



DEMOCRACY IN POST WAR SRI LANKA

TOP LINE REPORT



CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES
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மாற்றுக் கொள்கைகளுக்கான நிலையம்

The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) is an independent, non-partisan organisation that focuses primarily on issues of governance and conflict resolution. Formed in 1996 in the firm belief that the vital contribution of civil society to the public policy debate is in need of strengthening, CPA is committed to programmes of research and advocacy through which public policy is critiqued, alternatives identified and disseminated.

Address: 6/5, Layards Road,
Colombo 5, Sri Lanka
Telephone: +94 (11) 2081384-6
Fax: +94 (11) 2081388
Web: www.cpalanka.org
Email: info@cpalanka.org



Making Social Research Count

Social Indicator (SI) is the survey research unit of the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) and was established in September 1999, filling a longstanding vacuum for a permanent, professional and independent polling facility in Sri Lanka on social and political issues. Driven by the strong belief that polling is an instrument that empowers democracy, SI has been conducting polls on a large range of socio-economic and political issues since its inception.

Address: 105, Fifth Lane, Colombo 03

Telephone: +94(11)2370472/4/6 Fax: +94(11) 2370475

Web: <http://cpalanka.org/survey-research/> Email: info@cpasocialindicator.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 2 |
| INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| KEY EVENTS PRIOR TO AND DURING FIELD WORK | 5 |
| METHODOLOGY | 6 |
| ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT | 9 |
| SECURITY AND FREEDOM | 17 |
| PERCEPTIONS ON POLITICS | 21 |
| HUMAN RIGHTS AND RECONCILIATION | 26 |
| THE GOVERNMENT | 39 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- A majority (80.6%) are of the opinion that the Government should find solutions to address the root causes of the conflict. While 48.1% of Sri Lankans indicate that there should be a credible mechanism to look into accountability during the final stages of the war, 37.7% indicate that there should not be one.
- Among those who stated that there should be a credible mechanism, 43.8% prefer an exclusively domestic mechanism, 17.1% prefer an exclusively international mechanism to probe into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity that were committed by all parties to the ethnic conflict during the final stages of the war. 30.6% of Sri Lankans prefer a combination of both domestic and international mechanism. A majority (61.7%) from the Sinhala community prefer an exclusively domestic mechanism. 47.6% from the Tamil community prefer an exclusively international one.
- On reconciliation, 47% of Sri Lankans believe that the Government is genuinely committed to promoting reconciliation in the country while 22.6% believe that the Government is not genuinely committed.
- Nearly 81% of Sri Lankans approved President Sirisena's statement on the 18th of September 2015 with regard to implementing the death penalty in 2016.
- On the composition of the new Cabinet of Ministers, State Ministers and Deputy Ministers, 31.7% of Sri Lankans state that they are satisfied while 36.7% of Sri Lankans express dissatisfaction with regard to the same.
- When results of the two surveys conducted in 2015 are compared, Sri Lankans appeared to be more satisfied overall with the work done by the current administration to address corruption. In October 2015, more Sri Lankans (49.6%) felt that the Government is committed to eradicating corruption in the country when compared to the previous survey conducted in March 2015 (43.9%).
- On the allocation of a fixed quota for female representation, 73.5% agree that the number female representation in Parliament, Provincial Councils and Local Government Authorities is insufficient, while 12.8% disagree with the same.

- While 31.3% of Sri Lankans believe that the general economic situation in the country has got better since the new Government was formed, 30.3% believe that it has got worse. When comparing data across the four main ethnic communities, the Sinhala community is the most skeptical with regard to the general economic situation in the country with 35.3% stating that it has got worse since the new Government was formed.
- The respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction in relation to the development initiatives taken thus far under President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. While 46.3% of Sri Lankans were satisfied, nearly 30% were not satisfied with the present pace of development in the country.
- There is overall satisfaction on the level of media freedom with 67.7% of Sri Lankans agreeing (with 27.9% strongly agreeing) that the Sri Lankan media is completely free to criticise the Government, a further increase from 51.7% in March 2015. Comparison with data from the previous surveys – 42% in 2011, 42.5% in 2013 and 39.2% in 2014 reflects a sustained improvement over the years on the level of media freedom as perceived by the general public.
- A majority of Sri Lankans (almost 55%) are satisfied with the current level of democracy in the country, while nearly 16% state that they are not.
- A low level of positivity among the general public is evident in relation to the influence they think they could have over national decision making. While 45.7% of Sri Lankans state that they do not have an influence over national decision making 37.3% believe that they do.
- A majority of Sri Lankans (nearly 85%) are of the opinion that there should be a legal restriction on the amount of money that political parties and candidates can spend at elections. Furthermore, a majority (83.3%) of Sri Lankans also state that political parties must publish their audited accounts.
- On the question about hate speech in Sri Lanka, 46.4% of Sri Lankans approve the Government's plans to criminalise hate speech, while 13.1% disapproved the same. Among the most who approved the plan to criminalise hate speech was the Muslim community with 87.1% indicating the same.

INTRODUCTION

This is the fifth wave of the survey on 'Democracy in Post War Sri Lanka' since it was first conducted in August 2011. A striking change in the political order of the country was ushered in with the Presidential Elections on the 8th of January 2015 and further imposed by the Parliamentary Elections on the 17th of August 2015. Under the rubric of good governance, the Sirisena government has proposed and promised (among other things) constitutional reform and a reconciliation process that underpins the principles of truth, transitional justice, reparations and non-recurrence in post war Sri Lanka over the next year. Strengthening the Parliament, empowering Independent Commissions, improving and restructuring of the Electoral System, introducing the Right to Information Act are some of the key areas identified by the government to which it has directed its focus on, since its victory in January 2015.

This is the first public opinion survey that has been conducted by the Centre for Policy Alternatives following the Parliamentary elections in August this year. This survey records public perceptions and opinions with regard to the state of democracy, reconciliation measures in the country and the level of confidence in the new framework of governance. Data was collected from all 25 districts thereby making this a comprehensive survey with much insight into the perceptions on practices of democracy in Sri Lanka.

This survey was conducted by Social Indicator, the survey research unit of the Centre for Policy Alternatives. The team comprised of Iromi Perera, Sakina Moinudeen, Ayesha Zuhair and M. Krishnamoorthy. Data processing was done by Shashik Dhanushka.

We would like to thank Dr. Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu for his valuable input in finalising the report.

KEY EVENTS PRIOR TO AND DURING FIELD WORK

Parliamentary Elections

The 2015 Parliamentary Elections was held on the 17th of August 2015. The ruling United National Party (UNP) won 11 out of the 22 districts obtaining 106 parliamentary seats including 13 National List seats, with a total of 5,098,927 votes. The opposition United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) won 8 districts, obtaining 83 seats receiving 4,732,669 votes and 12 National List seats. The three districts in the Tamil dominated the North and the East were secured by the Tamil National Alliance (Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi). The ITAK (Illankai Tamil Arasu Kachchi) obtained 16 parliamentary seats including two bonus seats, whilst JVP (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna) gained six seats including two National List seats.

Resolution by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

The High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein visited Sri Lanka ahead of the 30th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva this year. The resolution titled 'Promoting Reconciliation, Accountability and Human Rights in Sri Lanka' was submitted to the UNHRC in October 2015 and was co-sponsored by Sri Lanka and 25 additional co-sponsors. The resolution calls for wide-ranging reforms and a domestic accountability mechanism with international involvement to probe into allegations of human rights violations that claim to have occurred during the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

METHODOLOGY

The fifth wave of the survey on Democracy in Post War Sri Lanka was carried out using a semi structured questionnaire administered through face to face interviews with 2103 respondents in both Sinhala and Tamil languages across all 25 districts. The sample respondents were selected with the use of a multi-stage stratified random sampling technique that represents the four main ethnic communities in the country (Sinhala, Tamil, Up Country Tamil and Muslim communities).

Questionnaire

Ongoing political, socio-economic and cultural debates, discussions with regard to democracy, governance, human rights and reconciliation, along with the existing surveys conducted in the past, were taken into consideration when the survey questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire was finalised with a group that comprised of Senior Researchers and the Executive Director of the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA).

The questionnaire was translated into Sinhala and Tamil and a pilot survey was conducted by selected senior field staff. Findings from the pilot survey were taken into account in the finalisation of the questionnaire.

Sampling and fieldwork

In this survey, Social Indicator (SI) used a multi-stage stratified random sampling technique and a sample of 2103 respondents spread across all districts were polled. The Population Proportionate Sampling (PPS) method was used and ethnic proportions were accounted for. The sample size was determined in order to produce results within a 2% error margin at a 95% confidence level. Electorates were chosen as the strata to distribute the sample and polling centres within each electorate were chosen randomly. From each selected polling centre the starting point (first household selected for the survey) of the survey was selected randomly from the 2008 voter registry. Following the completion of an interview at the first household, 19 other households that come under the same polling centre were selected

using the right hand rule.¹ At each selected household, a respondent was determined using the last birthday method.²

Fieldwork for the entire study was conducted from October 20th to November 15th 2015.

Training of Field Researchers

A total of 60 Field Researchers participated in this study. The Field Researchers consisted of both male and female enumerators from three ethnic communities – Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim. Prior to starting fieldwork, they were given comprehensive training on the study, the survey instrument and field techniques. In order to guarantee the quality of field research, SI deployed a group of Supervisors to conduct quality control processes during and after fieldwork, such as accompany visits, spot-checks and back-check were carried out to ensure the quality of the data collected.

Data Processing and analysis

All the completed questionnaires were scrutinised, checked and entered into a database designed for the survey. The dataset was further cleaned prior to the analysis. Before starting the analysis process, the dataset was weighted in order to reflect actual geographical and ethnic proportion. The data set was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

¹ Following a successful interview, the field researcher would select the next following a successful interview, the field researcher would select the next household by skipping a pre determined number of houses (based on the total number of households in the selected polling centre) on his/her right. The route that the field researcher follows from the starting point is guided by this method of always counting the houses on the right as well as selecting the path on the right when faced with more than one possible path. This random sampling technique provides a good coverage of the sample population area, thereby giving all households in the selected area an equal chance of being selected

² In a selected household where there is more than one eligible respondent, the person who had their birthday most recently is selected for the survey interview.

How to read this report

- This report presents the top line results of the survey. The graphs presented set out a descriptive explanation on the basis of National data, and have been divided according to ethnicity.
- Where there was a significant shift or change in opinion over the years, data was compared with the surveys that were conducted in 2011, 2013, 2014 and March 2015. It is imperative to note that the study cannot predict the future trends or allow for strong conclusions about shift in opinion until more data is available from future surveys.
- For questions that require more than one answer (multiple answer questions) from the respondents, figures do not add up to a 100%.

ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT

Summary

- While 31.3% of Sri Lankans believe that the general economic situation in the country has got better since the new Government was formed, 30.3% believe that it has got worse. When comparing data across all ethnicities, the Sinhala community is the most skeptical with regard to the general economic situation in the country with 35.3% stating that it has got worse since the new Government was formed.
- Although the number of meals per day was not compromised as a result of shortage of finances at a household level, the quality of food purchased in the past one year has been most affected with 23.2% of Sri Lankans indicating that they had to cut back on the quality of food purchased. From an ethnic perspective it is the Tamil community who has had to compromise on the quality of food the most with 31.8%, followed by the Up Country Tamil community with nearly 27.6% indicating the same.
- Given the opportunity to allocate money from the National Budget to sectors of their choice, people would choose education, health and agriculture.
- The respondents believe that the three main areas that the Government should pay attention to is the reduction in the cost of living, address unemployment and creating better education facilities.
- With regard to development in the conflict affected areas, 37.5% of Sri Lankans are of the opinion that the Government should give priority to allocating resources to rebuild the conflict affected areas, even if this means that less money is spent on the rest of the country.

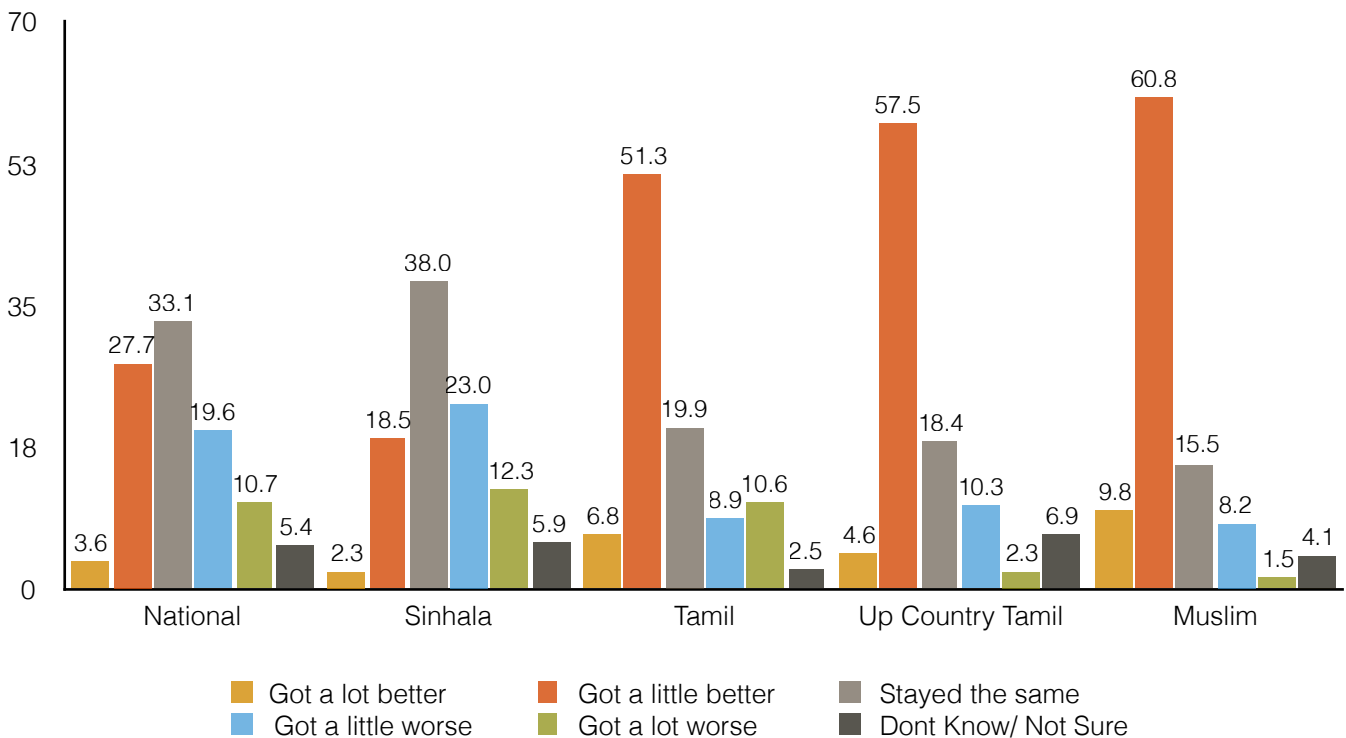
Economy

On the general economic situation of the country since the new Government was formed, 31.3% of Sri Lankans believe that it has got better while 30.3% say it has got worse. 33.1% of the respondents state that the general economic situation has remained the same.

From an ethnic perspective, 70.6% from the Muslim community, 62.1% from the Up Country Tamil community and 58.1% from the Tamil community believe that the general economic situation in the country has got better in comparison to the 20.8% from the Sinhala community.

It is pertinent to note that a significant proportion of the Sinhala community (35.3%) state that the general economic situation in the country has worsened since the formation of the new government, which indicates that it is the Sinhala community which is most dissatisfied in relation to the economy. (Refer Graph 1.1)

Graph 1.1 How do you think the general economic situation in the country has changed since the new government was formed ?



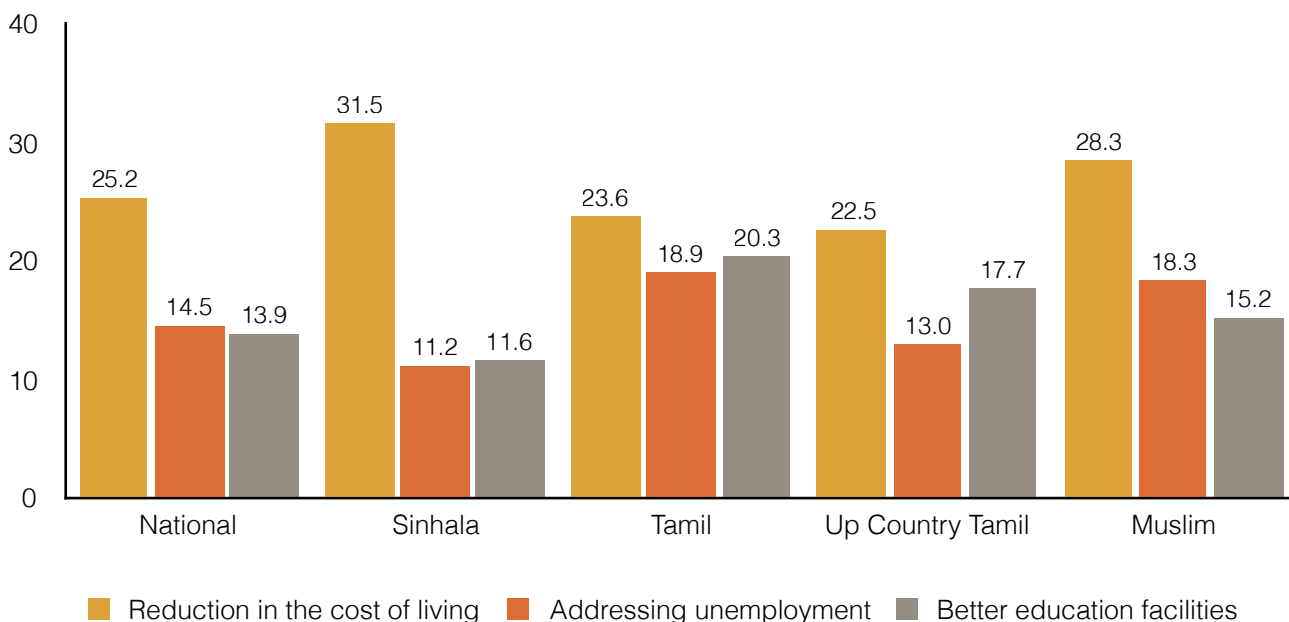
Respondents were given a list and asked to select the three most important areas that they felt the Government should pay attention to. The list included reduction in the cost living, improved infrastructure, addressing unemployment, agriculture, improved healthcare

services, better education facilities, combating corruption, combating crime, proposed electoral reforms (the 20th Amendment to the Constitution) and addressing and implementing various reconciliation measures that ensures truth, justice, reparations and the guarantee of non-recurrence in post war Sri Lanka.

Overall, the three main areas that were selected were: reduction in the cost of living, to addressing unemployment and creating better education facilities. Reduction in the cost of living was the top most priority in 2013 and 2014 as well.

Reduction in the cost of living was an area selected by all four communities with the Sinhala, Tamil, Up Country Tamil and Muslim communities selecting it as their first most important area. Whilst better education facilities was the second choice of importance for the Sinhala, Tamil, Up Country Tamil communities, addressing unemployment was the second choice for the Muslim community. The third choice for the Sinhala, Tamil and the Up Country Tamil communities was addressing unemployment whilst it was better education facilities for the Muslim community. (Refer Graph 1.2)

Graph 1.2 Please rank the three main areas that the Government should pay attention to?

