



# Challenges Faced by the Myanmar Queer Community After the 2024 Conscription Law

Report Paper



January-2025





# ABOUT QBA

Queers of Burma Alternative (QBA) was established in 2021 by a group of LGBTQIA+ students with a vision of creating a society rooted in freedom, equality, justice, and peace for all queers in Myanmar. Beginning as study groups focused on understanding the initial conditions of the queer community and providing support for urban poor LGBTQIA+ individuals, QBA quickly grew into a platform for activism and solidarity. In 2021, the military coup deeply affected the organization as members participated in nonviolent demonstrations for democracy and human rights, often facing imprisonment and displacement due to military brutality. Reorganized in 2022, QBA continues its mission to safeguard the rights and security of LGBTQIA+ individuals, particularly those in covert locations, border regions, and conflict-affected areas. By uniting diverse activists from student unions, workers, and professionals, QBA is committed to promoting the role of LGBTQIA+ individuals in political, economic, and social sectors. Through core programs such as community organizing, advocacy, research, and awareness-raising in conflict zones, QBA amplifies the voices of Myanmar's queer community and strives for systemic change and the recognition of their rights and dignity.

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# 1.ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is the result of a collective effort, and we would like to extend our deepest gratitude to all who contributed to its development. First and foremost, we wish to thank the brave individuals from Myanmar's LGBTQIA+ community who courageously shared their stories and experiences. Your voices are the heart of this report, and your resilience inspires us to continue the fight for justice and equality. Without your participation, this work would not have been possible.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to our partner organization, Progressive Voice Myanmar, for their unwavering support throughout this project. Their expertise, resources, and steadfast commitment to amplifying marginalized voices have been invaluable in shaping the research and ensuring its meaningful impact. The collaboration with Progressive Voice Myanmar has not only enriched the content of this report but also reinforced the shared goal of advocating for human rights and social justice in Myanmar.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of our research team, allies, and volunteers who dedicated their time and energy to this project. From data collection to analysis and dissemination, your hard work and commitment have been instrumental in bringing this report to fruition. We hope that the findings and recommendations herein will serve as a catalyst for change, driving actions that uplift and protect Myanmar's LGBTQIA+ community in these challenging times.



## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the profound impacts of Myanmar's 2024 Conscription Law on the country's LGBTQIA+ community, a marginalized group already grappling with systemic discrimination, legal vulnerabilities, and societal stigma. Enacted in February 2024, the law mandates military service for eligible individuals, exacerbating the challenges faced by queer individuals in a society deeply rooted in patriarchy and conservative norms. Drawing on data from 101 survey responses and 10 in-depth interviews, the study reveals the multifaceted consequences of the law, including forced conscription, financial extortion, social ostracism, and psychological trauma. A significant portion of respondents reported experiencing heightened discrimination from officials, family, and community members, often accompanied by financial hardship and displacement. The findings highlight increased risks of violence, insecurity, and exploitation, with many LGBTQIA+ individuals resorting to migration, bribes, or hiding to avoid conscription. The report underscores the urgent need for systemic reforms to address these vulnerabilities and calls for targeted support, legal protections, and advocacy efforts to safeguard the rights and dignity of Myanmar's queer population. Through a mixed-methods approach, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the intersecting legal, social, economic, and psychological impacts, presenting evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, international organizations, and advocacy groups to take immediate action.

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# 4. INTRODUCTION

The activation of People's Military Service Law (Myanmar's Conscription Law) has brought profound changes and challenges for the country's young adults, particularly for the LGBTQIA+ community. Initially enacted in 1959 under General Ne Win and later amended in 2010 by then-dictator Than Shwe, the conscription law was not enforced until recently.[1] The current military regime announced to take effect on 10th February 2024, making it mandatory for eligible individuals to serve in the military for two to five years.[2] This move has sparked widespread concern, particularly among marginalized groups who face unique vulnerabilities under such a law.

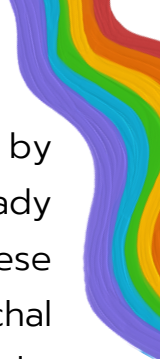
According to the regime, approximately 14 million young people, which constitutes 26 percent of the country's population of 54 million, are eligible for conscription. The first group of 5,000 conscripts were be selected shortly after the Myanmar New Year holidays, with women excluded from the initial batches. The law imposes severe penalties for evading conscription, including prison sentences of three to five years and fines. Additionally, those found pretending to be sick or disabled to avoid conscription face up to five years in prison.[3]

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1. <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/politics/timeline-myanmar-junta-fast-tracks-conscription-law-implementation.html>

2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-68261709>

3. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/11/myanmars-junta-declares-it-will-enforce-military-service-laws-for-young-people>



The implementation of the conscription law has intensified the struggles faced by marginalized groups, particularly the LGBTQIA+ communities, which already encounter systemic discrimination and societal stigmatization. Additionally, these communities face significant challenges rooted in deeply entrenched patriarchal norms, religious conservatism, and outdated colonial-era laws from British rule. The legal framework that was mentioned in the 2008 constitution does not recognize or protect individuals based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression. Key legal provisions, such as Section 377 of the Penal Code, criminalize same-sex relations, reinforcing discrimination and stigma. These laws are often used arbitrarily by law enforcement to intimidate, harass, and detain LGBTQIA+ individuals. Additionally, the absence of explicit anti-discrimination protections in the 2008 Constitution leaves LGBTQIA+ individuals vulnerable to abuse, marginalization, and unequal treatment.[4]

Socially, LGBTQIA+ individuals are subjected to widespread prejudice and discrimination within their families, educational institutions, workplaces, and religious communities. Many face domestic violence, forced marriages, bullying, and exclusion from social and economic opportunities. In educational settings, queer students are often bullied or neglected, while workplaces frequently impose gender-conforming dress codes and discriminatory practices.

Meanwhile, the announcement of the 2024 Conscription Law has intensified the struggles of Myanmar's LGBTQIA+ community. Under this law, young adults are required to serve in the military for two to five years, with harsh penalties for those evading service. LGBTQIA+ individuals are particularly vulnerable under this policy due to the pervasive homophobia and transphobia in both society and the military. The conscription law has heightened fears of discrimination, violence, and exploitation within a system already hostile to their identities. The lack of physical security, economic stability, and freedom of movement has further marginalized the community, forcing many to flee their homes or even the country to seek safety.

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[4] Kaung Zaw Htet & Theo Maung, At an impasse: How decade-long dictatorship, systemic oppression and social conservatism empowered (or fueled) discrimination and, stigma towards LGBTI people in Myanmar (ILGA Asia, 2021).

This report explores the multifaceted impacts of the 2024 Conscription Law on Myanmar's LGBTQIA+ community. It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how conscription law exacerbates their vulnerabilities by examining the legal, social, psychological, economic, and physical difficulties, as well as issues of displacement and migration.

## 4.1 Methodology

This study employed a mixed methods approach to comprehensively explore the impacts of the 2024 Conscription Law on Myanmar's LGBTQIA+ community. The study design integrated both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to capture the breadth and depth of the issue. Ethics played a central role in the research process, with all participants providing informed consent and their confidentiality rigorously protected. Ten qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals from diverse LGBTQIA+ identities, allowing for in-depth exploration of their personal experiences, challenges, and coping strategies under the conscription law. Additionally, a quantitative survey gathered data from 101 respondents, offering statistical insights into the community's demographic characteristics and the law's multifaceted impacts, including legal, social, economic, psychological, and physical dimensions. The mixed-methods design allowed the qualitative data to provide nuanced context to the quantitative findings, ensuring a richer understanding of the lived realities and systemic challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community. This holistic approach enabled the triangulation of data, enhancing the credibility and robustness of the study's conclusions and recommendations.

