

MARKET PRICE REPORT – RAKHINE STATE (NOV. 2020)

Mercy Corps - Market Analysis Unit

January 6th, 2021

As part of its cash and voucher assistance programs in Rakhine State, Mercy Corps gathers market prices at town markets in Central and Northern Rakhine State. This monthly market price report summarizes median product prices, based on data from three vendors per product per market. November data were gathered Nov. 25 – Dec. 6, 2020 in Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, Minbya, Mrauk U, Rathedaung and Sittwe Townships. Data for September and October are also provided for comparison in section two.¹

Highlights: November 2020

- **Essential food prices were fairly consistent across townships in November**, although rice prices were slightly lower in Mrauk U and higher in Maungdaw Townships.
- **Vegetables prices varied considerably by township in November**, although Sittwe and Minbya prices were generally lower while Maungdaw prices were higher.
- **Prices for shelter goods were fairly similar across townships in November** relative to previous months, although prices in Rathedaung Township were slightly higher.
- **Prices for essential food items remained stable from September to November**, both at a product-level and at a township-level (particularly in Maungdaw Township);
- **Rice showed a possible trend toward slightly rising prices in Mrauk U** from September to November, although the change was minor.

Table 1. Market Prices in this Report (by Category)

Essential food items	High-quality (better) rice, low-quality (cheaper) rice, palm oil, salt, and pulses.
Vegetables	Green chili, long bean, potato, onion, tomato, etc.
Shelter goods	Blankets, mosquito nets, plastic mats, plastic tarps, towels, etc.
Kitchen goods	Plates, cooking spoons, kitchen knives, cooking pots, cups, etc.
Other goods	Hygiene products, fish, shrimp and crab.

I. Market Prices: November 2020 (by Category)

Essential Food Items – Essential food prices were generally consistent across townships in November. A few products showed more price variation such as salt (200-600 MMK/500g) and pulses (2300-3900 MMK/viss), although this was due primarily to outliers in a few locations (e.g., Minbya and Kyauktaw Townships). Prices were high for pulses in Kyauktaw (3900 MMK/viss) where supply may have been low, and low for salt in Minbya (300 MMK/500g), although this is consistent with past months. Similarly, prices for low- and high-quality rice were lowest in Mrauk U (550 MMK/kg and 750 MMK/kg, respectively) and highest in Maungdaw (700 MMK/kg and 1000 MMK/kg, respectively), as was the case in past months. Otherwise, at a township-level there were no obvious trends for essential food prices in November.

¹ September and October 2020 data include only Maungdaw, Minbya, Mrauk U and Sittwe Townships. Data for Kyauktaw and Rathedaung were not available during these months.

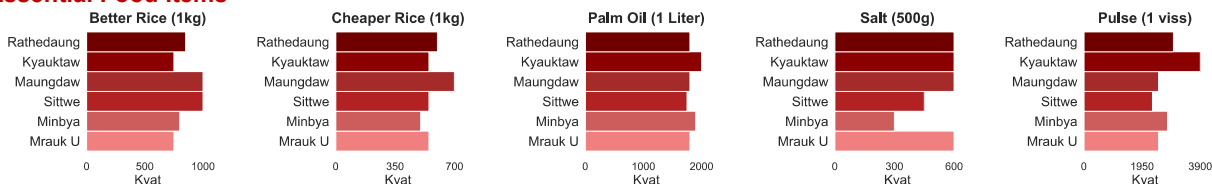
Vegetables – Vegetable prices showed wide variation across townships in November as local winter crop supply arrived in markets. In some cases, prices were consistent across townships with the exception of an occasional outlier. For example, Mrauk U vendors reported high onion prices (1900 MMK/viss) due to low supply of imports, and Kyauktaw vendors reported high long bean prices (3500 MMK/viss) due to the arrival of better-quality local supply. Other outliers were more likely due to differentiated product features (e.g., a different variety of potato in Kyauktaw, or green chili in Kyauktaw and Maungdaw). Among townships, Sittwe and Minbya were generally on the low-end of vegetable prices, while Maungdaw was again on the high end.

Shelter Goods – Prices for shelter goods were slightly more consistent across townships in November than in previous months. Items like blankets (4500-6500 MMK/unit) and plastic mats (5000-6000 MMK/unit) showed more consistency across townships than in past months. However, there continued to be price variation for items like mosquito nets (2000-4000 MMK/unit) and towels (1000-2000 MMK/unit). At a township-level, Rathedaung Township (measured for the first time this month) stood out a bit for having slightly higher prices for shelter goods in November.

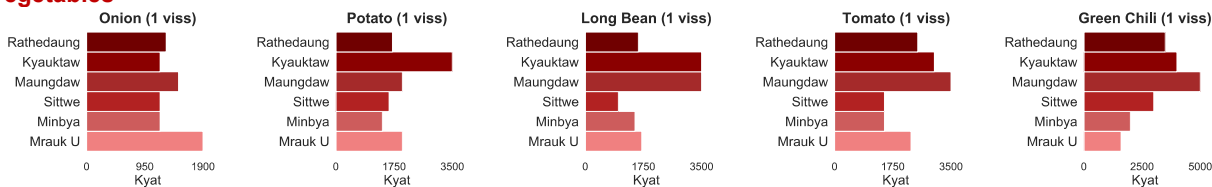
Kitchen Goods – Kitchen goods showed notable price variation across townships in November, although no more than in previous months. As in past months, prices for kitchen goods were often lower in Sittwe and higher in Maungdaw; prices in Kyauktaw Township (measured for the first time this month) were also higher than elsewhere. As in October, kitchen knives (300-1000 MMK/unit) and cooking spoons (700-2000 MMK/unit) showed uneven prices across townships, although this may also be due to the absence of identical goods in each market.

