

Single-use Plastic-Bag Survey

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

LSDS Coordination Meeting,
May 2025



Overview



Camp 2E, 3, 5, 6, 11, 27



Total 175 Respondents
Consumer- 79 (Female 18, Male 61)
Shopkeepers- 96



Over 3 weeks, 5 Enumerators

- **Questionnaire developed in consultation with LSDS, EEN, WASH**
- **Open-ended questionnaire, a set of 30 questions**
- **Camp selection based on camp market exercise**
- **Bio-degradable sample bags collected and used during data collection**

Findings from the Shopkeepers

Total Shopkeepers- 96



Business Longevity and Plastic Bag Dependency

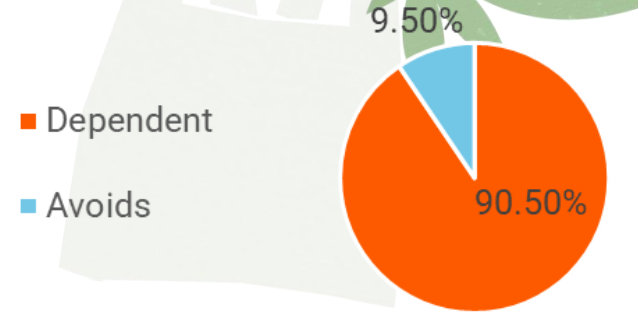
- Various types of businesses including grocery, clothing, betel, restaurant, meat and others.
- 88% have been operating for 1-5 and 5 to 10 years. (50/50)
- **90.5% (86 businesses)** use plastic bags, with only **9.5% (10 businesses)** avoid them (clothes, handicraft)
- Plastic bags are sourced in-camp and nearby markets

Frequency of Plastic Bag Use

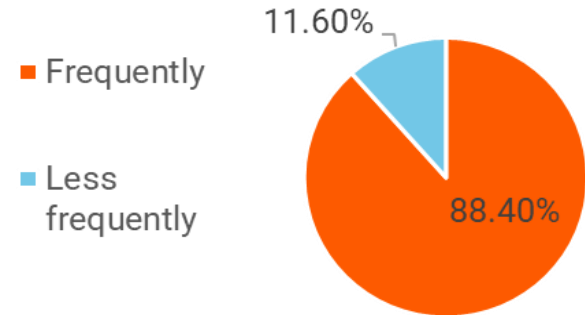
Among those using plastic bags:

- **88.4% (76 businesses)** always provide them to customers.
- **11.6% (10 businesses)** use them less frequently (clothes, cosmetic)
- Almost all provide plastic bags for free

Plastic Bag Dependency



Frequency of Plastic Bag Use



Alternatives

- 33 business provide alternative options including cloth and paper bags – non-food items (clothes, cosmetic, shoes, pharmacy, hardware with few grocery and fruit shops)
- Alternative bags are sourced locally or nearby markets (kotupalong bazar)

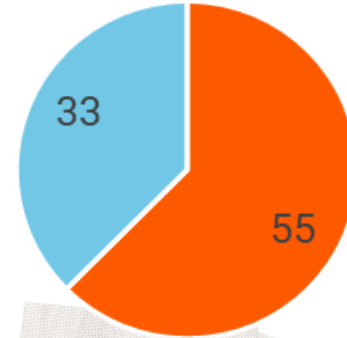
Challenges to Alternative Options

Barriers to use alternative options:

- Availability, customer preference, price and type of business
- **55** businesses reported that customers prefer plastic bags while **33** said that customers have no preference

Challenges to Alternative Options

- Prefer Plastic Bags
- Have no opinion



Awareness

- **62** businesses had awareness on environmental effect reporting impact on soil, agriculture, clogged drains, air pollution and others

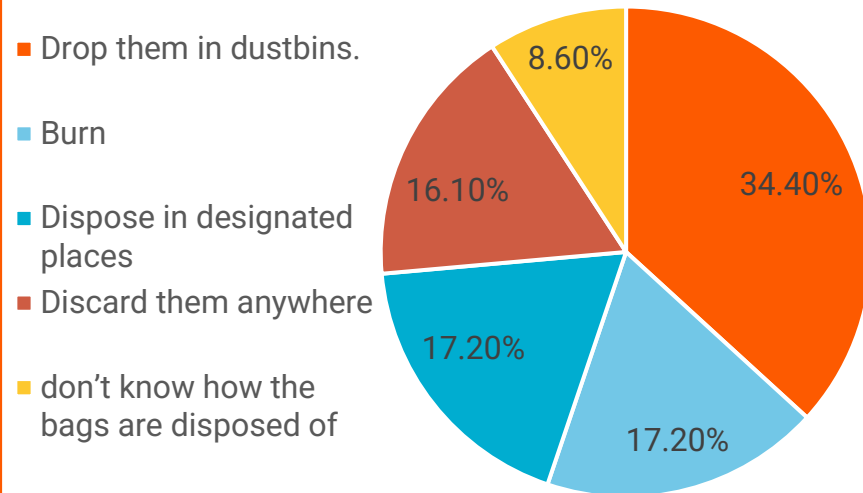


Disposal Practices for Used Plastic Bags

Businesses dispose of plastic bags in different ways:

- **34.4% (32 businesses)** drop them in dustbins.
- **17.2% (16 businesses)** burn them
- **16.1% (15 businesses)** dispose of them in designated places.
- **7.5% (7 businesses)** discard them anywhere
- **8.6% (8 businesses)** don't know how the bags are disposed of.
- **6.5%** either reuse, sell, or hand over bags to a waste team

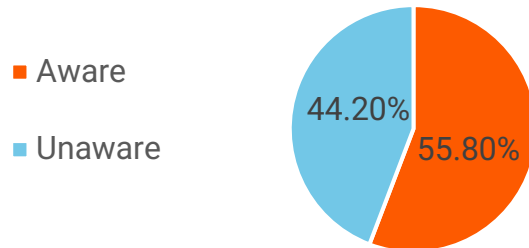
Disposal Practices for Used Plastic Bags



Awareness of Legal Regulations

- **44.2% (42 businesses)** are unaware of plastic bag regulations, while **55.8% (53 businesses)** acknowledge their existence.

Awareness of Legal Regulations

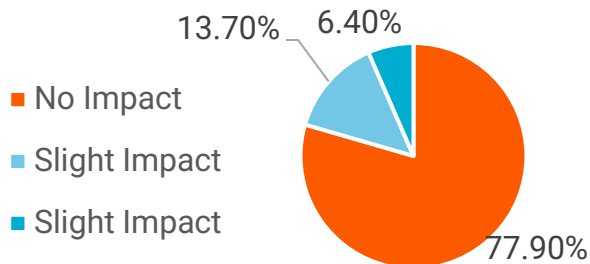


Business Impact of a Plastic Bag Ban

If plastic bags were banned:

- **77.9% (74 businesses)** said there would be no impact.
- **56 businesses** would use alternatives including paper, jute and cloth bags if plastic is banned

Business Impact of a Plastic Bag Ban



Bio-Bags

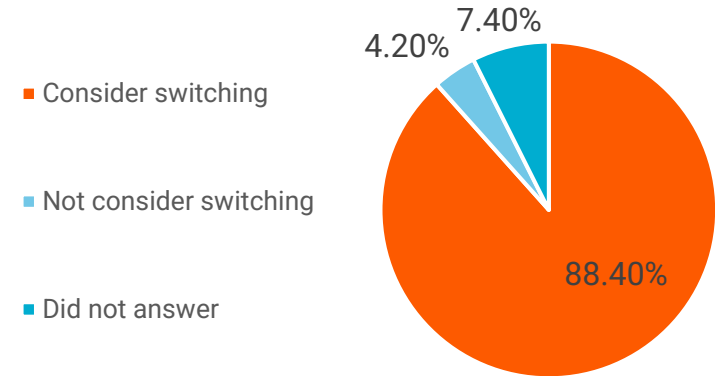
- All businesses reported that customers will accept the bio-bags.
- Majority reported **strength, water resistance** and **reusability** as most important qualities.
- **77 businesses** said the bio-bags will perform well and **10 reported** it will perform better than plastic bags
- 56 reported no challenges to switch to bio-bags remaining reported challenges related to awareness, price and quality.
- **29** businesses reported they'd still need to use plastic bags even with alternatives – grocery, meat, fish shops



Transition to Biodegradable Alternatives

- Businesses showed strong willingness to adopt biodegradable bags with **88.4%** (84 businesses) would consider switching if available.
- Common reasons for considering biodegradable bags include:
- Environmental benefits (pollution reduction, soil protection).
- Long-term sustainability and nature conservation.
- Potential bans on single-use plastics