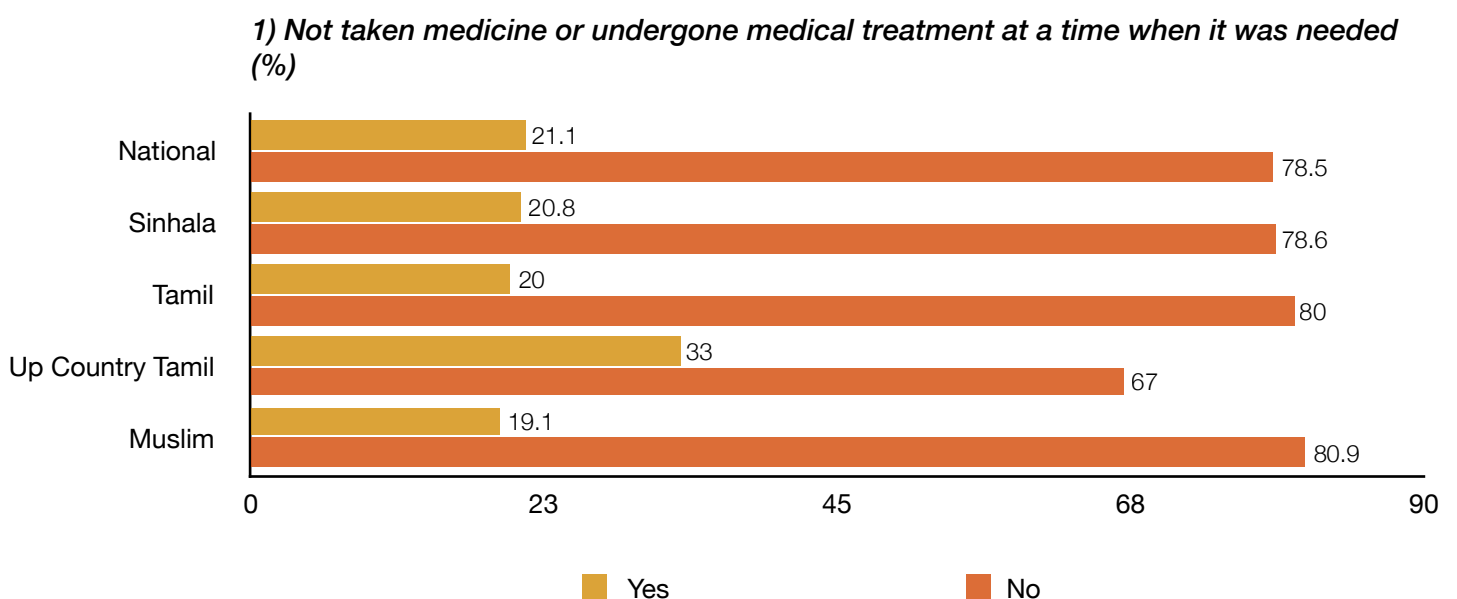


Household

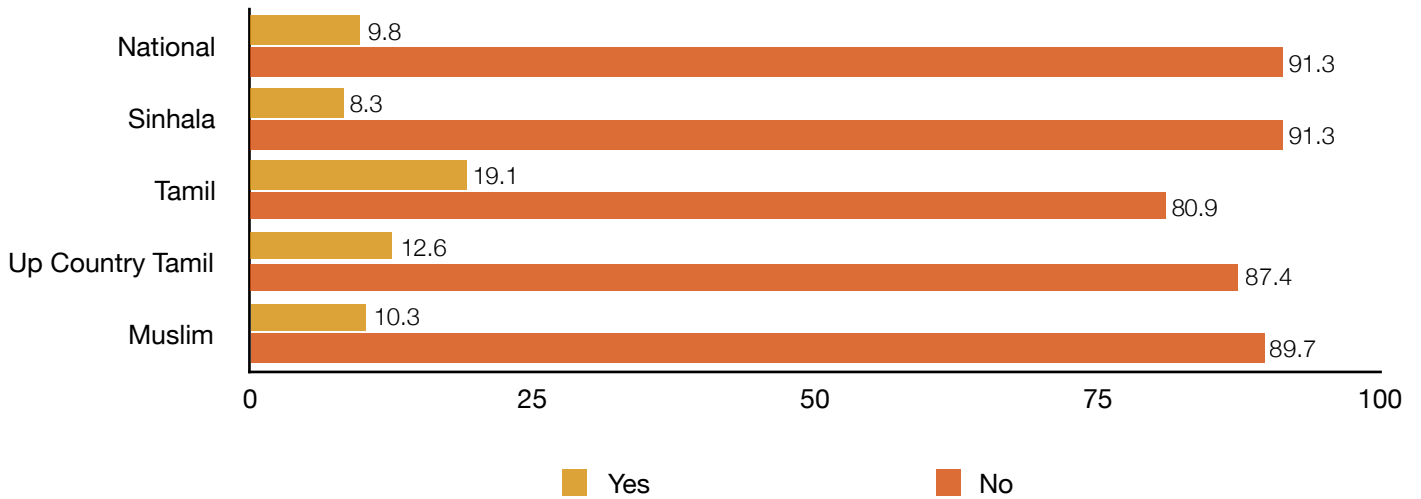
With reference to the financial situation in the household, respondents were asked whether in the last year either they or a member of their household had to reduce expenditure on medical treatment, housing and food. While the number of meals per day is the least affected, the quality of food appears to be the most affected with 23.2% of Sri Lankans indicating that they had to cut back on the quality of food purchased in the last year and 21.1% indicating that they had not taken medicine or medical treatment at a time when it was needed. This is however an improvement when comparing the data with the survey s conducted in 2013 and 2014, as 30.6% in 2013 and 42.7% in 2014 indicated that they had to cut back on the quality of food that they purchased. In terms of compromising on medicine and medical treatment at a time when it was needed, it is evident that there appears to be a slight improvement when compared with the data in the previous surveys. While 24.2% of Sri Lankans in 2014 indicate that they had compromised on medicine or medical treatment at a time when it was needed, in 2015 it has dropped to 21.1%.

When asked if they have had to delay paying house rent or mortgage, only 9.8% of Sri Lankans said that they had to do so in the last year. (Refer Graph 1.3)

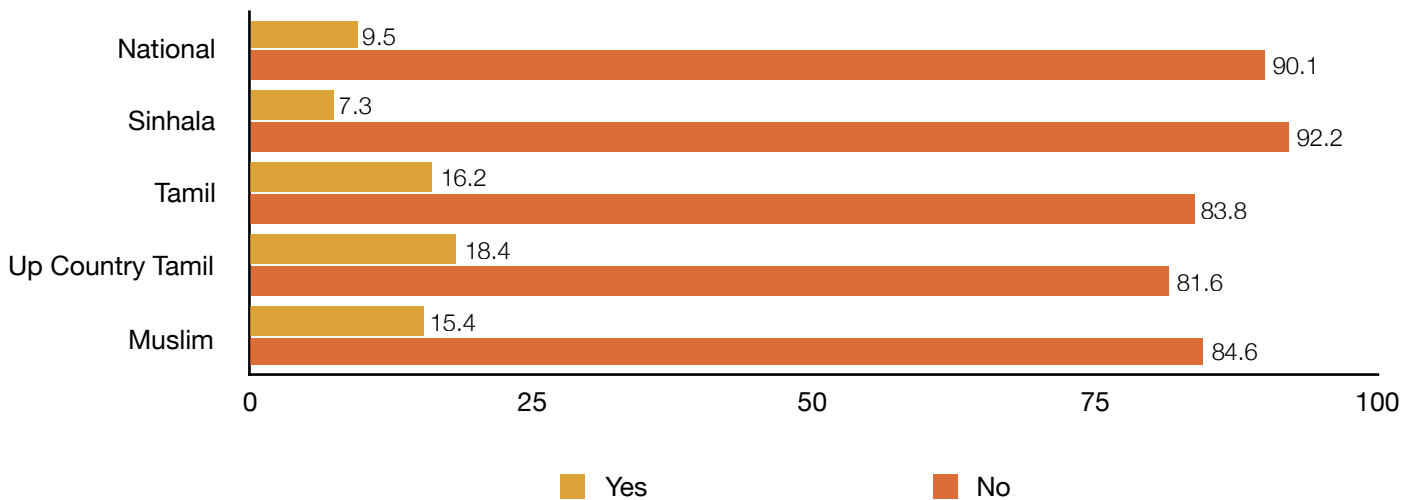
Graph 1.3 Over the 12 months, have you or anyone in your household had to do any of the following due to the shortage of finance?



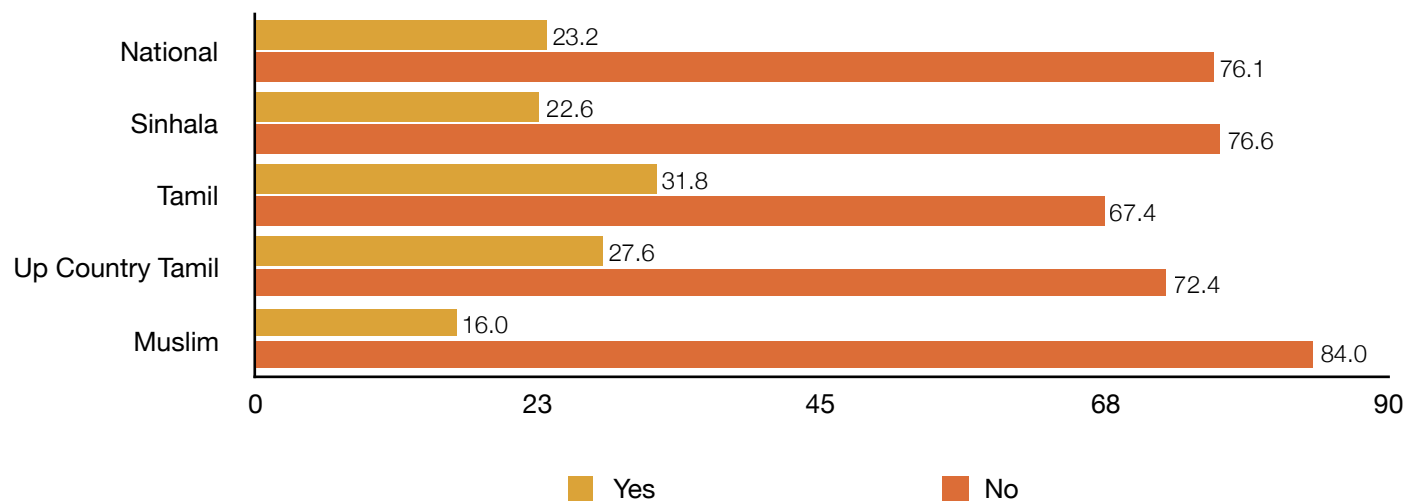
2) Delay in paying house rent or mortgage (%)



3) Cut back on the number of meals per day (%)



4) Cut back on the quality of food you purchased (%)



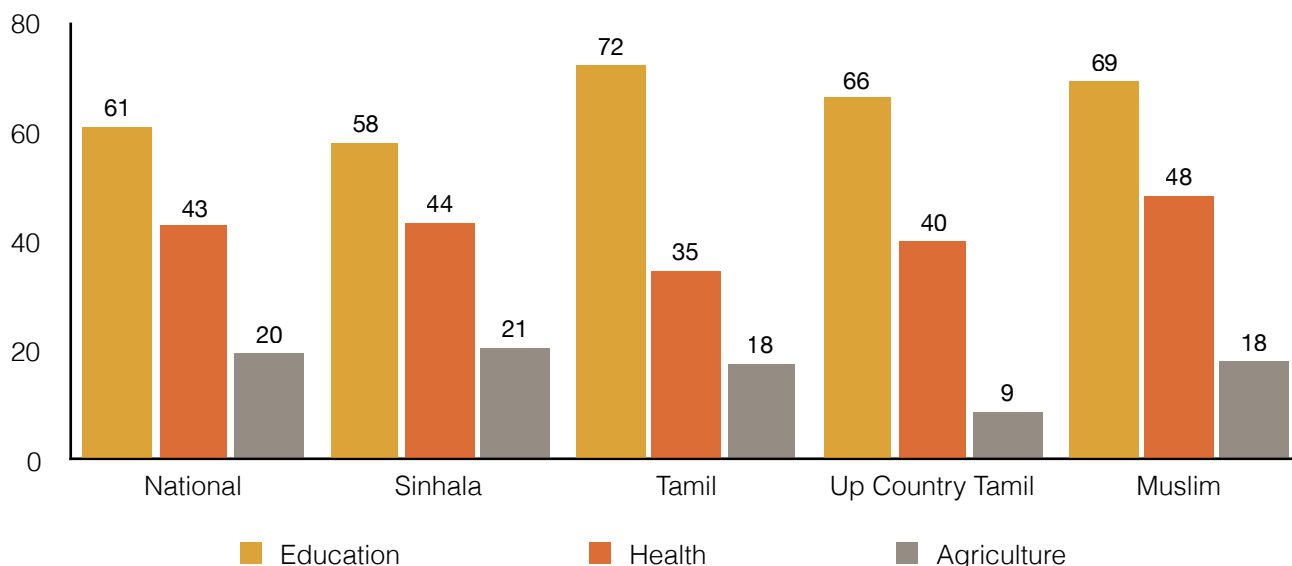
National Budget

The 2016 budget was passed with 159 members of the Parliament voting in favour, and 52 opposing it with 13 absent. As per the Appropriation Bill for the year 2016, the expenditure allocated for Defence is the highest, with a proposed expenditure of Rs 306.657 billion. The estimated expenditure for Education is Rs 186 billion, for Health Rs 174 billion and for Agriculture Rs 54.2 billion.³

Respondents were asked about what sectors they would allocate money to if they were given the opportunity and the top three sectors were: education, health and agriculture. 61.2% of Sri Lankans state that education should be given the top most priority when deciding the allocation for the national budget, which is followed by nearly 43% of Sri Lankans prioritising health and 19.6% agriculture.

From an ethnic perspective when comparing the data with the survey conducted in 2013, there appears to be a significant decline in the respondents preference for budget allocations towards the agriculture sector. Allocation towards agriculture stood at 31% in 2013 but declined to 19.6% in 2015. (Refer Graph 1.4)

Graph 1.4 If you were to decide on the top three sectors, to which allocation of the national budget should be prioritised, what would these sectors be?



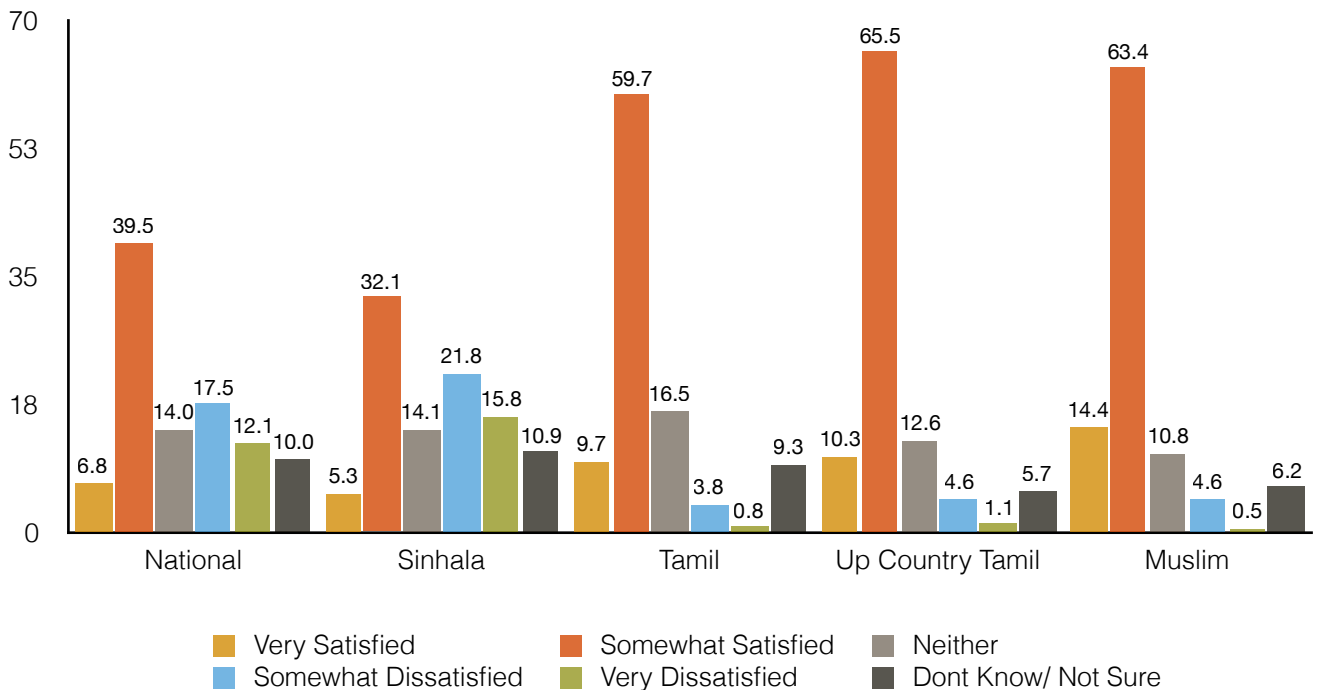
³<http://www.dailymirror.lk/92465/appropriation-bill-for-2016-presented>

Development

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction in relation to the development initiatives taken thus far under President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. While 46.3% of Sri Lankans were satisfied, nearly 30% were not satisfied with the present pace of development in the country.

From an ethnic perspective 37.4% from the Sinhala community, 69.4% from the Tamil community, 75.8% from the Up Country Tamil community and 77.8% from the Muslim community state they are satisfied with the present pace of development in the country under President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. The Sinhala community is the most dissatisfied with 37.6% indicating the same. (Refer Graph 1.5)

Graph 1.5 When considering the pace of development in the country, how satisfied are you with the development initiatives that have been taken thus far, under President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe?



On the question on allocation of resources, 37.5% of Sri Lankans say that the Government should give priority to allocating resources towards rebuilding the conflict affected areas, even if this means that less money is spent in the rest of the country. This opinion is held by nearly 60% of the Tamil community while 42.3% of the Muslim community believe the same.

