

Assessment of Public Awareness on the Environmental Issues During the Political Crisis in Myanmar

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Abstract

The environmental challenges facing Myanmar have been exacerbated by political instability, particularly since the military coup in 2021. This study examines public perceptions of environmental issues during this political crisis, focusing on awareness of key environmental concerns such as air and water quality, land use, and climate change. A survey was conducted, with the majority of respondents aged between 30 and 39, largely consisting of graduates and professionals across diverse ethnic groups. Results indicate that over 91% of respondents are aware of environmental degradation during the crisis, with air and water quality concerns being the most prominent. While over half of the respondents identified vehicles and waste burning as major contributors to air pollution, water quality was perceived as unreliable by the majority, reflecting the country's growing water scarcity issues. The study also revealed that government efforts to mitigate these issues were largely deemed insufficient. Furthermore, awareness of climate change impacts was high, with flooding and drought being the most commonly reported concerns. Despite the challenges, a significant portion of the population expressed interest in participating in environmental conservation, though security and political instability were major barriers to involvement. This research highlights the urgent need for stronger environmental policies and public engagement to address the ongoing environmental crisis in Myanmar, particularly during periods of political unrest.

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1. Introduction

Environment is the key free-source and natural capital (Agheli & Taghvaei, 2022) for the existence of living organisms on this planet. For both the subsistence and economy of human beings, the environmental sources such as forests, water sources, biodiversity, etc., are being utilized without paying attention to sustainability (WCED, 1987). These neglected actions not only threaten the good health of the environment but also escalate the public concerns on the availability of the sources from the environment for their living (Agheli & Taghvaei, 2022; Mahadevan et al., 2024). In 2002, the "Johannesburg Summit" underscored the vital role of public involvement in fostering sustainable development, emphasizing the interconnectedness of environmental concerns with socio-economic well-being, critical for achieving a balanced quality of life (White & Hunter, 2009), found out that there were local people's awareness and concerns on the relation between the environmental issues and their socioeconomic conditions in coastal Ghana. However, the awareness and concerns on environmental issues and socio-economic conditions during the political conflict period is less explored. The profound impacts on the environment such as biodiversity loss, sea level rise, increasing frequency and severity of natural disasters caused by global warming, were warned to be tackled by IPCC (2018).

While global concerns about environmental quality and the regulation of remedial measures, including their respective policy implications, remain paramount, the political state of a country also becomes a crucial consideration. Specific treaty and customary International Humanitarian Law and additional protocol to 1949 Geneva Convention, and Rio Declaration on Environment (UNEP) prohibited to damage the environment after experiencing the environmental impacts under war and armed conflicts (The International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC] Humanitarian Law & Policy, 2021). Thus, the quality of the environment is directly correlated with the role of political stability (Agheli & Taghvaei, 2022; Kirikkaleli & Osmanlı, 2023). Moreover, the increasing population as the consumers of the environmental resources and their perceptions and individual changed behavior for environmental quality (Perera et al., 2022; Maduku, 2024) are also critical for future generations. Unsustainable utilization practices have jeopardized environmental health and raised public concerns regarding resource availability (White & Hunter, 2009). Currently, natural resources in Myanmar are over-exploited, becoming more notable since the 2021 Military coup as a usual misconducted action of the Military Regime. The 2021 report from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation under the Republic of the Union of Myanmar National Unity Government highlights the considerable

depletion of natural resources under military regimes, providing a detailed account of environmental challenges amid political transitions (MONREC-NUG, 2021).

Under the intense armed conflicts and these political transitions, environmental conservation actions and policy enforcement are undoubtedly in question. To support effective environmental management, it's essential to understand people's perspectives and concerns regarding environmental quality and related issues. This research aims to gather valuable insights into public views on the current state of the environment in Myanmar and these insights will inform strategies to promote people participation for addressing environmental issues in Myanmar.

1.1 Problem Statement

The environment serves as a vital resource for life, encompassing various elements such as forests, water sources, and biodiversity, which are essential for human existence and economic activities (WCED, 1987; Agheli & Taghvaei, 2022). Under the previous military regime, the nation's natural wealth dwindled swiftly as a result of governmental mismanagement, lax policy implementation, and inadequate regulatory oversight, leading to a multitude of environmental challenges faced by the populace (Ben Heubl, 2021). Throughout the era of Military Regimes, the Junta has historically exploited natural resources for short-term gain, neglecting long-term sustainability, property rights, and public perception. This disregard has resulted in profound environmental risks, casting a shadow over Myanmar's future (CEOBS, 2021).

Political instability undermines environmental policies and policy implementation enforcement, amplifies resource exploitation, and diminishes public engagement and awareness of environmental concerns. Panigaj (2023) provides insights into the draft principles on protection of the environment during armed conflicts, highlighting the legal frameworks that govern environmental protection during times of conflict. The study of Galinato & Galinato (2012) documented the mitigating effect of a stable political system on ecological deterioration. Since the commencement of the military coup in Myanmar in 2021, political upheaval has accelerated the depletion of the country's vital resources, plunging it into environmental decline (Darbyshire, 2021). Darbyshire (2021) stresses that Myanmar's environmental crisis is now a pressing concern. Kenny (2020) notes that political turmoil can shift public focus away from environmental issues, worsening environmental damage. Thus, public perception plays a crucial role in driving environmental efforts, including individual actions and policy development. Understanding how different socioeconomic groups view environmental issues is essential for crafting effective

strategies post-instability (Bi et al., 2010). Agheli & Taghvaei (2022) highlight the link between political stability and environmental sustainability in Asia, emphasizing its role in maintaining environmental well-being. Kirikkaleli & Osmanlı (2023) explore Turkey's case, illustrating how political stability impacts long-term environmental conditions. The assessment of public perception on environmental issues during the political crisis in Myanmar is crucial for understanding the complex dynamics between political instability and environmental sustainability. Due to the limited research on public perception of environmental issues in Myanmar, this research endeavors to uncover insights into public perspectives during periods of political instability.

1.2 Objectives

The specific objectives are as follows:

- (1) To examine the current environmental issues faced by people during the political crisis in Myanmar,
- (2) To understand the awareness of people on the performance of People's Administrative Bodies to environmental issues during the political crisis, and
- (3) To assess the accessibility of information relating to environmental issues and the performance of the People's Administrative Bodies.

2. Research Methodology

To achieve the research goals, a simple random sampling method was used for data collection.

2.1 Design of the survey questionnaires

The focus of the assessment was on public awareness of various environmental issues, including Air Quality, Water Quality, Land Use, and Climate-related concerns, amidst the political crisis in Myanmar. A Google Form questionnaire survey in the Myanmar language was prepared to collect the data from respondents representing diverse demographics and geographical areas across Myanmar. The survey included different types of questions including Likert scale (Awareness assessment as Aware, Not Aware and Not know/Ignore; Score Level assessment from 1 to 5; Quality assessment as Not very reliable, Not reliable, Don't know/Ignore, Reliable and Very Reliable), multiple-choice, and open-ended questions to gauge public awareness and attitudes towards environmental issues during Myanmar's political crisis. At the beginning of the question form, the study objectives, consents and requests for voluntary participation were described. The questionnaire was structured into three parts: (1) the basic socio-demographic information of the respondents, (2) public opinions on environmental issues during the political crisis, (3) the public's perceptions regarding the effectiveness of people's administrative bodies in addressing current environmental challenges, the accessibility of information concerning environmental issues, and the performance of these administrative bodies. To assess the accessibility of information relating to environmental issues and the performance of the People's Administrative Bodies.

