

Audit of Political Engagement-2019

Yangon Region Report



EMReF
Enlightened Myanmar
Research Foundation



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**GLOBAL RESEARCH
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About the Audit in Yangon Region

The Audit of Political Engagement -Myanmar (APE-Myanmar) is the very first study of its kind conducted in Myanmar). APE Myanmar(2019) gagues public opinion about political knowledge and perception about current administration, political engagement, sources of information and access to information.

- The Yangon Region Audit report, published in 2020, is part of the National level study of APE Myanmar.
- The Audit report presents the findings from a face-to-face public opinion survey carried out on a proportionately allocated sample of adults aged 18+, together with key informant interviews across Yangon Region.
- The data collection was conducted between July and August 2019 by seven collaborative organizations such as Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF-Yangon Region), Hluttaw Lane (Magway Region), Karen Affairs Committee (KAC-Karen State), Naushaung Development Institute (NDI-Kachin State), Stars Do Shine (SDS-Shan State), and Tavoyan Women's Union (Tanintharyi Region).
- This report covers five main themes which are presented and analyzed through ten core indicators.
- The ten core indicators consist of satisfaction with present system of governing; trust with the governance system; basic political knowledge; basic knowledge of Hluttaw (Parliament); interest in participation for the betterment of the country; political efficacy; participation in politics ; certainty to vote; engagement with political actors; and access to political information.
- Demographic breakdown of the findings of five main themes, the cross-tabulation analysis for some key variables, and detail of the survey methodology can be found end of this report.

The five main themes in the Yangon Region

Audit - 2019

Theme 1

The respondents have positive perceptions on the security of their residential wards and villages and the development of local infrastructure whilst the largest group has neutral perceptions on the improvement of household's economy.

Theme 2

The respondents have the moderate satisfaction with and trust in the present system of governing. Although they have more reliance on the elected members of parliament (MPs) to help solve the needs of the villages and wards, the relationship between the MPs and the constituents remains moderate. Their knowledge about Hluttaws is low.

Theme 3

The majority of respondents have little knowledge about politics.

Theme 4

The majority of respondents express their assurance of casting vote in upcoming 2020 General Election. Most of them show their interest in participation for the betterment of the country. Nonetheless, only few percentage of them engaged with political decision makers and participated in political movements and demonstrations.

Theme 5

Facebook is the primary source for getting political information; however, family members, friends or relatives are the main source of information.

The key findings in the Yangon Region

Audit - 2019

Theme 1

2

3

4

5

The respondents have positive perceptions on the security of their residential wards and villages and the development of local infrastructure whilst the largest group has neutral perceptions on the improvement of household's economy

- 75% of the respondents feel highly secured in their residential wards and villages.
- Nearly 50% of respondents express moderate level improvement of local infrastructure.
- The largest group, 59%, says their household's economy status is moderate.

The respondents have the moderate satisfaction with and trust in the present system of governing. Although they have more reliance on the elected members of parliament (MPs) to help solve the needs of the villages and wards, the relationship between the MPs and the constituents remains moderate. Their knowledge about Hluttaws (Legislatures) is low.

- Nearly 59% are moderately satisfied with the present system of governing.
- One in two respondents has moderate trust in the present system of governing.
- Almost 34% believe that the MPs will help the needs of the wards or villages whilst only 14% think MPs (Members of Parliaments) are able to provide help in case an ordinary member of the community quest for their help.
- One-thirds of the respondents say that MPs have a moderate engagement/ level of reach-out to their constituents
- Those who do not know about the reciprocal oversight (check and balance) and supporting of each other between the legislative and executive branches possess the highest proportions about 38% and 37% respectively.
- 52% say that they have trust in armed actors and most of them express they have more trust in Tatmadaw (the national armed forces) than any other armed actors.

1

2

Theme 3

4

5

The respondents have little knowledge about politics

- Only 3.1% (the smallest group) provided correct answers for all of the four questions about basic political knowledge.
- Of those who say Hluttaws and the MPs are able to help them , approximately 56% do not have any idea about the ways they can be helped.
- Nearly 35% think ordinary people can visit Hluttaw sessions

1

2

3

Theme 4

5

The majority of respondents express their assurance of casting vote in upcoming 2020 General Elections. Most of them show their interest in participation for the betterment of the country. Nonetheless, only few percentage of them engaged with political decision makers and participated in political movements and demonstrations.

- Approximately 83% of respondents express certainty to vote in the 2020 general elections.
- More than two-thirds of the respondents voted in the 2015 general elections; however, only a few respondents who took part in political campaigns and demonstrations.
- Almost 48% have a full interest in participating in the betterment of the country.

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Theme 5

Facebook is the primary source for getting political information; however, family members, friends or relatives are the main source of getting local information

- Regarding politics, Facebook is the most widely used information source, nearly 23% (highest portion).
- About 55% receive local information from family members, friends or relatives, concerning local issues.
- Almost all Facebook users use Burmese as the medium of communication.

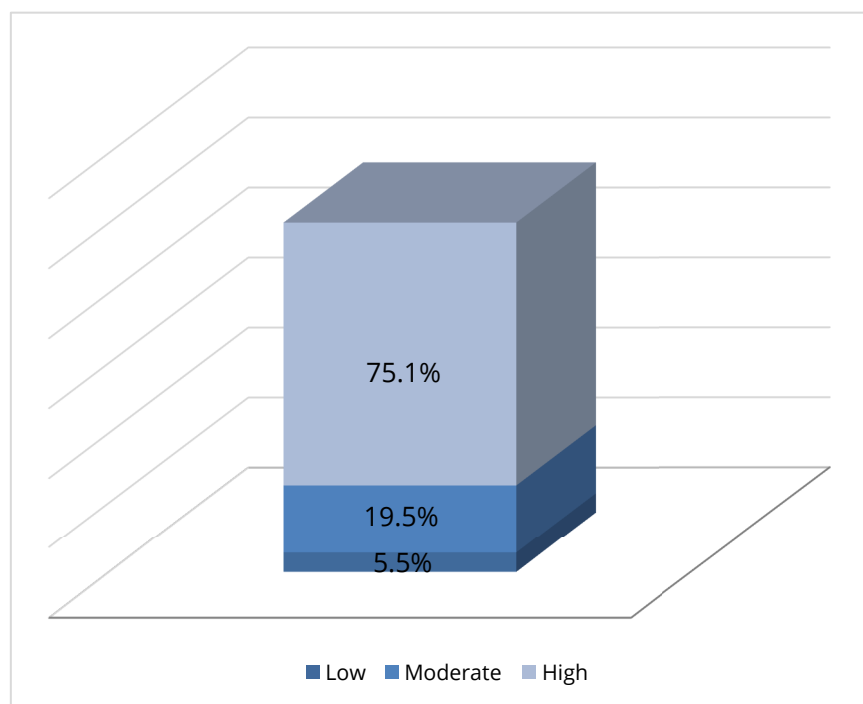
Detailed findings of Theme 1

Theme 1.

The respondents have positive perceptions on the security of their residential wards and villages and the development of local infrastructure whilst the largest group has neutral perceptions on the improvement of household's economy.

75% of the respondents feel highly secured in their residential wards and villages.¹

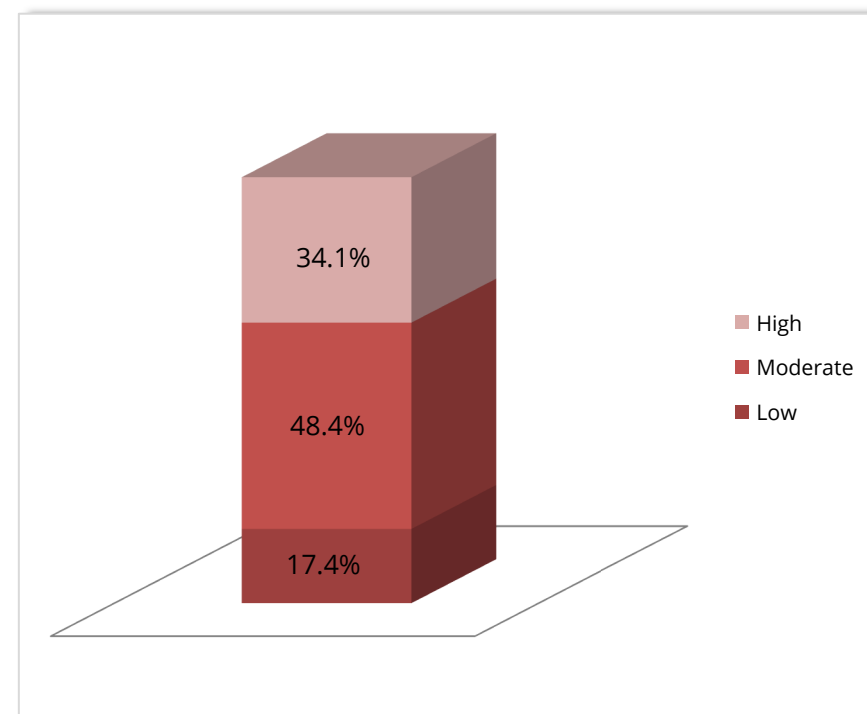
Only few respondents, 5.5%, express they do feel secure in their ward and villages. (Respondent = 385)



¹ The respondents are asked whether they feel secured in their residential wards and villages with a feeling thermometer scale ranging from 1 to 10. However, safety is measured based on low (1 to 4), moderate (5 to 7), and high (8 to 10). A question on safety: I feel secured in my residential award or village.