Transition to Biodegradable Alternatives



Consumer Preferences and Alternative Bag Availability

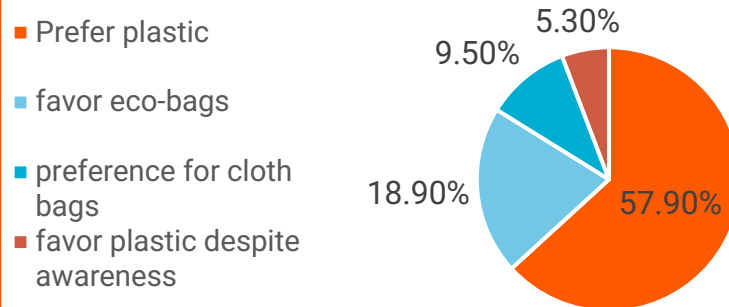
When asked about consumer preferences:

- **57.9% (55 businesses)** said customers prefer plastic bags.
- **18.9% (18 businesses)** believed consumers favour eco-bags.
- **9.5% (9 businesses)** indicated a preference for cloth bags.
- **5.3% (5 businesses)** stated consumers still favour plastic despite awareness.

When asked about alternative bag usage:

- **68.4% (64 businesses)** would fully transition away from plastic.
- **30.6% (29 businesses)** would still need plastic bags.

Consumer Preferences



Perception about alternative bag usage



Challenges and Benefits of Biodegradable Bags

Potential challenges with switching:

- **58.9% (56 businesses)** saw no major issues.
- **12.6% (12 businesses)** cited awareness and availability concerns.
- **13.7% (13 businesses)** worried about price, strength, and weight.
- **6.3% (6 businesses)** believed cost would be an initial barrier but would normalize.

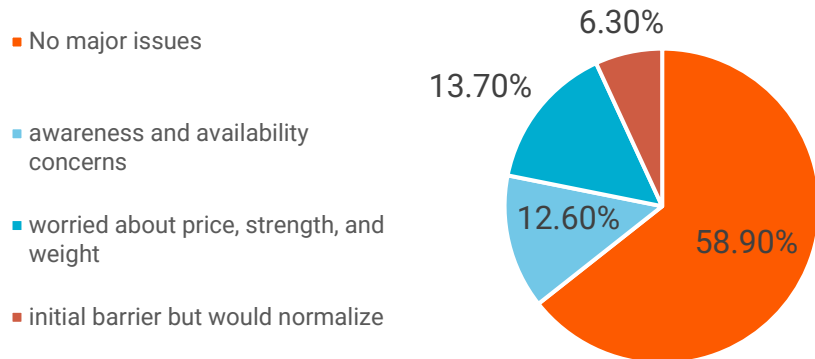
Perceived benefits of biodegradable bags:

- **31.6% (30 businesses)** recognized environmental advantages.
- **29.5% (28 businesses)** were uncertain about their benefits.
- **7.4% (7 businesses)** mentioned pollution reduction.

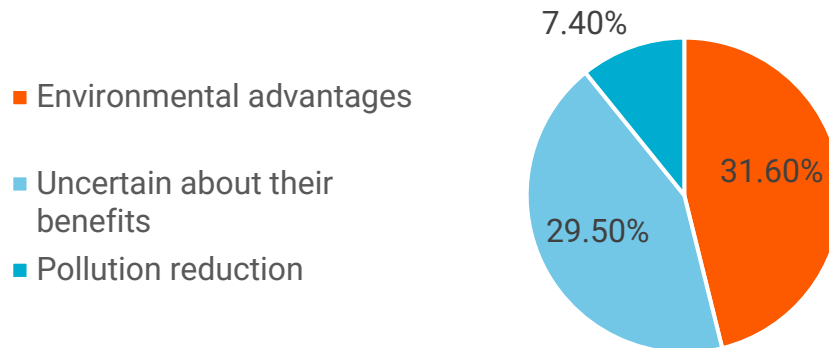
Others cited biodegradability, improved soil conditions, and waste reduction