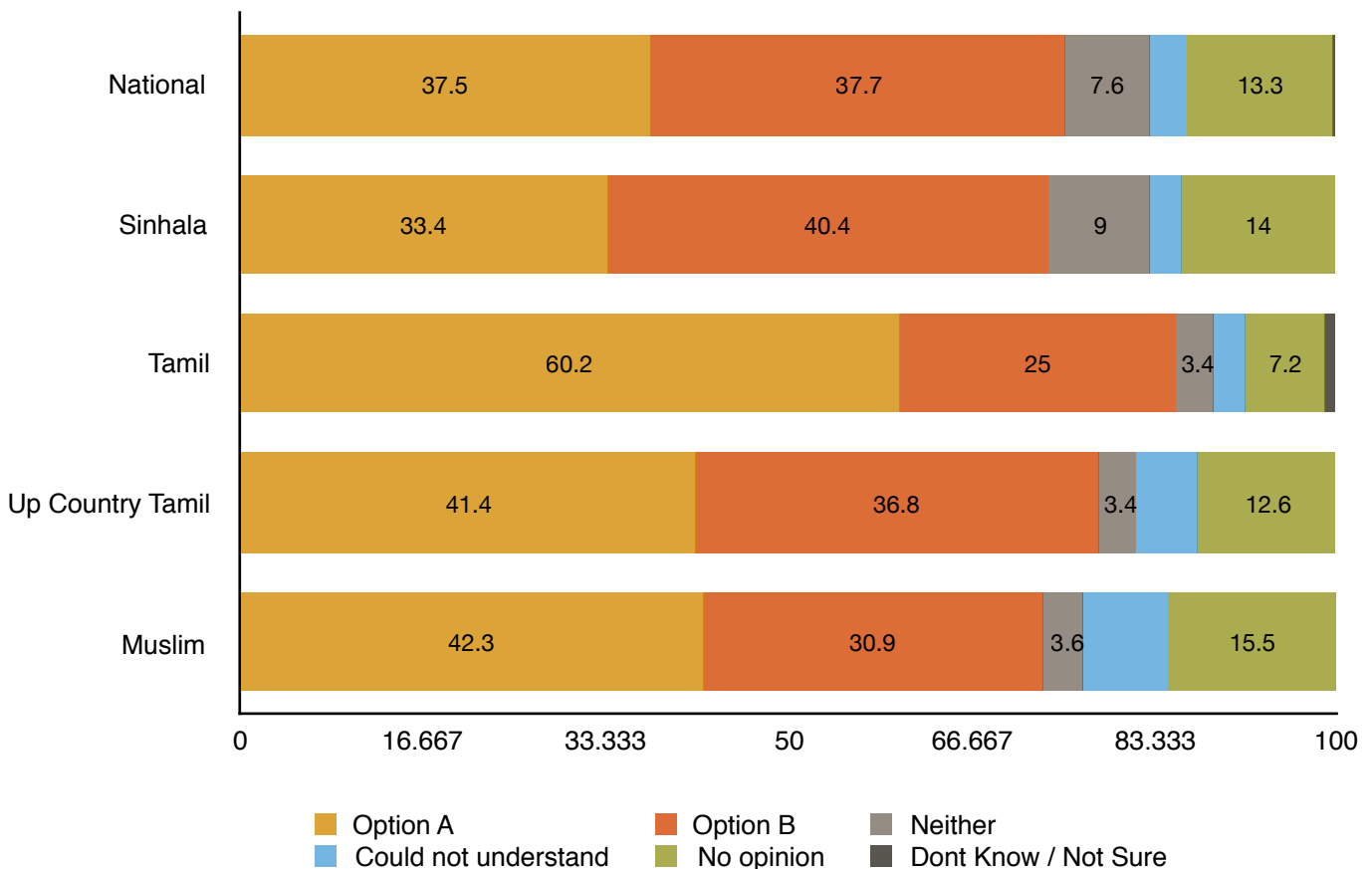
37.7% of Sri Lankans say that there are many other problems that the Government should focus on, and that rebuilding the conflict affected areas should not be given priority over the needs of the rest of the country. From the respondents, 40.4% from the Sinhala community and 36.8% from the Up Country Tamil community indicate the same.

When compared with the surveys conducted in the past, there appears to be a decline in the percentage of Sri Lankans who believe that the Government should give priority to allocating resources to rebuilding the conflict affected areas, even if this means that less money is spent in the rest of the country. This is evident from the data in 2013 with 61.1% and in 2014 with 46.3% of Sri Lankans indicating the same. (Refer Graph 1.6)

Graph 1.6 : Which statement is most agreeable to you?

Option A - “The Government should give priority to allocating resources to rebuilding the conflict affected areas, even if this means that less money is spent in the rest of the country.”

Option B - “There are many other problems facing this country that the government should focus on, rebuilding the conflict affected areas should not be given priority over the needs of the rest of the country.”



SECURITY AND FREEDOM

Summary

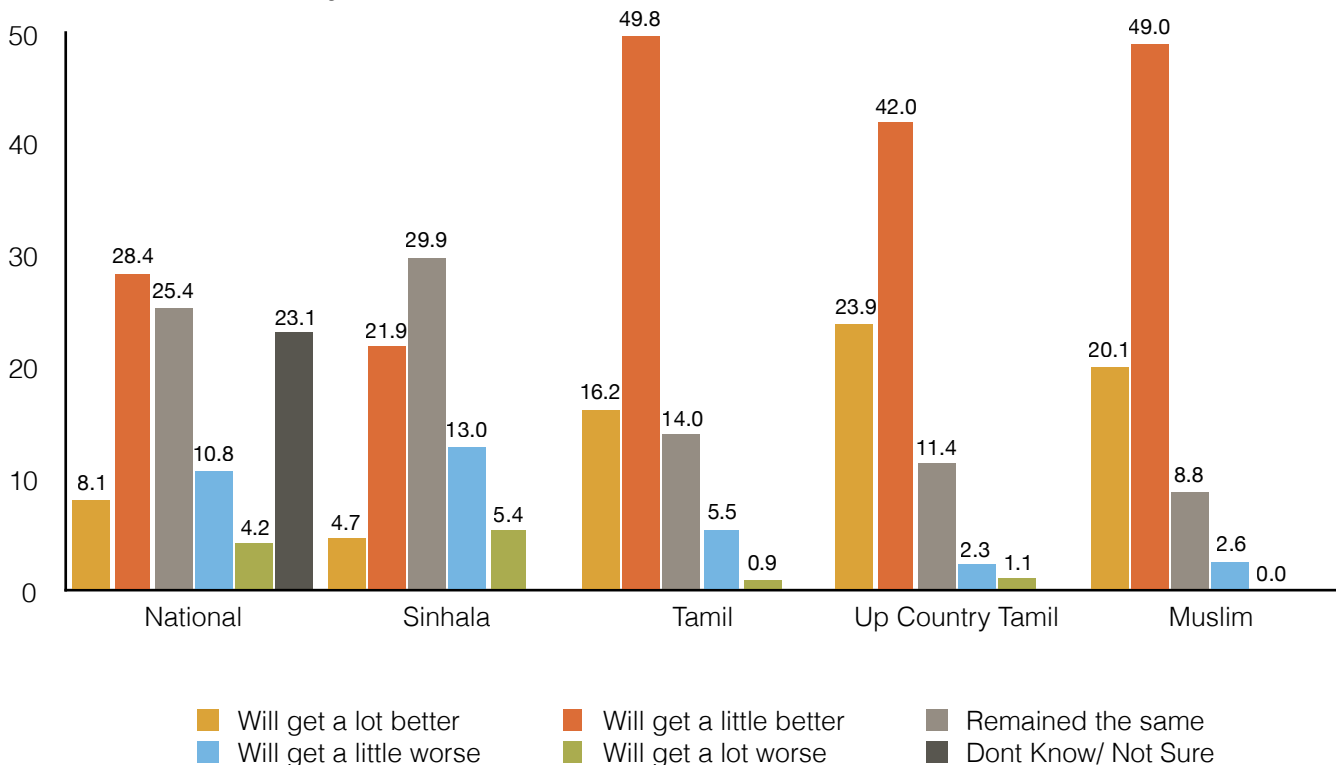
- When analysing data from the previous surveys, there is a decrease in the percentage of Sri Lankans who say that the general security situation will get better. In 2011, 79.7% of Sri Lankans stated that the general security situation will get better over the next two years. In 2013, the figure was 83.6%. By March 2015, it decreased to 49.1% and in October 2015, there was a further drop to 36.5%.
- Compared to the previous surveys, those who felt that the security situation would worsen over the next two years also rose considerably. In March 2015, 7.3% stated that the security situation will worsen. This figure went up to 18.4% in October 2015.
- As the data from the ethnic breakdown shows, the overall decline can be attributed to the dissatisfaction among the Sinhala community as the figures have not changed significantly for the other communities when compared to the data from the March 2015 survey.
- The low level of satisfaction among the Sinhala community in relation to security is further upheld by responses given to the question on whether national security has improved since the formation of the new Government. 24.4% of the Sinhalese community stated that it had got worse, while 20.7% stated that it had improved. Interestingly the highest level of satisfaction was evident in the Muslim community, with 74.3% from the Muslim community stating that national security has improved since the formation of the new Government, and just 2.1% stating that it had worsened.
- There is overall satisfaction on the level of media freedom with 67.7% of Sri Lankans agreeing (with 27.9% strongly agreeing) that the Sri Lankan media is completely free to criticise the Government, a further increase from 51.7% in March 2015. Comparison with data from the previous surveys – 42% in 2011, 42.5% in 2013 and 39.2% in 2014 reflects a sustained improvement over the years on the level of media freedom as perceived by the general public.

General Security Situation in the Country

When analysing data from the past surveys, the percentage of Sri Lankans who say that the general security situation will get better has decreased considerably. In 2011, 79.7% of Sri Lankans stated that the general security situation will get better over the next two years. In 2013, the figure stood at 83.6%. By March 2015, it decreased to 49.1%. In October 2015, there was a further drop to 36.5%, whilst 18.4% felt that the security situation will get worse and 25.4% stated that there will be no change.

From an ethnic perspective, in March 2015 43.7% of the Sinhala community stated that the security will get better while the figure for October 2015 reduced to 26.6%. The figures have not changed significantly for the other communities when compared to the data from the March 2015 survey. 66% from the Tamil community (in comparison to the 66.7% in March 2015), 65.9% of Up Country Tamil Community (in comparison to the 56.1% in March 2015), and 69.1% of Muslim community (in comparison to the 69.4% in March 2015) believe that the general security situation of the country will get better in the future. (Refer Graph 2.1)

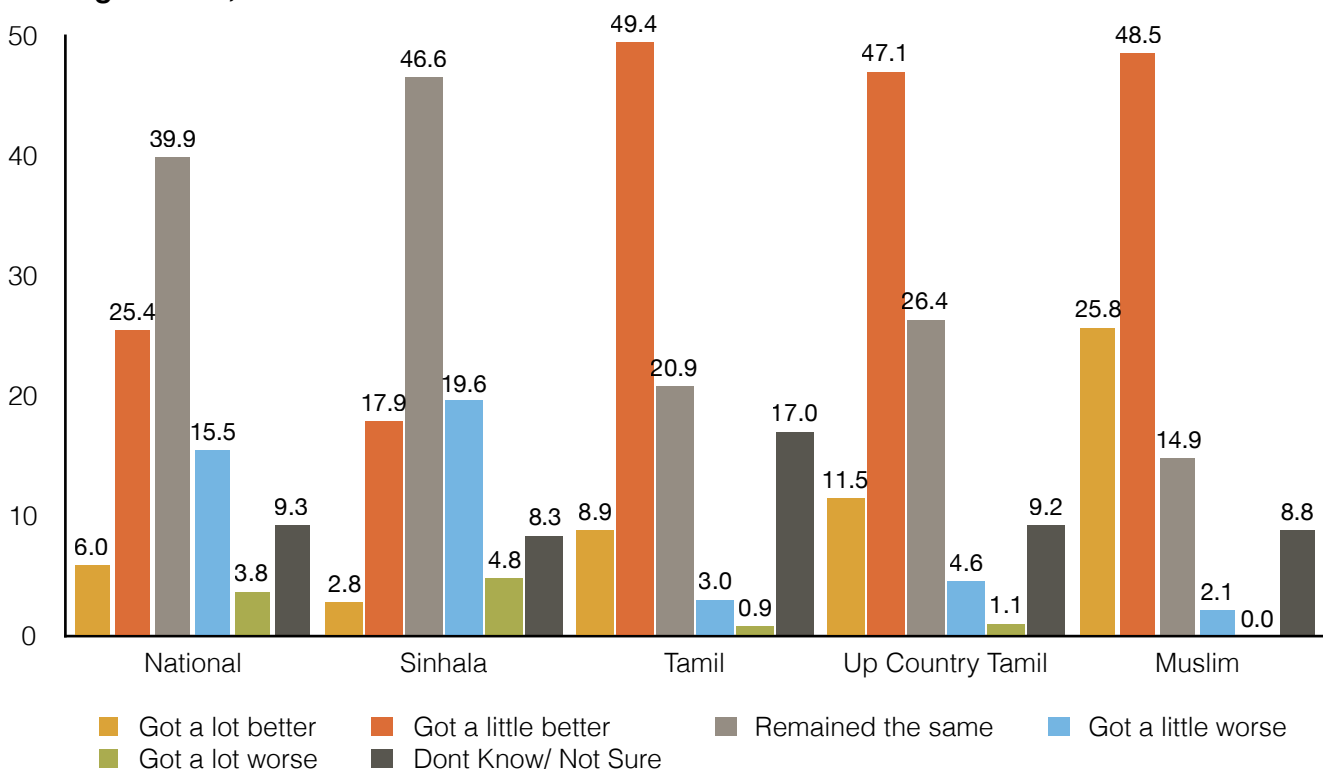
Graph 2.1 How do you think the general security situation in this country will change over the next two years?



National security since formation of the new Government

31.4% of Sri Lankans agreed that national security has improved since the new Government was formed, while 39.9% stated it remained the same, and 19.3% disagreed that national security has improved since the new Government was formed. From an ethnic perspective, the differences again in this respect are fairly considerable - 20.7% from the Sinhala community, 58.3% of Tamil community, 58.6% from the Up Country Tamil community and 74.2% from the Muslim community stated that national security has got better. In fact, almost a quarter of the Sinhala community (24.4%) stated that national security had deteriorated since the formation of the new Government, while the figure stood at 3.9% for Tamil community, 5.7% for Up Country Tamil community and 2.1% for Muslim community. (Refer Graph 2.2)

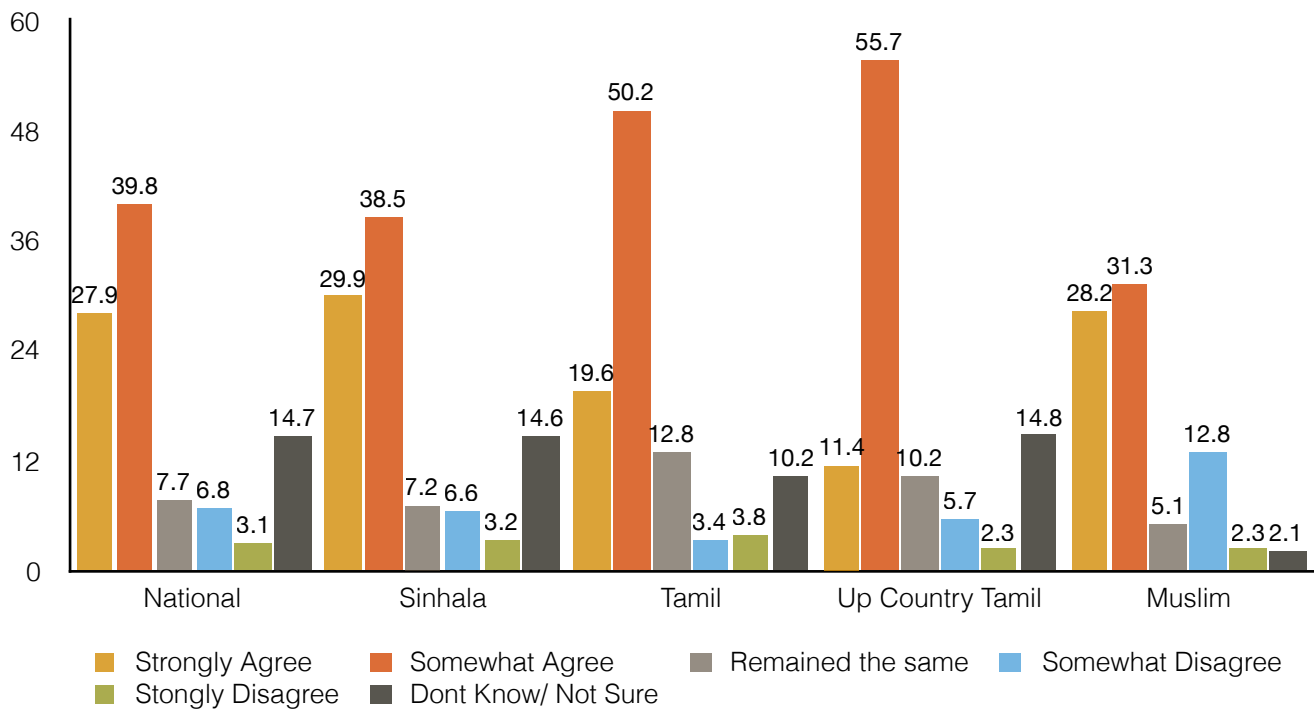
Graph 2.2 Some people agree that national security has improved since the new government was formed, whilst others disagree with the same. In your opinion, do you think the national security of the country, when compared with the previous regime has;



Media Freedom

The question relating to media freedom in the country reveals a general satisfaction in this sphere with 67.7% of Sri Lankans (with 27.9% strongly agreeing) stating that the media in Sri Lanka is completely free to criticise the Government, a further increase from 51.7% in March 2015. From an ethnic perspective, agreement among the Tamil community at 69.8% and Sinhala community at 68.4% is even higher than the national average. The figure for Up Country Tamil community at 67.1% almost coincides with the national average while the figure for Muslim community at 59.5% is below the national average by 8.2%. (Refer Graph 2.3)

Graph 2.3 Some people say that the media in Sri Lanka is completely free to criticize the Government as they wish. Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with this statement.



PERCEPTIONS ON POLITICS

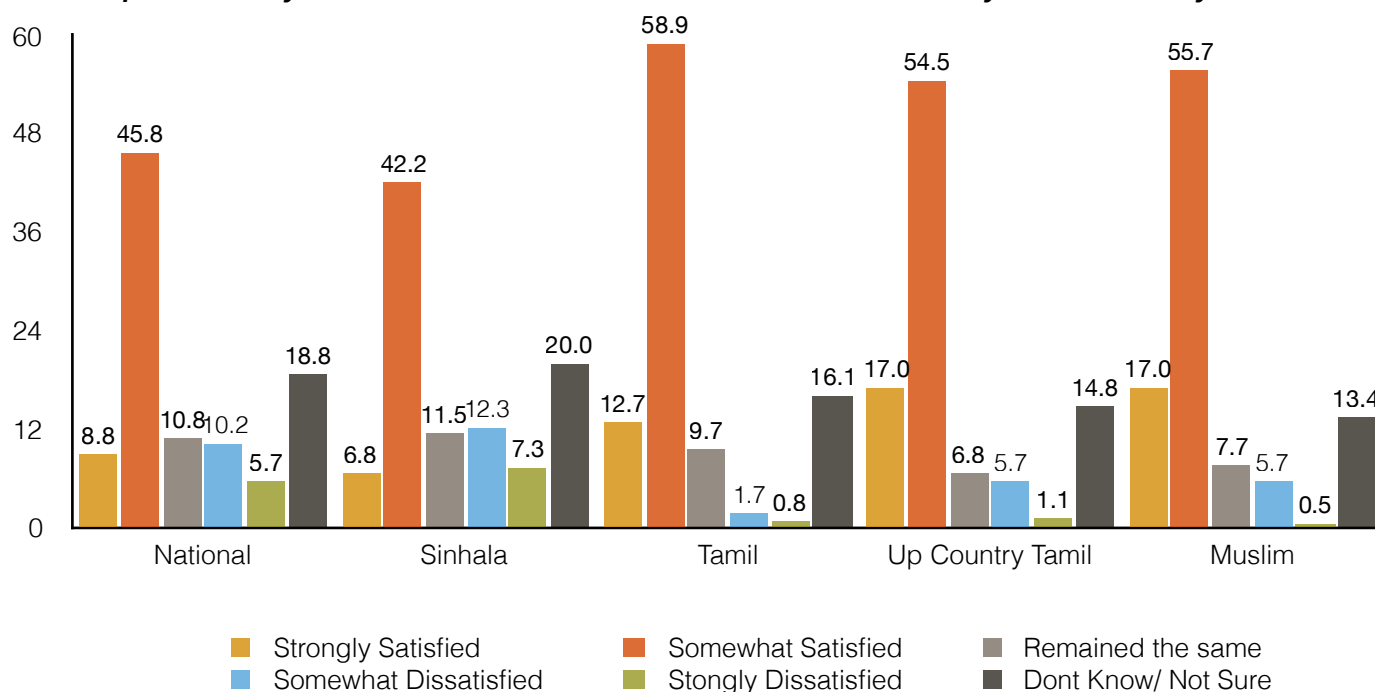
Summary

- A majority of Sri Lankans (almost 55%) are satisfied with the current level of democracy in the country, while nearly 16% state that they are not.
- A low level of positivity among the general public is evident in relation to the influence they think they could have over national decision making. While 45.7% of Sri Lankans state that they do not have an influence over national decision making 37.3% believe that they do.
- From an ethnic perspective, the Up Country Tamil community appear to be the most content on the overall performance of political parties in Sri Lanka. Nearly 46% from the Up Country Tamil community rate the overall performance of political parties in Sri Lanka to be good, whilst 44.3% from the Sinhala community indicate that it is bad.
- A majority of Sri Lankans (nearly 85%) are of the opinion that there should be a legal restriction on the amount of money that political parties and candidates can spend at elections. Furthermore, a majority (83.3%) of Sri Lankans also state that political parties must publish their audited accounts.