Nearly 50% of respondents express moderate level improvement of local infrasturcture.²

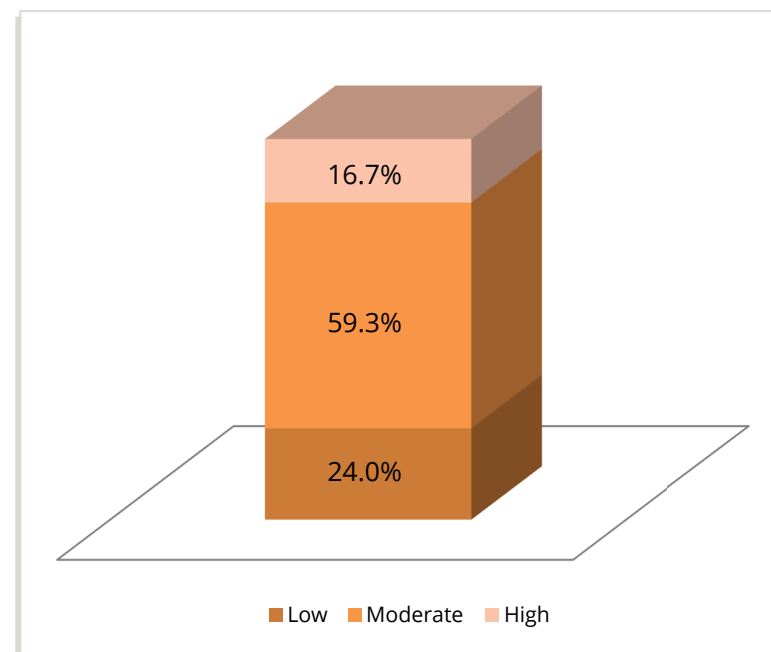
Only 17% of the respondents report the low level improvement of infra-structure. (Respondent = 384)



² The question on the improvement of local infrastructure: (1) Electricity is much better in this area. (2) Telephone line is better in this area. (3) The road is better in my residential ward or village. They are interviewed with a feeling thermometer scale ranging from 1 to 10.

The largest group, 59%, says their household's economy status is moderate.³

24% perceive that their economy status remains low whilst only 17% perceive as high. (Respondent 383)



³The question on whether the state of economy is improved: My household's economy status is improved within this year. They are asked with a feeling thermometer scale ranging from 1 to 10. Feeling thermometer scale 1 indicates zero satisfaction and 10 indicates complete satisfaction.

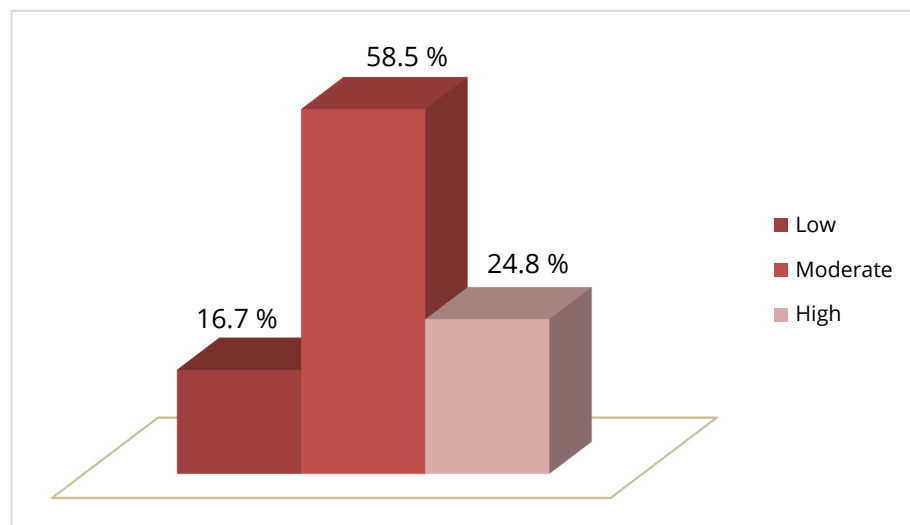
Detailed findings of Theme 2

Theme 2.

The respondents have the moderate satisfaction with and trust in the present system of governing. Although they have more reliance on the elected members of parliament (MPs) to help solve the needs of the villages and wards, the relationship between the MPs and the constituents remains moderate. Their knowledge about Hluttaws is low.

Nearly 59% are moderately satisfied with the present system of governing.

Over half of the respondents are moderately satisfied with the present system of governing and about 25% are highly satisfied with it.⁴ (Respondent=355)

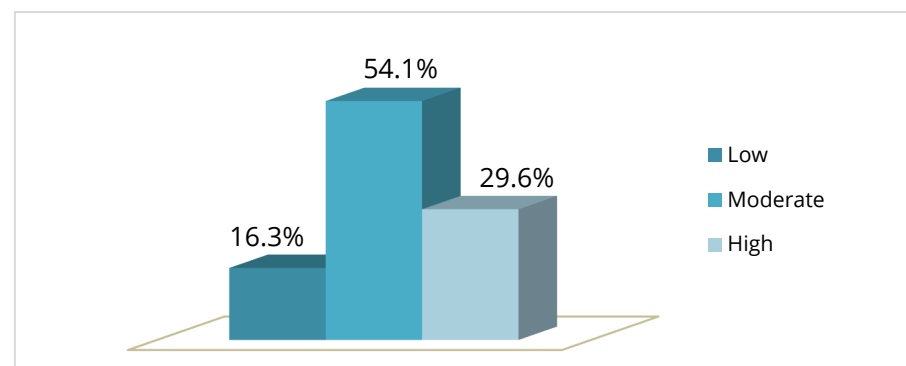


⁴ Questions of satisfaction of the present system of governing: (1) State/Region government is effectively working on its development activities. (2) The rule of law is improved in States/Regions. (3) State/Region Government is transparently implementing its development projects. (4) The country's peace process is improving. (5) The country's economic situation is improving. (6) Combating corruption in Myanmar is improving. (7) The Union government is transparent. (They are interviewed with the feeling thermometer scale ranging from 1 to 10)

Only one in two has moderate trust in the present system of governing.

54% of the respondents moderately trust the present system of governing, whereas over 16% have low trust in it⁵ (Respondent=307)

The respondents expressed in qualitative interviews that the activities done within the Hluttaw need to be more transparent in order for the public to have trust in the MPs who are part of the system of governing

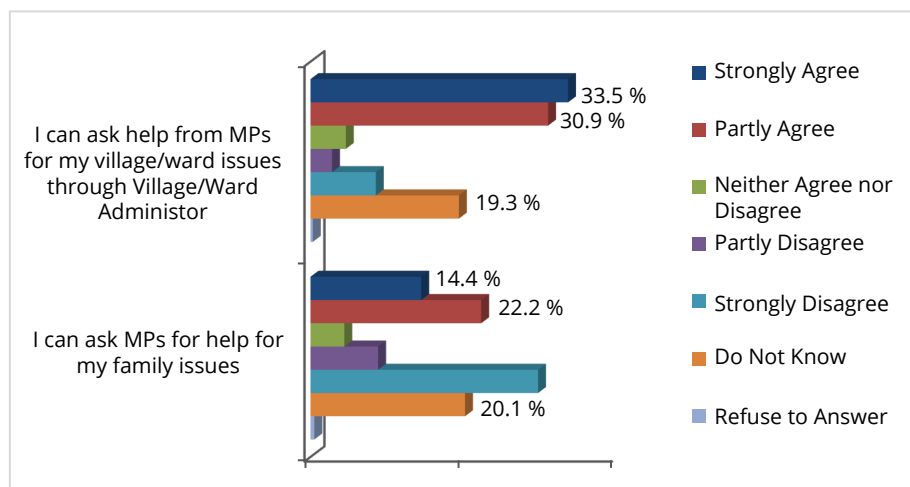


“The public will have more trust in the hluttaws only if they are more informed about what hluttaws have been doing). Instead of doing closed door meetings and hearing, budget oversight and review, and hearings should be open to public. (A CSO leader)

⁵ Questions of satisfaction of the present system of governing: (1) How much do you believe the Union government is on the right track? (2) How much do you believe the State/Region government is on the right track? (3) How much do you believe the Union Hluttaw is on the right track? (4) To what extent do you believe the State/Region Hluttaw is correctly doing? (5) To what extent do you believe the judicial branch is fairly and justly doing? (They are interviewed with the feeling thermometer scale ranging from 1 to 10)

Almost 34% believe the MPs will help the needs of the wards or villages, whilst only 14% think the MPs are able to provide help when an individual family/ household quests for their assistance.

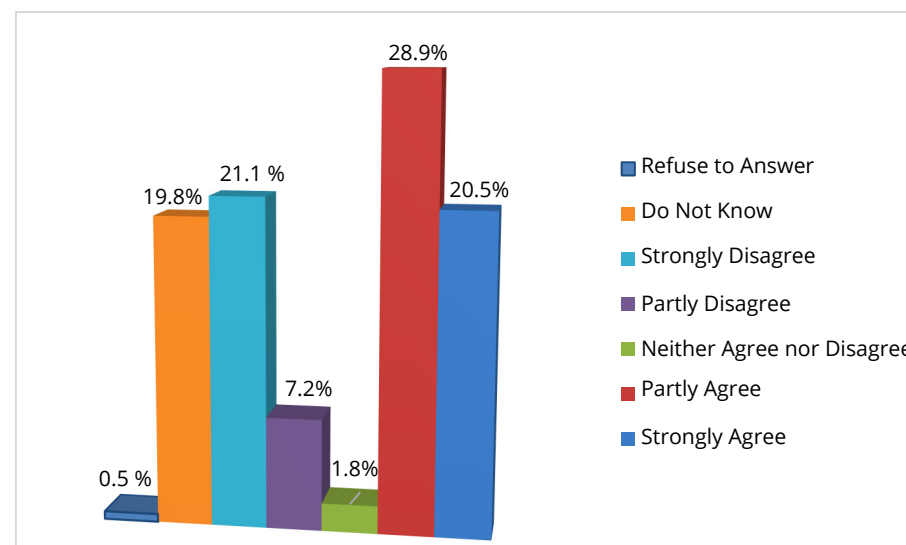
Almost 34% believe that the MPs will help the needs of the wards or villages if they are requested/ asked via administrators is 33% and only 14% think the MPs are able to provide help if they are asked by ordinary members of the community.⁶ (Respondent= 388)



⁶ The questions of opinion on State and Region Hluttaws: (1) Your village or ward administrator can ask the MPs for help when necessary. (2) I think that the MP of my constituency will help solve my problems and my family problems/ difficulties if he/she is asked for help. (3) The MPs engage with their respective constituents. (They are interviewed with the feeling thermometer scale ranging from 1 to 10).

