring two disability types** which affect as many as an estimated **1.6 million people** countrywide.
- Other than the consistently **high levels of disability** in **Chin and Ayeyarwady** in 2014 and again in 2019, there is **no pattern in the differences between states and regions**.

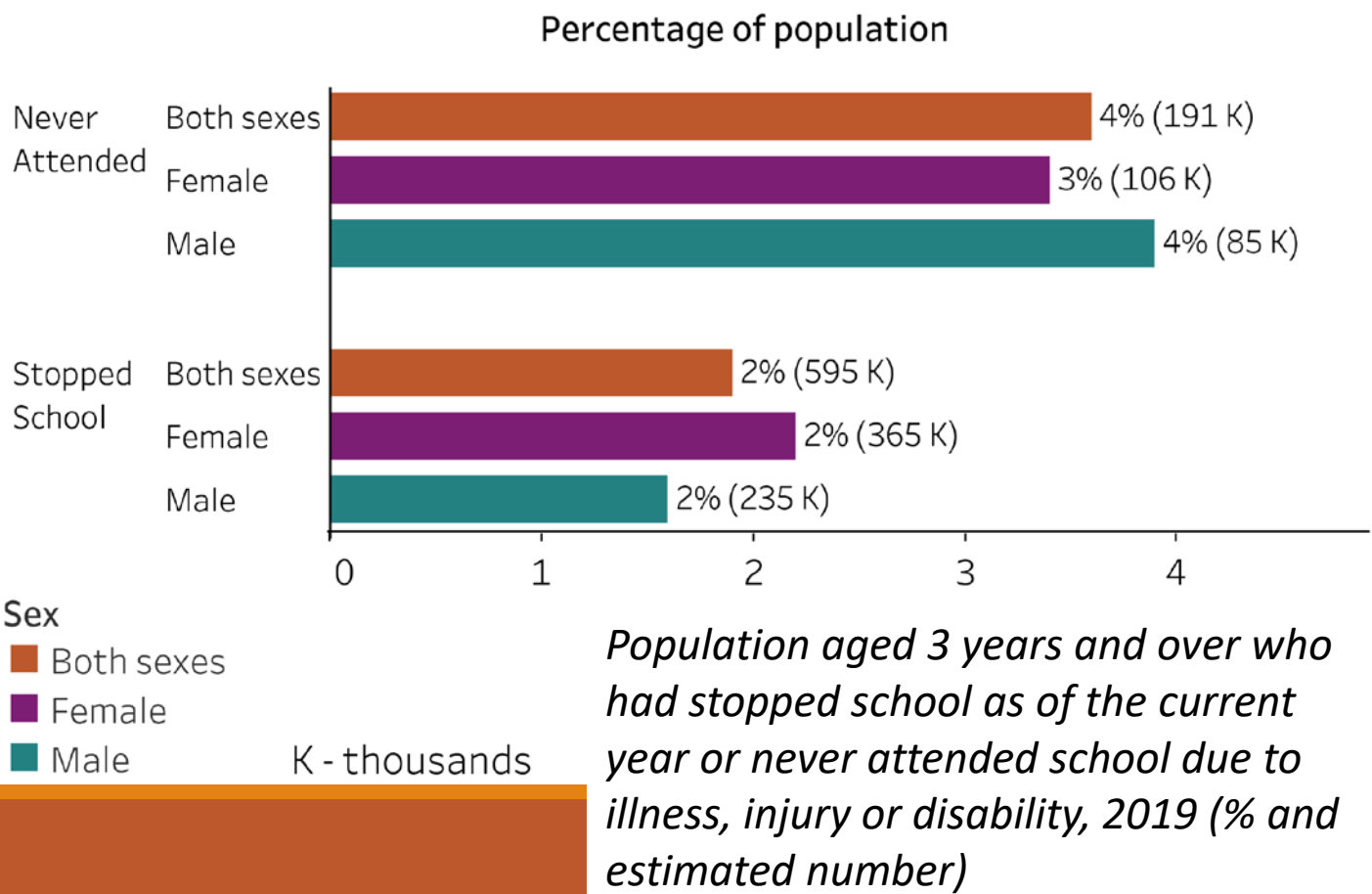
Disability prevalence rate by type at the state/region level, 2014 & 2019 (%)

Children with disabilities are more likely to be excluded from the formal education system

- Myanmar's **education system** is **not inclusive for children with disabilities**.
- Principal barriers to children with disabilities accessing schooling are:
 - lack of qualified teachers
 - negative judgment and attitude from teachers, parents and classmates;
 - denial of enrolment in mainstream schools;
 - the general perception that school is not benefiting children with disabilities; and
 - lack of accessible facilities.

