

ABSTRACT

The current state of high density polyethylene bags waste in Myanmar is alarming. Retail shopping bags are not inherently bad but they have terrible consequences in a throwaway society and there are simple, readily available ways to reduce dependency of consumers and properly reuse, recycle or dispose of them. The purpose of the study was to explore the awareness on the health and environmental impacts caused by high density polyethylene bags among the sellers in Kyaukpadaung Market. To achieve this, a research employing cross-sectional descriptive study by simple random sampling was conducted in Kyaukpadaung Market within three weeks. Chi-square test was carried out, using SPSS version 17.0 Statistical Analysis Software Package. According to the findings of the study, there were high density polyethylene bags which were mainly used to pack goods in the Kyaukpadaung Market. Most of the respondents had fair awareness of the impacts of high density polyethylene bags. Interestingly the respondents had more awareness on environmental hazards of high density polyethylene bags than that of health hazards. The age group of 31-40 years was the highest awareness persons in this study. Another interesting point was that awareness level was not associated with education status. Also, there will be convenient to use eco-friendly packing materials such as basket, metal containers, leaf (in-phat), paper and paper bags, low density polythene bags as alternative materials to replace high density polyethylene bags. Therefore, this study reported that “Reuse” and “Reduce” were the well-known items of 3R Practice (Reuse, Reduce and Recycle) to promote anti-plastic bags programme among the sellers in Kyaukpadaung Market. Finally, the study suggested that awareness information alone is not enough to encourage a change in behavior. Even though, imparting awareness relevant to hazards of high density polyethylene bags and management causes a change in people attitude, resulted in more correct behavior. There is also the need to build capacity of municipality, to promote the community awareness, to enact the law and legislation to become a fully embraced high density polyethylene bags free environment.