Only one-thirds of the respondents say the MPs and the constituents have a moderate engagement/ relationship.

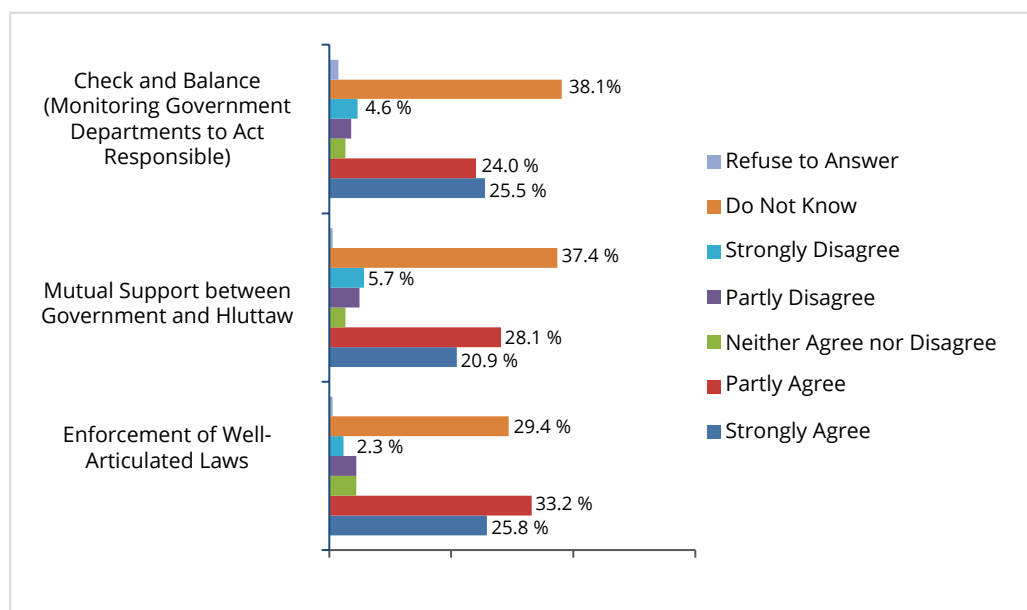
The percentage of the respondents who moderately agree that the MPs and the constituents have an engagement is 28.9%, which is the highest. Nevertheless, the proportion of the respondents who completely agree and the percentage of the respondents who completely disagree have no significant gap, 20.6% and 21.1%, respectively. (Respondent= 388)



**“The constituent area of some MPs is 50 squared mile wide. They have to spend their own budget for their field visits.....”
(Leader of a CSOs)**

Those who do not know about the reciprocal oversight (check and balance) and supporting of each other between the legislative and executive branches possess the highest proportions about 38% and 37% respectively.

The highest percentage, 38.1%, do not know about reciprocal oversight check and balance between the legislative and executive branches. About 37 of the respondents do not know whether the government and hluttaw mutually support each other. Meanwhile, the second largest group, about 29%, say they do not know about legislation at the Hluttaws⁷ (Respondent=388)



“The public do not know about Hluttaw’s legislation role. The public asked for the MPs to help their problems solve.” (Leader of a Local CSOs)

⁷ Questions of opinion on State/Region Hluttaws: (1) State/Region Hluttaws make good laws for the public. (2) State/Region Hluttaw and Government support each other in their respective works. (3) State/Region Hluttaw oversees the activities of the government to be accountable. (They are interviewed with the feeling thermometer scale ranging from 1 to 10)

44.3% say that they have trust in armed actors and most of them express they have more trust in Tatmadaw (the national armed forces) than any other armed actors.

44.3% of the respondents say that they have trust in armed actors; most of them express they have more trust in Tatmadaw (the national armed forces) than any other armed actors.⁸

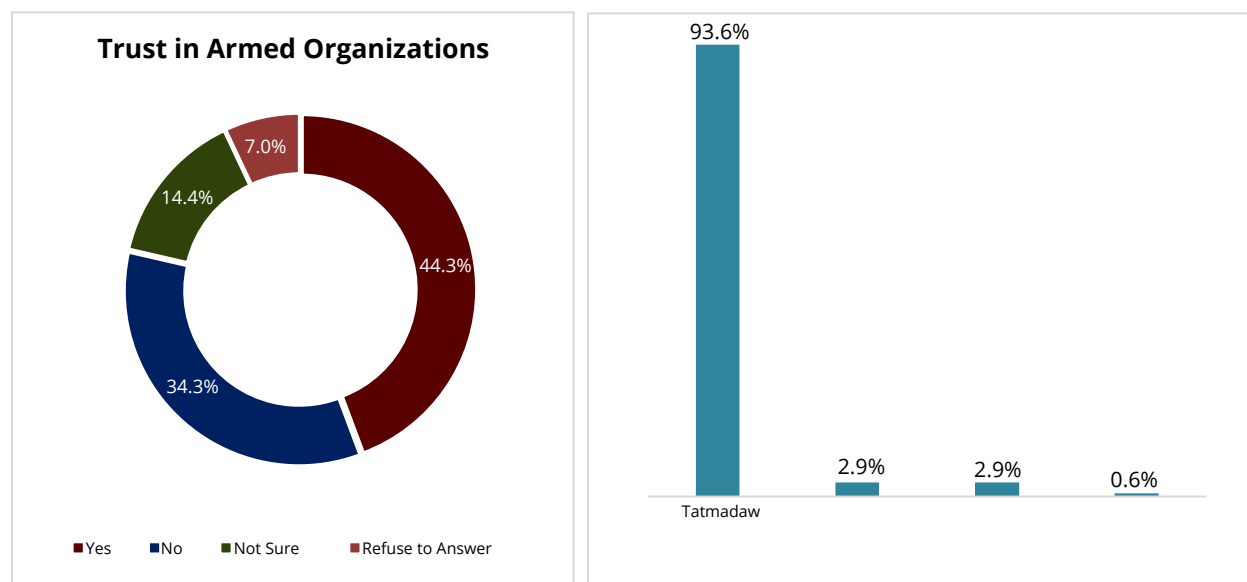


Fig. A Trust in Armed Organizations (Respondent = 385) **Fig. B** Arm Organization They Trust in Most (Respondent = 172)

⁸ The analytical questions on the opinion upon armed groups: (1) Do you have trust in one of any armed groups? (including ethnic armed groups and the military), (2) If trusted, which armed group do you trust? (A respondent needs to answer the name of the armed group)

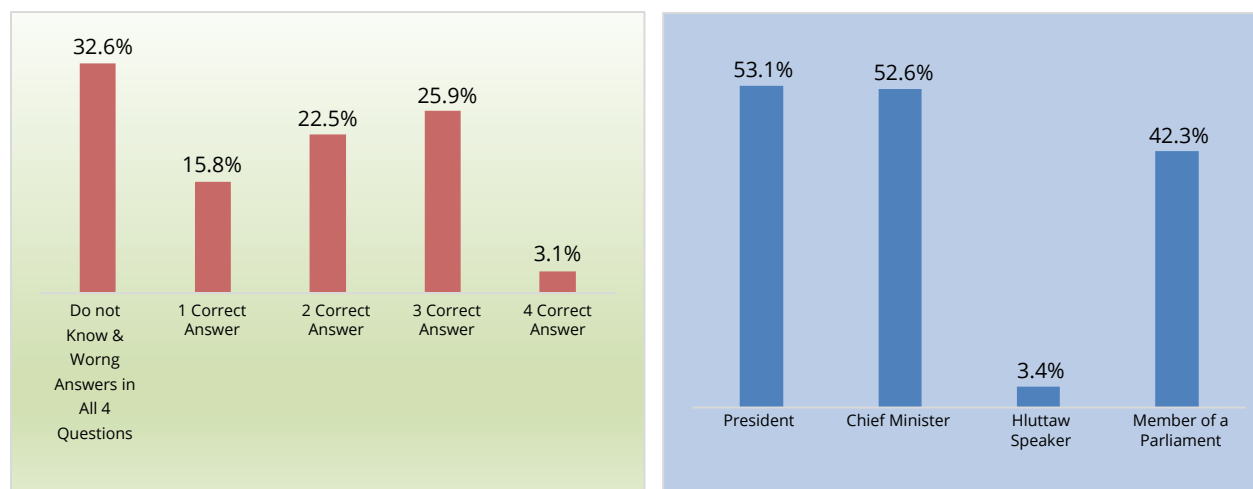
Detailed findings of Theme 3

Theme 3.

The respondents have little knowledge about politics.

Only 3.1% (the smallest group) answer all correctly of the four questions about basic political knowlege.