For the sake of security concerns of the voluntary respondents, the google form was designed to be able to give their opinions and answers as confidential (See Appendix for the survey questionnaire).

2.2 Data collection and analysis

Using the designed questionnaires, we distributed the Google Form via several online platforms like Facebook pages, and other social network systems (SNS) closed groups such as Telegram, Messenger, Signal and Email. In total, we collected 86 respondents. Of which, one individual resided in Dubai, not in Myanmar, and so we excluded that respondent from our further analysis.

Based on the collected data, we analyzed the demographic characteristics of the respondents by gender, age groups, education level, occupation, ethnicity and geographical regions.

Also, we collected the respondents' level of awareness of environmental issues, including air quality issues, water related issues (especially clean water and water shortage problems), land related issues (especially in landslides and land use problems) and climate related issues during the political crisis in Myanmar. Respondents were asked to score their awareness on a scale ranging from 1 (totally unaware) to 5 (fully aware).

To gauge public perception regarding the responsiveness of People's Administrative Bodies (PABs) to environmental concerns, we managed the assessments on awareness, satisfaction levels, and prioritized sectors.

We conducted quantitative data analysis in Excel. The information delved into the current environmental challenges faced by the public by analyzing respondents' awareness levels, identifying specific environmental issues they encountered, and evaluating the impacts of these issues.

2.3 Research Limitations

Limitations of the research may include potential biases in self-assessment survey responses, limited generalizability of findings due to the sample size and sampling method, and challenges in reaching diverse participant groups in areas where access to the internet is difficult and of conflict.

3. Results

3.1 Respondents' Characteristics

The majority of respondents are from Facebook (52.9%), followed by social network systems (SNS) closed groups (47.1%) such as Telegram, Messenger, Signal and Email (Figure 1). This suggests a heavy reliance on social media platforms, particularly Facebook, for disseminating information and gathering respondents' opinions on environmental issues during the political crisis in Myanmar despite making the internet access restricted.

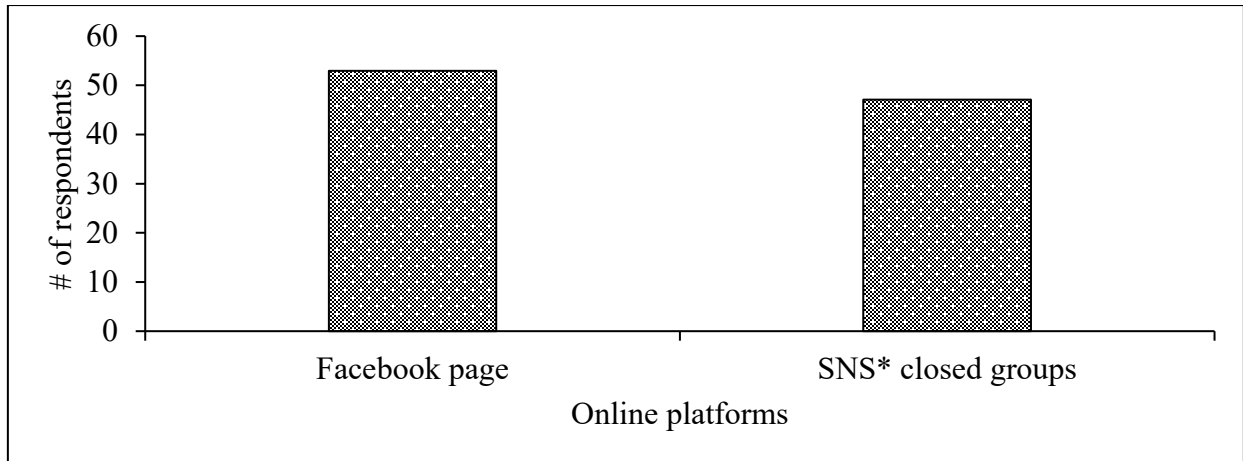


Figure 1. Number of respondents by different online platforms

*SNS includes several social network systems such as Telegram, Messenger, Signal and Email

We also analyzed demographic data to provides insights into the composition of respondents and their respective perspectives on environmental issues during the political crisis in Myanmar, taking into account the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of the population in each state and region. In terms of gender, females responded largely to our questionnaires, followed by males, LGBTQ and those who preferred not to specify (Figure 2a), representing diverse gender demographics in Myanmar. The majority of respondents fall within the age range of 16 to 52, with a noticeable concentration in the age group of 30 ~ 39 with 53 respondents (Figure 2b). This indicates that a large portion of the surveyed population consists of young adults and early-career individuals, suggesting a strong engagement with environmental issues within the age group.