Form of Governance Preferred

There appears to be a general sense of satisfaction on the current level of democracy in the country with 54.6% of Sri Lankans stating that they are satisfied and only 16% expressing dissatisfaction. From an ethnic perspective, nearly 50% from the Sinhala community, 71.6% from the Tamil community, 71.6% from the Up Country Tamil community and 72.7% from the Muslim community are satisfied with the current level of democracy in the country. The most dissatisfied with the current level of democracy is the Sinhala community with nearly 20% indicating the same. (Refer Graph 3.1)

Graph 3.1 Are you satisfied with the current level of democracy in the country?

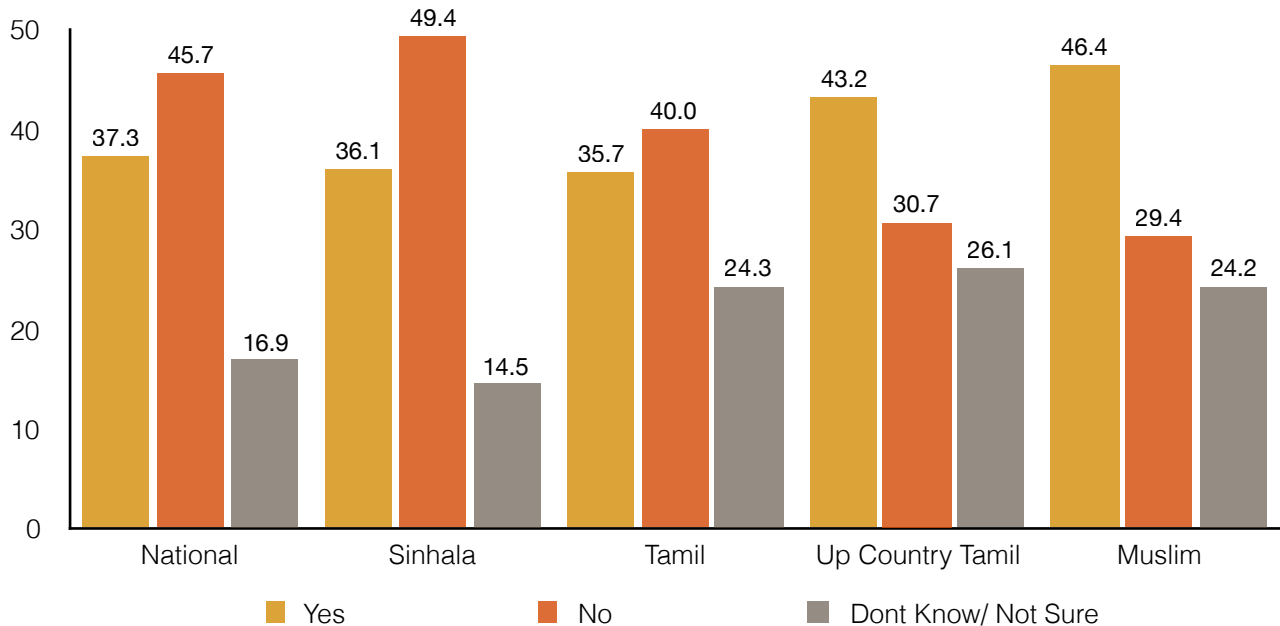


Political Efficacy

The respondents were asked if they as ordinary persons could have an influence over national decision making. 37.3% of Sri Lankans agreed that they could have an influence over national decision making while nearly 46% say that they could not. From an ethnic perspective, 36.1% from the Sinhala community, 35.7% from the Tamil community, 43.2% from the Up Country Tamil community and 46.4% from the Muslim community say that they could have an influence over national decision making. From those who believe that they don't, 49.4% were from the Sinhala community, 40% were from the Tamil community, 30.7%

were from the Up Country Tamil community and 29.4% were from the Muslim community. (Refer Graph 3.2)

Graph 3.2 Do you think an ordinary person such as yourself could have an influence over national-decision making?



Quality of Political Representation

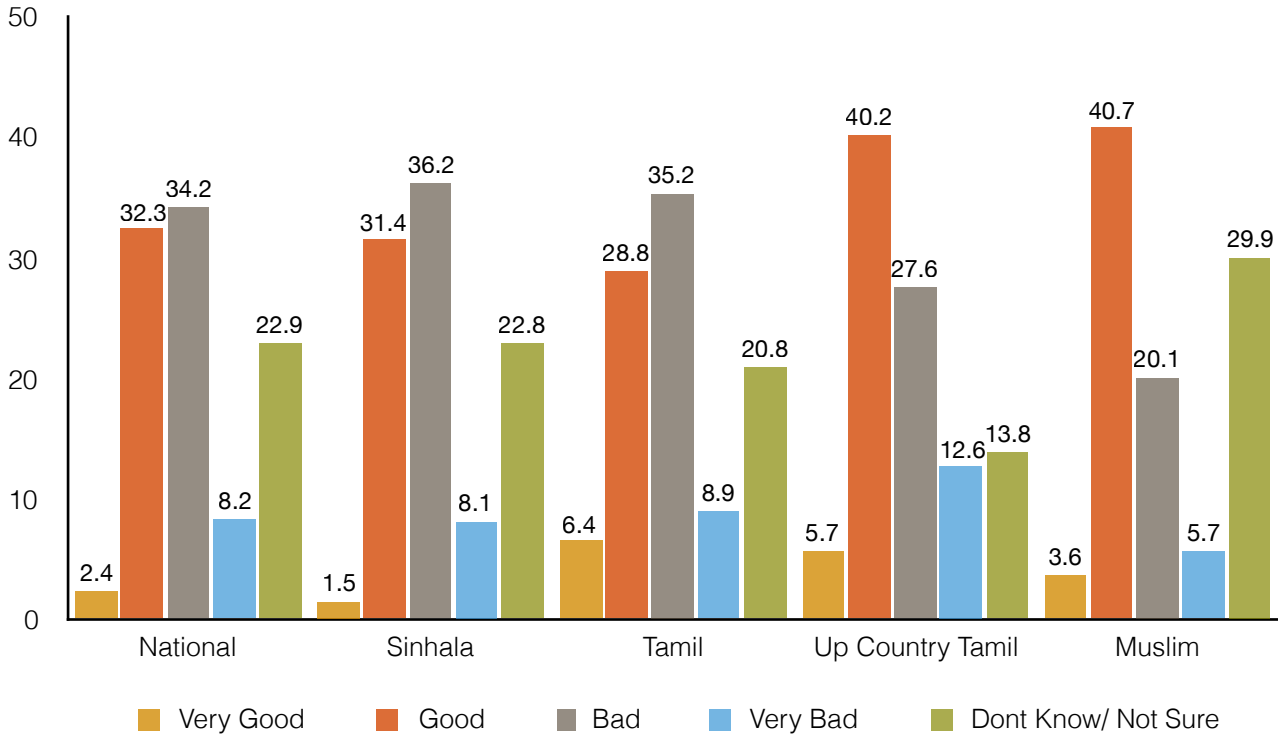
On the question of assessing the performance of political parties in Sri Lanka, nearly 35% indicate that the overall performance of political parties in Sri Lanka is good, whilst 42.4% indicate that it is bad. From an ethnic perspective, nearly 33% from the Sinhala community, 35.2% from the Tamil community, nearly 46% from the Up Country Tamil community and 44.3% from the Muslim community are of the opinion that the overall performance of political parties are good. The lack of optimism is mainly among the Sinhalese community with 44.3% indicating that the overall performance of political parties is bad. (Refer Graph 3.3)

Most Sri Lankans are of the opinion that there should be a legal restriction on the amount of money that political parties and candidates can spend at elections. While nearly 85% of Sri Lankans agree that there should be a legal restriction on the amount of money political parties and candidates can spend at elections, only 3.5% disagree.

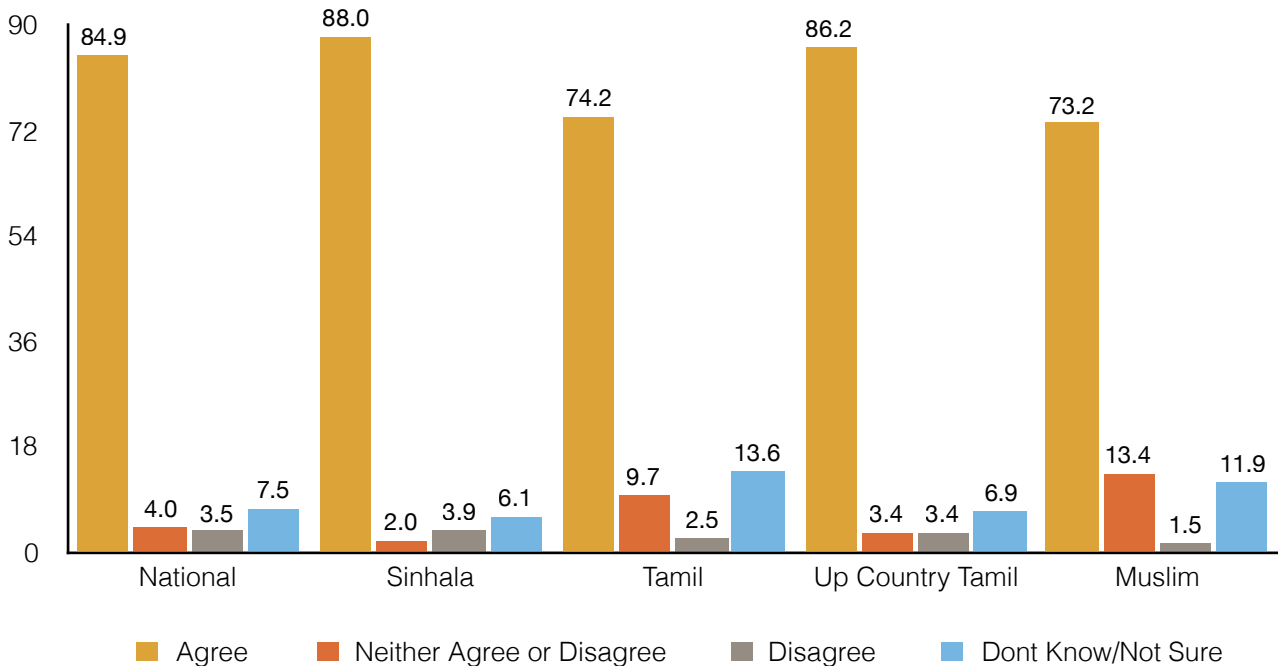
From an ethnic perspective, 88% from the Sinhala community, 74.2% from the Tamil community, 86.2% from the Up Country Tamil community and 73.2% from the Muslim

community believe that there should be a legal restriction on the amount of money that political parties and candidates can spend at elections. (Refer Graph 3.4)

Graph 3.3 How do you rate the overall performance of political parties in Sri Lanka

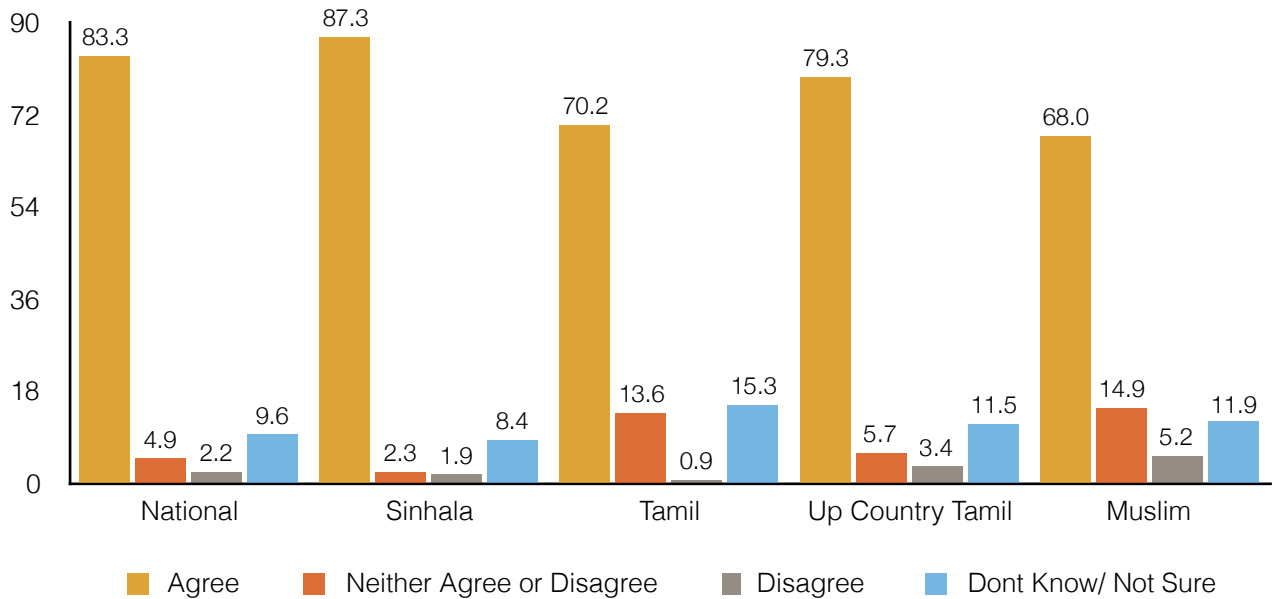


Graph 3.4 There should be a legal restriction on the amount of money that political parties and candidates can spend at elections



When respondents were asked if political parties must publish their audited accounts, a majority of Sri Lankans (83.3%) agreed that they should, whilst only 2.2% disagreed. 87.3% from the Sinhala community, 70.2% from the Tamil community, 79.3% from the Up Country Tamil community and 68% from the Muslim community agreed that political parties must publish their audited accounts. (Refer Graph 3.5)

Graph 3.5 Political Parties must publish their audited accounts



HUMAN RIGHTS AND RECONCILIATION

Summary

- On the question about hate speech in Sri Lanka, 46.4% of Sri Lankans approve the Government's plans to criminalise hate speech, while 13.1% disapproved the same. Among the most who approved the plan to criminalise hate speech was the Muslim community with 87.1% indicating the same.
- On the topic of finding a political solution to the ethnic conflict, 53.4% of Sri Lankans believe that the constitution should be changed based on recommendations made by an all-party committee to produce a political solution to the ethnic conflict. 14.3% are of the opinion that there is no need for a political solution as the LTTE was completely defeated militarily.
- A majority (80.6%) are of the opinion that the Government should find solutions to address the root causes of the conflict. While 48.1% of Sri Lankans indicate that there should be a credible mechanism to look into accountability during the final stages of the war, 37.7% indicate that there should not be one.
- Among those who stated that there should be a credible mechanism, 43.8% prefer an exclusively domestic mechanism, 17.1% prefer an exclusively international mechanism to probe into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity that were committed by all parties to the ethnic conflict during the final stages of the war. 30.6% of Sri Lankans prefer a combination of both domestic and international mechanism. A majority (61.7%) from the Sinhala community prefer an exclusively domestic mechanism. 47.6% from the Tamil community prefer an exclusively international one.
- 54.8% of Sri Lankans were not aware of the UNHRC report that was released on the 16th of September 2015, while only 22.8% of Sri Lankans were aware of the same. From those who were aware of the release of the report, 68.1% were aware of a "hybrid special court" that was proposed in the resolution.

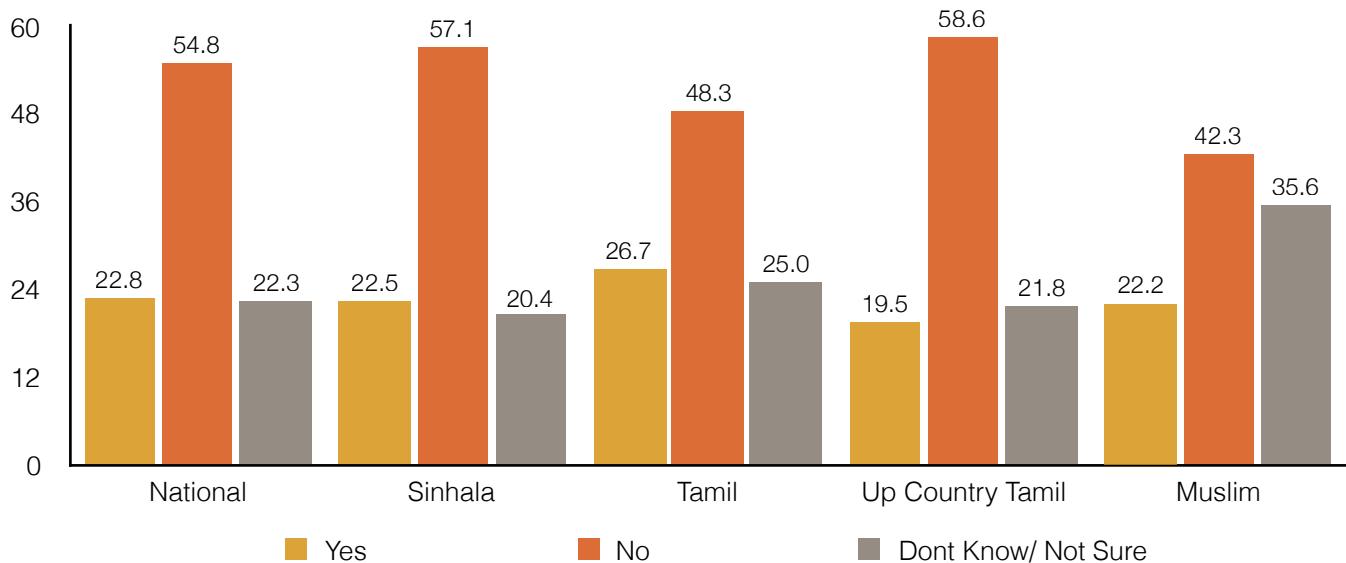
- On reconciliation, 47% of Sri Lankans believe that the Government is genuinely committed to promoting reconciliation in the country while 22.6% believe that the Government is not genuinely committed.
- Nearly 81% of Sri Lankans approved President Sirisena's statement on the 18th of September 2015 with regard to implementing the death penalty in 2016.