32.6% (the highest) were not able to give correct answers to all questions related to basic political knowledge, but 3.1% can correctly answer the questions. 3.4%, the least portion, know the name of the region hluttaw speaker (Respondent=386)

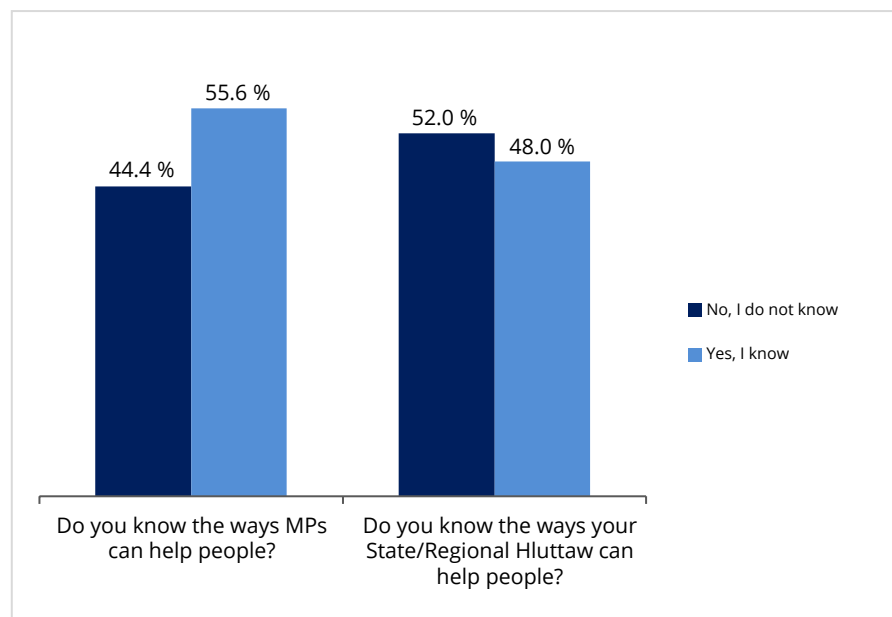


An MP's point of view on the above finding:

"The main point is that as the government has the authority, the public pay attention to the management of the department of the government. It seems that they do not have anything to get from the Hluttaw Speaker. The Speaker deals only with the matters of the Hluttaw and field visits and economic matters seem unimportant. The public have much more interests in the MPs who discuss the public's matters at the hluttaw sessions than the Speaker. For example, if (he) discusses what our constituency needs, the public in our township will have a good impression for what he does for the people. The speaker is just holding hearings and thus the public have less interest in the Speaker who is just like a referee. He should also use the media to make themselves important as a key player. Such things may become weak points" (An MP of Yangon Region hluttaw)

Of those who say the hluttaws are able to help them, approximately 52% do not have idea about the ways they can be helped.⁹

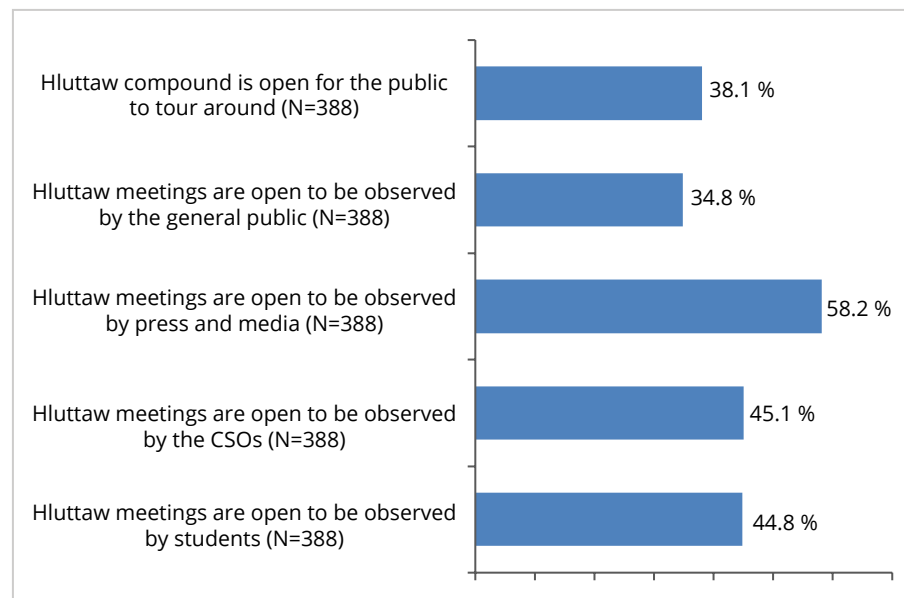
Of those who say their MPs are able to help them, 44% do not know the ways their MPs can help them. (Respondent = 171)



⁹ Questions of knowledge about hluttaw: (1) In what ways do you think MPs can help you? (2) In what ways do you think the Region and State Hluttaws can help the public?

Nearly 35% think ordinary people can visit Hluttaw sessions

58.2% of the respondents think media can observe hluttaw sessions. The percentage of those who think the public can observe the hluttaw sessions is the lowest. Likewise, about 62 in 100 do not think everyone can visit the Hluttaw compound.



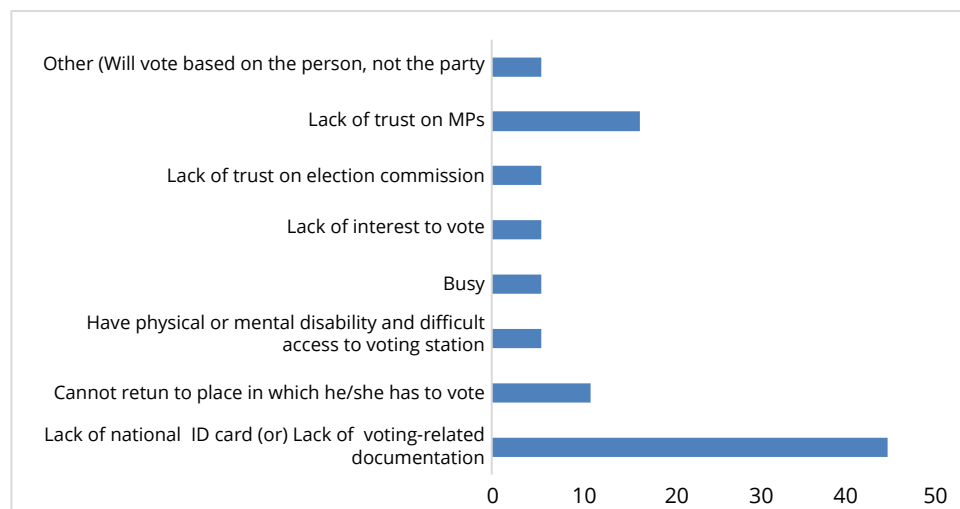
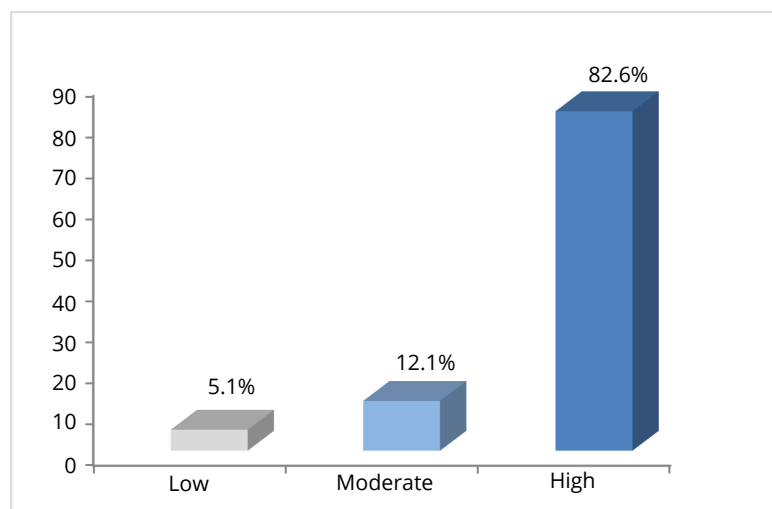
Detailed findings of theme 4

Theme 4.

The majority of respondents express their assurance of casting vote in upcoming 2020 General Elections. Most of them show their interest in participation for the betterment of the country. Nonetheless, only few percentage of them engaged with political decision makers and participated in political movements and demonstrations.

Approximately 83% of respondents have certainty to vote in the upcoming 2020 general elections.

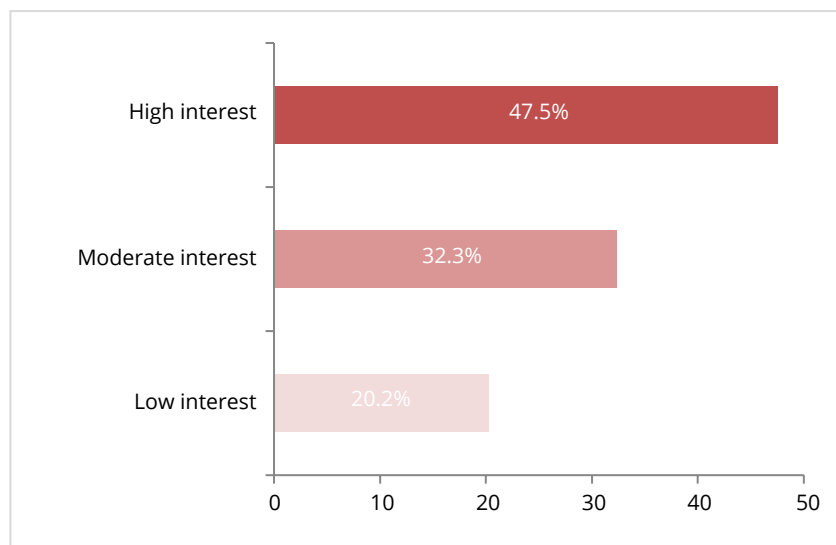
82.6% are certain to vote in the upcoming 2020 general elections, whereas just 5.1% are not. The reasons why they are not certain to vote in the general elections are a lack of national registration card (NRC) and a document related to voting (Respondent=372)



¹⁰ Question: How much are you certain to vote in the upcoming 2020 general election? (They are interviewed with a feeling thermometer scale ranging from 1 to 10)

Almost 48% have a full interest in participating for the betterment of the country.

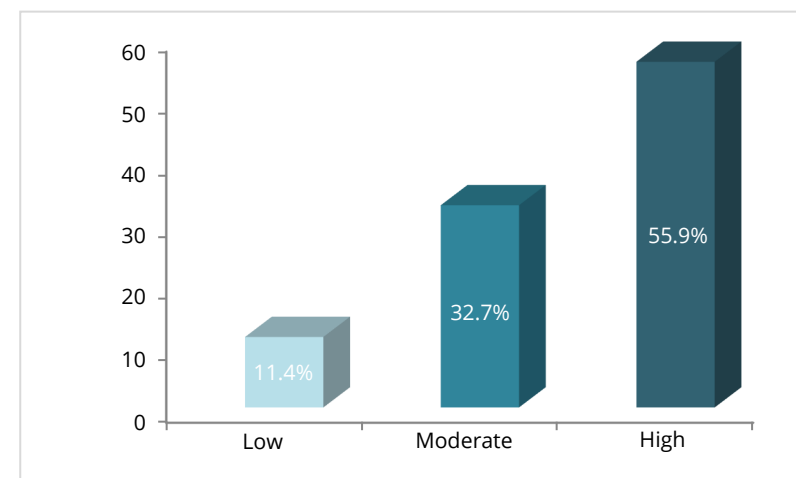
The proportion of the respondents who have an interest in the betterment of the country is the highest (47.5%) and the proportion of the respondents who have no interest in it is the lowest (about 20%)¹¹ (Respondent= 337)



¹¹ Question on the interest of participation in the betterment of the country: How much are you interested to participate in the betterment of the country? (The feeling thermometer scale ranging from 1 to 10 is used to interview)

One in two respondents believes if they would have taken part for the betterment of the country, Myanmar would be more developed.