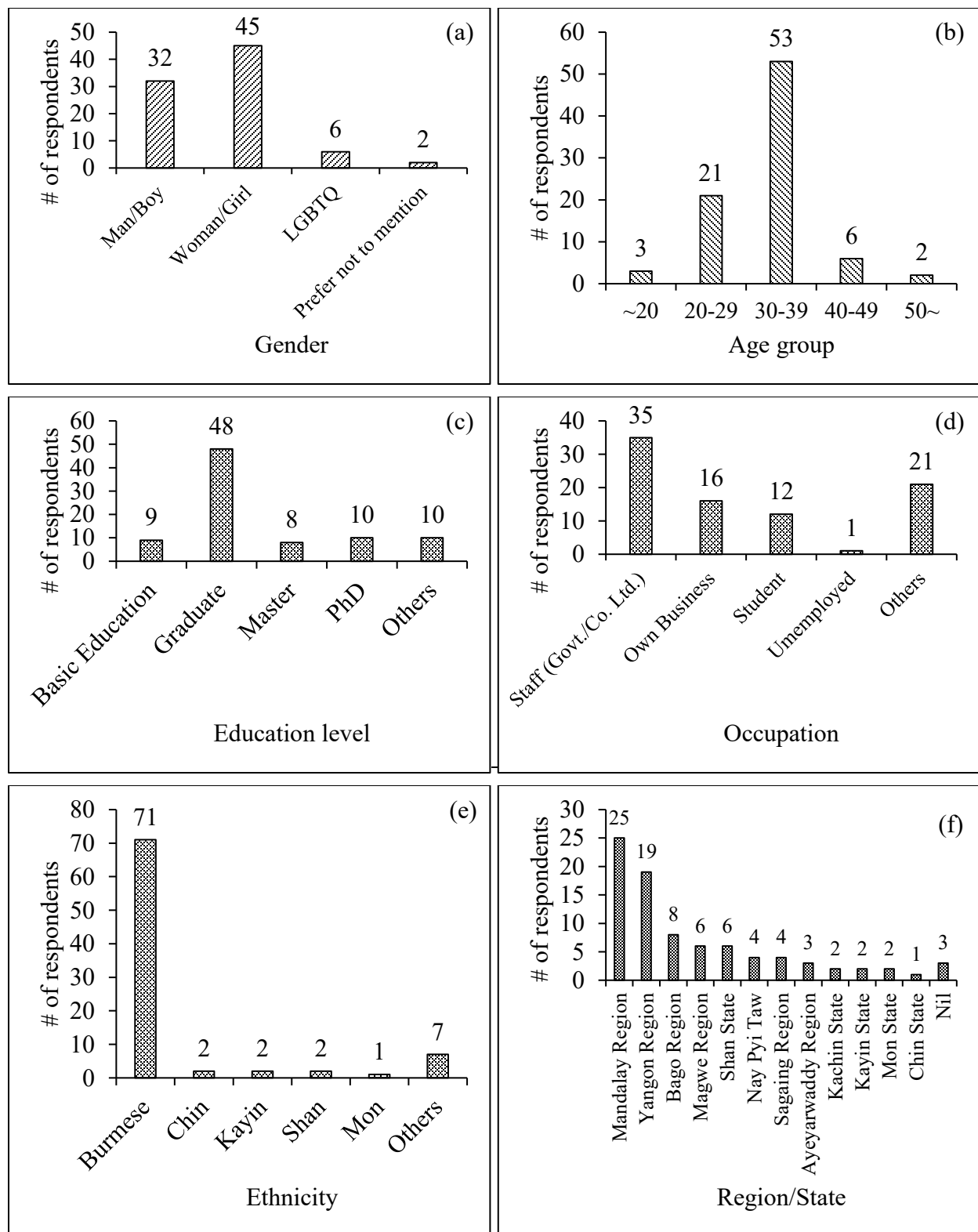


Figure 2. Respondents' characteristics by (a) Gender, (b) Age group, (c) Education level, (d) Occupation, (e) Ethnicity, and (f) Geographical region

In terms of education, most of the respondents are graduates, comprising 56.5% of the total, which indicates that a significant portion of participants have completed undergraduate studies (Figure 2c). A smaller proportion of respondents have higher degrees, with 9.4% holding a Master degree and 11.8% having a Ph.D. Additionally, 11.8% fall into the "Others" category, which may include those with vocational training, incomplete higher education, or other educational backgrounds. In our survey, those who obtained basic education also participated.

Among the respondents, staff (government or company) comprised the largest group in terms of occupation (Figure 2d), accounting for 41.2%, followed by individuals with their own business (18.8%), students (14.1%), and others (24.7%), including those directly involved in governance and environmental management. Even though there is one respondent with unemployment status, we included that respondent for our further analysis.

In terms of ethnicity, most respondents identified as Burmese (82.6%), while 17.4% belonged to various other ethnic groups such as Karen, Chin, Mon, Rakhine, Shan and mixed ethnicity (Figure 2e). This distribution highlights the need to consider ethnic diversity in addressing environmental concerns, as different ethnic groups may have unique perspectives and experiences related to environmental issues.

We also analyzed the geographical spread of respondents. The respondents are from 12 of 14 States/Regions in Myanmar (Figure 2f) with significant numbers of responses from Mandalay (25) and Yangon (19). In our survey, we could not get any responses from Kayah State and Tanintharyi Region. However, we could collect diverse environmental opinions from different States/Regions.

3.2 Awareness of Environmental Issues

While examining the awareness level of the current environmental issues encountered by the people during the political crisis in Myanmar, most respondents (over 91 %) responded the scores of 3 and more. It implies that most of the respondents are aware the environmental issues happening during the political crisis in Myanmar. Nearly 59 % of respondents (n=50) gave the highest score of 5 (Fully aware). Only the remaining 8% responded with a score of 2 (Not aware) and 1 (Totally unaware). Our findings suggest that public awareness on environmental issues is markedly high, implying that the people in Myanmar have faced many issues related to environmental degradation, and its impacts and degree of their suffering during the political crisis were largely high.

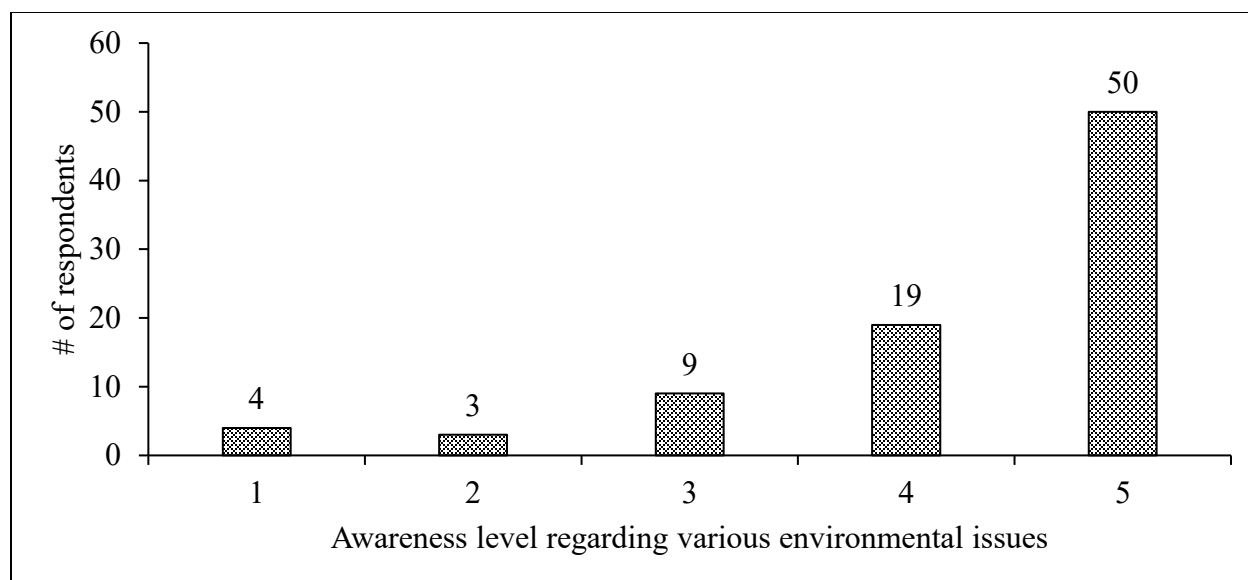


Figure 3. Respondents’ awareness level regarding Environmental Issues in Myanmar

To understand which environmental issues were mainly aware of by the public, we tried to assess their awareness in detail by focusing on four different environmental issues such as air quality, water quality, land use and climate impact.

3.2.1 Awareness on Air Quality Issues

When we tried to assess their awareness on air quality issues in their living area, 55 % of the respondents are aware of the issue, 12% are not aware, and 33 % did not know or ignore of that issue (Figure 4).

According to the respondents, the lowest level of awareness, indicated by a score of 1, was reported by a minimal proportion of respondents (Figure 5). Most of the respondents were aware of air quality issues in their respective regions. This suggests that only a small fraction of individuals perceive their awareness of air quality issues as extremely poor. Most of the respondents from Magway, Yangon, Mandalay and Kayin reported their high awareness regarding air pollution in their regions.

When asked the major causing factor of air quality issues in their respective regions (Table 1), most respondents reported vehicles (n = 48) as the major causes, following by burning waste (n = 41), torching/burning houses and buildings (n = 33), industry/factory (n = 18), and other factors such as diesel generators, forest fire or burning forests, agri-residue burning (n = 11).