The United Nations Human Rights Council's (UNHRC) Resolution on Sri Lanka, October 2015

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) through consensus adopted the resolution on Sri Lanka at its 30th session in Geneva on the 01st of October 2015. The resolution calls for wide ranging reforms and a domestic accountability mechanism with international involvement. In working towards a process of reconciliation, the Government has promised to ensure and introduce various confidence building measures that involves truth seeking, justice, reparations and non-recurrence in post war Sri Lanka. The establishment and operationalising of a Truth Commission, a Office of Missing Persons, a special judicial mechanism inclusive of independent courts and counsel, and a office of reparation including compensation to the victims of the civil war, are a few recommendations among many that were brought forth and cosponsored by the Government of Sri Lanka.

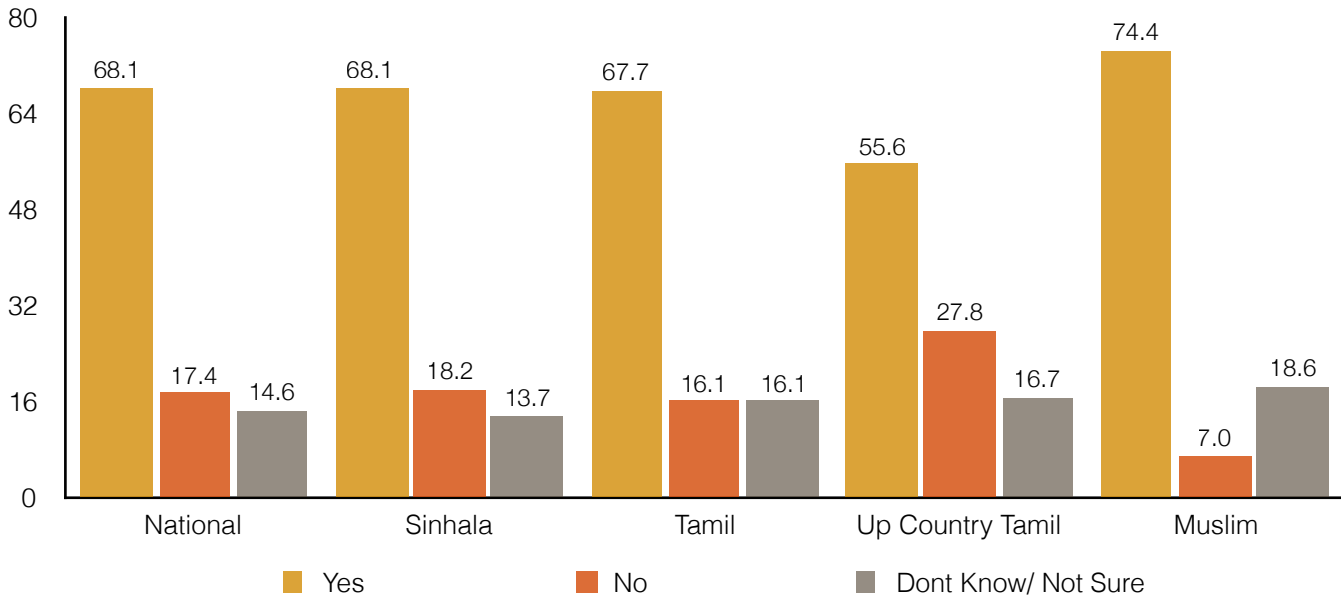
When the respondents were asked if they were aware of the report released by UNHRC in September this year, only 22.8% were aware of it, whilst a majority of Sri Lankans (54.8%) were unaware of the report which refers to initiatives required to be taken in order to promote Reconciliation, Accountability and Human Rights in post-war Sri Lanka. It was the Up Country Tamil community with 58.6% who were the highest among those who were unaware, followed by 57.1% from the Sinhala community, 48.3% from the Tamil community and 42.3% from the Muslim community. From those who were aware of the UNHRC Report the most informed were the Tamil community (26.7%) followed by the Sinhala community (22.5%), the Muslim community (22.2%) and the Up Country Tamil community (19.5%). (Refer Graph 4.1)

Graph 4.1 Are you aware of the report released on the 16th of September 2015, by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which refers to initiatives that need to be taken in order to promote reconciliation, accountability and human rights in post war Sri Lanka?



Among those who said that they were aware of the UNHRC report released on the 16th of September 2015, 68.1% were aware and 17.4% were not aware of the recommendation highlighted in the report in relation to the establishment of a “hybrid special court” that integrates international judges, prosecutors, lawyers and investigators to a domestic mechanism, to probe into war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed by all parties to the armed conflict. From among those who were aware of the ‘hybrid special court’ it is the Muslim community (74.4%) who were the most informed, followed by 68.1% from the Sinhala community, 67.7% from the Tamil community and 55.6% from the Up Country Tamil community. From the 22.5% of the Sinhalese community who were aware of the UNHRC report 18.2% were not aware of the recommendation of a ‘hybrid special court’. (Refer Graph 4.2)

Graph 4.2 If yes, as an essential step towards justice, the report recommends the establishment of a hybrid special court that integrates international judges, prosecutors, lawyers and investigators to the domestic mechanism, to probe into war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed by all parties to the armed conflict. Are you aware of the same?



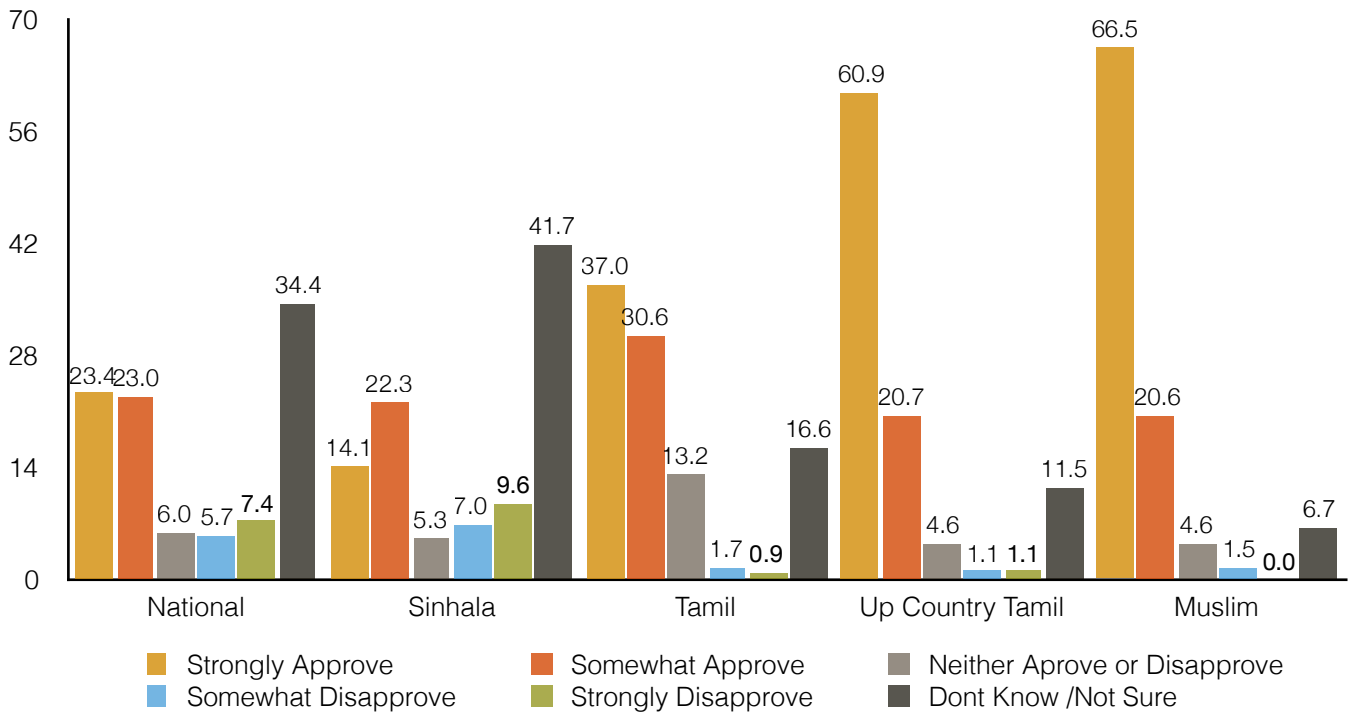
Hate Speech

In April 2015, the Government of Sri Lanka announced plans to criminalise hate speech. On the question of criminalising hate speech, the respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for the Government’s plans on criminalising hate speech in Sri Lanka. While 46.4% (with 23.4% strongly approving) approve of the Government’s plans, 13.1% disapprove.

From an ethnic perspective, a majority from the Muslim community (an overall percentage of 87.1% with 67% strongly approving) approve the Government’s announcement to criminalise hate speech in Sri Lanka. The figure stood at 36.3% from the Sinhala community, 67.7% from the Tamil community and 81.6% from the Up Country Tamil community.

When comparing data across the different ethnicities, it is evident that the Sinhala community with 16.6%, predominantly disapproves the Government’s plan to criminalise hate speech in the country. (Refer Graph 4.3)

Graph 4.3 In April 2015, the Government of Sri Lanka announced plans to criminalise hate speech. In your opinion, how far do you approve or disapprove of this statement.



Political solution to the ethnic conflict

When asked if the Constitution should be changed based on recommendations made by an all-party committee to produce a political solution to the country’s ethnic problem, a majority of Sri Lankans (53.4%) agreed that it should be changed. 14.3% of Sri Lankans believe that there is no need for a political solution as the LTTE was completely defeated militarily.

In comparison to the previous surveys there appears to be marked a rise in the percentage of Sri Lankans who believe that the constitution should be changed based on recommendations made by an all-party committee in order to produce a political solution to the country’s ethnic conflict. As such, while the figure stood at 39.9% in 2013 it rose to 53.4% in 2015.

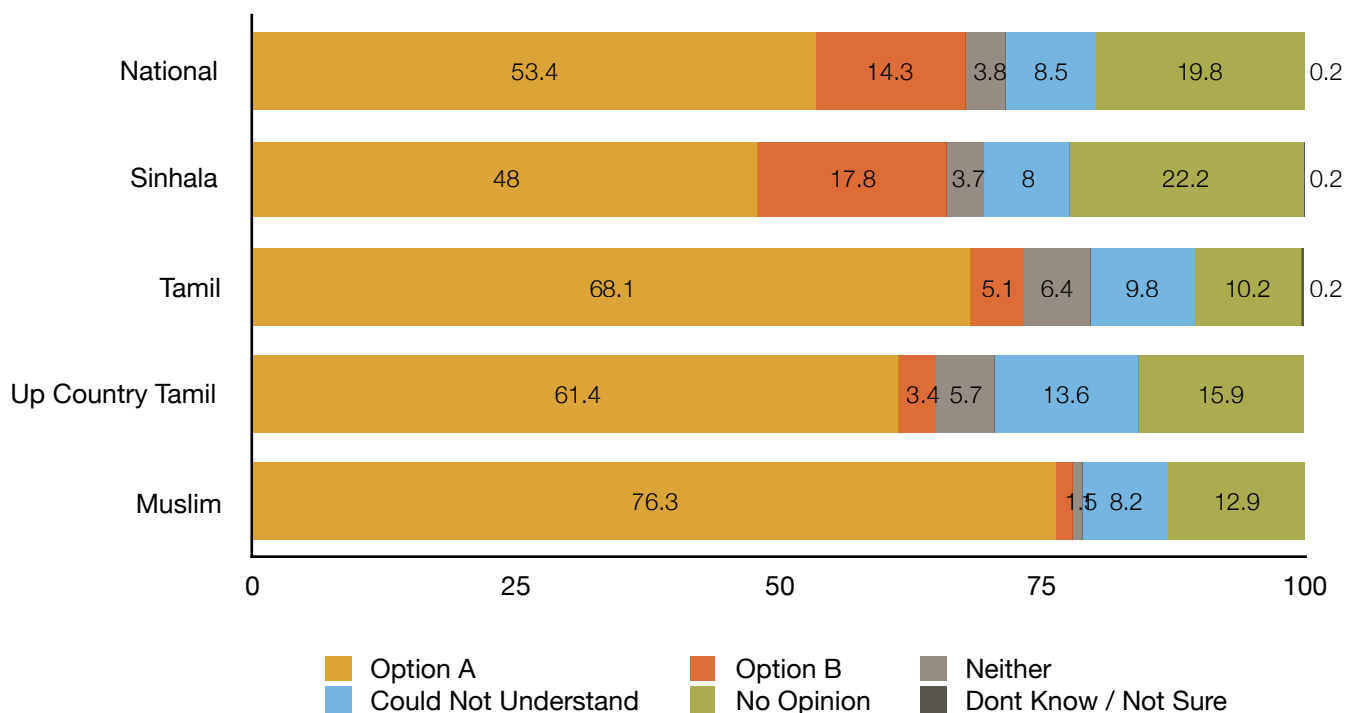
From an ethnic perspective, there seems to be a significant rise in the percentages among the Sinhala and Muslim communities since 2011 to October 2015. For the Sinhala community the figures stand at 29.7% in 2011, 30.8% in 2013 to 48% in October 2015 and for the Muslim community – 53.5% in 2011, 52.8% in 2013 and 76.3% in October 2015.

In 2013, 14.9% from the Sinhala community indicated that there was no need for a political solution as the LTTE was completely defeated as opposed to the 17.8% in October 2015. A clear decline however, can be seen since 2013 in the percentages of the Up Country Tamil and Muslim communities in this regard. In 2013, 17.9% from the Up Country Tamil and 6.6% from the Muslim communities indicate that there is no need for a political solution as the LTTE was completely defeated as opposed to the 3.4% from the Up Country Tamil and 1.5% from the Muslim communities in October 2015. (Refer Graph 4.4)

Graph 4.4 Which statement is most agreeable to you?

Option A - “The constitution should be changed based on recommendations made by an all-party committee to produce a political solution to the country’s ethnic problem.”

Option B - “There is no need for a political solution as the LTTE was completely defeated militarily.”

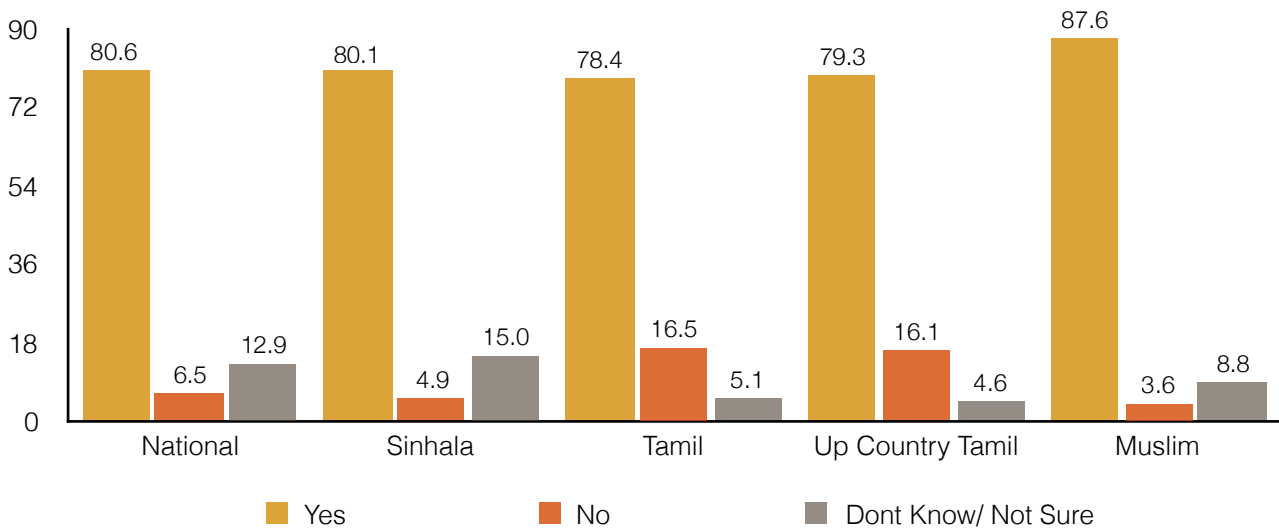


On the topic of finding solutions to address the root causes of the ethnic conflict, a majority of Sri Lankans (80.6%) indicate that the Government should find solutions to address the ethnic problem while 6.5% indicate that the Government should not.

From an ethnic perspective, most who share the opinion that the Government should find solutions to address the root causes of the conflict are from the Muslim community (87.6%)

followed by 80.1% from the Sinhala, 79.3% from the Up Country Tamil and 78.4% from the Tamil communities. (Refer Graph 4.5)

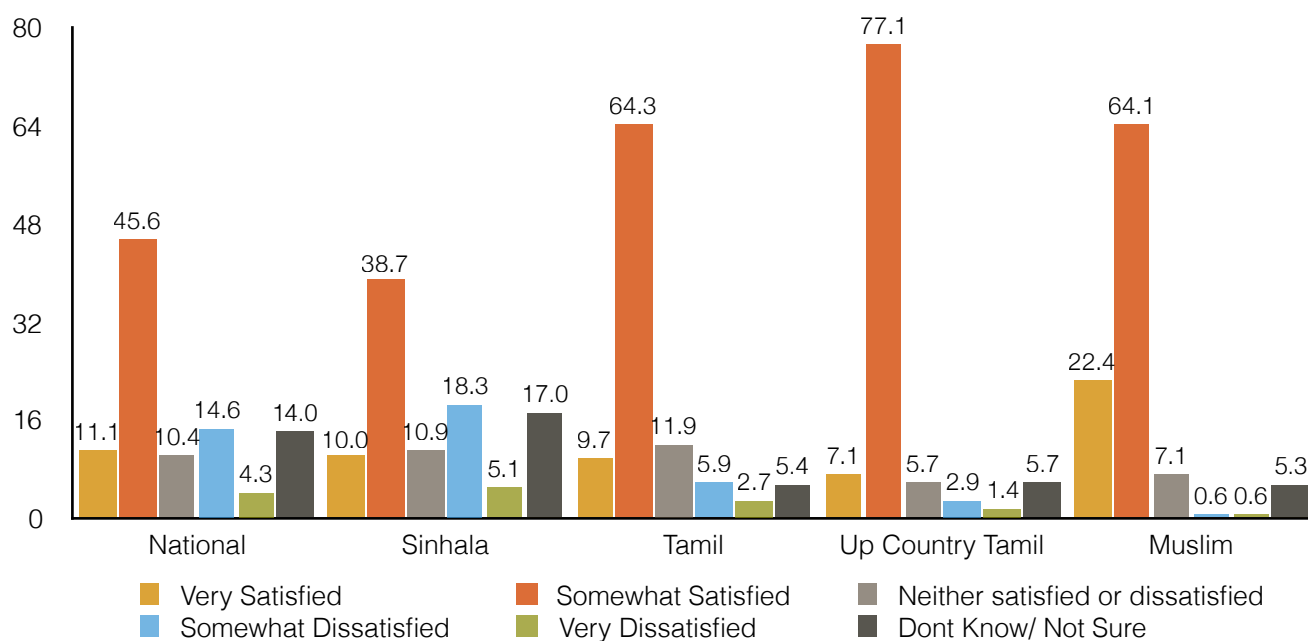
Graph 4.5: In your opinion, do you believe that the Government should find solutions to address the root causes of the ethnic conflict?