55.9% believe the country will be developed if they participate in development sector but 11.4% do not believe¹² (Respondent=333)

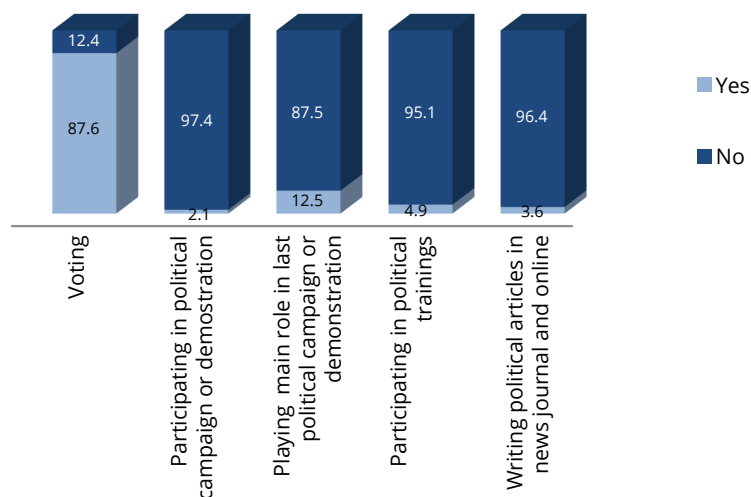


¹² The measurement question: Myanmar would be developed if you were interested and participated in the betterment of the country. Do you agree? How much do you agree? (The feeling thermometer scale ranging from 1 to 10 is used to interview)

More than two-thirds of the respondents voted in the 2015 general elections; however, there were only a few took part in political campaigns and demonstrations.

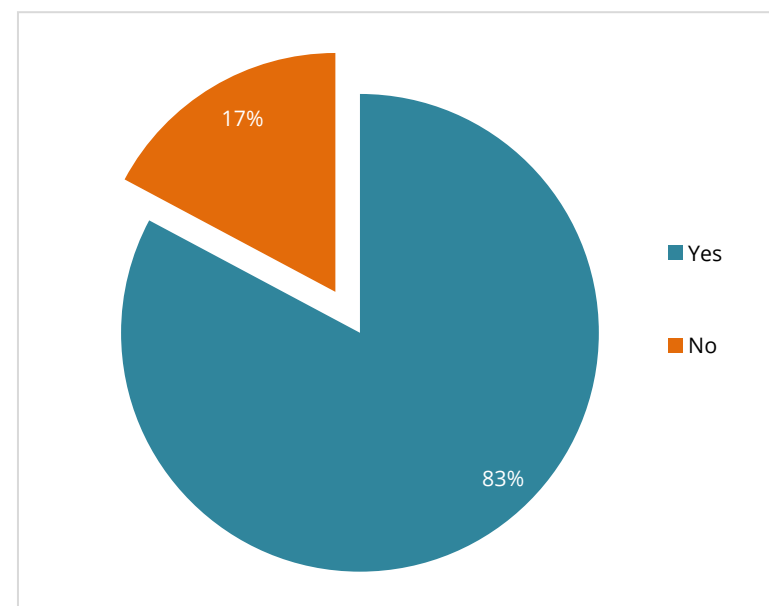
85.5% of respondents say they cast vote in the 2015 general elections and 2.1% participated in political campaigns. 12.5% took a leading role in political campaigns or demonstrations but a majority of the respondents (87.5%) did not take part in such activities (Respondent = 380, 388, 8, 388, and 362)

Participation in political campaign and demonstration in last year (%)



Just 17% met with and sent letters to key persons and committees for policy change or something improved during the last one year.

82.8% of the respondents did meet with and send letters to responsible persons/groups and committees for policy change and something to be improved within the last one year, whereas 17.2% did such engagement. (Respondent = 383)



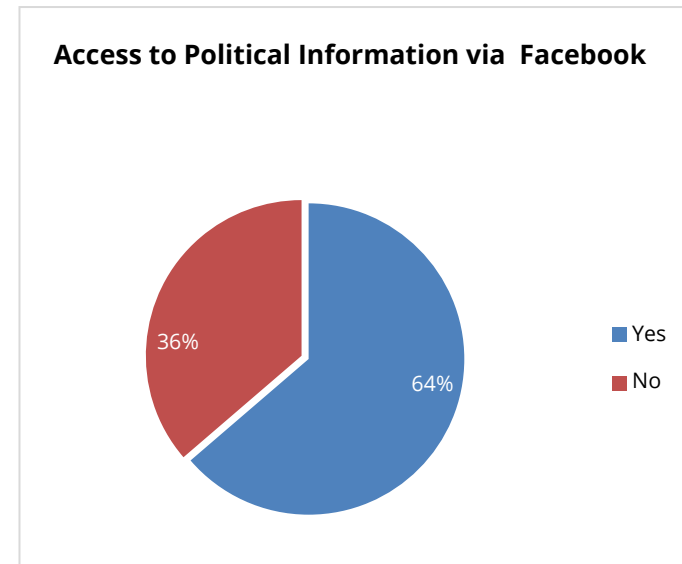
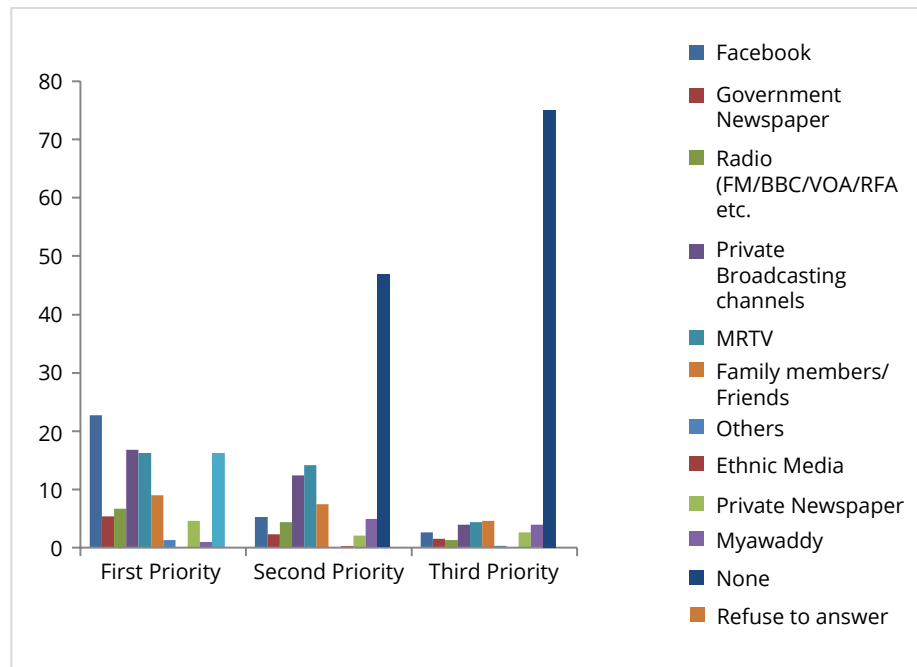
Detailed findings of Theme 5

Theme 5.

Facebook is the primary source of political information. However, family members, friends or relatives are the main source of local information.

Facebook is the most widely used information source, nearly 23% (highest portion), regarding politics.

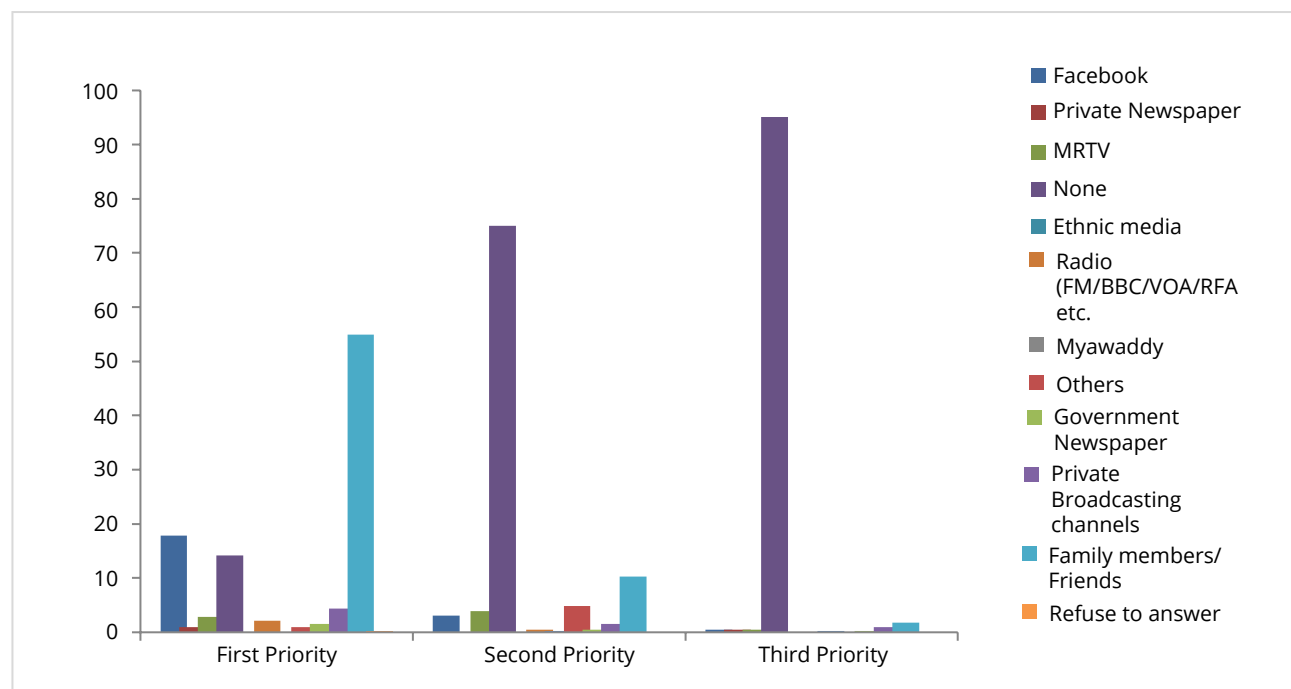
As the first priority, Facebook is the primary source for getting the information and MRTV and Private Broadcastings are the second and the third sources for the information¹³ (Respondent = 388)



¹³ Question on the source for getting political information: Where do you get information if you would like to know Myanmar's political information? (Select three information sources)

About 55% receive information from family members, friends or relatives, concerning local issues.¹⁴ (Respondent = 388)

One of the sources to collect information about local issues is Facebook and it accounts for 17.8%.