## 4.2 Objectives

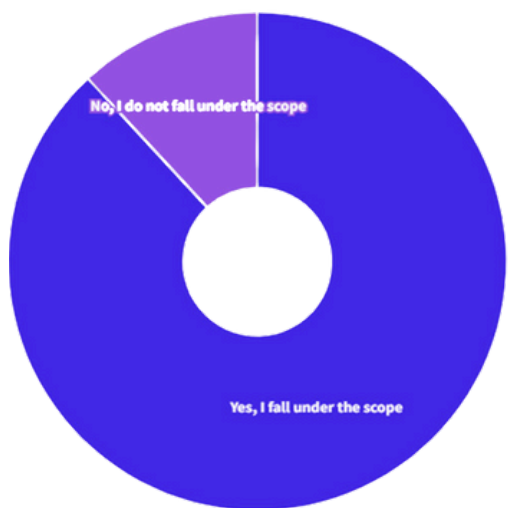
The objectives of this report are threefold:

1) To identify and document the challenges faced by Myanmar's LGBTQIA+ community post-conscription law.

2) To analyze the legal, social, economic, physical security and psychological impacts of the conscription law on LGBTQIA+ individuals.

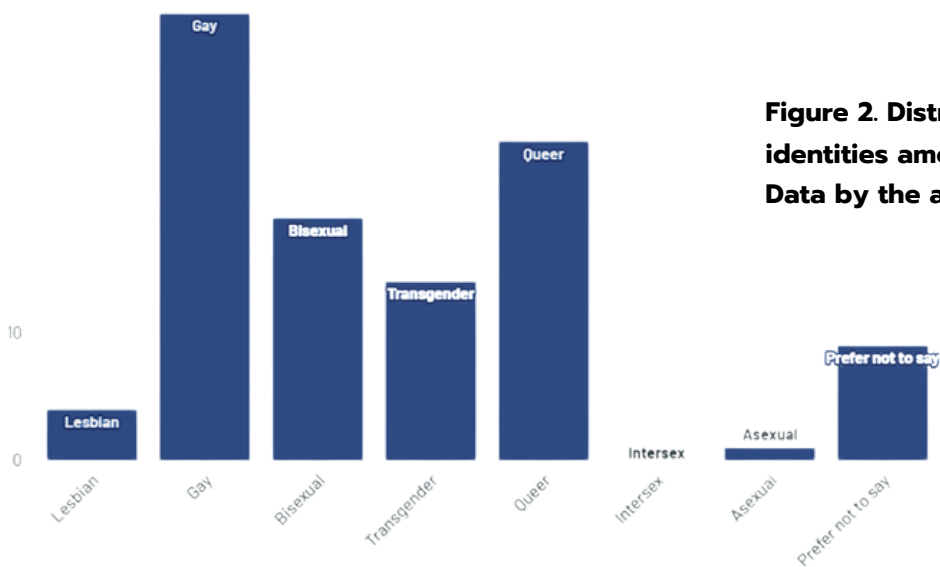
The expected outcomes include a comprehensive report detailing these challenges, evidence-based recommendations for policymakers and advocacy groups. Additionally, it aims to enhance awareness of the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the LGBTQIA+ community in the context of conscription.

To provide context for these findings, the survey collected demographic information on those affected by the conscription law. When asked, "Are you part of the LGBTQIA+ community and fall under the age group required for military service according to the conscription law?", a large majority 88.1% answered "Yes," while 11.9% answered "No."



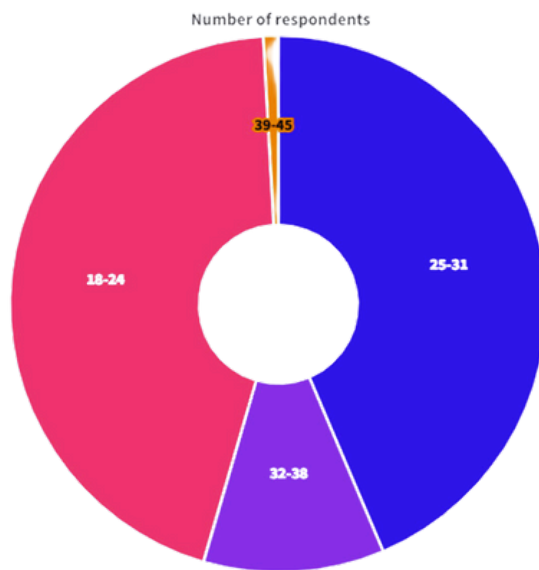
**Figure 1. Response to "Are you part of the LGBTQIA+ community and fall under the age group required for military service according to the conscription law?"**  
Data by the author

This indicates that most respondents are directly impacted by the law, as they fall within the eligible age group for conscription. These individuals represent a group already facing systemic challenges, now made worse by the introduction of mandatory military service, highlighting the urgency of addressing their needs and advocating for their rights.



**Figure 2. Distribution of LGBTQIA+ identities among respondents**  
Data by the author

To understand the diversity in the LGBTQIA+ community, we asked participants to describe their identities. The largest group, 34.7%, identified as Gay. Next, 24.8% identified as Queer, and 18.8% identified as Bisexual. Additionally, 13.9% of respondents identified as Transgender, showing that gender-diverse individuals are part of this group. A smaller group, 8.9%, chose not to share their identity, which points to the stigma and risks of being openly LGBTQIA+ in Myanmar. Lastly, 1% of respondents identified as Asexual, highlighting the variety of sexual orientations within the community.



**Figure 3. Age distribution of respondents**  
Data by the author

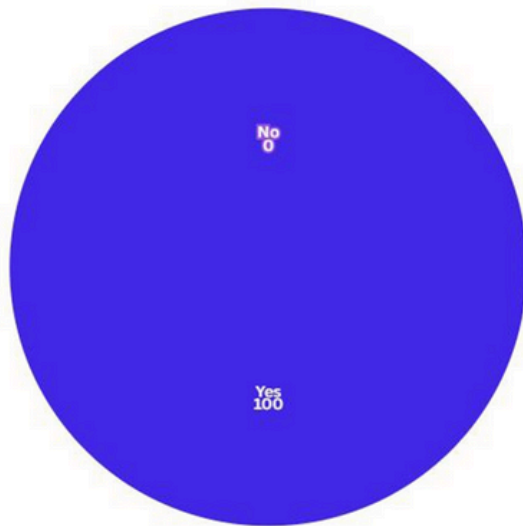
Age distribution data further emphasizes the disproportionate impact of the conscription law on younger LGBTQIA+ individuals. Nearly 90% of respondents fall within the younger age brackets, with 44.6% aged 18 to 24 and 43.6% aged 25 to 31. This shows that the law primarily affects individuals in the early stages of their adult lives, a period typically associated with personal and professional development. A smaller proportion, 10.9%, are aged 32 to 38, while only 1% fall within the 39 to 45 age group.

This age distribution reveals that the conscription law places its heaviest burden on the younger members of the LGBTQIA+ community, compounding the challenges they already face in a society that marginalizes their identities.

# 5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Do you know that the conscription law has been announced?

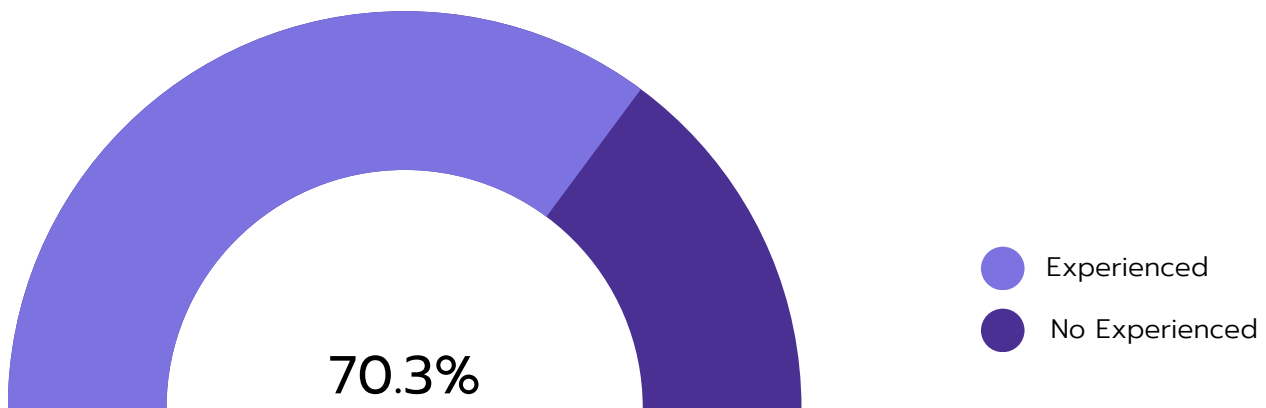
■ Yes ■ No



**Figure 4. Awareness of the conscription law announcement. Data by the author**

The findings of this report reveal the profound impact of the 2024 Conscription Law on Myanmar's LGBTQIA+ communities. All survey participants (100%) reported being aware of the law's announcement, highlighting its widespread visibility and the significant concern it has generated within the community.