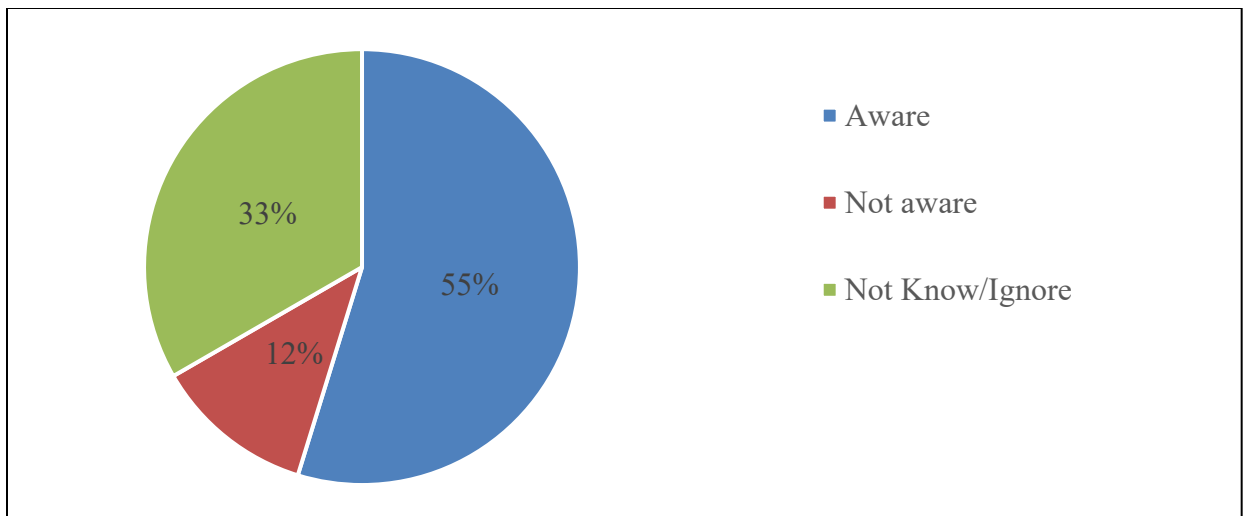


Figure 4. Awareness on air quality issues

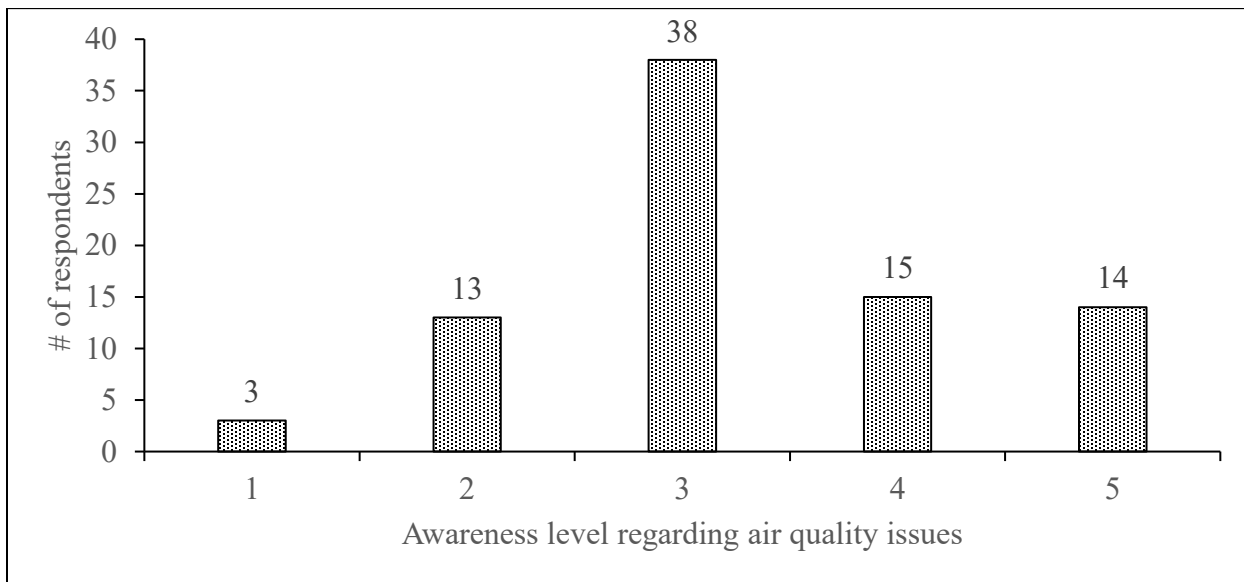


Figure 5. Awareness level regarding air quality issues.

Table 1. Number of respondents by causes of air quality issues

Causes	# of respondents
Vehicles	48
Burning Wastes	41
Torching/Burning (House/Building)	33
Industry/Factory	18
Others	11

3.2.2 Awareness of Water Quality Issues

When we assessed the awareness of water quality issues in their residing area, 48 % of the respondents were aware of it, 27 % not aware, and 25 % did not know or ignore, respectively (Figure 6).

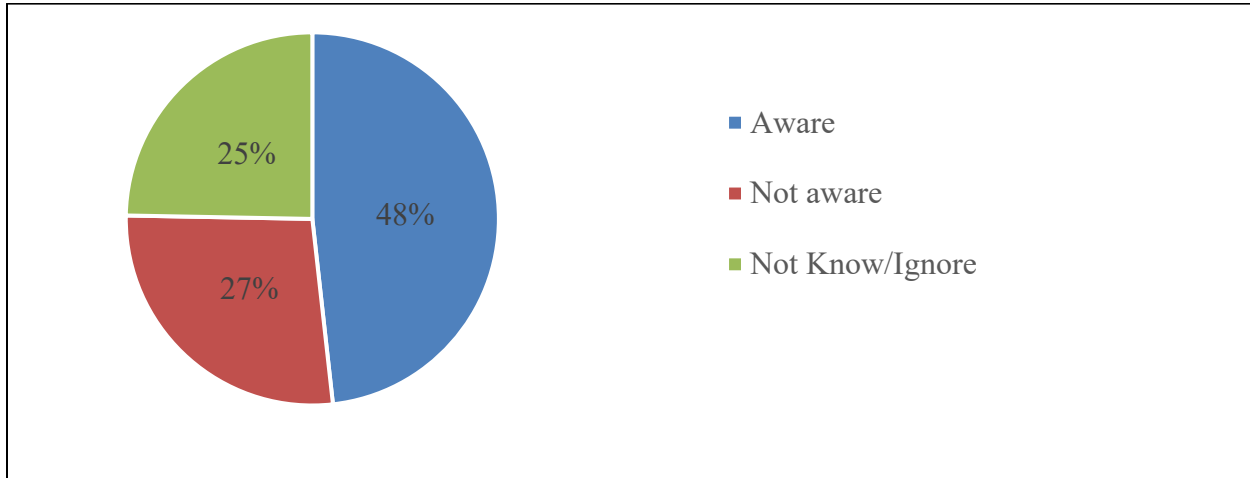


Figure 6. Awareness on water quality issues.