¹⁴ Question on the source for getting political information: Where do you get information if you would like to know your local information? (Select three information sources)

Almost all Facebook users use Burmese as the main medium of communication.

According to Figure (a) and (b), Burmese, English, and other languages are used for communication on Facebook and Burmese Language is the most widely used and the main communicative medium¹⁵ (Respondent = 117)

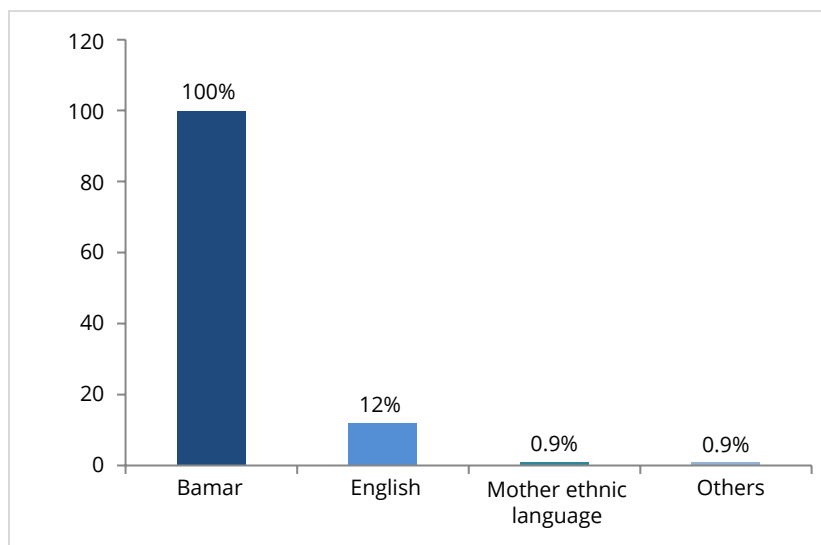


Fig. A Languages used on Facebook for communication

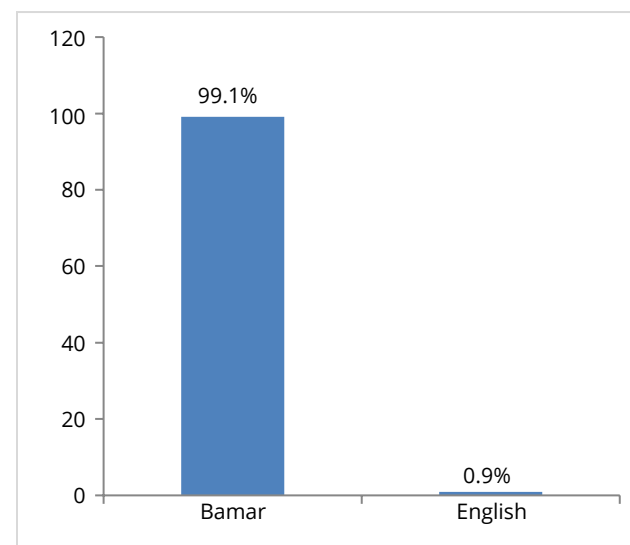


Fig. B Language mainly used as a communication medium on Facebook

¹⁵ Question of communicative language on Facebook: Which language do you use to communicate with people on Facebook?

Methodology

The study was conducted in a total of 6 States and Regions including Yangon Region and applied a mixed method design, which primarily used quantitative study through tablet-based survey, plus qualitative interviews with key informants, including members of parliamentarians (MPs), local CSO leaders, and local media personnel. The states and regions are purposively selected in order to cover different ethnicities and conflict context. The reason that Yangon Region is included in the study is that it is the most diverse and populous city in Myanmar, but is not affected by active armed conflict.

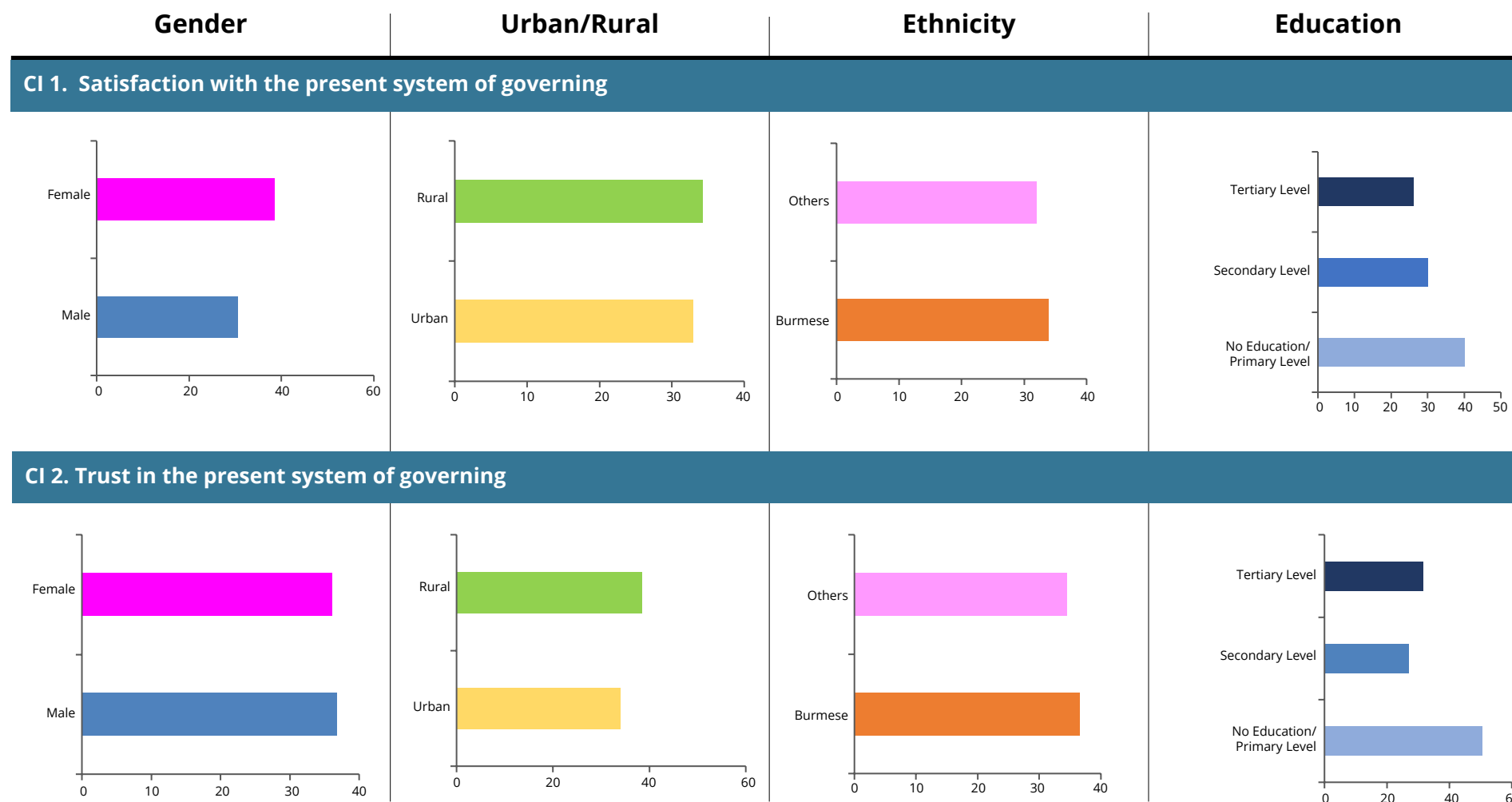
The quantitative study is conducted by employing multistage stratified cluster random sampling method in Yangon region. At first stage, the region is stratified in terms of townships with and without villages. It is determined to visit two townships without villages and 3 townships with villages, based on the urban-rural population ratio of Myanmar. In the second stage, the townships are randomly selected from each district located across Yangon Region. After doing that, the village/ward clusters were chosen by using random method. The list of village/ward clusters are obtained from MIMU¹⁶. Regarding household selection, the study utilized the systematic random sampling method, where the sampling frame is to be developed by using household list provided by the community leader or administration. In cases where household list were not available, the survey team practised the right-hand rule method to identify sample households in clusters. The face-to-face interviews were conducted with one household member aged 18 and older who is eligible and willing to answer, while the study made sure to have equal gender proportion, and different age groups were fairly represented in interviews. The survey questionnaire is composed of 93 questions and mostly took 20 minutes, but in certain cases it took 45 minutes at most.

The required sample size of the whole study is determined by using the statistical formula for infinite population based on 95% confidence level and 6% of margin of error or precision, 4 for design effect to reduce error raised due to sampling design and cushion rate of 5%. Accordingly, the sample 1120 households are required to be visited for interviews. This sample is proportionately allocated to the state and regions based on their population size, and 30% of the sample households is allocated to urban and 70% to rural, reflecting to the 2014 census data. Accordingly, 305 households are needed to be visited in Yangon Region. This sample size is again allocated 8 villages and 6 wards, which are selected by stratified random method mentioned above. In each cluster, it is determined to visit 27 households for interview. Nonetheless, when performing practical field work, the survey team carried out some extra households to assure to meet with intended response rate. Thus, total sample households 388 were completed.