## 5.1 Legal Challenges

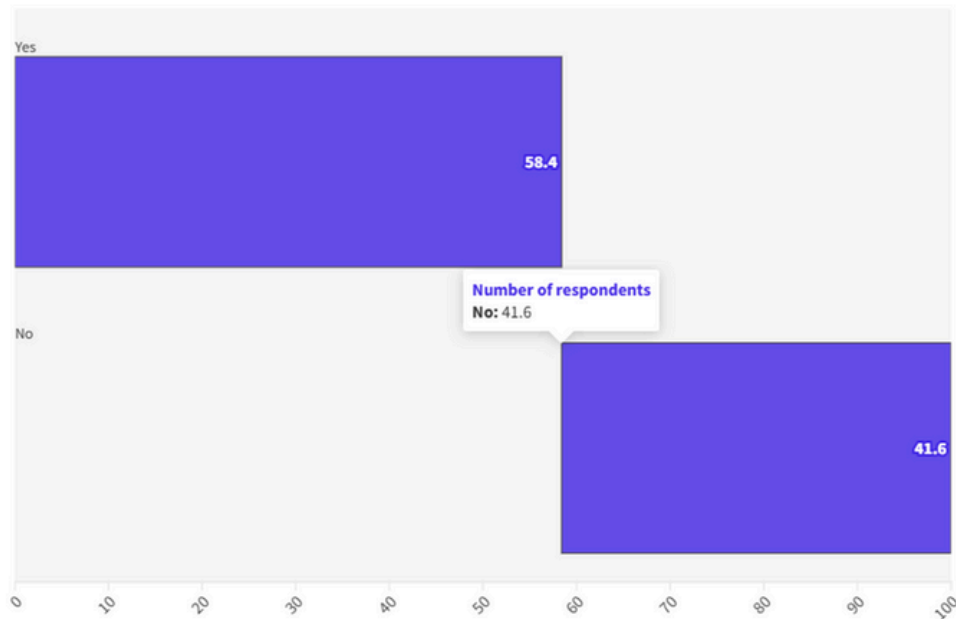


**Figure 5. Experience of forced conscription. Data by the author**

The 2024 Conscription Law has created profound legal challenges for the Myanmar queer community, as revealed by the survey results. A significant portion of respondents, 70.3%, reported experiencing forced conscription by the Myanmar military, while only 30.7% indicated that they had not. This statistic illustrates the widespread and pervasive nature of forced conscription within the community, highlighting their vulnerability under the new legal framework.

Moreover, 58.4% of respondents confirmed that they had been summoned for military service, further emphasizing the extensive reach of the conscription process. In contrast, 41.6% of participants stated that they had not been summoned, suggesting variations in enforcement or possibly avoidance strategies.

### Have you been summoned for a military



**Figure 6. Response to being summoned for military service. Data by the author**

The conscription process under the 2024 law is fraught with irregularities and discriminatory practices, as highlighted by one interviewee: "Even though there are set criteria for selection, they're calling people however they want. Some are selected through the lottery, and some without the lottery." (Interviewee 01, Online Interview, 7th September, 2024). This lack of transparency creates an environment where individuals feel powerless against arbitrary decisions by authorities.

Another interviewee, an LGBTQ activist, shared their observations: "One person wasn't drawn in the lottery themselves, but the ward officials came to their house saying they were selected and must serve." (Interviewee 03, Online Interview, 8th November, 2024). This account highlights the lack of transparency in the process and the unchecked authority of ward officials.

The interviewee also explained how the law disproportionately targets LGBTQIA+ individuals: "After the military service law came out, they particularly target young people who fall within the service age, especially gays and those with male anatomy. Even if others don't recognize them, when LGBT people are visible, the ward might target them out of prejudice or dissatisfaction, thinking colloquially that 'putting that queer in the military will straighten them out.' (Interviewee 03, Online Interview, 8th November, 2024). This systemic targeting reflects not only the arbitrariness of the draft process but also the prejudices that compound the vulnerability of LGBTQIA+ individuals.

The interviewee also noted the use of financial extortion in the draft process: "If you're eligible but don't want to join, they demand money. They collect money using various excuses." (Interviewee 01, Online Interview, 7th September, 2024). This practice disproportionately affects marginalized individuals, such as LGBTQIA+ people, who are more likely to face exploitation due to their lack of social and legal protections.

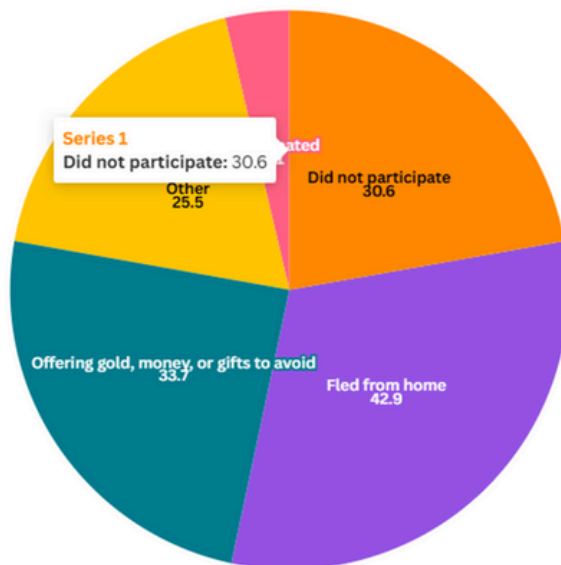
One respondent recounted how their ward leaders demanded an exorbitant sum of 20,000,000 MMK for voter registration, an amount their family could not afford. The respondent explained, "I couldn't speak up about this to people around me, and my parents couldn't afford to pay. I had no choice but to flee. When I escaped without paying, they threatened to arrest my family." (Interviewee 07, Online Interview, 14th November, 2024). This experience highlights not only the financial extortion faced by individuals but also the coercion and intimidation directed at their families, leaving them with no safe options.

Additionally, the targeting of specific groups by ward administrators was described: "If the ward administrator is Burmese, they first call Chinese and Muslim people. They specifically target those they perceive as weak." Such targeted practices exacerbate existing ethnic, religious, and social inequalities. (Interviewee 01, Online Interview, 7th September, 2024).

The respondent further elaborated on the pervasive fear caused by these arbitrary actions: "Since they can call people they see on the street; everyone is living in a cramped situation just thinking about how to survive." (Interviewee 01, Online Interview, 7th September, 2024). This reflects the overwhelming sense of insecurity and anxiety that the LGBTQIA+ community and other marginalized groups experience under the conscription law.

When faced with military summons, queer individuals employed various coping strategies, many of which reflect the difficulties and inequities of the conscription system. A notable 42.9% of respondents reported fleeing from their homes to escape participation. For 33.7%, the resolution involved offering gold, money, or gifts to avoid participating in the draft lottery, pointing to systemic corruption and the heavy financial burden on those seeking to evade conscription.