When asked as to how satisfied the respondents were with the Government’s efforts in addressing the root causes of the conflict, nearly 57% of Sri Lankans were satisfied while nearly 19% were not. 10.4% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

From an ethnic perspective, 48.7% from the Sinhala, 74% from the Tamil, 84.2% from the Up Country Tamil and 86.5% from the Muslim communities were satisfied with the Government’s efforts in addressing the root causes of the conflict. The most dissatisfied were from the Sinhala community with 23.4% stating the same. (Refer Graph 4.6)

Graph 4.6: How satisfied are you with the Government's efforts in addressing the root causes of the ethnic conflict?



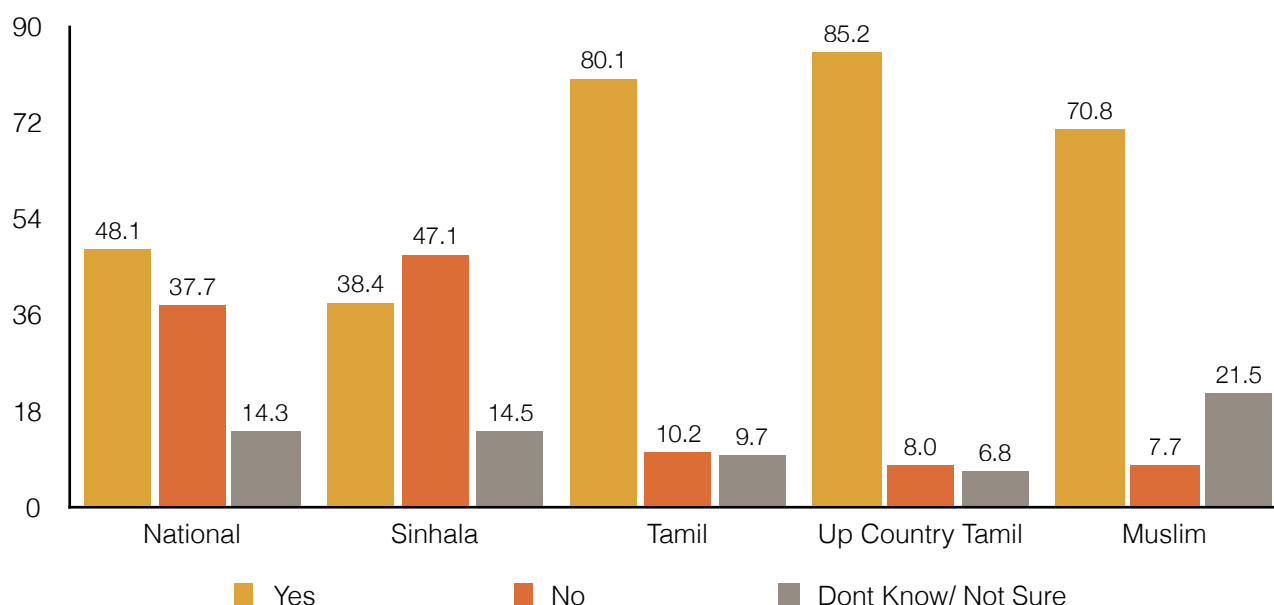
Accountability

When the respondents were asked if there should be a credible mechanism to look into accountability of what happened during the final stages of the war, 48.1% of Sri Lankans stated that there should be a credible mechanism while 37.7% opposed it. From those who stated that there should be a credible mechanism to look into accountability of what happened during the final stages of the war were 38.4% from the Sinhala, 80.1% from the Tamil, 85.2% from the Up Country Tamil and 70.8% from the Muslim communities. There appears to be a rise in the figures across all ethnicities since March 2015 except for in the Tamil community, where the figure stood at 83.9% in March, and has slightly decreased to 80.1% in October 2015.

Among those who are not in favour of a credible mechanism are 47.1% from the Sinhala, 10.2% from the Tamil, 8% from the Up Country Tamil and 7.7% from the Muslim communities. An increase in the percentages is evident when compared with the data in March 2015, where 32.2% from the Sinhala community, 9% from the Tamil community and 7.3% from the Up Country Tamil community were not in favour of a credible mechanism. As for the Muslim community from 16.4% in March 2015, the figure has dropped to 7.7%.

Overall, there appears to be a rise in the percentage of Sri Lankans who believe that there should be a credible mechanism to look into accountability of what happened during the final stages of the war. While 42.6% in March 2015 state that there should be a credible mechanism, the figure rose to 48.1% in October 2015. 36.3% opposed a credible mechanism in March 2015, while the figure slightly rose in October 2015 to 37.7%. (Refer Graph 4.7)

Graph 4.7: Do you think there should be a credible mechanism to look into accountability of what happened during the final stages of the war?

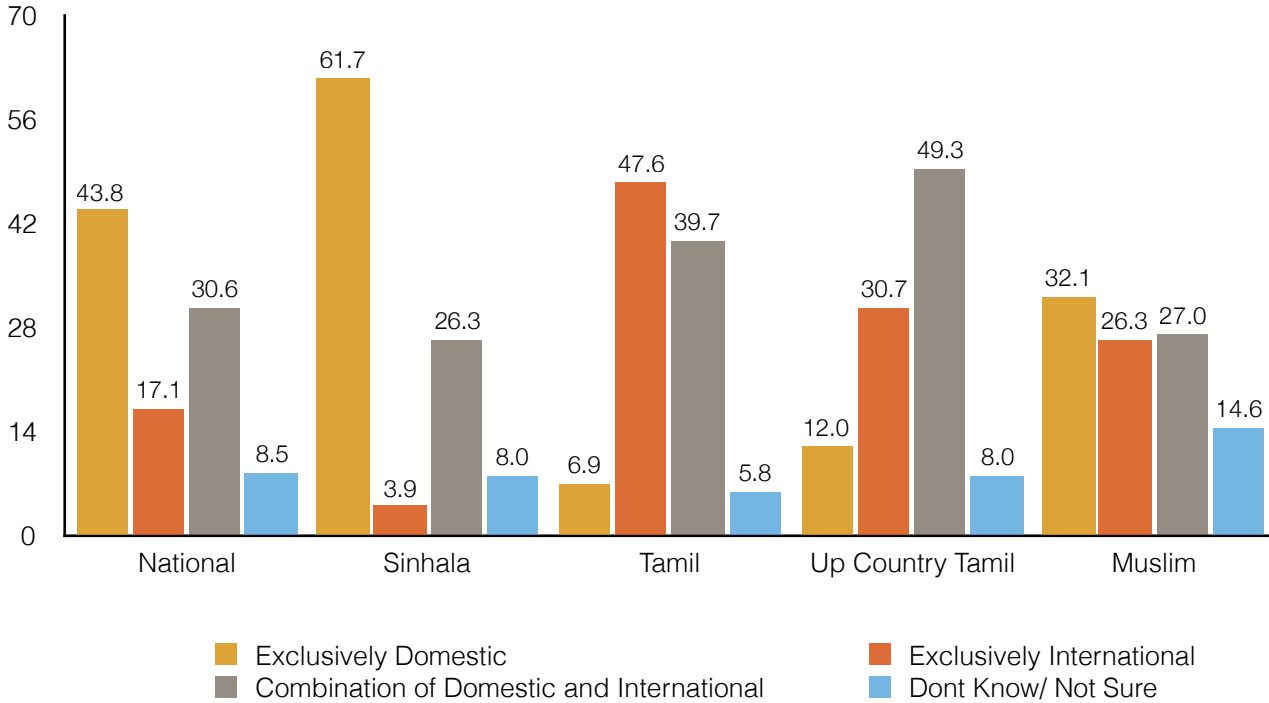


Those who said that there should be a credible mechanism to look into accountability of what happened during the final stages of the war were asked as to how they would prefer this mechanism to be formed. Among the 48.1% of Sri Lankans who said yes to a credible mechanism, 43.8% believe this should be an exclusively domestic mechanism, 17.1% believe that it should be an exclusively international mechanism and 30.6% believe that it should be a combination of both a domestic and international one.

From the 38.4% of the Sinhalese community who said that there should be a credible mechanism, a majority (61.7%) say that it should be exclusively domestic. From the 80.1% of the Tamil community who said that there should be a credible mechanism, 47.6% say that it should be exclusively international. The Tamil community has the least amount of faith in an exclusively domestic mechanism with only 6.9% in favour of one. A combination of both

domestic and international mechanism is significantly supported by the Up Country Tamil community with 49.3% indicating the same. (Refer Graph 4.8)

Graph 4.8: If yes, the mechanism for the assessment of alleged war crimes/ crimes against humanity should be;

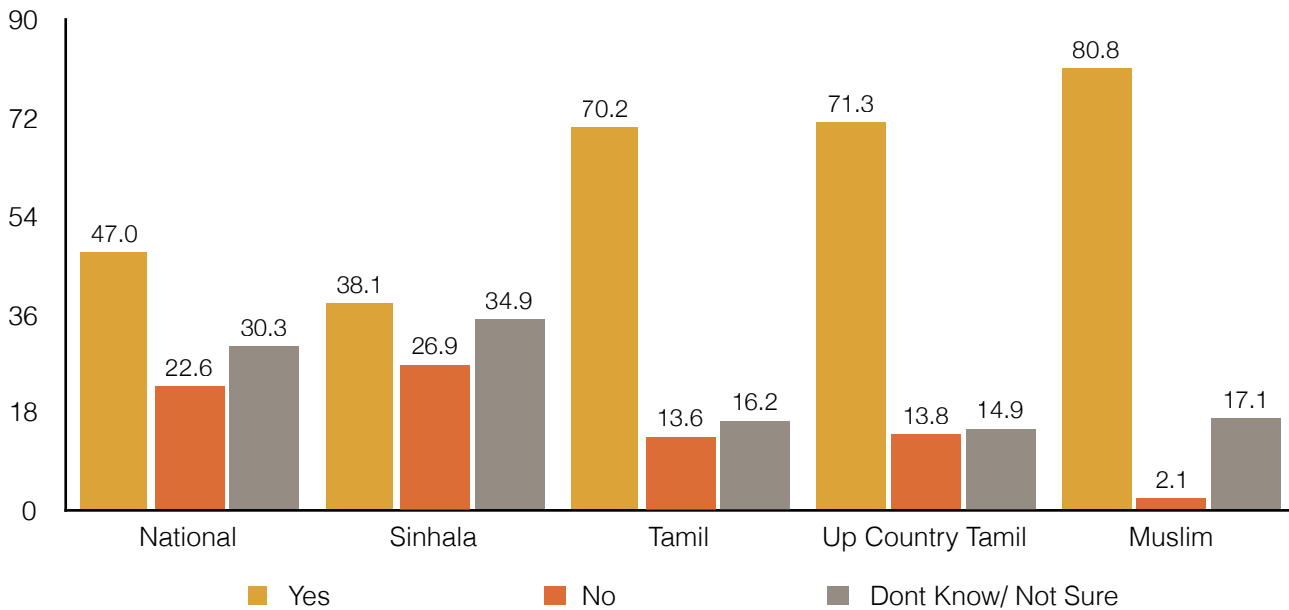


Government’s commitment towards promoting reconciliation

When asked if the Government was genuinely committed to promoting reconciliation in the country, 47% of Sri Lankans believed that it was, 22.6% believed that the Government was not genuinely committed towards promoting reconciliation in the country. From an ethnic perspective it is the Muslim community who is most optimistic with 80.8% stating that the Government is genuinely committed to promoting reconciliation in the country. The Sinhala community is the least optimistic with 26.9% stating the same.

From the 22.6% of Sri Lankans who state that the Government is not genuinely committed to promoting reconciliation in the county, 34.1% of Sri Lankans believe that it is due to the fact that political leaders and organisations in power prioritise their personal needs prior to addressing the needs of the citizens in the country. 30.2% of Sri Lankans believe that there isn’t a suitable mechanism in place towards promoting reconciliation in the country. (Refer Graph 4.9)

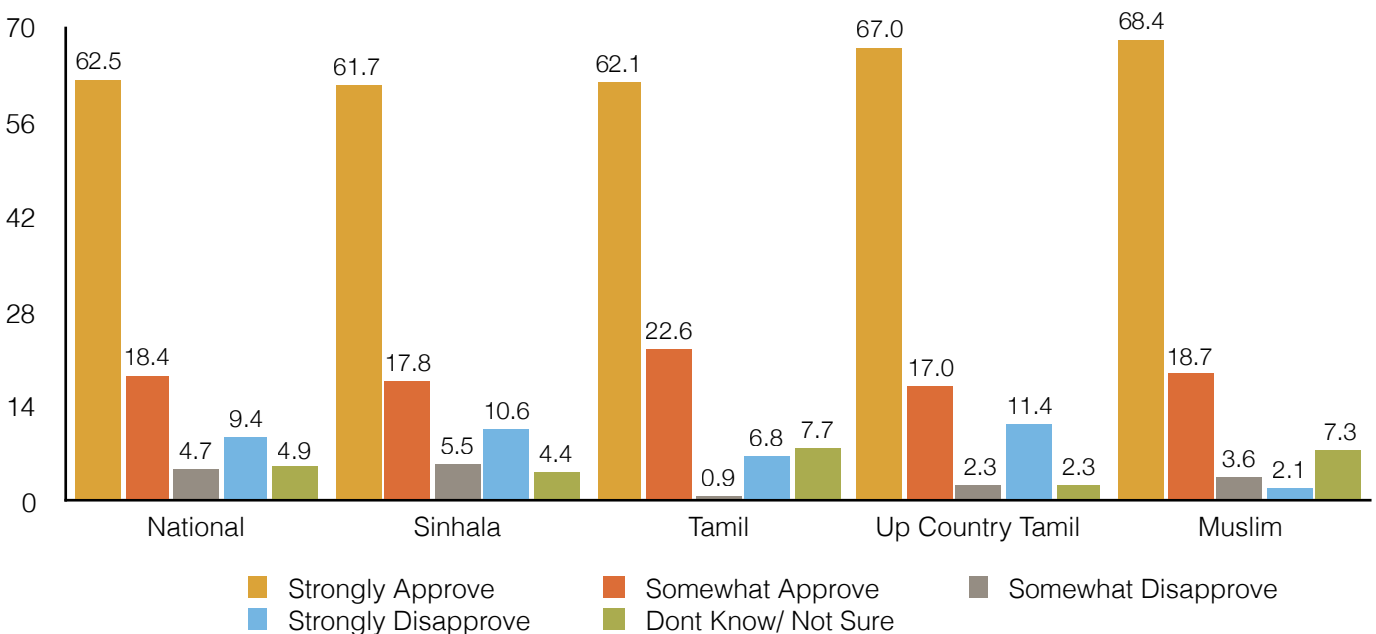
Graph 4.9 Do you believe that the government is genuinely committed to towards promoting reconciliation in the country?



Death Penalty

On the 18th of September 2015, President Sirisena stated that the death penalty would be implemented in 2016. While nearly 81% of Sri Lankans approved President Sirisena’s statement, 14.1 % of Sri Lankans disapproved the same. (Refer Graph 4.10)

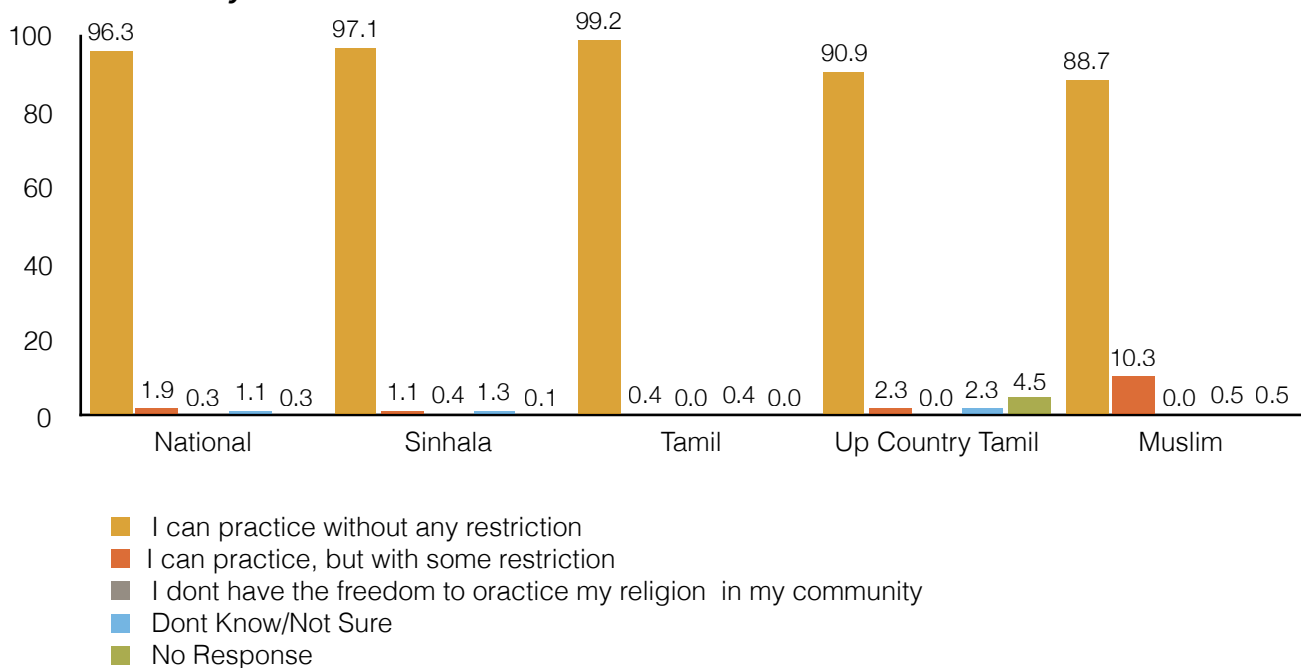
Graph 4.10: On the 18th of September 2015, President Sirisena stated that the death penalty would be implemented in 2016. In your opinion do you;



Ethnicity and Religion

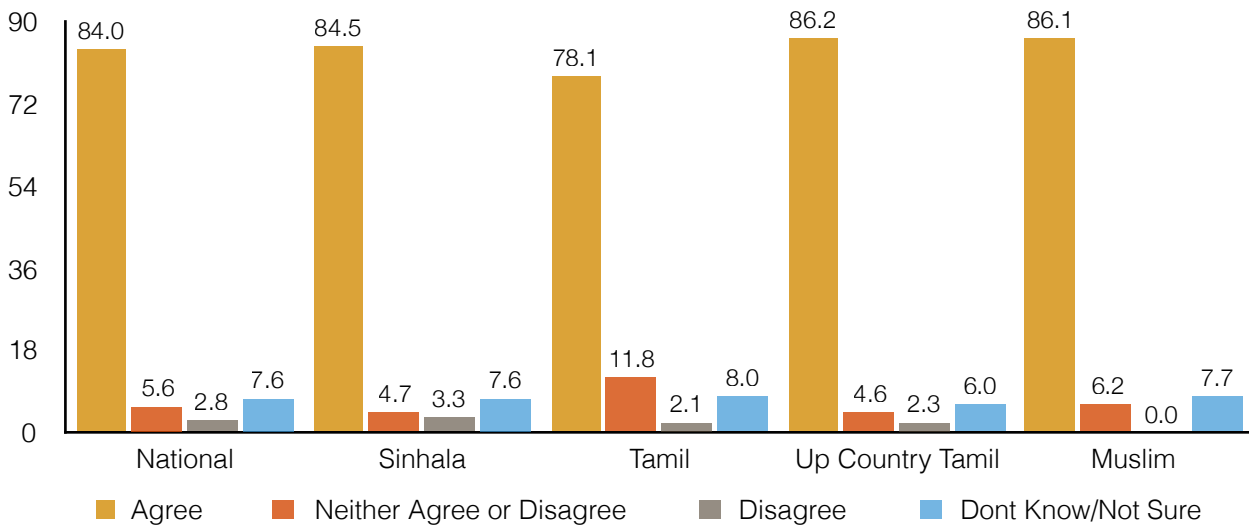
A majority of Sri Lankans (96.3%) believe that they are free to practice their religion in their community. Agreement is high across all communities with the Tamil community being the most optimistic (99.2%). A rise in the percentages across all communities is evident when compared with the survey that was conducted in 2013. While 88.7% from the Muslim community state that they can practice their religion without any restriction 10.3% experience some restrictions. This represents a slight rise since 2013, where 86.8% from the Muslim community state that they can practice their religion without any restriction, with 10.2% who express that they face some restrictions. (Refer Graph 4.11)

Graph 4.11: How free do you think you are to practice your religion in your community?