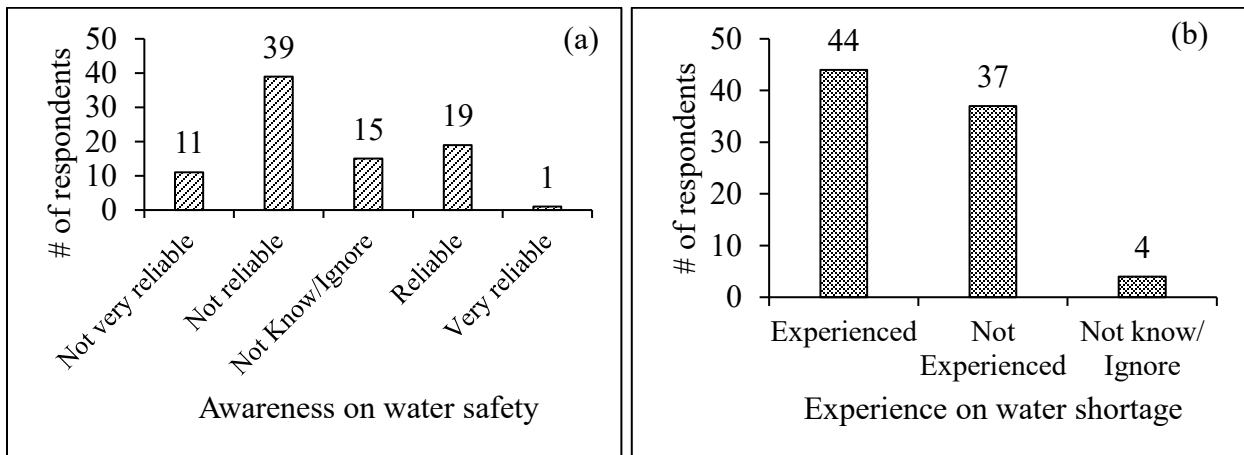


Figure 7. Awareness on (a) Water safety, and (b) Water shortage

Also, when asked about water safety, most respondents (n=50) responded "Not very reliable" or "Not reliable" (Figure 7a). Twenty respondents perceived water safety, while fifteen did not know or recognize water safety. It implies the need for heightened public awareness and concerted efforts to address this issue. Regarding water scarcity, the majority of the respondents (n=44) reported experiencing water shortage, while thirty-three respondents had not encountered it, and 7% were unsure (Figure 7b). Those who had not experienced water shortage mentioned relied on private sources like tube-wells rather than municipal distribution channels.

This highlights a significant water shortage in parts of Myanmar and a growing awareness of this issue amid the political crisis. The public's awareness of water quality and safe water availability conditions remains notably high during these challenging times.

Table 2. Impacts on water safety and security works by People’s Administrative Bodies (PABs) during political crisis in Myanmar

Impacts on water works	# of respondents	% of total respondents
No change in effort	10	11.76
Significantly reduced effort	55	64.71
Slightly reduced effort	19	22.35
Not sure	1	1.18

When assessed the efforts of the People’s Administrative Bodies (PABs) to preserve and enhance water quality and quantity, the data revealed a significant decrease in effort for water related activities by 65% and a slight decrease by 22% (Table 2). Only 12% show no change in effort, while about 1% are unsure. Our findings suggest a logical response to Myanmar's current situation amidst escalating internal conflicts. The 12% reporting no change can also be interpreted as a reasonable response, potentially due to the implementation of work plans by State Administration Council crews in certain regions.

3.2.3 Awareness on Land-use Issues

When we asked about the impacts on land use, especially on agricultural practice, land access and ownership, in your area during the political crisis, very few respondents (n=5) said they did not observe any serious negative impacts on their land use during the political crisis. Other respondents reported the different levels of impacts on their land use (Figure 8).

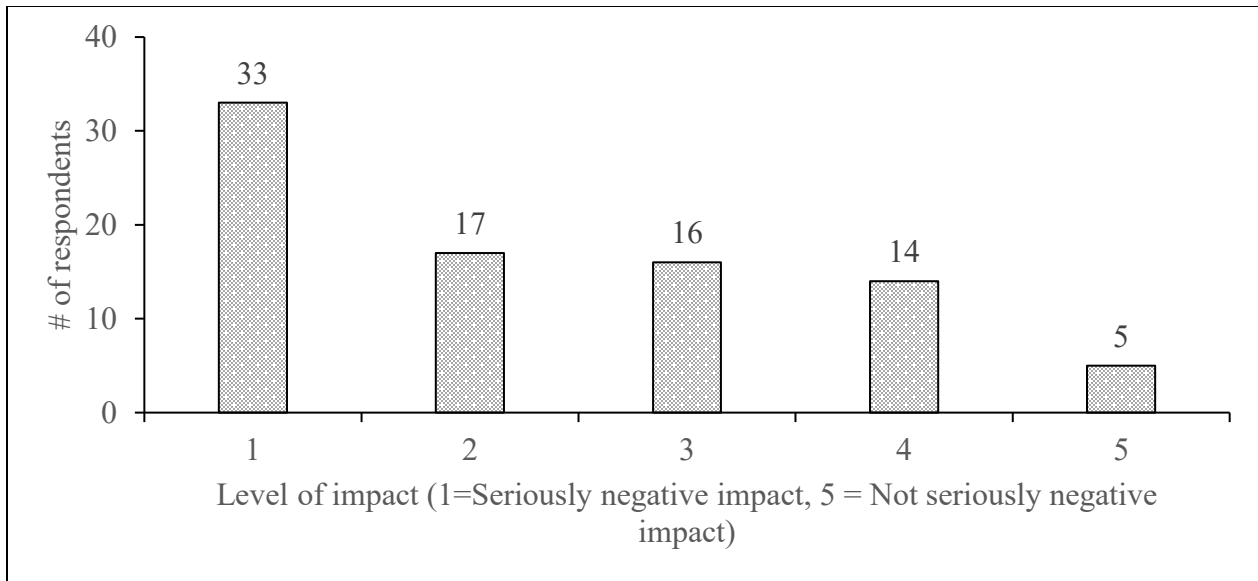


Figure 8. Different level of impacts on land use during the political crisis in Myanmar

When we asked detailed changes in land use such as deforestation, land use change and force migration, most respondents (n=70) were aware of such issues during the political crisis. Some respondents (n=12) were not aware of such issues while the others (n = 3) did not recognize such kind of problems in their surroundings (Figure 9a).