### How did you respond when the ward administrator summoned you for the military



**Figure 7. Strategies used when faced with military summons.**  
Data by the author

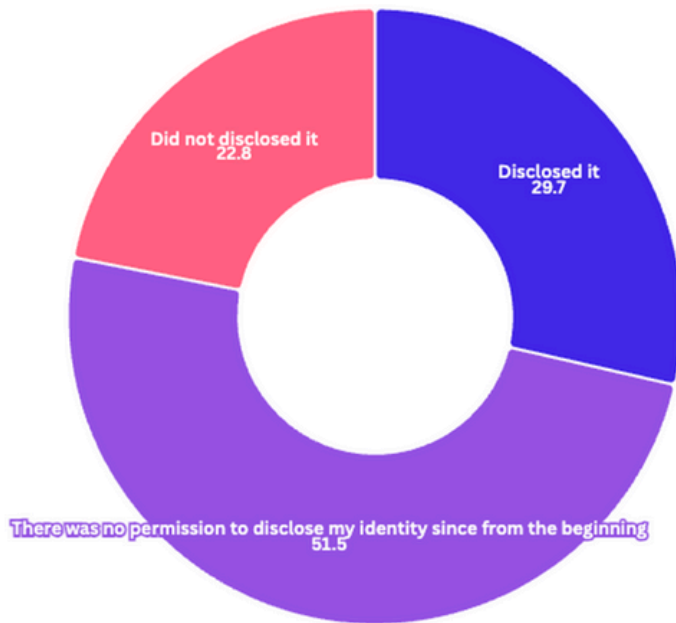
Additionally, 30.6% chose not to participate in the draft lottery, potentially as an act of resistance or due to a lack of support or awareness. Interestingly, only 5.1% of respondents participated in the draft lottery, highlighting widespread apprehension about engaging with the military system. Meanwhile, 25.5% selected "Other," which likely encompasses a range of additional strategies, such as seeking community or legal assistance, or relying on personal connections to navigate the situation.

These findings underscore the legal and societal barriers faced by the queer community under the conscription law. The use of informal methods, such as bribery and fleeing, reveals a lack of trust in legal protections and a limited ability to challenge the system. Furthermore, these responses reflect the emotional, financial, and social tolls imposed by the conscription process, which disproportionately affects already marginalized groups.

In addition to the challenges of forced conscription and summons, the survey also highlighted issues related to identity disclosure during the draft lottery. When respondents were asked, "If you were summoned for the draft lottery, did you attend the event while disclosing your identity?", the answers revealed significant struggles. Only 29.7% of respondents said they disclosed their identity during the event. This shows that a small portion of the community chose to reveal their identity, possibly to assert their truth or because they had no choice.

Meanwhile, 22.8% of respondents stated that they did not disclose their identity. This likely reflects a fear of discrimination or harassment during the process. The largest group, 51.5%, reported that they were not allowed to disclose their identity at all. This suggests that systemic barriers, such as societal stigma or strict military regulations, prevented them from openly expressing their identity.

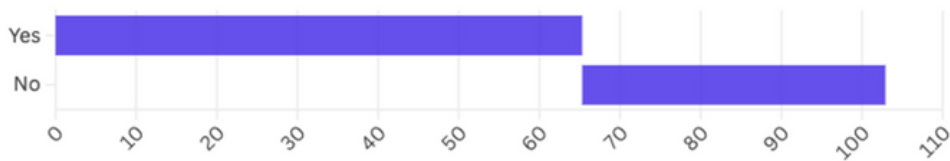
## If you were summoned for the draft lottery, did you attend the event while disclosing your identity?



**Figure 8. Identity disclosure during draft lottery.**  
Data by the author

These findings connect to the broader legal and societal challenges faced by the queer community under the 2024 Conscription Law. The inability to disclose their identity adds another layer of difficulty, forcing many to hide who they are to avoid potential harm. Combined with the financial, emotional, and social burdens revealed in earlier findings, this highlights how deeply the conscription process affects the lives of queer individuals. It further emphasizes the urgent need for policies that respect and protect their rights, allowing them to navigate the system safely and with dignity.

## Have the conscription officials or administrators treated you with discrimination because of your LGBTQIA+ identity?



**Figure 9. Experience of discrimination from conscription officials.**  
Data by the author

The survey also shed light on the discrimination faced by queer individuals during the conscription process. When asked, "Have the conscription officials or administrators treated you with discrimination because of your LGBTQIA+ identity?", 65.3% of respondents said they had experienced discrimination. In contrast, 37.6% said they had not, showing that a majority of queer individuals face bias during interactions with officials.

Participants who experienced discrimination described various forms of mistreatment. Some reported being subjected to derogatory language, with officials calling them names like "A-Chauk" a pejorative term used to demean queer individuals in Myanmar. Others recounted being asked embarrassing or invasive questions about their gender or sexual identity, creating feelings of humiliation and discomfort.

Additionally, participants shared that officials made demeaning comments, such as stating that "Gays are not men" and referring to them as "Wut-Kyaway" (suffering for action from past life). These statements reflect deep-seated prejudices and a lack of respect for queer individuals. Some respondents also mentioned being subjected to dehumanizing stares, describing how officials looked at them with condescending expressions, further amplifying the psychological distress they faced.

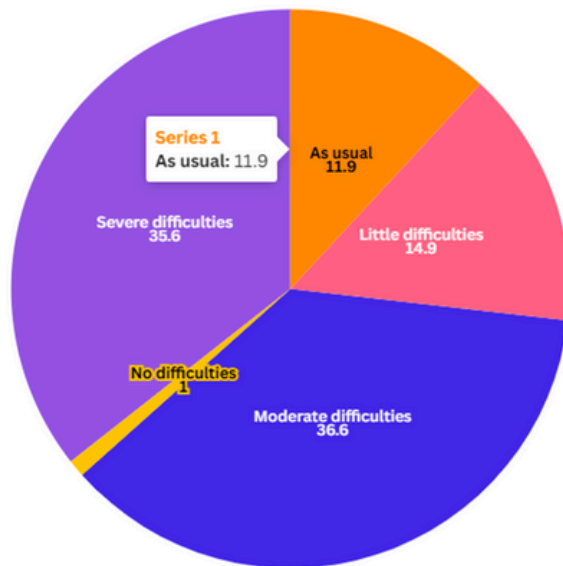


This discriminatory treatment underscores the systemic challenges queer individuals face under the 2024 Conscription Law. The use of derogatory language and demeaning behavior reflects broader societal stigmas, which are reinforced by institutional practices. Such experiences not only violate the dignity and rights of queer individuals but also contribute to a hostile and unsafe environment, exacerbating their vulnerability during the conscription process. These findings highlight the urgent need for awareness, training, and accountability measures to address discrimination within the system.

These legal challenges are further compounded by the social difficulties LGBTQIA+ individuals face within their communities, as detailed in the following section.

## 5.2 Social Challenges

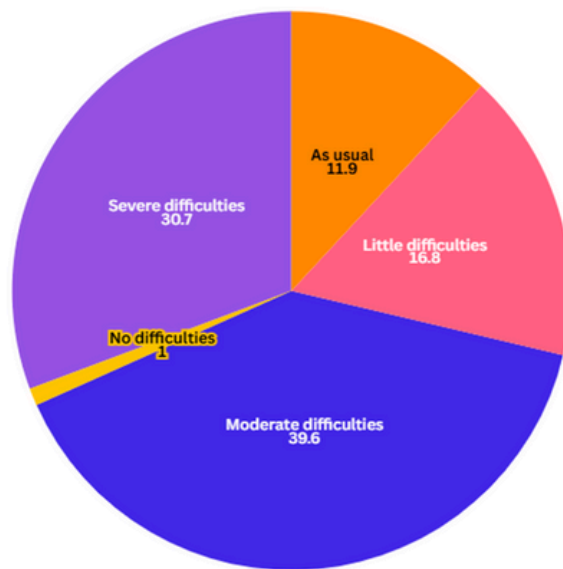
Have you faced any difficulties in your daily life after the conscription law was implemented?



**Figure 10. Difficulties in daily life after conscription law implementation. Data by the author**

The implementation of the 2024 Conscription Law has significantly impacted the daily and social lives of the LGBTQIA+ communities in Myanmar. When asked, "Have you faced any difficulties in your daily life after the conscription law was implemented?", 36.6% of respondents reported experiencing moderate difficulties, and 35.6% faced severe difficulties. Meanwhile, 14.9% experienced only a little difficulty, and 11.9% said their lives continued as usual. These responses show that the majority of queer individuals face substantial challenges in their everyday lives under the new law.