Challenges and Benefits of Biodegradable Bags

Potential challenges with switching



Perceived benefits of biodegradable bags



Findings from the Consumers



Total Consumers- 79

Female- 18

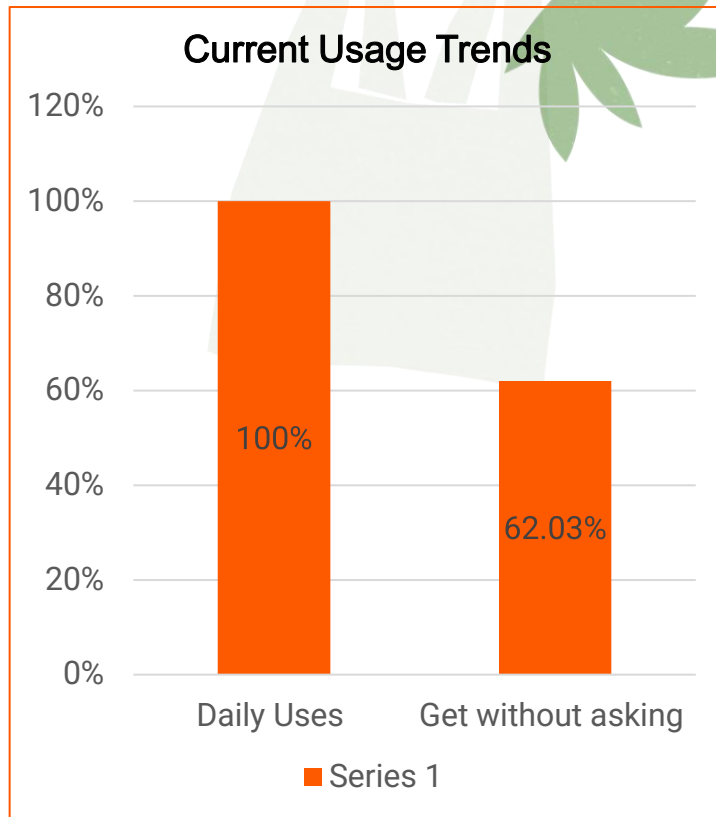
Male- 61

Current Usage Trends

- All participants (**100%**) use single-use plastic bags.
- Used for all products especially vegetables, fish and meat. While paper and cloth bags are used for some products

Usage Frequency

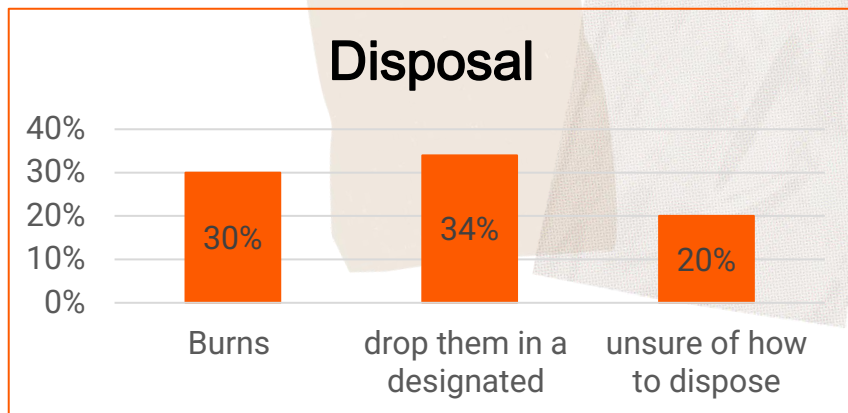
- Most participants use plastic bags daily.
- Majority use single-use plastic bags once with more than half (53%) have no other uses.



Disposal

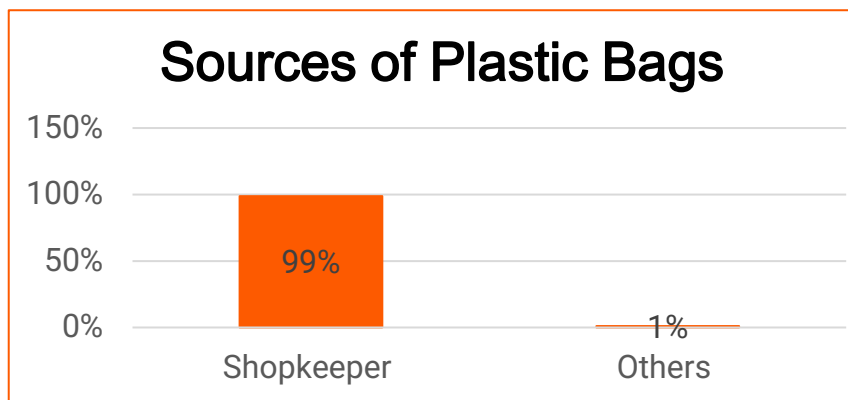
Respondent reported mix methods of disposing of plastic bags:

- **30%** of respondents burn the bags.
- **34%** of respondents drop them in a designated location.
- **20%** of respondents are unsure of how to dispose of them.