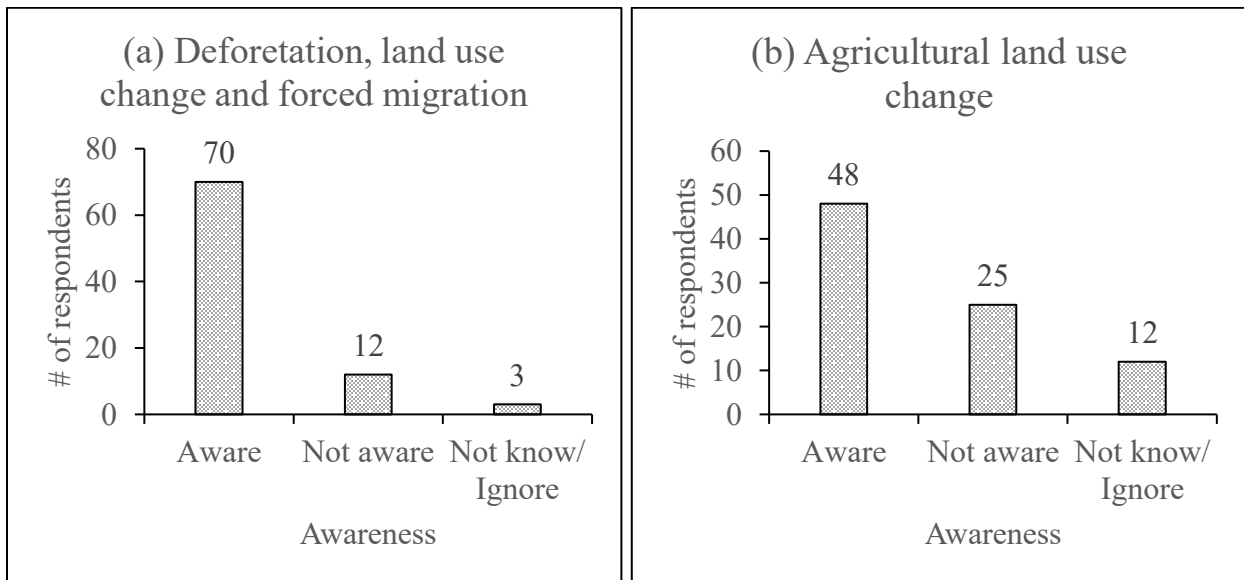


Figure 9. Awareness on (a) deforestation and land use change, and (b) agricultural land use change.

Our survey also targeted awareness of agricultural land-use challenges arising from post-mining land recovery issues, focusing on agricultural land depletion and related impacts. Results revealed that 56% of respondents were aware, while 27% were not, and 16% were unsure or indifferent (Figure 9b).

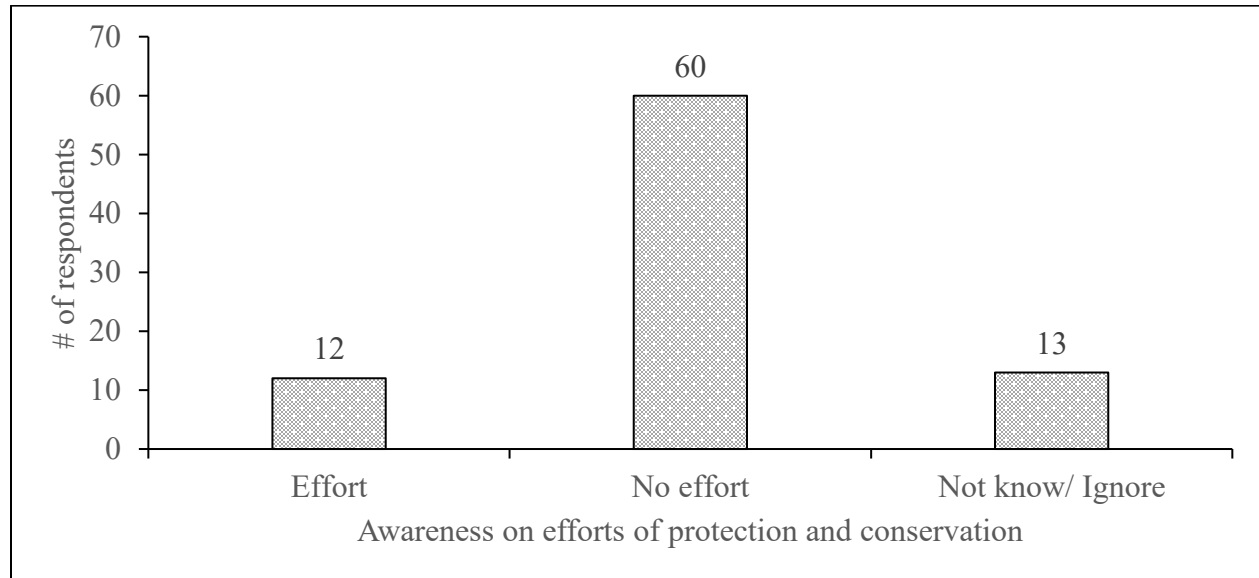


Figure 10. Awareness of efforts to protect and conserve wild land and landscape systems

In a follow-up questionnaire on government efforts to safeguard wild land and landscape ecosystems, 71% of the respondents (n=60) notably perceived no substantial government effort, contrasting with 14% (n=12) acknowledging effort and 15% (n=13) unsure or indifferent (Figure 10). Our findings underscore the need to bolster government initiatives for the protection and conservation of natural ecosystems in the future.

3.2.4 Awareness of Climate Issue

When we surveyed the intensity level of climate issues faced during the political crisis, we observed that few respondents (n=6) reported they did not face any serious impact by climate change, while others (n=69) responded they faced different level of intensity due to climate change in their respective regions (Figure 11).

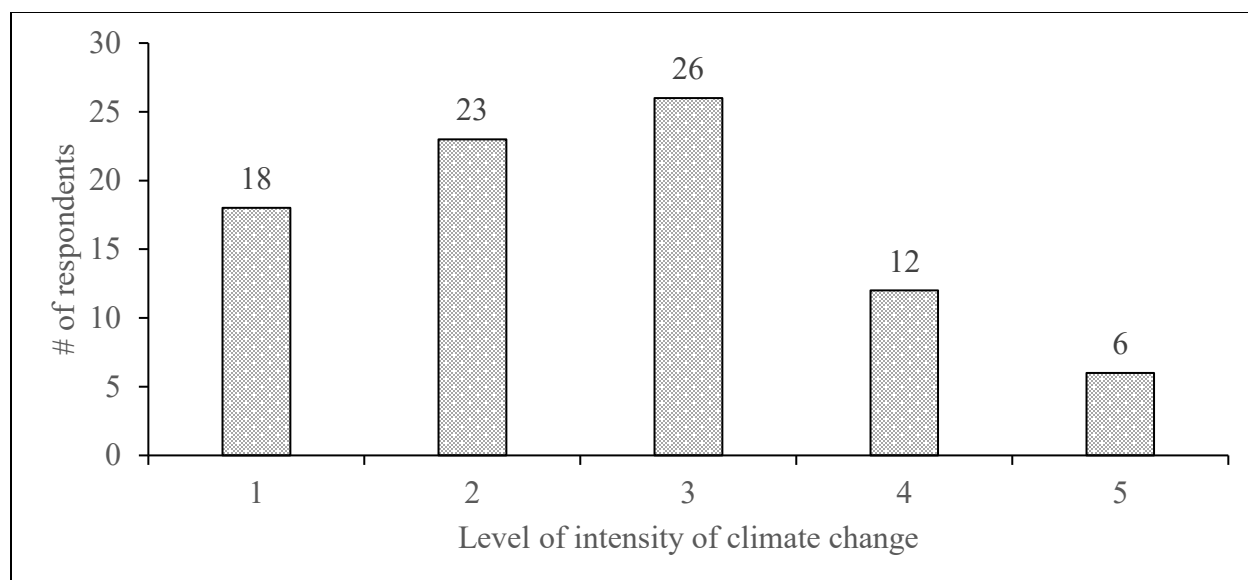


Figure 11. Level of intensity on climate change in Myanmar during political crisis.