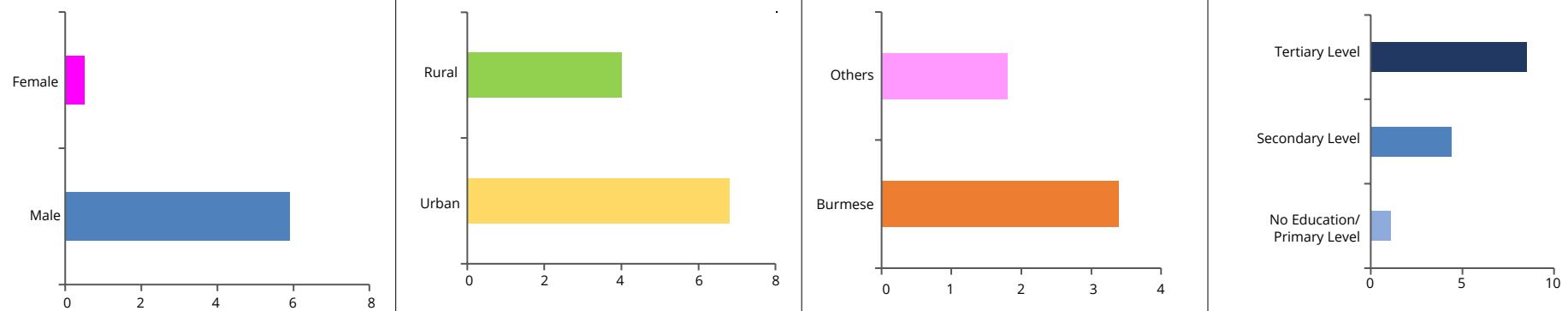
The qualitative study is also conducted in order to support the quantitative findings, by holding face-to-face interviews with the MPs, CSOs and media in the selected townships. The interviews covered four MPs, three CSO leaders and one personnel from a local media.

¹⁶ MIMU is Myanmar Information of Management Unit

Cross-tabulation Analysis on Key Indicators through Important Variables (%)

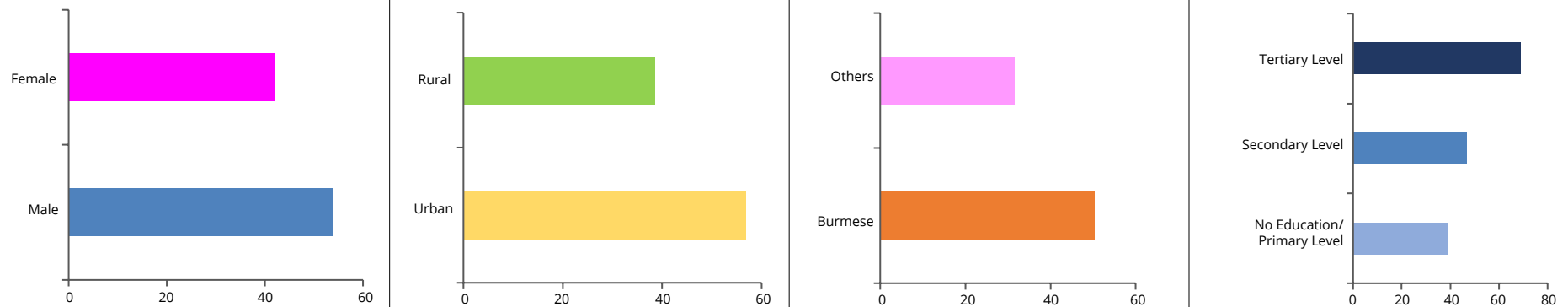


CI 3. Basic Political Knowledge

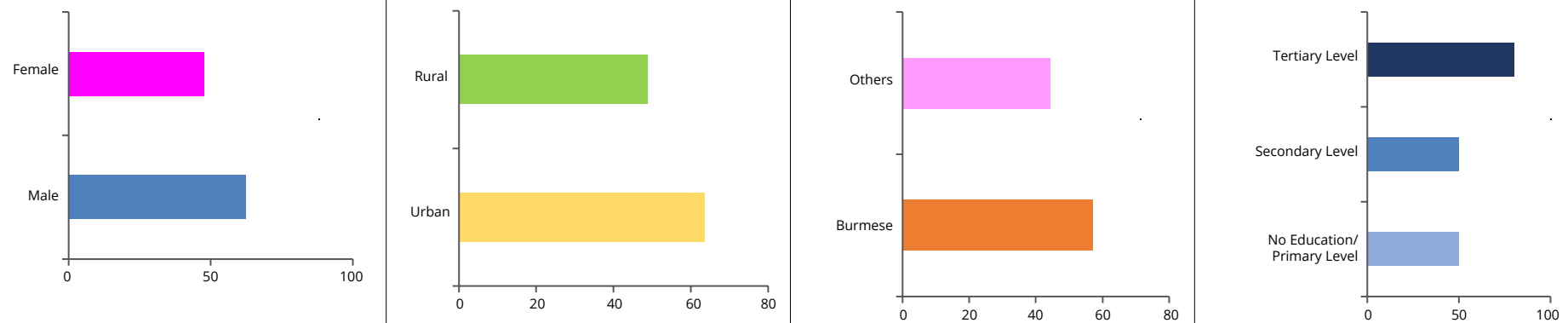


CI 4. Basic Knowledge in hluttaws (legislatures)

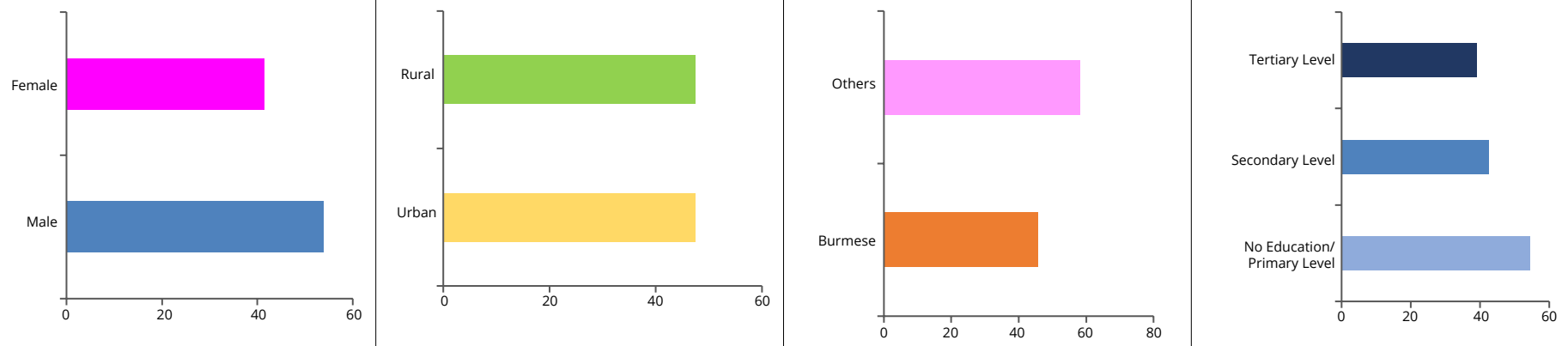
CI 4.1 The extent to which the respondents know how their State/Regional hluttaws can help them



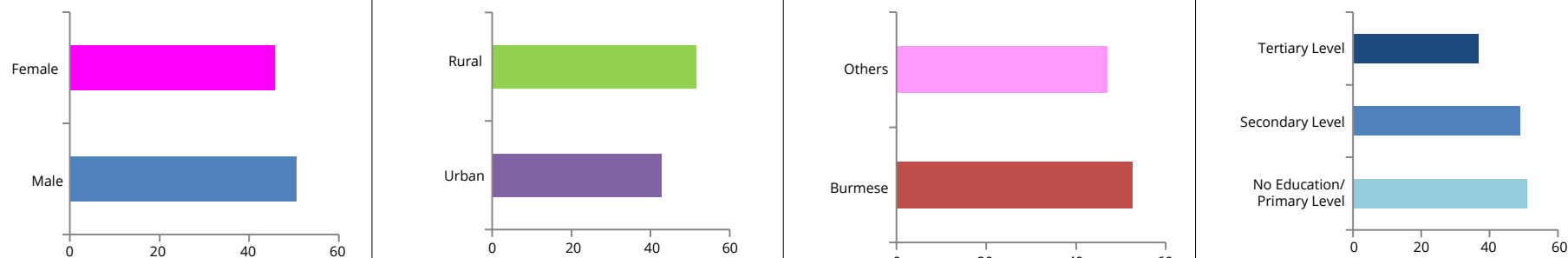
CI 4.2 The extent to which the repondents know how their State/Regional MPs can help them



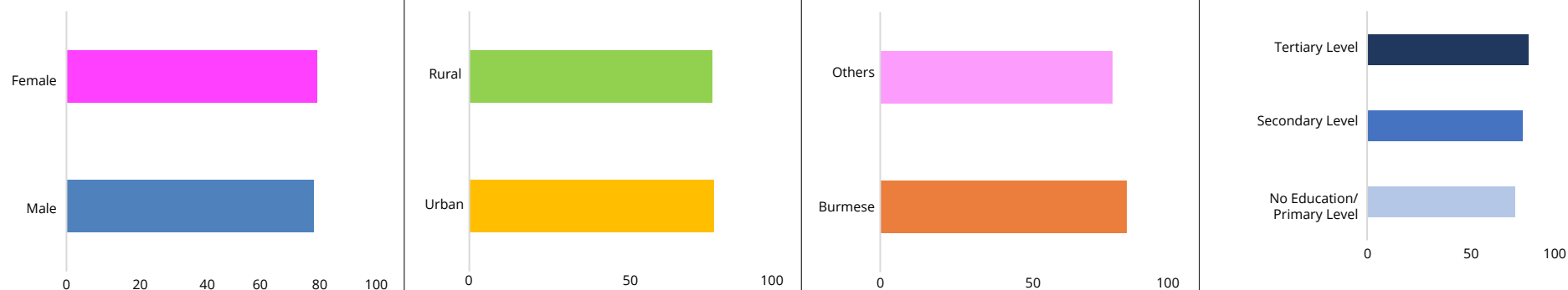
CI 5. Interest in invloving in activities for the betterment of the country