Charts 1-20. November Market Prices (by Category and Township)

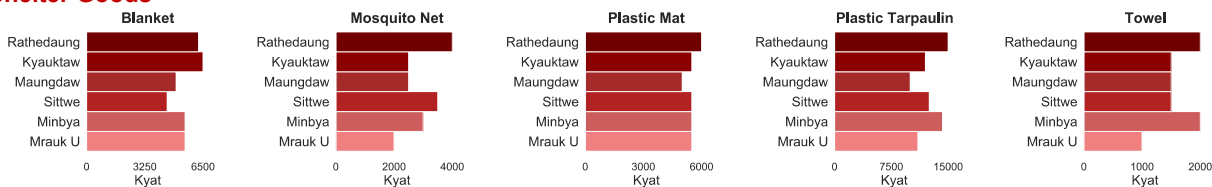
Essential Food Items



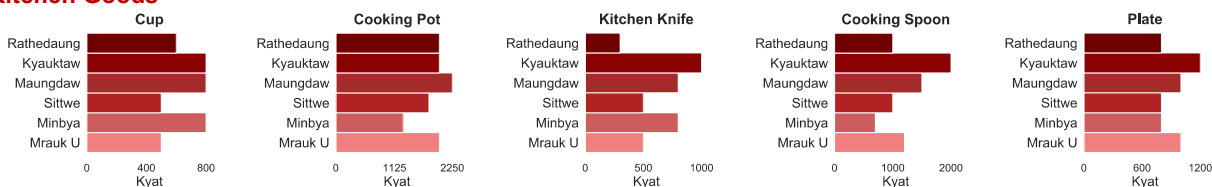
Vegetables



Shelter Goods



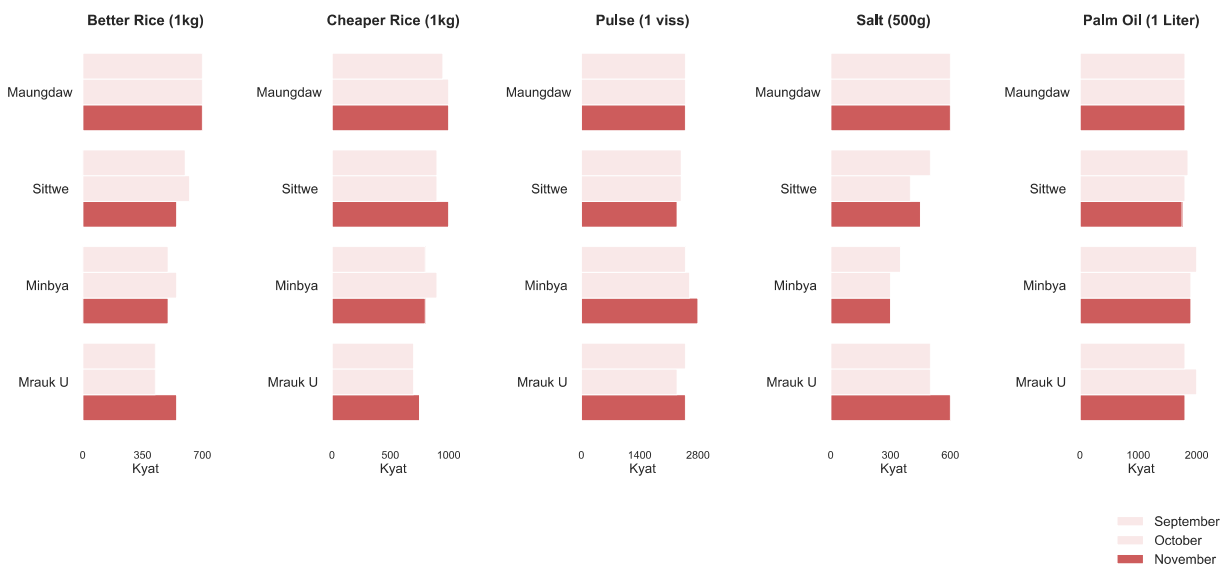
Kitchen Goods



II. Price Stability: Essential Food Items (Sept. – Nov. 2020)

Essential Food Items – Prices for essential food items gathered in September, October and November indicate fairly stable prices across products and locations. At a product-level, most prices were flat across these three months for each of the five products monitored (palm oil prices were particularly stable). The only possible exception is a possible trend toward slightly rising prices for lower-quality rice between September and November. At a township-level, none of the four townships monitored during this three-month period stood out more than others for price instability with respect to essential food items. Maungdaw Township showed even less variation than elsewhere, with almost no change in recorded prices during this period. Only Mrauk U Township was perhaps noteworthy for small net-increases in the price of rice (both low- and high-quality) and salt. Charts 21-25 compare prices for essential food items collected in September, October and November 2020.²

Charts 21-25. Prices for Essential Food Items (Sept., Oct. and Nov. 2020)



² Charts 21-25, which provide a longitudinal perspective on prices, exclude Kyauktaw and Rathedaung townships, because prices were not collection here in September and October.

Mercy Corps' Market Analysis Unit (MAU)

The Market Analysis Unit provides development practitioners, policymakers and private sector actors in Rakhine State with data and analysis to better understand the present and potential impacts of COVID-19, conflict and other crises on:

- **Household purchasing power**, including coping mechanisms, safety nets and access to basic needs;
- **Supply chains**, including trade, cross-border dynamics and market functionality (particularly as it relates to food systems);
- **Financial services**, including financial services providers, household and business access to finance and remittances; and
- **Labor markets** (formal and informal), with a focus on agricultural labor and low-wage sectors (e.g. construction, food service).

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