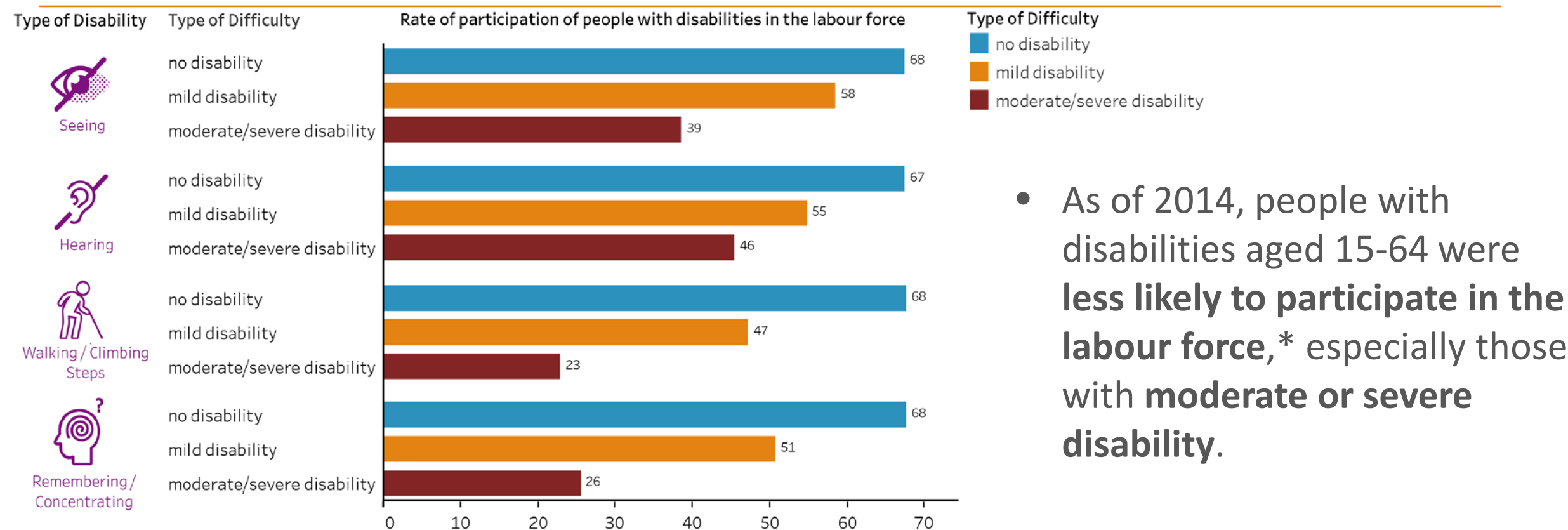
Children with disabilities are more likely to be excluded from the formal education system

- **Illness, injury or disability** were the cause of:
 - an estimated **600,000** school-age children **stopping school** in Myanmar in 2019/2020, as well as
 - an estimated **200,000** persons aged 3 and over **never attending school at all**.



- While the **percentages of males and females with disabilities** who either never attended or stopped school due to illness, injury or disability were **similar**, the **overall number of females is higher** due to the **greater overall number of females** in Myanmar’s population.