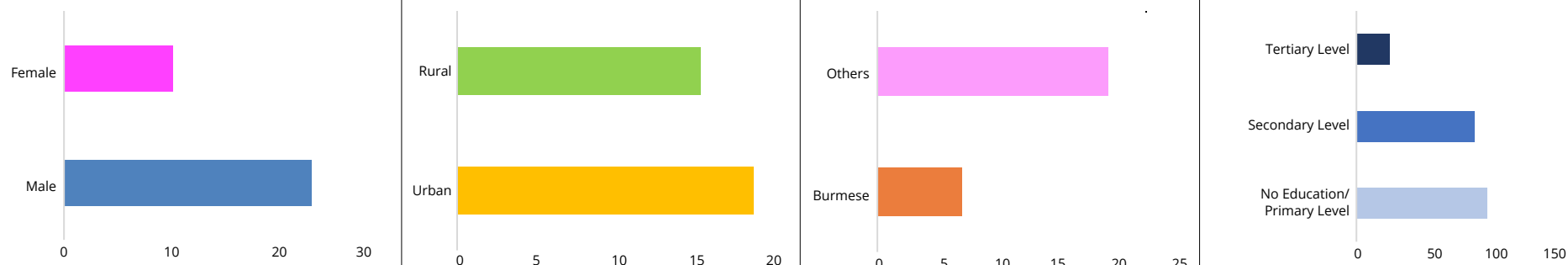
CI 6. Political Efficacy



CI7. Certainty to Vote in 2020 General Elections

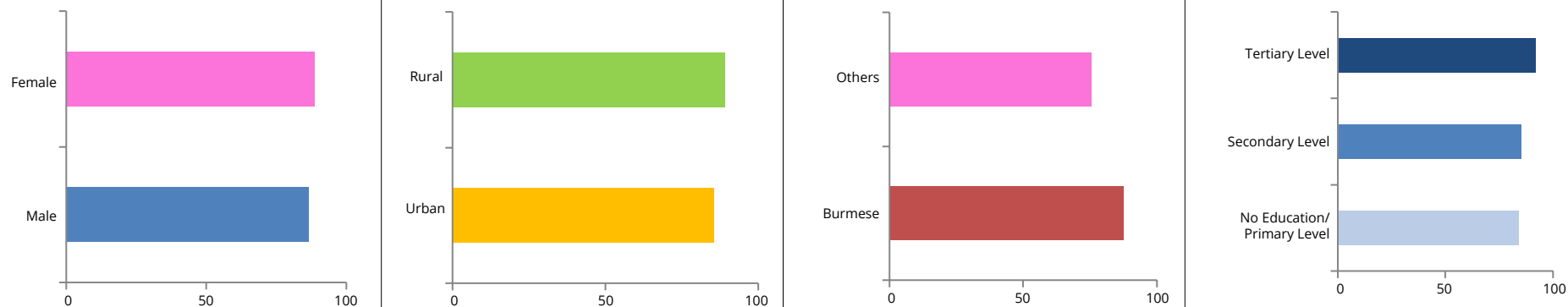


CI 8. Participation for betterment of Policy Change: Meeting with the government officials and organizations (or) Writing letter to them.

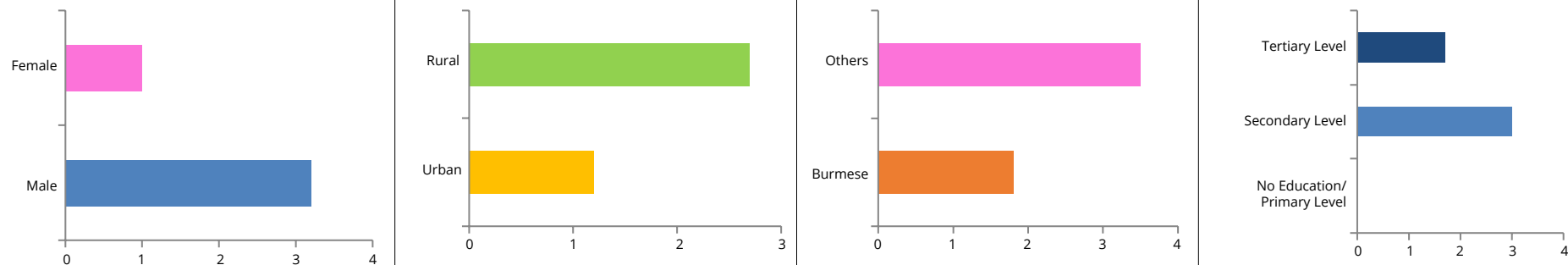


CI 9. Participation in politics

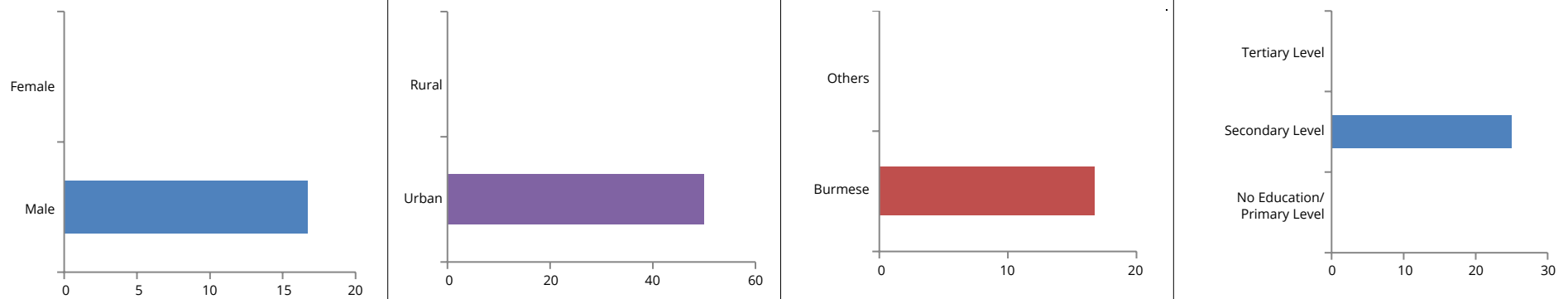
CI 9.1 Voting in 2015 General Election



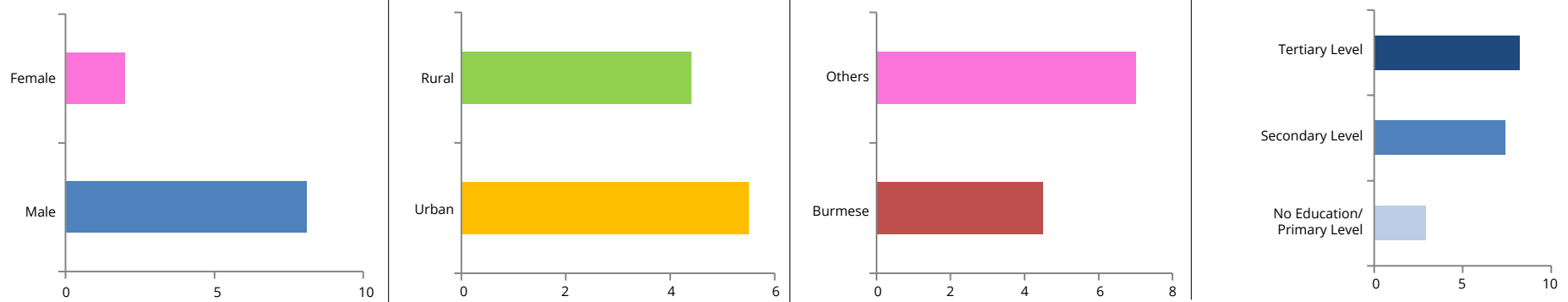
CI 9.2 Participation in political campaign or demonstration last year



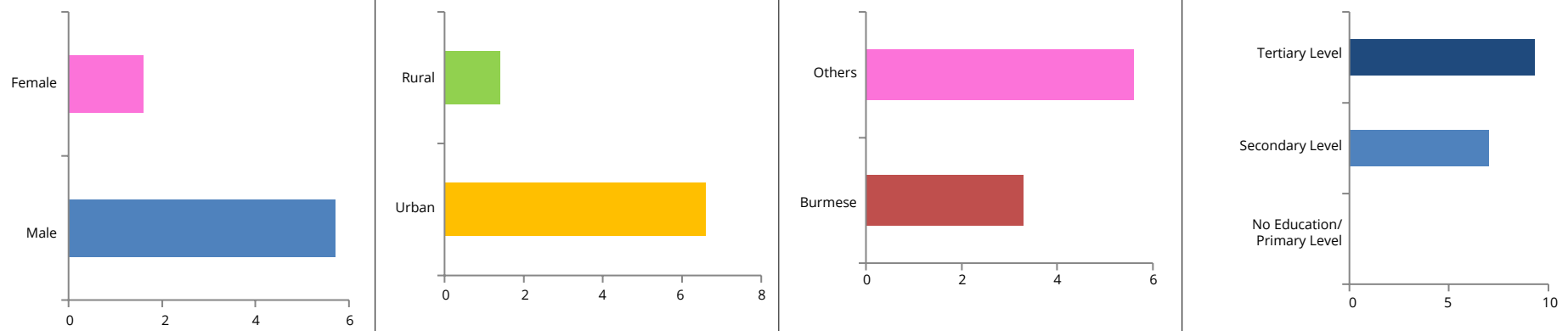
CI 9.3 Playing main role in last political campaign or demonstration



CI 9.4 Participated in political training for either policy changes or improvement



CI 9.5 Writing or Posting on media for either policy change or improvement



CI 10. Access to political information