## Have you faced any social difficulties after the conscription law was implemented?

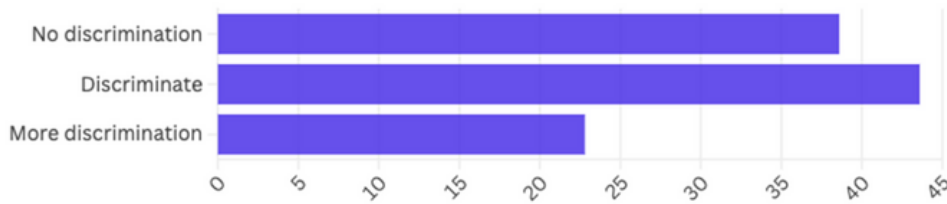


**Figure 11. Social difficulties after conscription law implementation.**  
Data by the author

In terms of social difficulties, the struggles appear even more pronounced. When asked, "Have you faced any social difficulties after the conscription law was implemented?", 30.7% reported severe difficulty, while 39.6% experienced moderate difficulty. Additionally, 16.8% faced little difficulty, and 11.9% said their social interactions remained unchanged. These findings reveal that the conscription law has created a ripple effect, affecting how queer individuals are treated in their social environments, including within their communities and families.

The survey also highlighted increased discrimination due to the conscription law. When asked, "Have your family or community started treating your LGBTQIA+ identity with increased discrimination?", 66.4% of respondents said they had experienced heightened discrimination, while only 33.6% said they had not. This demonstrates how the law has not only impacted individuals directly but has also intensified existing prejudices within their social networks.

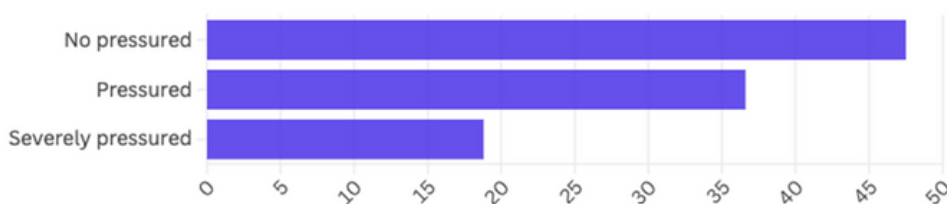
## Due to the conscription law, have your family or community started treating your LGBTQIA+ identity with increased discrimination?



**Figure 12. Experience of increased discrimination from family/community.**  
Data by the author

Furthermore, the pressure to conform to societal expectations has grown. When asked, "Due to the conscription law, have your family or community pressured you to change your LGBTQIA+ identity?", 47.5% said they had not experienced pressure, but 36.6% reported being pressured, and 18.8% said they had been forcefully pressured to change their identity. These responses indicate that nearly half of the respondents have faced some form of coercion to alter or suppress their identity, adding to the emotional and psychological burdens they already face.

## Due to the conscription law, have your family or community pressured you to change your LGBTQIA+ identity?



**Figure 13. Experience of pressure to change LGBTQIA+ identity.**  
Data by the author



The social environment for LGBTQIA+ individuals has worsened significantly since the implementation of the conscription law. One interviewee described the situation, saying, "Before, even if things weren't completely smooth, we were still able to defend ourselves. After the law, when we can't defend ourselves anymore, we just try to avoid these situations." (Interviewee 01, Online Interview, 7th September, 2024). This response reflects the growing fear and inability of community members to protect themselves from escalating discrimination and societal pressures. The respondent also noted, "Seeing gradually increasing pressure and changes in our community," highlighting how the law has intensified existing stigmas and strained community dynamics. (Interviewee 01, Online Interview, 7th September, 2024).

These findings show that conscription law has far-reaching effects beyond legal and institutional challenges. It has disrupted daily lives, deepened social discrimination, and increased familial and community pressure on queer individuals to conform. This underscores the urgent need for societal awareness and support systems to protect the rights and well-being of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the face of systemic and social adversity.

## 5.3 Economics Challenges

Have you faced any financial difficulties after the conscription law was implemented?

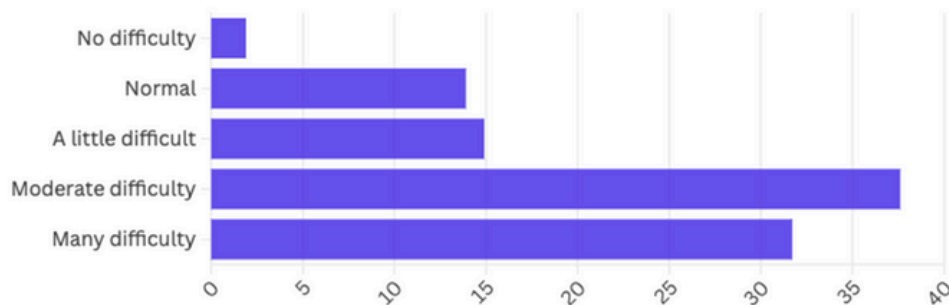


Figure 14. Financial difficulties after conscription law implementation. Data by the author

The 2024 Conscription Law has also created significant financial difficulties for many LGBTQIA+ individuals in Myanmar. When asked, "Have you faced any financial difficulties after the conscription law was implemented?", 31.7% of respondents reported severe financial difficulties, and 37.6% said they experienced moderate difficulties. Meanwhile, 14.9% faced only a little difficulty, and 13.9% said their financial situation remained unchanged. These findings reveal that the majority of respondents have struggled financially since the law was enacted.

When asked about the specific ways they have experienced financial difficulties, respondents shared a range of challenges. Some said they had to resign from stable jobs or sources of income because they needed to relocate or move abroad to avoid the conscription law. This sudden loss of income has left many without financial security. Others mentioned that the rising cost of living, combined with unemployment or underemployment, has worsened their situation. For example, participants spoke about struggling with insufficient income, high prices, and fuel shortages, making it difficult to meet basic needs.

Some respondents described how the law has affected their ability to work productively. One shared that they were unable to work with peace of mind because of constant worry about the law, which affected their focus and income. Another highlighted how income has not kept up with the rising cost of living, making it harder to manage daily expenses. Additionally, some respondents faced the financial burden of relocating, either within the country or abroad, to escape the reach of the law.

The conscription law has significantly forced many to make difficult choices about their livelihoods. One interviewee explained the constraints they face when seeking work: "When applying for jobs, people are choosing jobs closer to home." (Interviewee 02, Online Interview, 10th September, 2024). This reflects the fear of traveling or relocating for work due to the risks and uncertainties associated with the conscription law.

The respondent also highlighted how domestic job opportunities are no longer viable for many: "Even when domestic job opportunities exist, they can't take them." (Interviewee 02, Online Interview, 10th September, 2024). This limitation is tied to the increased surveillance and control over mobility, leaving individuals with few options to secure stable employment within the country.

The 2024 Conscription Law has created significant economic hardships for LGBTQIA+ individuals. One respondent shared how their work routine and income have been affected since the law's enactment: "Previously, I worked from 10 AM to 5 PM. Now, I start at 8 AM and finish at 4 PM. Travel has become a hardship, and visiting other towns is even more challenging. For example, when I arrive in a town, curfews often restrict movement after 6 PM. Express cars only operate during the day now." (Interviewee 04, Online Interview, 9th November, 2024). These constraints have disrupted daily routines and made both professional and personal travel more difficult, limiting opportunities for economic stability.

Inflation has further exacerbated financial struggles, as noted by the same respondent: "Inflation has significantly impacted my income, and even though commodity prices have risen, there's no increase in my salary." (Interviewee 04, Online Interview, 9th November, 2024). This financial strain forces individuals to stretch their limited resources, compounding the stress caused by the conscription law. For some, the only viable solution is migration. As the interviewee noted, "The only option is to leave the country, go abroad and work." (Interviewee 02, Online Interview, 10th September, 2024).

This response emphasizes how the conscription law not only impacts economic stability but also forces individuals to uproot their lives, leading to financial and emotional strain.

These economic challenges show how the conscription law has disrupted not only the lives but also the livelihoods of LGBTQIA+ individuals. The combination of job loss, rising costs, and the need to relocate has placed many in a financially precarious position. These struggles emphasize the need for targeted support to help individuals facing economic hardship due to this law and the broader systemic inequalities it exacerbates.