When we explored what kinds of environmental changes faced during the political crisis, flooding is the highest reported issue by 25 respondents (**Table 3**) followed by drought (n=21), intense heat (n=20), frequent and irregular rain (n=8), worsening air quality (n=6), irregular climate patterns (n=5), storm (n=4), and heavy rain and increased temperature (n=2).

Table 3. Awareness of climate change during political crisis in Myanmar.

Climate change	# of respondents	% of total respondents
Flooding	25	29.41
Drought	21	24.71
Intense heat	20	23.53
Frequent and irregular rain	8	9.41
Worsening air quality	6	7.06
Irregular climate patterns	5	5.88
Storm	4	4.71
Heavy rain	2	2.35
Increased temperature	2	2.35

Table 4. Awareness on impacts of political crisis on climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts in Myanmar

Impacts of political crisis on climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts	# of respondents	% of total respondents
All sectors	17	20.00
Daily life	12	14.12
Barrier on adaptation action	8	9.41
Limitation on environmental conservation activities	6	7.06
Environmental project suspension	5	5.88
Land use issues	4	4.71
Electricity access	3	3.53
Agricultural impacts	3	3.53
Air pollution	2	2.35
Drought	2	2.35
Increased dependency on natural resources	2	2.35
Water shortage	2	2.35
Health	1	1.18
Income generation	1	1.18
Weaknesses in municipal services	1	1.18

When we conducted the awareness assessment on how the political crisis impacts on the climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts (**Table 4**) most respondents said it impacted on all sectors (n=20). Some specified its impacts on their daily life (n=12) while others reported different impacts such as barrier on adaptation action (n=8), limitation on environmental conservation activities (n=6), environmental project suspension (n=5), land use (n=4), electricity access and agricultural practices (n=3), air quality, drought, increased dependency on natural resources and water shortage (n=2), and health, income generation, and weakness in municipal services (n=1).

Table 5. Self-involvement in activities to deal with environmental problems during political crisis.

Self-involvement in activities to deal with environmental problems	# of respondents
Self-environmental conservation	23
Environmental knowledge sharing	1
No opportunity to involve	2
Willingness to involve	1
No involvement	58

When we assessed the respondents' involvement to handle the environmental problems in their regions, most respondents (n=58) did not get involved due to intense political situation and security concerns, while some respondents (n=24) participated in environmental conservation activities such as environmental knowledge sharing. Some are willing to take part in, but they do not have opportunities to do so (Table 5).

3.3 Awareness on Response of the State Administrative Council (SAC) and People's Administrative Bodies (PAB) to Environmental Issues

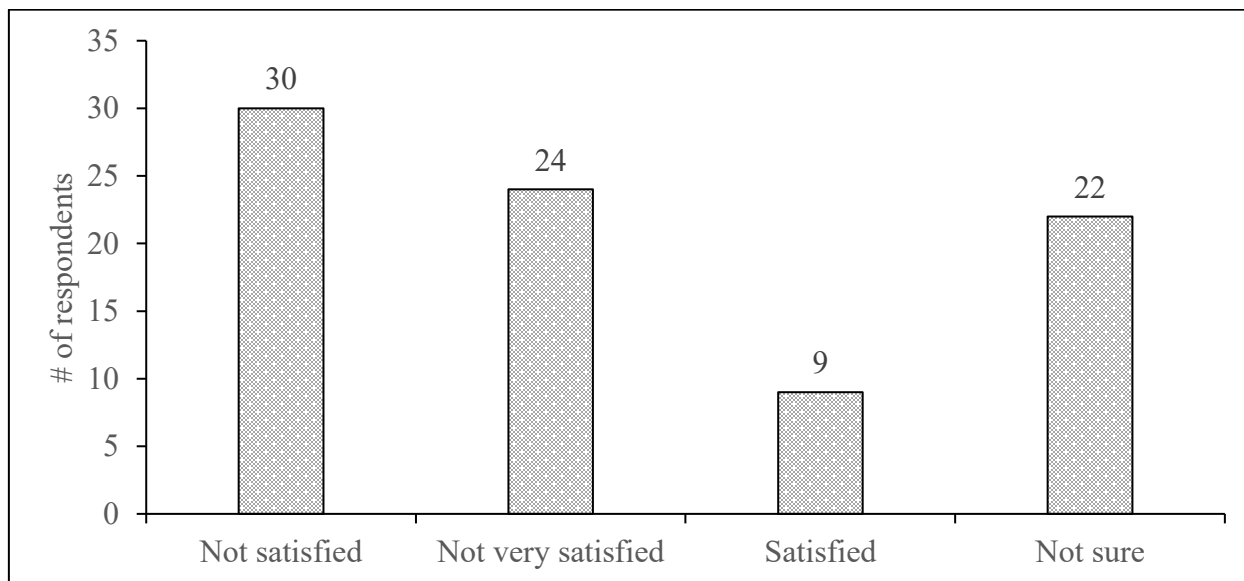


Figure 12. Satisfaction on the response of the SAC to environmental issues during political crisis.

When we assessed the satisfaction of the SAC's response to environmental issues during the political crisis, most respondents seemed to be confused which government they need to state

during the conflict period. However, the majority of respondents (n=54) showed they did not satisfy the SAC’s response to environmental issues (Figure 12).

When we asked for the respondents to provide their recommendations for the future government to cope with several environmental problems, most of the respondents (n=48) suggested to incorporate environmental education into curriculum of the elementary schools. Table 6, followed by effective implementation of policies and laws (n=45), provide environmental education to the public (n=43), review and revise the existing rules and regulations (n=41), as well as strengthen the capacity of the staff (n=4).

Table 6. Recommended actions to the future government for effective actions on environmental challenges

Recommended actions on environmental challenges	# of respondents	% of total respondents
Incorporating the general environmental education into the curriculum of elementary schools	48	56.47
Effective implementation of environmental policies/laws that have been issued	45	52.94
Environmental education to the public	43	50.59
Reviewing existing laws/regulations/policies, re-drafting and effective implementation of laws/regulations/policies that include all aspects	41	48.24
Skills and capacity of the staff under the administration Regime are not well enough and also capacity building and recruiting are necessary	4	4.71

We also assessed the awareness of the activities by PAB to respond the changes in environmental condition in Myanmar during the political crisis. According to our survey, only 31 % of the respondents (n=26) are aware of several activities by PAB to respond to different environmental issues while 67% are not aware (Figure 13). Moreover, 2 % of the respondents (n=2) responded that the PABs are doing nothing to deal with the environmental activities in their region during the political crisis.