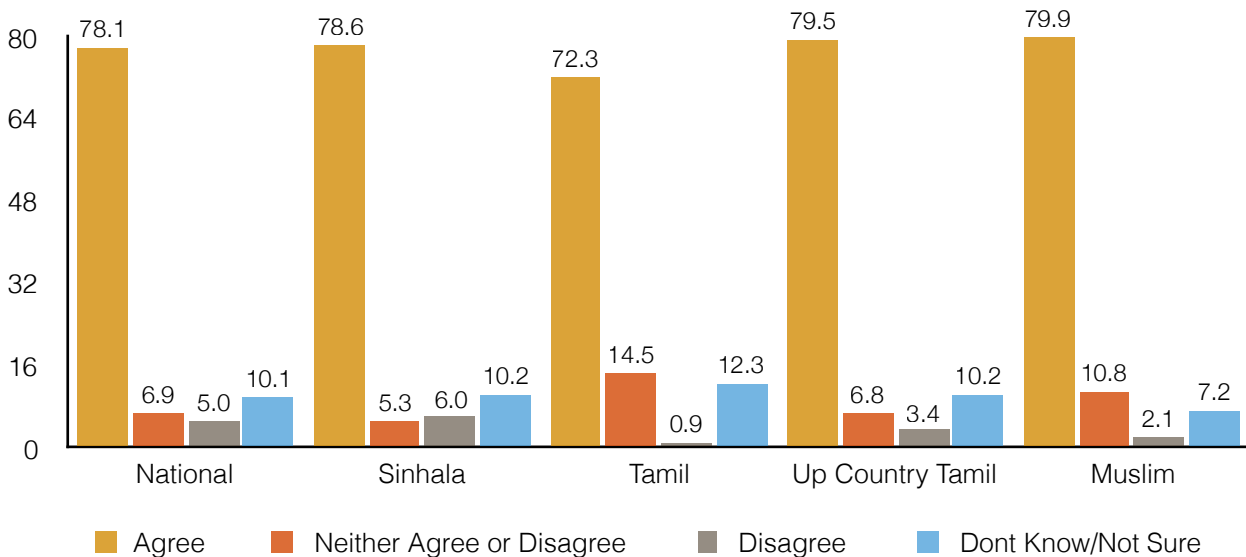
On the question relating to minority rights, 84% of Sri Lankans believe that the rights of the minorities should be protected even if the majority in the area do not agree, while only 2.8% disagree with the same. The highest number of respondents in this category are from the Muslim community with 86.1% indicating the same. This figure is followed by 86.2% from the Up Country Tamil, 84.5% from the Sinhala, and 78.1% from the Tamil communities. (Refer Graph 4.12)

Graph 4.12 The rights of the minority group should be protected even if the majority in the area do not agree



The respondents were asked if each ethnic group should have the right to elect a certain number of members to Parliament. While 78.1% of Sri Lankans agreed, 5% of Sri Lankans disagreed. The most who agreed with this statement were from the Muslim community with nearly 80% agreeing that a certain number of members from each ethnic group should be elected to the Parliament. Agreement to this statement was followed by 78.6% from the Sinhala, 72.3% from the Tamil and 79.5% from the Up Country Tamil communities. (Refer Graph 4.13)

Graph 4.13 Each ethnic group should have the right to elect a certain number of members to the Parliament



THE GOVERNMENT

Summary

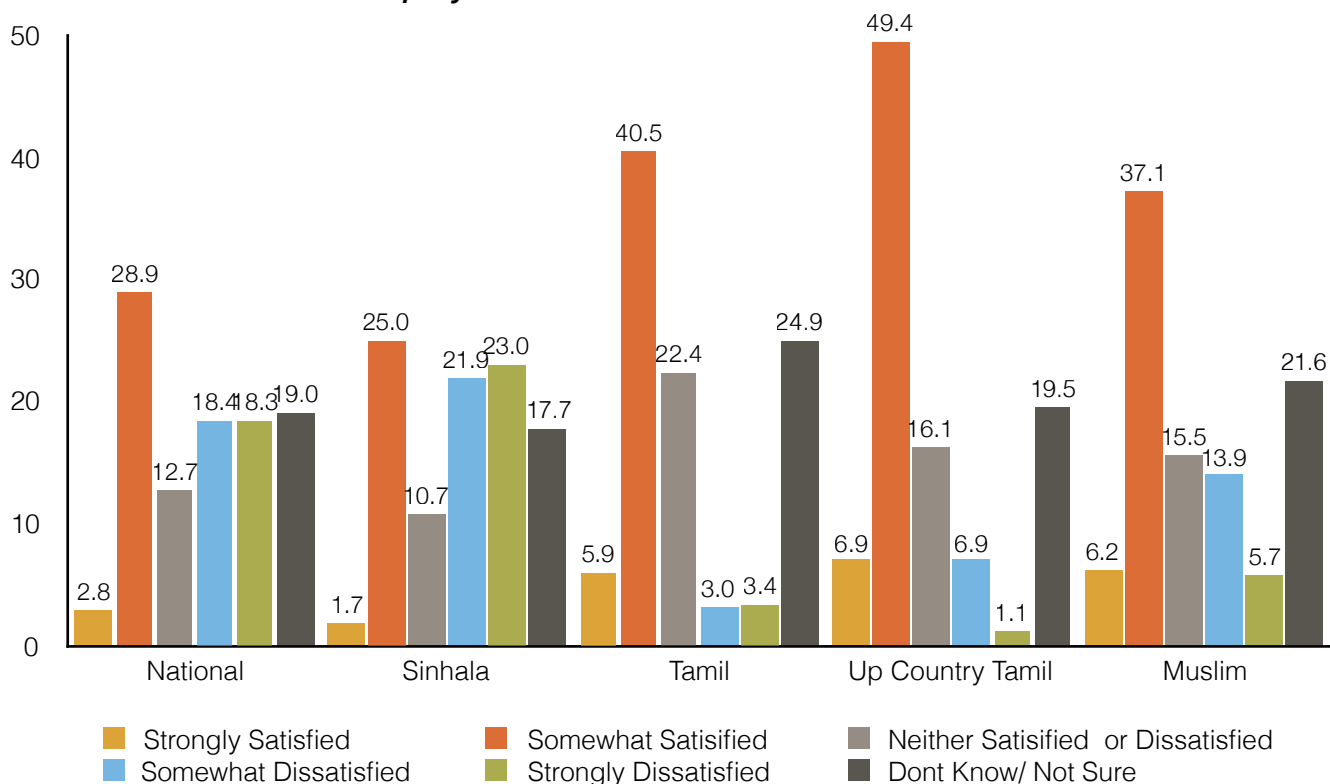
- On the composition of the new Cabinet of Ministers, State Ministers and Deputy Ministers, 31.7% of Sri Lankans state that they are satisfied while 36.7% of Sri Lankans express dissatisfaction with regard to the same.
- When results of the two surveys conducted in 2015 are compared, Sri Lankans appeared to be more satisfied overall with the work done by the current administration to address corruption. In October 2015, more Sri Lankans (49.6%) felt that the Government is committed to eradicating corruption in the country when compared to the previous survey conducted in March 2015 (43.9%).
- Nearly 61% of Sri Lankans are satisfied with President Sirisena and his Government's handling of international relations while only 10% indicate dissatisfaction.
- Nearly 50% of Sri Lankans indicate that forming a coalition of parties to govern the country has minimised autocratic rule which has resulted in greater coherence among the minority parties.
- 26% of Sri Lankans agree that power needs to be devolved to the Provincial Councils while the powers of the Central Government should be reduced. 41.3% of Sri Lankans agree that certain powers could be decentralised but the powers of the Central Government should not be reduced.
- On the allocation of a fixed quota for female representation, 73.5% agree that the number female representation in Parliament, Provincial Councils and Local Government Authorities is insufficient, while 12.8% disagree with the same.

Parliamentary Elections 2015

Parliamentary elections were held on the 17th of August 2015, to elect 225 members to Sri Lanka's 15th Parliament.

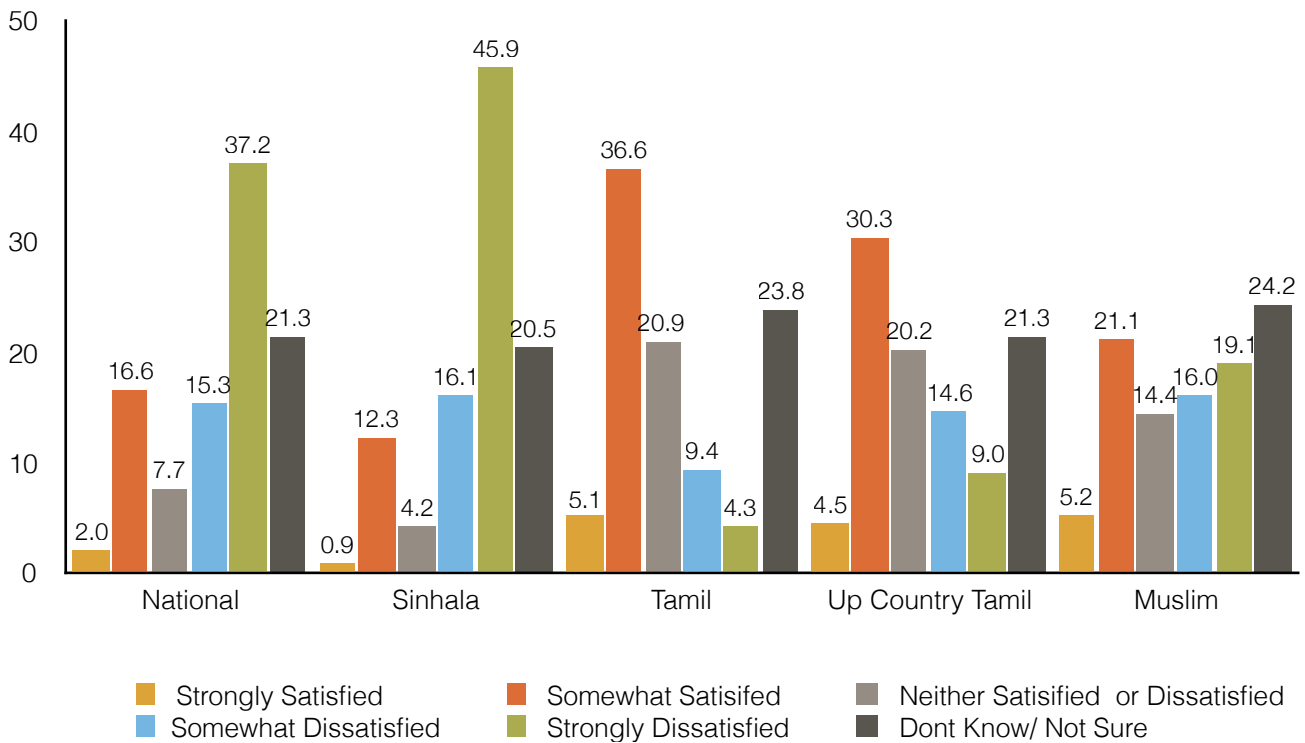
When asked if the respondents were satisfied with the composition of the new Cabinet of Ministers, State Minister and Deputy Ministers, 31.7% of Sri Lankans state that they are satisfied while 36.7% of Sri Lankans express dissatisfaction. Across all ethnicities the most satisfied is the Up Country Tamil community with 56.3% followed by 46.4% from the Tamil, 43.3% from the Muslim and 26.7% from the Sinhala communities. The most dissatisfied with the composition of the new Cabinet of Ministers, State Ministers and Deputy Ministers is the Sinhala community with nearly 45% stating the same. (Refer 5.1)

Graph 5.1 Are you satisfied with the composition of the new Cabinet of Ministers, State Ministers and Deputy Ministers?



When the respondents were asked to comment on how satisfied they were with the individuals who were appointed to Parliament from the National List, following the Parliamentary Elections in August 2015, 18.6% of Sri Lankans were satisfied whilst 52.5% were not satisfied. (Refer Graph 5.2)

Graph 5.2 How satisfied are you with the individuals who were appointed to Parliament from the national list, following the Parliamentary Elections on the 15th of August 2015?

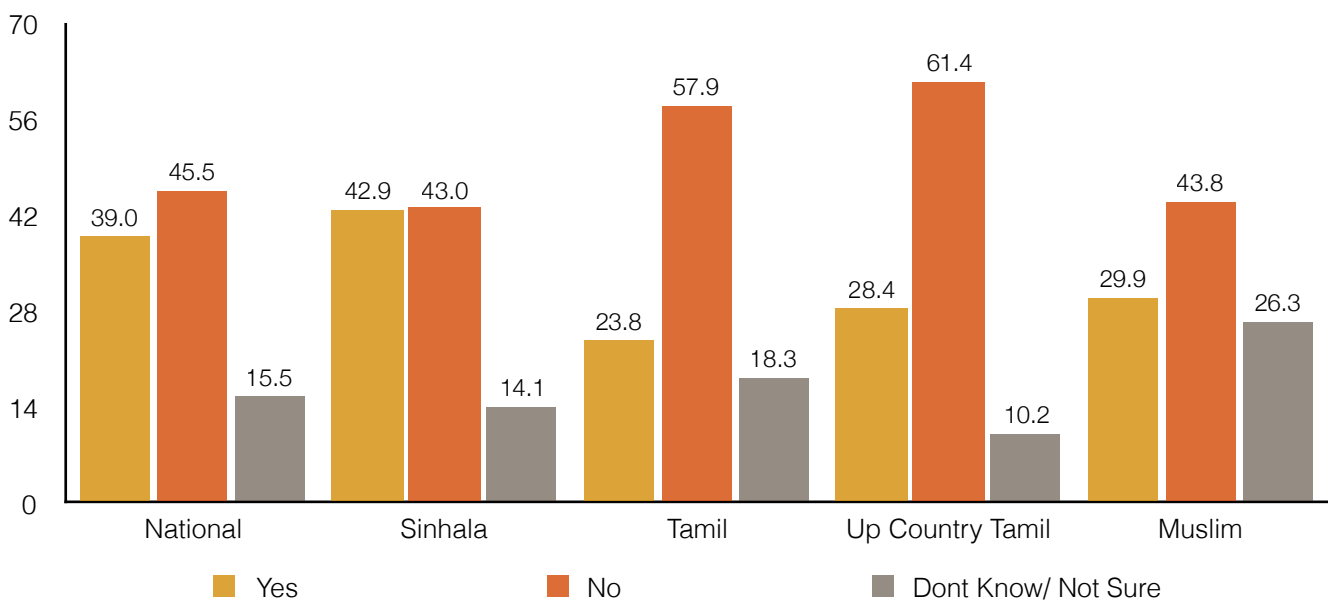


In President Maithripala Sirisena's first session addressing the new Parliament following the Parliamentary elections in August 2015, he declared that the two main parties namely the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) will form a "National Unity Government" for two years.

The respondents were asked if they were aware of the concept of 'National Unity Government' that is currently being followed by the present administration. Nearly 46% were not aware and only 39% were aware of the concept of 'National Unity Government'.

From an ethnic perspective, the respondents who were aware of the concept of 'National Unity Government' consisted of 42.9% from the Sinhala community, 23.8% from the Tamil community, 28.4% from the Up Country Tamil community and 29.9% from the Muslim community. The Up Country Tamil community with 61.4% is the most unaware of the concept of National Unity Government followed by 57.9% from the Tamil community, 43.8% from the Muslim community and 43% from the Sinhala community. (Refer Graph 5.3)

Graph 5.3: Are you aware of the concept of 'National Unity Government' that is currently being followed by the present administration?



Those who were aware of the concept of National Unity Government, were asked to indicate one positive feature of the National Unity Government. Nearly a majority (48.8%) of Sri Lankans indicate that forming a coalition of parties to govern the country has minimised autocratic rule which has resulted in greater coherence among the minority parties. This opinion is shared by 51.5% from the Sinhala community, 35.1% from the Tamil community, 39.1% from the Up County Tamil community and 36.7 from the Muslim community. Meanwhile, 11.2% of Sri Lankans could not specify one positive feature of the National Unity Government. 12.6% from the Sinhala community, 3.5% from the Tamil community and 6.7% from the Muslim community share this opinion.

43.6% of Sri Lankans indicate that there is no strong Opposition to the Government as a result of the coalition of parties joining force and forming a National Unity Government, which has in turn given rise to disagreements between the different ideologies of various political

parties. This opinion is shared by 45.1% from the Sinhala, 37.7% from the Tamil, 23.8% from the Up Country Tamil and 39.7% from the Muslim communities.

Devolution of Power

On the topic of the devolution of power, nearly 26% of Sri Lankans agree that power needs to be devolved to the Provincial Councils while the powers of the Central Government should be reduced. 41.3% of Sri Lankans agree that certain powers could be decentralised but the powers of the Central Government should not be reduced.

From an ethnic perspective, 17.8% from the Sinhala, 47.9% from the Tamil, 47.1% from the Up Country Tamil and 51.5% from the Muslim communities are of the opinion that power needs to be devolved to the Provincial Councils while reducing the power of the Central Government.

