
Expanding Social Protection for the vulnerable: Social Pension and Disability Allowance

Godfred Paul - 12 June 2019



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The context

- Older people and persons with disabilities in Myanmar are vulnerable in different, intersecting ways.
- No specific government policy, plans or budget for social protection of vulnerable people. Had a very fragmented form of social protection before 2014

Demographic transition

Pop 60 - 69	4,474,408	8.9% of total pop:
Pop 70 - 79	1,833,070	3.1% of total pop:
80+	566,602	0.8% of total pop:
By 2050	60 - 69	18.5% of total pop:
	70 - 79	8.3% of total pop:
	80+	2% of total pop:
2.3 m PWDs (4.6% of total population) (2014 Census)		

The foundation

- **Trusted relationship with Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement since 2004**
- Regional and global experience on social protection
- Strong experience in older people-led community-based programmes
- Focus on older people's issues, including income
- Evidence-based findings on older people in Myanmar
- Inter-sectionality of Ageing with Disability
- **Trusted relationship with LIFT since 2009**



Strategic approach

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- Build national social protection capacity and understanding
 - Generate lessons and experience on cash transfer delivery
 - Launch a feasibility study on social pensions and a policy brief on social protection
 - Build staff capacity at the Department of Social Welfare
 - Ensure older people and persons with disabilities participate
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Achievements by HelpAge

- Piloted community-based identification of persons with disabilities
- Piloted cash transfer for older people and persons with disabilities in Dry Zone (2015-18)
- Successfully piloted electronic cash transfers and shared findings (2018)
- Developed and implemented Inclusive Self Help Group model
- Older women's empowerment and decision making roles



DSW's Achievements

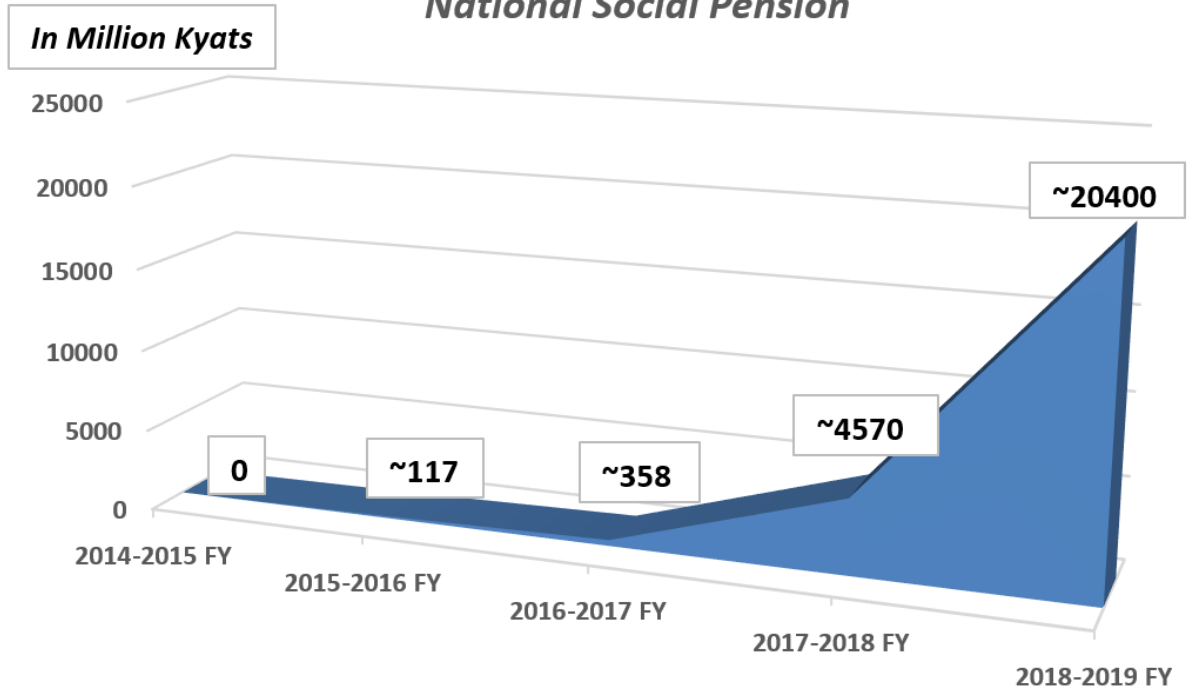
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- Elderly Law passed (2016)
 - National Committee on Ageing appointed (2017)
 - National Social Protection Strategic Plan, including social protection and older people's self-help groups
 - Big increase in government budget allocation & spending on social protection since 2016
 - Creation of SP Division within DSW and rapid expansion of social protection programme (2017)
 - Universal social pension started 2017 for 90+ (40,872 people)
 - Eligibility age reduced to 85 in October 2018, increasing coverage to 168,578 people
 - Costed SP Sector Plan 2018-2022, includes social pension and ISHGs (2018)
 - Appointed high-level National Social Protection Committee and Working Committee (2018-19)
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Achievements

*Estimated Government Budget for
National Social Pension*



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Future plans

As per Costed
SP Sector Plan

- Lower the social pension eligibility age to 80 years
- Increase the social pension amount to MMK 15,000
- Start the disability allowance at MMK 15,000
- 40% of cash transfers delivered electronically by 2020
- Form 800 new ISHGs
- Greater public awareness on social protection
- Continue to support systems and institutional strengthening of social protection with other DPs
- Pilot an electronic cash transfer for persons with disabilities in five townships

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Challenges and opportunities

- Increase in budget allocation by MoPF?
- Implementation capacity, system and institutional arrangement of the Government as the programme expands?
- Can Myanmar's states and regions engage with social protection to help decentralise the system?
- Integrating data and building management information systems?

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"Now, I am receiving 10,000 kyats social pension from the Government, and before that I received from HelpAge from 2017 to 2018. I use the money on medication, food and to donate to the monastery. My son and daughter-in-law care for me but I know I cannot ask for everything I want. By receiving this social pension money, I can spend it when I need something."

Daw Than, 88

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"It is difficult to walk because of my short toes caused by leprosy. I am unable to work to get income. I rely on the disability allowance for my living. I spend it on food and I try to cover my daily costs. By receiving this allowance, I feel happy and peaceful. I have an income even though I can't work. That is why I don't need to rely on the villagers all the time."

Daw Aye Byine, 71

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A big THANK YOU to LIFT from Myanmar's older people and persons with disabilities!



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