People with disabilities are less likely to be employed



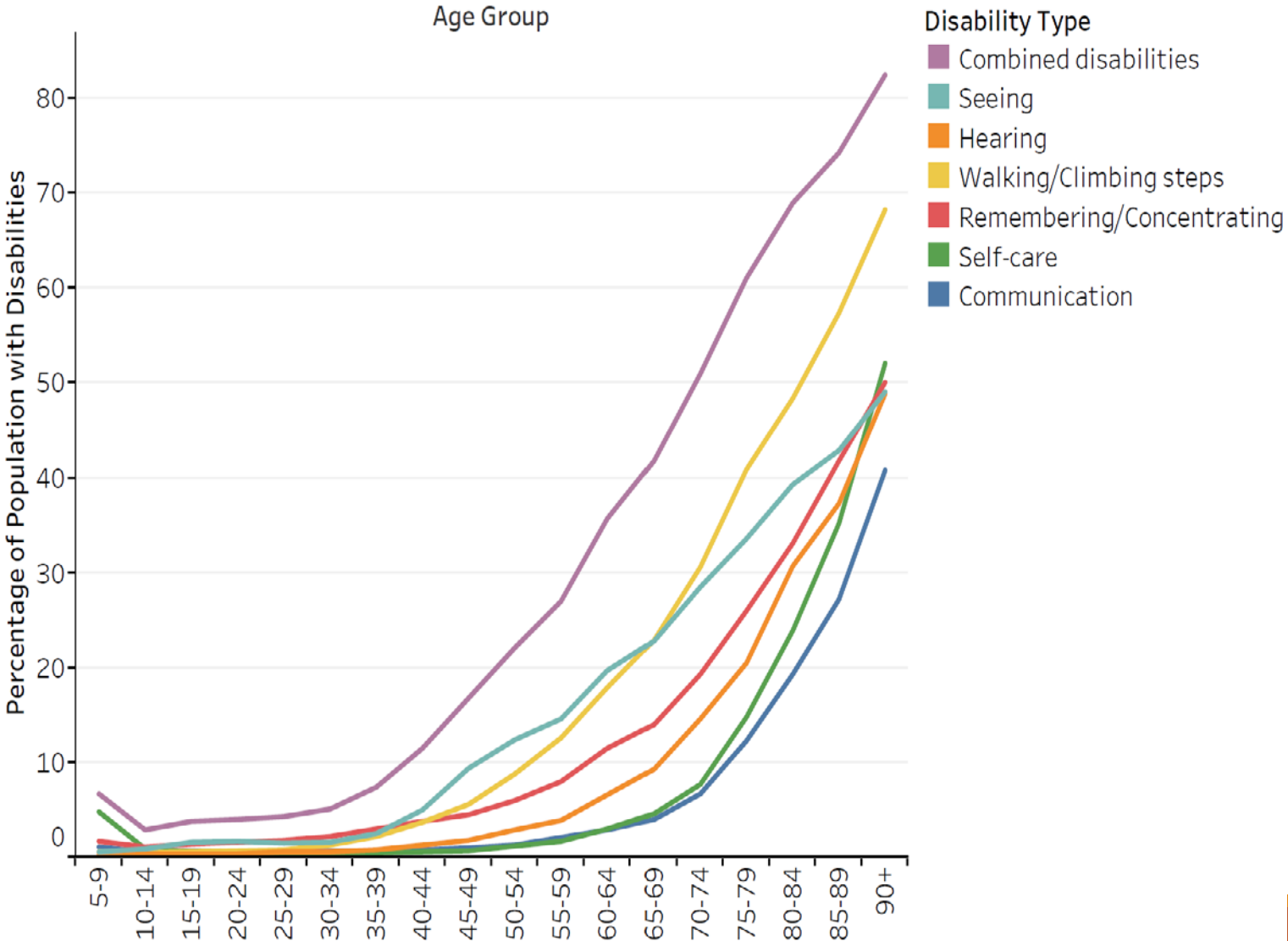
- As of 2014, people with disabilities aged 15-64 were **less likely to participate in the labour force,*** especially those with **moderate or severe disability.**

Participation of population with disabilities in the labour force, Myanmar, 2014 (%)

- Labour force participation rates* in Myanmar were **lower for those with a moderate or severe disability** than those with a **mild disability** across **all four types** of disabilities measured.

* The labour force participation rate is a measure of an economy’s active workforce and is the percentage of the working age population who are either employed (in paid employment or self-employed), or unemployed but available for or seeking work.

Lack of healthcare infrastructure and a growing aged population are the leading causes of high disability prevalence



Disability prevalence rates by age and disability type, 2019 (%)

- Disability is an **age-related** phenomenon – particularly in terms of **mobility (walking/climbing steps) and seeing** – which **begin to rise at age 40**.
- The increase in disability prevalence rate among older age groups **varies by disability type**.

Lack of healthcare infrastructure and a growing aged population are the leading causes of high disability prevalence

- **Weaknesses in healthcare infrastructure** disproportionately affect Myanmar's **rapidly growing aged population**, pushing the country's **disability prevalence rate up** while **reducing individuals' quality of life**.
- The **population aged 65** and over is projected to be **nearly 9 million by 2050**, three times larger than the same population in 2014.
- This **lack of capacity impacts** people of **all ages** for whom **treatment could either resolve or prevent the worsening of disabilities**, resulting in an improvement in their quality of life.
- The 2019 Statistical Yearbook indicates a **lack of trained doctors** in Myanmar with around **17,000 for a population of over 51 million**.

Conclusion

Conclusion

- There is an estimated **5.9 million** people with disabilities with 1/6 persons located in **Ayeyarwady (17%)**. **Chin** has the highest rate of **21%** which is 12% higher than the national level.
- People with disabilities in Myanmar are more likely to be found in the **countryside** as within cities and towns (**4.3 and 1.7 million respectively**) due to the overall higher population in rural areas. They are also more likely to **older females** due to the high overall number of women in the country.
- People with disabilities in Myanmar typically have **challenges in access to education, fewer livelihood opportunities, and reduced social inclusion**. By providing the **right support and an inclusive approach**, people with disabilities can experience a **higher quality of life**.