## 5.4 Psychological Impacts

Were you worried when you first heard about the conscription law?

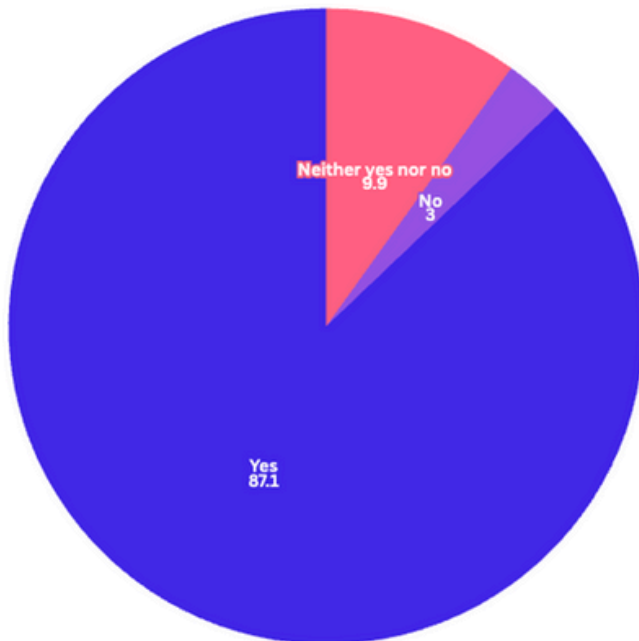
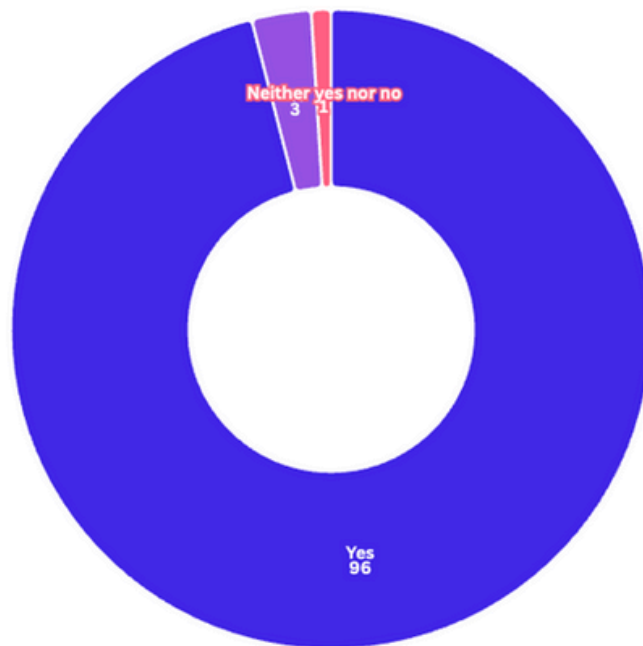


Figure 15. Initial worry about conscription law. Data by the author

The 2024 Conscription Law has had a profound psychological impact on LGBTQIA+ individuals in Myanmar. When asked, "Were you worried when you first heard about the conscription law?", a vast majority, 87.1%, said they were worried. Only 9.9% said they felt neutral, and a very small percentage, 3%, said they were not worried. These responses show that hearing about the law immediately created fear and anxiety for most people in the community.

## Did the conscription law make you worry about your future?

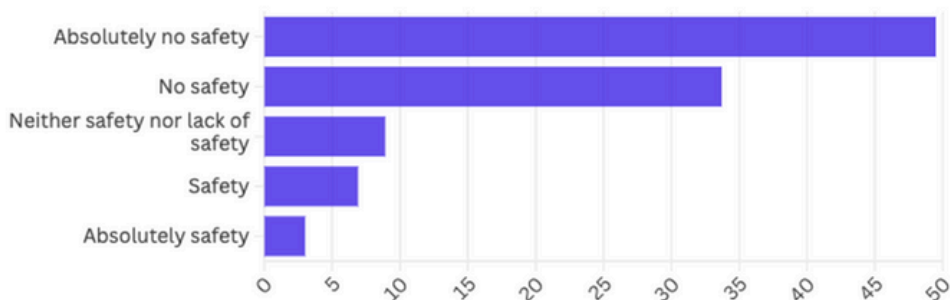


**Figure 16. Worry about future due to conscription law.**  
Data by the author

The concerns about the future were even more significant. When asked, "Did the conscription law make you worry about your future?", 96% of respondents said yes, while only 3% said no, and 1% felt neutral. These results highlight how the law has created a sense of uncertainty and fear about what lies ahead for individuals in the community.

To better understand their mental well-being, respondents were asked to describe how secure they felt due to the conscription law. Nearly half, 49.5%, said they felt "absolutely no secure," while 33.7% said "no secure." This means more than 80% of respondents do not feel any sense of safety or stability. A smaller percentage, 8.9%, felt neutral about their security, while 6.9% said they felt secure, and only 3% reported feeling "absolutely secure."

## Please describe your mental well-being due to the conscription law



**Figure 17. Feeling of security due to conscription law.**

**Data by the author**

The announcement of the conscription law instilled deep fear and anxiety within the LGBTQIA+ community. One interviewee described their initial reaction as "frightening and terrifying," (Interviewee 03, Online Interview, 8th November, 2024). expressing concerns about how the law targets Myanmar's youth and human resources. They explained, "When seeing it that way, along with the human rights violations that would follow, and because Myanmar has strong patriarchy and only recognizes male and female genders, I worried whether this military service law considered LGBT people." (Interviewee 03, Online Interview, 8th November, 2024).

The respondent's reflection highlights the dual fear of forced recruitment and the systemic erasure of LGBTQIA+ identities in a society that only acknowledges binary gender norms. They added, "Thinking about these aspects made me feel very afraid and shocked," capturing the emotional toll and uncertainty faced by queer individuals under the law. (Interviewee 03, Online Interview, 8th November, 2024).

The psychological toll of the conscription law is immense, leaving many LGBTQIA+ individuals in a state of constant fear, insecurity, and emotional numbness. One interviewee shared their experience: "In our minds, we question ourselves about how we can survive like others. Wondering if we still have human feelings." (Interviewee 01, Online Interview, 7th September, 2024). This sentiment reflects the deep mental strain caused by the persistent challenges and pressures faced under the law.

The respondent further described the emotional desensitization resulting from daily exposure to hardship and injustice: "Seeing these incidents daily, we don't feel anything anymore. Even when seeing pickpocketing, we don't want to say anything. Seeing so many difficulties, the mind becomes numb." (Interviewee 01, Online Interview, 7th September, 2024). This numbness highlights the psychological burnout experienced by individuals as they navigate a system that offers little support or hope for change.

These responses underline the profound mental health crisis within the LGBTQIA+ community, exacerbated by the societal and systemic challenges posed by the conscription law. The combination of fear, insecurity, and emotional exhaustion significantly impacts their overall well-being and ability to cope with daily life.

These responses paint a clear picture of the severe mental health impact caused by the conscription law. Many individuals expressed feelings of constant fear, anxiety, and insecurity about their safety and future. The sense of being unprotected and vulnerable has left the majority of the LGBTQIA+ community in a state of emotional distress.