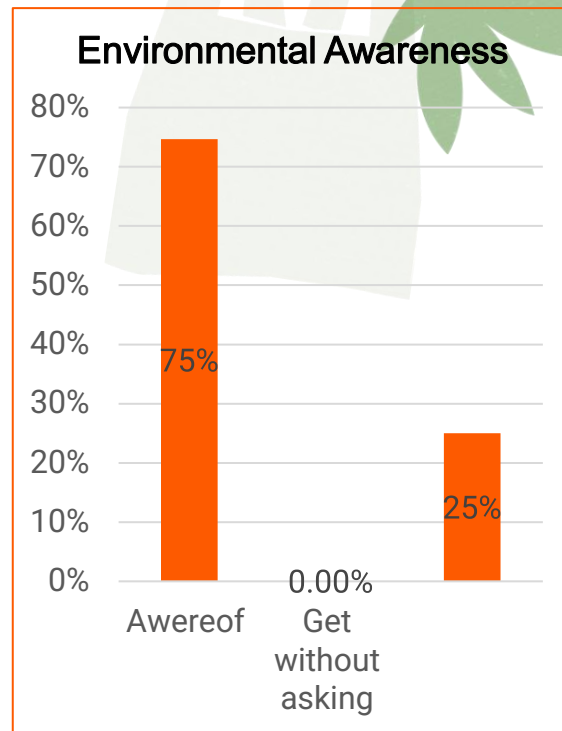
Sources of Plastic Bags

- A vast majority, **98.73%**, of participants rely solely on **shopkeepers** to receive plastic bags.



Environmental Awareness

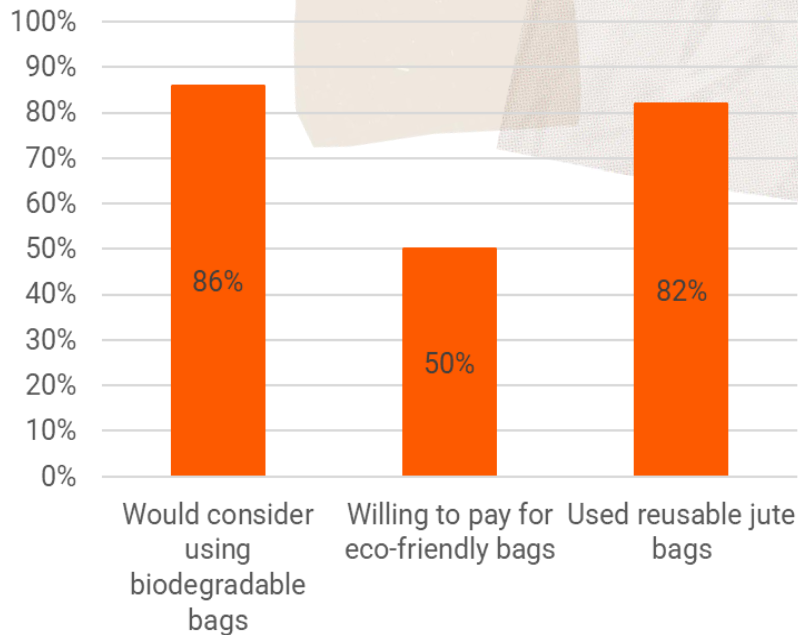
- **75%** of participants demonstrated awareness of the effects of single-use plastic bags with many reporting impact on the environment, soil, agriculture, drain blockages, water contamination and others.
- Majority are not aware of any particular law or regulation on plastic use



Transition to Eco-Friendly Solutions

- **86%** of participants would consider using biodegradable bags if they are available with majority reporting environment friendly as motivation
- **50% are willing to pay** for eco-friendly bags. Other respondents expect bio-bags to be provided for free (current practise) or do not wish to pay extra
- **82% of participants use/have used reusable jute bags** distributed from NFI (Non-Food Items) points. 2 to 3 months average life cycle.

Transition to Eco-Friendly Solutions



Community Perceptions, Engagement and Awareness

- When asked about what they value in plastic bags, majority **emphasized strength, affordability, and availability.**
- The biggest factors in switching to biodegradable bags is **cost and availability**
- **100% of participants** showed interest in attending awareness sessions on bag usage and the environmental impacts of plastic waste.



Major Findings



- High reliance on plastic bags (90.5% of businesses).
- Strong willingness to adopt biodegradable alternatives (88.4%).
- Limited awareness about plastic regulations (55.8%).
- Minimal recycling efforts (only 6.5% reuse or resell).
- Customer preference remains largely plastic-oriented (57.9%).

Recommendations

- Increase Awareness: Strengthen educational campaigns about plastic waste regulations.
- Improve Disposal Management: Encourage structured waste disposal and recycling initiatives.
- Promote Alternative Bags: Ensure cost-effective biodegradable bags are available.
- Introduce Incentives: Encourage businesses to charge for plastic bags or offer eco-friendly bags at a discount.
- Regulate Pricing & Availability: Make biodegradable bags strong enough and affordable to compete with plastic.
- Enforce Plastic Bans Strategically: Gradually phase out plastics without disrupting businesses.