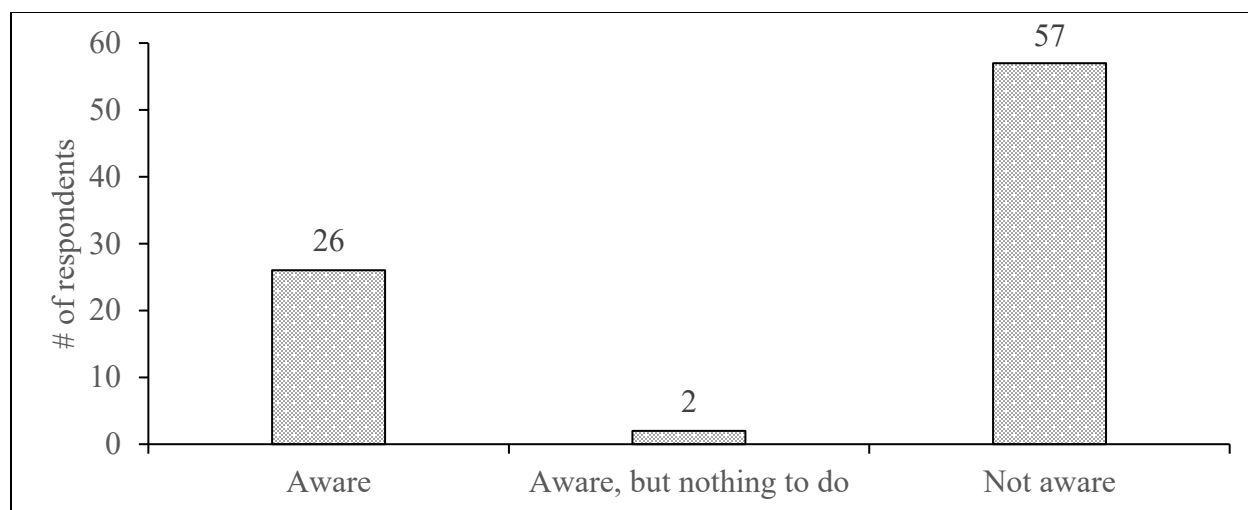


Figure 13. Awareness on the activities of People’s Administrative Bodies (PAB) to environmental issues.

When we assessed the public satisfaction on the activities of PABs to respond to environmental issues (Table 7), we observed that most respondents were not satisfied (65%). However, 25% of the respondents said they were satisfied with the response activities by PAB while a few respondents (n=2) said the PAB needs more actions.

Table 7. Satisfaction with performance of the People’s Administrative Bodies to the environmental issues

Satisfaction on the response of People’s Administrative Bodies to Environmental Issues	# of respondents	% of total respondents
Satisfied	21	24.71
Need more actions and others	2	2.35
Not satisfied	55	64.71
Not aware	7	8.24

The respondents who were not satisfied want the PAB to do the following activities for effective actions on environmental protection and management.

- Peace is the most important to implement environmental conservation activities, and so PABs should take power and control the country as quickly as possible.
- PABs should have more practical environmental policies, which are more relevant to the different local conditions. Also, the policies should encourage local people’s participation.

- PABs should implement awareness raising activities on environmental protection and conservation to the public.
- Human resources development, especially for environmental conservation, should be prioritized.
- PABs should not grant large-scale land concession, but for subsistence purpose.
- PABs should collaborate with other NGOs, CSOs, CBOs and international organizations, as well as local people to better manage the environment.

3.4 Access to information on environmental issues and the current performances of PABs

When we identified the accessibility of information relating to the environmental issues and the current performances of PABs, the majority (93% of the total respondents) gained the information via “Social Media” (Facebook, Youtube, Tiktok), followed by environmental organizations such as MONREC-NUG and other websites (36%), verbal communication (29 %), TV (14%), Radio (8%) and Newspapers (7%) (

Table 8).

Table 8. Information sources accessed for environmental information

Information sources	# of respondents	% of total respondents
Social media (Facebook, YouTube, TikTok)	79	92.94
Environmental organization	31	36.47
Verbal communication	25	29.41
TV	12	14.12
Radio	7	8.24
Newspapers	6	7.06
Others	2	2.35

4. Discussion

Our study highlighted diverse environmental challenges faced by Myanmar's public, including air and water pollution, land-use issues, and climate impacts. The diverse age and educational background of respondents provides a useful perspective on the demographic factors that influence public awareness during this period in Myanmar, reflecting their potentially higher awareness or access to information about environmental issues, despite the ongoing political

crisis. Respondents showed substantial awareness of these challenges, especially land-use problems, underscoring the severity of environmental issues during the crisis. Such environmental issues are not new in other parts of the world, but Myanmar is very special due to long internal conflicts. Also, even though the public faced daily life challenges due to internal conflicts, they are still aware of their environmental condition via different information sources. During the political crisis, the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the SAC's as well as PABs' responses to environmental issues. This sentiment reflects a gap between public expectations and perceived government actions, signaling the need for more effective environmental policies and enforcement. On the website of MONREC-NUG (<https://monrec.nugmyanmar.org>), there are some activities by the PAB to mitigate environmental issues. However, according to our findings, the public awareness on environmental issues outweighs their awareness on response of the PAB to environmental issues, probably because there might be limitations in public relation and media outreach dimensions to implementing the responses by the PAB to environmental issues in this current situation.

According to our findings, social media such as Facebook, YouTube and TikTok emerged as a major information source, indicating its growing influence in disseminating environmental information. It reflects the real situation that most of the people mainly uses Facebook, YouTube and TikTok in Myanmar. Therefore, during the current political crisis, access to Facebook, Instagram, X, WhatsApp and VPN services was banned nationwide at the end of May, 2024 by the Transport and Communications Ministry under the State Administrative Council (SAC)¹. Concerns remain about the reliability of social media as an information channel, suggesting the importance of diversified and reliable communication strategies.

Respondents' recommendations, such as enhancing environmental education, improving law enforcement, and increasing public involvement, provide actionable insights for policymakers. These findings can guide the development of more robust environmental conservation measures and policies. Our findings underscore the critical need for proactive measures to address environmental challenges during political crises. By bridging the gap between public awareness

¹ <https://apnews.com/article/myanmar-censorship-virtual-private-network-facebook-79fb4cc0c3c4317844d0c00b0be1d9d1#>

and governmental responses, policymakers can foster a more sustainable and resilient environmental framework for Myanmar.

In this research, we could not emphasize about environmental education, environmental campaigns and current environmental and climate policy implications in depth because this research is the assessment of public awareness on environmental challenges they faced during the political crisis after the 2021 Military Coup. We have considered the education levels and expertise on this environmental field and so, we conducted the survey focusing only general knowledge based on their experiences. For that case, we suggest conducting the specific research study by interviewing the environmental practitioners, Fund assisting organizations, local stakeholders and non-governmental organizations who are operating environmental conservation activities or projects.

5. Conclusion

this study highlights the significant environmental challenges faced by Myanmar during its political crisis, revealing critical insights into public awareness and perceptions. The results indicate a high level of awareness among the population regarding various environmental issues, including air and water quality, land use, and climate change. However, the findings also underscore the limitations in public engagement and the inadequate response from governing bodies, particularly the State Administrative Council (SAC), in addressing these environmental concerns. Despite the challenging political situation, there is a clear public demand for stronger environmental policies, enhanced education, and the need for capacity-building initiatives to foster environmental conservation efforts.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the role of People's Administrative Bodies (PABs) in improving environmental management and underscores the importance of incorporating environmental education into the public curriculum. Addressing environmental degradation and fostering public participation in conservation efforts require a multi-faceted approach, which involves reforming governance structures, improving access to information, and promoting sustainable practices at all levels. Future research should explore more in-depth analyses of the socioeconomic impacts of political instability on environmental sustainability and assess the long-term consequences for both governance and natural resource management in Myanmar.

Therefore, this research study could provide useful information for the formulation of effective environmental conservation measures, frameworks, amendments of the respective policy and laws and regulations in the future.

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