## 5.5 Displacement and Migration

Place of residence before the conscription law was enacted

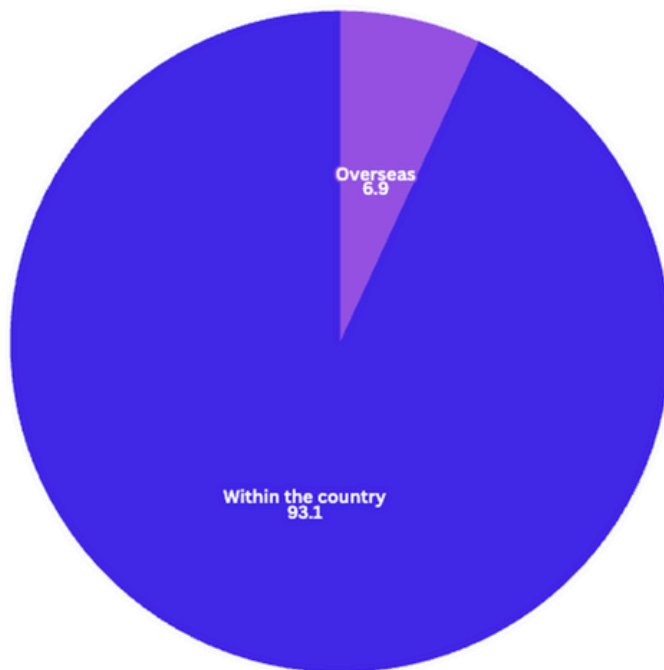
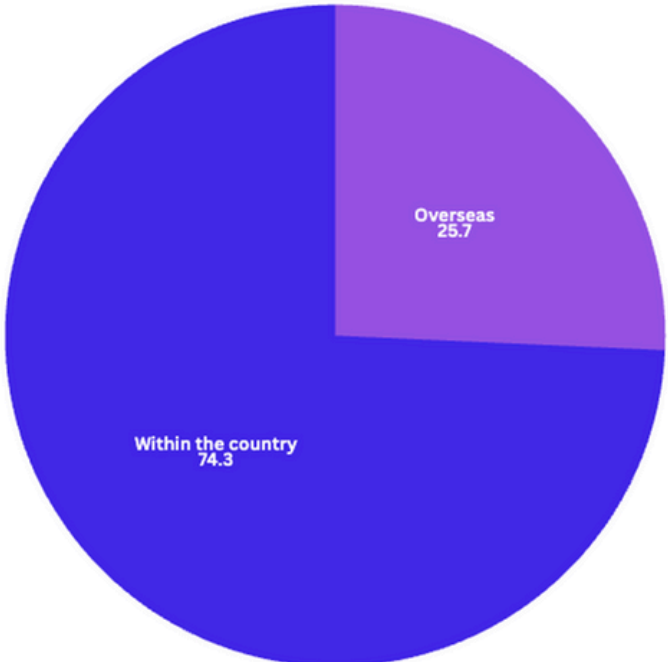


Figure 18. Place of residence before conscription law. Data by the author

The 2024 Conscription Law has significantly influenced the living arrangements of LGBTQIA+ individuals in Myanmar, leading to noticeable displacement and migration. When asked about their place of residence before the law was enacted, 93.1% of respondents said they were living within the country, while only 6.9% were residing overseas. These figures indicate that the majority of the community was living in Myanmar before the law came into effect.

# Place of residence after the conscription law was enacted

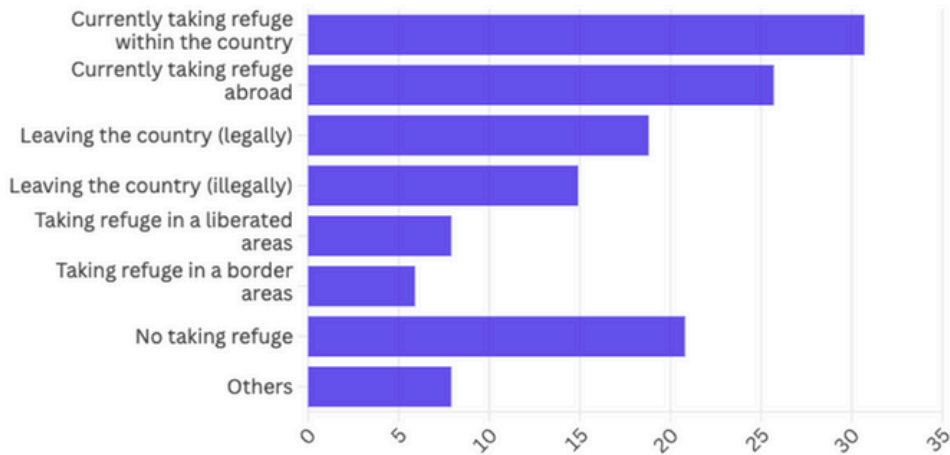


**Figure 19. Current place of residence.**  
**Data by the author**

However, after the implementation of the conscription law, the situation changed drastically. When asked about their current place of residence, only 74.3% said they were still living within the country, while a significant 25.7% reported moving overseas. This marks a substantial increase in migration, with many leaving the country to escape the pressures and challenges imposed by the conscription law.

The sharp rise in the number of individuals relocating overseas suggests that the conscription law has created an environment of fear and insecurity, forcing many to leave their homes and seek safety abroad. This displacement reflects not only the direct impact of the law but also the broader challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community in finding acceptance and security within Myanmar. These findings highlight the urgent need for policies that protect individuals from being forced to leave their country due to fear and discrimination.

## Due to the conscription law, are you in a situation where you have had to flee or leave your place of residence to avoid it?



**Figure 20. Situation regarding displacement/refuge.**  
Data by the author

Building on the significant changes in living arrangements, when asked, "Due to the conscription law, are you in a situation where you have had to flee or leave your place of residence to avoid it?", the responses showed a variety of situations.

A significant portion, 30.7%, said they are currently taking refuge within the country. Additionally, 25.7% reported taking refuge abroad, showing that many have sought safety in other countries. 18.8% of respondents said they left the country legally, while 14.9% said they left illegally, indicating the lengths people have gone to in order to escape the law, even at great personal risk.

Other respondents shared specific circumstances of their displacement. 7.9% said they were taking refuge in a liberated area, while 5.9% were living in border areas. These responses reflect the diverse and often precarious living situations of those seeking safety. Meanwhile, 20.8% of respondents reported that they had not taken refuge, and 7.9% chose "other," which may include unique or unlisted situations.



These findings show that the conscription law has forced many LGBTQIA+ individuals to uproot their lives and live in uncertainty. Whether taking refuge within Myanmar, fleeing abroad, or living in liberated or border areas, the experiences of displacement highlight the far-reaching consequences of the law. Many individuals face challenges such as instability, lack of security, and limited access to resources while trying to avoid conscription. These struggles underline the urgent need for support and protective measures for those affected by displacement.

## 5.6 Physical security

Please describe the state of your physical security after the conscription law was enacted

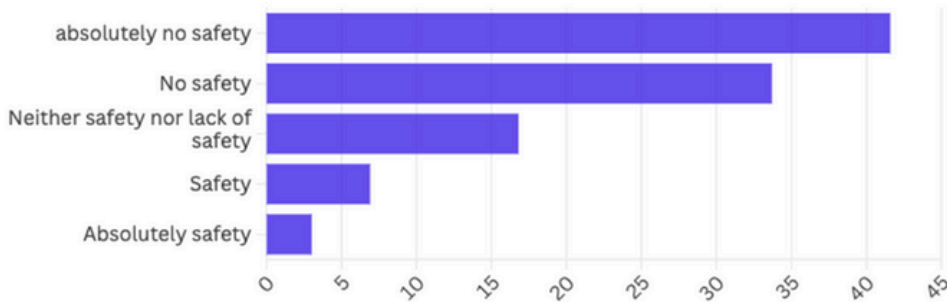


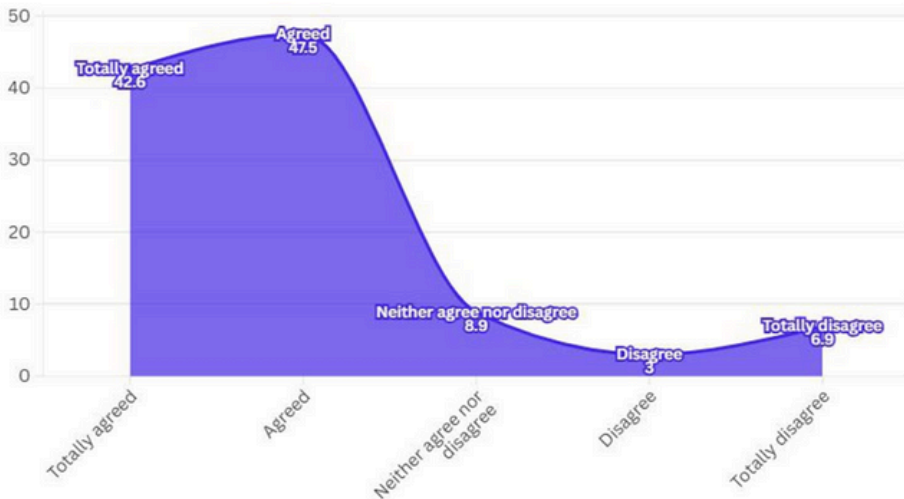
Figure 21. State of physical security after conscription law. Data by the author

The 2024 Conscription Law has created significant concerns about the physical security of LGBTQIA+ individuals in Myanmar. When asked, "Please describe the state of your physical security after the conscription law was enacted," 41.6% of respondents said they felt they had "absolutely no security at all," and 33.7% reported having "no security." Together, this means that more than three-quarters of respondents feel physically unsafe under the current circumstances. A smaller portion, 16.8%, felt neutral about their security, while only 6.9% said they felt secure, and 3% reported feeling "absolutely secure." These findings reveal a widespread sense of vulnerability and fear within the LGBTQIA+ community.

Concerns about violence and exploitation further highlight the risks associated with the conscription law. When asked to respond to the statement, "Myanmar's conscription law could lead to sexual and gender-based violence targeting the LGBTQIA+ community eligible for conscription," 47.5% agreed, and 42.6% totally agreed. This overwhelming majority reflects the community's deep apprehension about the potential for abuse and violence, both during the conscription process and within junta's settings.

These responses indicate that the LGBTQIA+ community not only feels unsafe but also perceives an increased risk of targeted violence under the conscription law. The sense of "no security" reported by most respondents reflects a broader fear of being exposed to physical harm or exploitation due to their sexual or gender identity. The concerns about sexual and gender-based violence point to systemic vulnerabilities that the community faces, particularly in environments where their rights and identities are not recognized or protected.

**Myanmar's conscription law could lead to sexual and gender-based violence targeting the LGBTQIA+ community eligible for conscription**



**Figure 22. Agreement with statement about potential for sexual and gender-based violence. Data by the author**

## 5.7 Impact on Traveling

The conscription law affects your travelling, including within the country and abroad

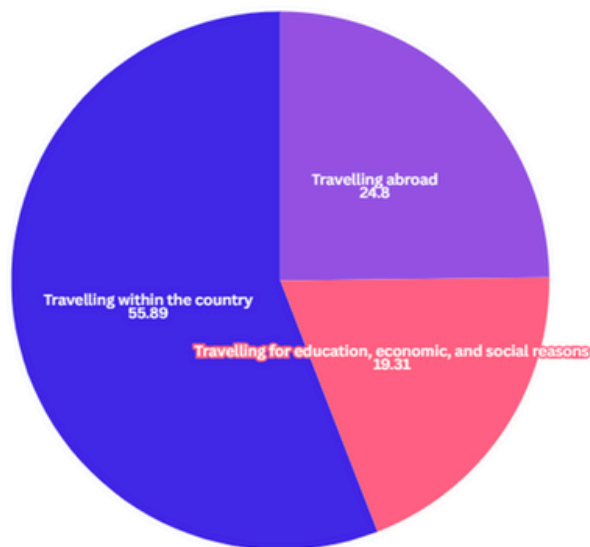


Figure 23. Effects of conscription law on traveling. Data by the author

The 2024 Conscription Law has significantly affected the freedom of movement for LGBTQIA+ individuals in Myanmar, both within the country and abroad. When asked, "How does the conscription law affect your traveling, including within the country and abroad?", participants reported a variety of difficulties and restrictions.

Many respondents shared that they faced difficulties traveling within the country, including moving freely within their own areas of residence. These restrictions have made it harder for individuals to visit other regions or even travel for daily needs. Some noted that local authorities and military checkpoints create obstacles, adding to the stress and fear of being questioned or detained due to their identity or perceived eligibility for conscription.



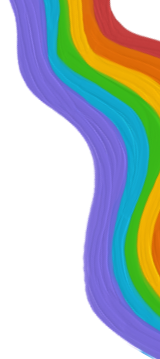
In addition to domestic challenges, participants reported restrictions on traveling abroad. These limitations often stem from heightened scrutiny of those attempting to leave the country, particularly for individuals trying to avoid conscription. LGBTQIA+ individuals face additional barriers, as they may be unfairly targeted or questioned about their identity and purpose for travel.

Participants also mentioned limitations on traveling for education, economic, or social reasons. For example, some individuals expressed difficulty pursuing opportunities for higher education or employment that required relocation. Social travel, such as visiting family or friends, has also become more complicated due to the fear of being monitored or restricted by authorities.

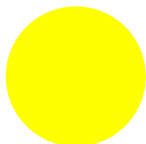
The travel restrictions imposed by the conscription law have disrupted many aspects of daily life and long-term planning for LGBTQIA+ individuals. The inability to move freely within their own communities, combined with restrictions on international travel, has added layers of difficulty to their already challenging circumstances. These limitations affect not only their sense of freedom and independence but also their ability to access education, work opportunities, and social connections.

# 6. CONCLUSION

The 2024 Conscription Law has profoundly disrupted the lives of Myanmar's LGBTQIA+ communities, forcing them into an even more precarious position in a society that already marginalizes and stigmatizes their identities. This report has brought to light the legal, social, psychological, economic, and physical challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals, who are being forced to navigate a system that neither protects nor acknowledges their humanity. The findings illustrate not just statistics, but the deeply personal struggles and pain endured by people who deserve to live freely, with dignity and respect.



# KEY FINDINGS



## **01. Legal Vulnerabilities**

LGBTQIA+ individuals are subjected to arbitrary selection, financial extortion, and systemic targeting forcibly during the conscription process. These experiences rob them not only of their legal protection but also of their sense of justice and fairness.



## **02. Social Discrimination**

The law has emboldened discriminatory attitudes within families and communities. For many, home, a place that should offer safety and love has become a battleground of rejection and coercion, forcing them to suppress or deny who they are.



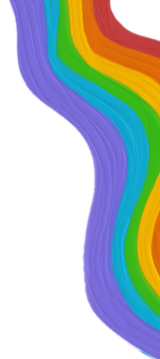
## **03. Economic Hardship**

Job losses, forced migration, and rising living costs have left LGBTQIA+ individuals struggling to survive. The relentless pursuit of financial stability amidst systemic barriers is exhausting and often feels futile.



## **04. Psychological Impact**

Fear, anxiety, and emotional numbness dominate the mental health landscape for many LGBTQIA+ individuals. As one participant poignantly shared, "In our minds, we question ourselves about how we can survive like others. Wondering if we still have human feelings."



# KEY FINDINGS



## **05. Physical Insecurity and Sexual violence**

The risk of violence, abuse, and exploitation under the conscription law has left the majority of LGBTQIA+ individuals feeling unsafe. Their vulnerability is not just a statistic, it is a daily, lived reality.




## **06. Displacement and Migration**

Forced to flee their homes or even their country, many LGBTQIA+ individuals now live in uncertainty, grappling with the trauma of leaving behind loved ones and familiar places in search of safety.

These findings are not just numbers. They represent real lives filled with fear, pain, and resilience. They tell the story of a community that has been cornered by an oppressive system yet continues to fight for survival.

Every individual deserves the freedom to live authentically, without fear of violence, discrimination, or rejection. The voices in this report cry out for justice and compassion. They ask us to imagine the pain of being forced to flee your home, to endure demeaning remarks that strip away your dignity, or to live every day wondering if your very existence is at risk. To stand by and do nothing is to be complicit in their suffering.



This is not just a call for policy changes, it is a call for humanity. LGBTQIA+ individuals in Myanmar are not just statistics or case studies. They are sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors. They are people with dreams, fears, and the same right to safety and love as anyone else. The stories shared in this report are a plea for empathy and action. They remind us of the resilience of a community that refuses to be silenced, even in the face of overwhelming odds. But resilience alone cannot dismantle systems of oppression. It requires solidarity. This is a moment to choose compassion over indifference, action over silence. Let this report inspire not just understanding, but also the courage to act. The time to stand with Myanmar's LGBTQIA+ community is now.