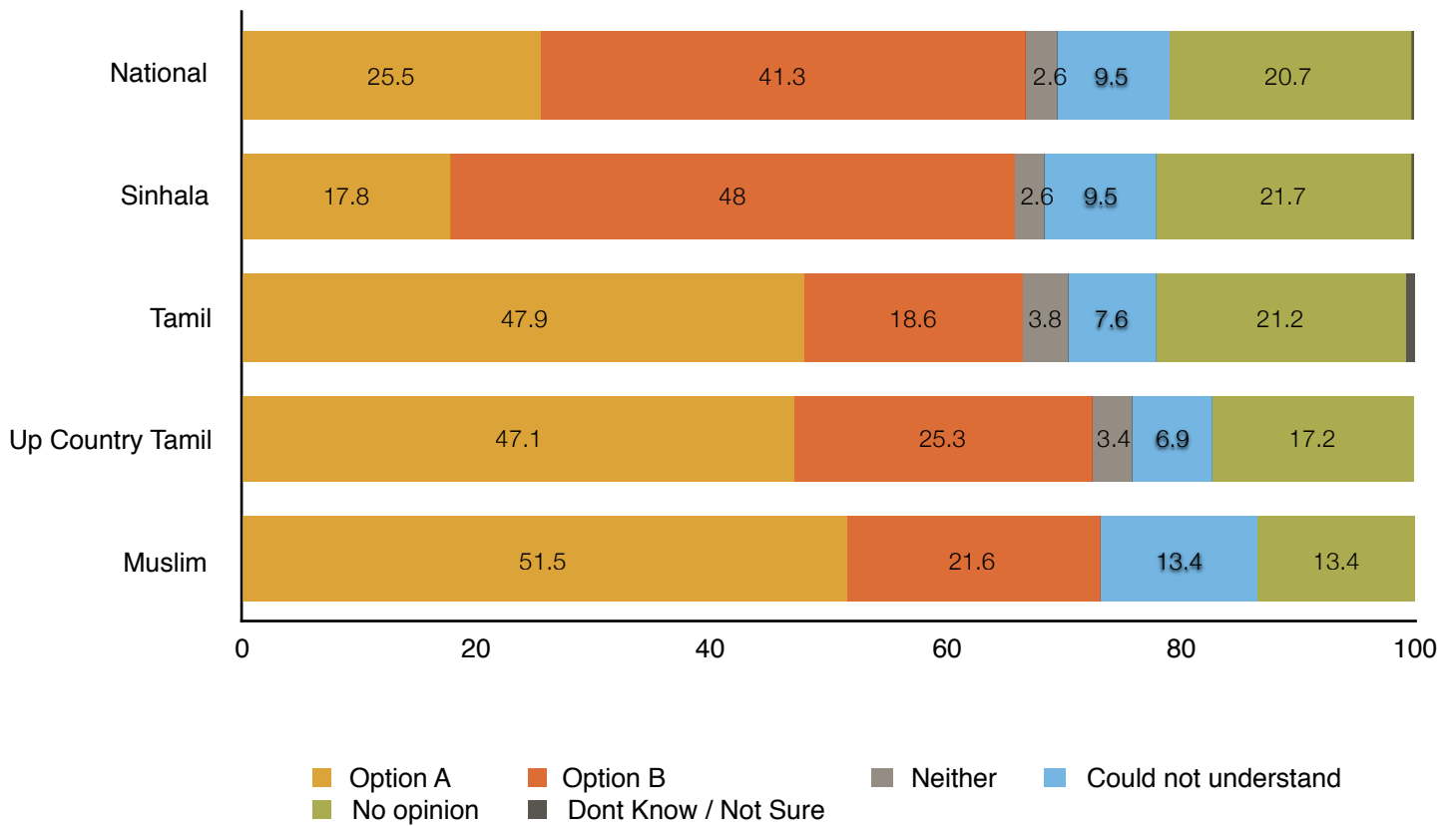
When compared with the survey conducted in 2011 there appears to be a rise in these figures across all communities. In 2011, 15.3% of the Sinhala, 40.9% from the Tamil, 32.5% from the Up country Tamil and 42.9% from the Muslim communities agreed that power needs to be devolved to the Provincial Councils while reducing the power of the Central Government.

In October 2015, from the 41.3% of Sri Lankans who state that certain powers could be decentralised but the powers of the Central Government should not be reduced, 48% are from the Sinhala, 18.6% are from the Tamil, 25.3% are from the Up Country Tamil and 21.6% are from the Muslim communities. There has been a rise in the percentage among the Sinhalese community who believe that it is alright to decentralise certain powers but powers of the Central Government should not be reduced since 2011 (31.3%) to October 2015 (48%). (Refer Graph 5.4)

Graph 5.4:

Option A - “Power needs to be devolved to the Provincial Councils while reducing the power of the Central Government”

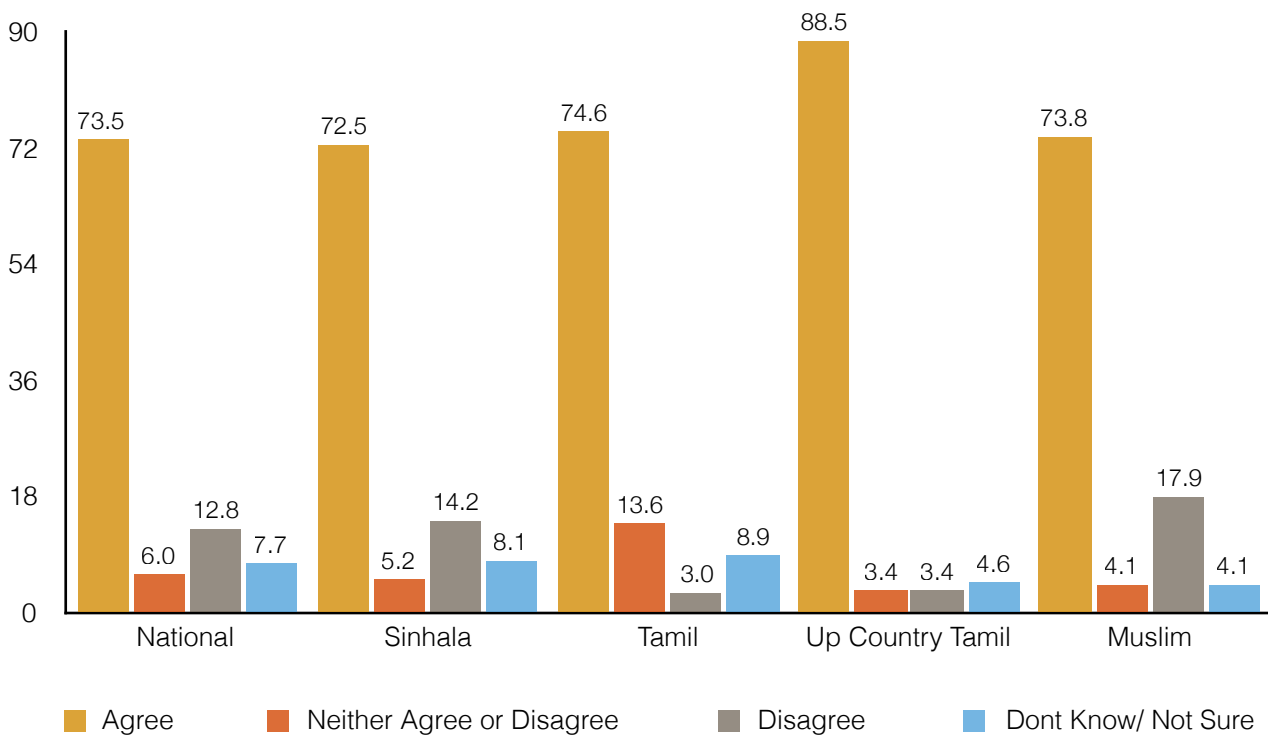
Option B- “It is ok to decentralise certain powers but powers of the Central Government should not be reduced.”



Women in Parliament

On the question of women’s participation in Parliament, Provincial Councils and Local Government Authorities, 73.5% agree that the number of female representation in Parliament, Provincial Councils and Local Government Authorities is insufficient, while 12.8% disagree with the same. It is the Up Country Tamil community with 88.5% who mostly agree that the number of female representation is insufficient. This figure is followed by 74.6% from the Tamil, 73.8% from the Muslim, 72.5% from the Sinhala communities. The Muslim community who agree the most that the female representation is sufficient stands at nearly 18%, followed by 14.2% from the Sinhala, 3% from the Tamil and 3.4% from the Up Country Tamil communities. (Refer Graph 5.5)

Graph 5.5: The number of female representation in Parliament, Provincial Councils and Local Government Authorities is insufficient

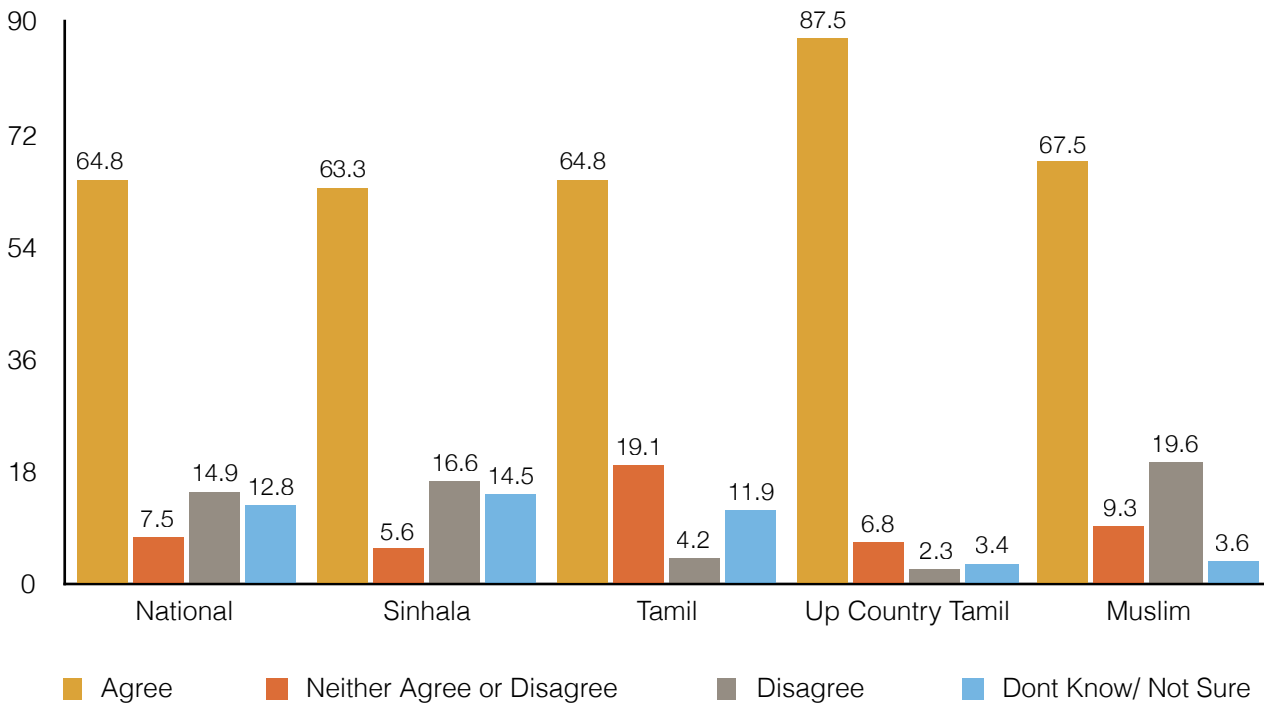


Nearly 65% of Sri Lankans agree while 7.5% disagree that a fixed quota should be allocated for female representation in the Parliament, Provincial Councils and Local Government Authorities. The Up Country Tamil community agree the most with 87.5% stating that a fixed quota should be allocated for female representation in the Parliament, Provincial Councils and Local Government Authorities. This is followed by 67.5% from the Muslim, 64.8% from the Tamil and 63.3% from the Sinhala communities.

16.6% from the Sinhala, 4.2% from the Tamil, 23% from the Up Country Tamil and 19.6% from the Muslim communities state that a fixed quota should not be allocated for female representation in the Parliament, Provincial Councils and Local Government Authorities.

When comparing data with the survey conducted in March 2015, it is evident that the percentage of Sri Lankans who agree that there should be a fixed quota for female representation in Parliament has decreased. In March 2015, 79.4% of Sri Lankans believe that there should be a fixed quota for women while in October 2015 this figure has dropped to nearly 65%. A significant drop is evident from 2011 (90.4%) to 2013 (78.6%) with a slight increase in 2014 (79%). (Refer Graph 5.6)

Graph 5.6: There should be quotas for female representation in the Parliament, Provincial Councils and Local Government Authorities



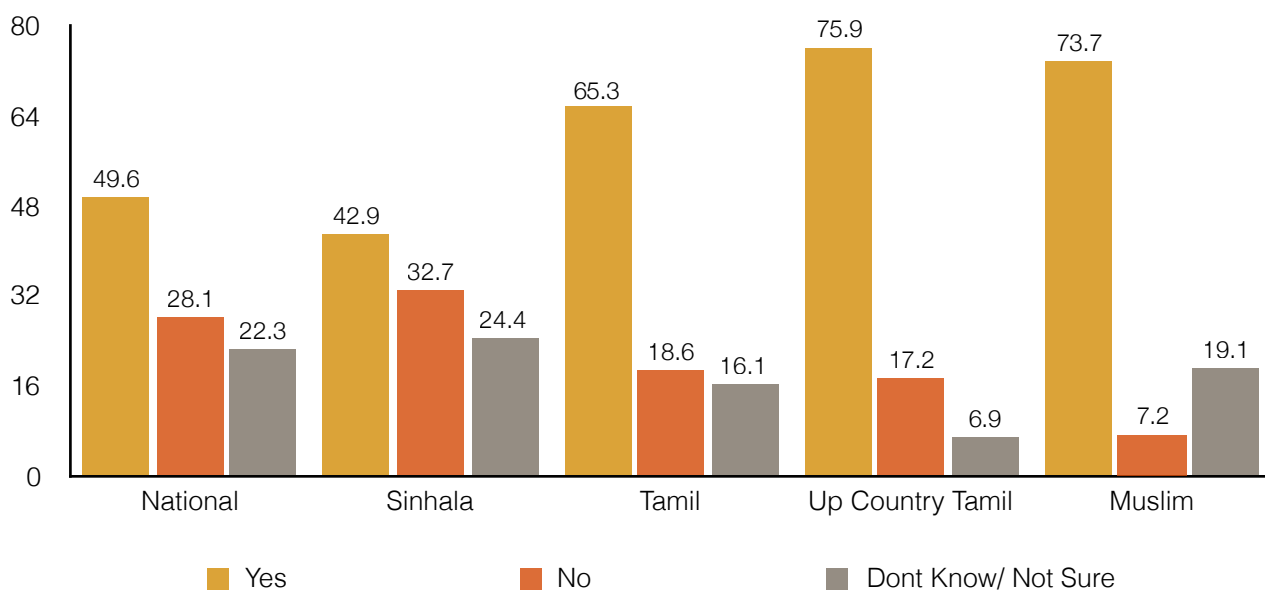
Corruption

When results of the two surveys conducted in 2015 are compared, Sri Lankans appeared to be more satisfied overall with the work done by the current administration to address corruption. In October 2015, more Sri Lankans (49.6%) felt that the Government is committed to eradicating corruption in the country when compared to the previous survey conducted in March 2015 (43.9%). While 41.2% of Sri Lankans stated that the Government has not done enough to combat corruption in March 2015, a considerably smaller proportion of Sri Lankans (28.1%) state that the Government is not committed to eradicating corruption in October 2015.

From an ethnic perspective, it is the Up Country Tamil (75.9%) and Muslim (73.7%) communities that have the highest degree of confidence in the new Government's commitment to eradicating corruption, followed by the Tamil community (65.3%). The Sinhala community's level of confidence with 42.9% falls below the national average of 49.6%. A sizeable proportion of the Sinhala community (32.7%) stated that the Government is not committed to eradicating corruption. However, there is an upsurge in the confidence of the Sinhala community when compared with the data of the previous wave of the survey.

In March 2015, 39.9% held the view that the Government has done enough to combat corruption, while the figure for October 2015 is 42.9%, reflecting a minor improvement on the corruption score. The percentage of Sinhalese community who felt that the Government was not committed to eliminating corruption fell by 14.9% to 32.7% (from 47.6% in March 2015), again reflecting an improvement on the Sinhala community's level of confidence in Government's work on corruption. Where the other communities are concerned, there is an overall increase in satisfaction in this area, except in the case of Up Country Tamils where a slightly larger proportion expressed the view that the Government was not committed to eradicating corruption when compared with the data in March 2015. (13.4% in March 2015 went up to 17.2% in October 2015). (Refer Graph 5.7)

Graph 5.7: Do you think the Government is committed to eradicate corruption in the country?

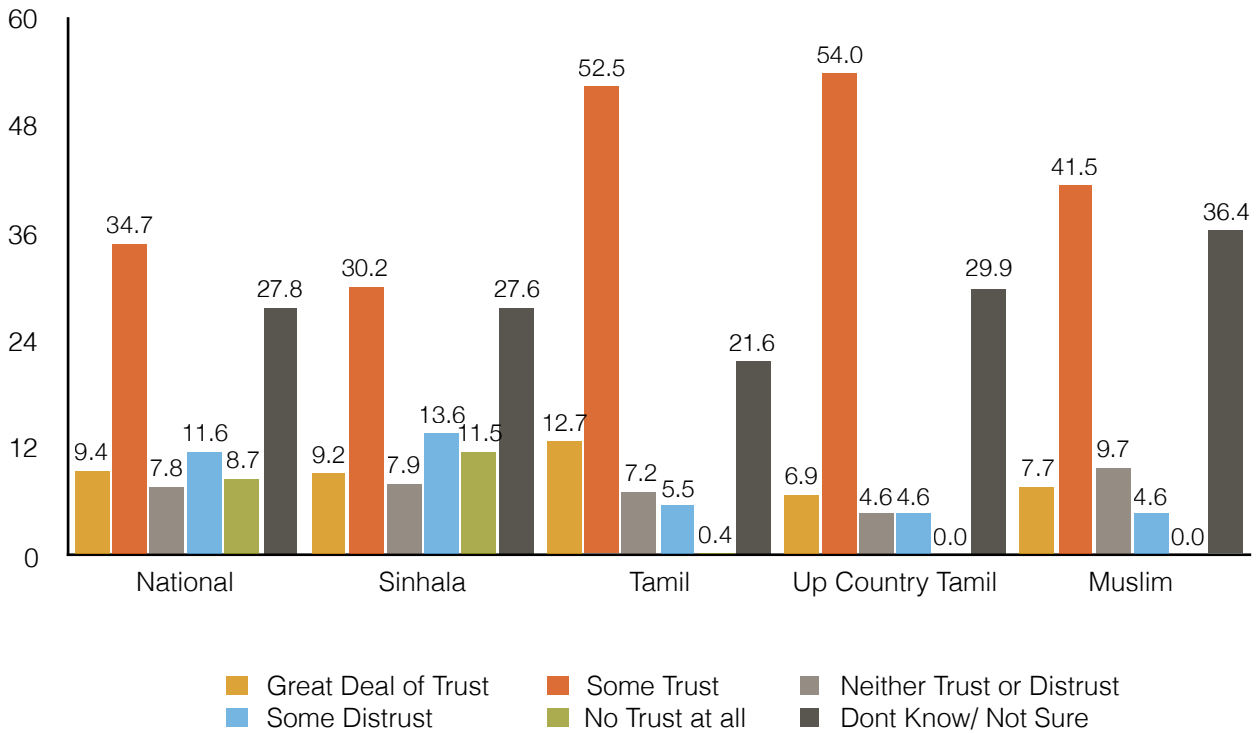


The next question pertaining to corruption sought to evaluate public opinion on the level of trust Sri Lankans have in the Financial Crimes Investigation Division (FCID). 44.1% of Sri Lankans stated they trusted the FCID, while 20.3% said that they did not trust the same. From an ethnic perspective, the Tamil community (64.2%) expressed the highest degree of trust, followed by the Up Country Tamil community (60.9%) and Muslim community (49.2%). The Sinhala community appeared to have the least degree of trust with 39.4% stating that they trusted the FCID to combat corruption and fraud in Sri Lanka.

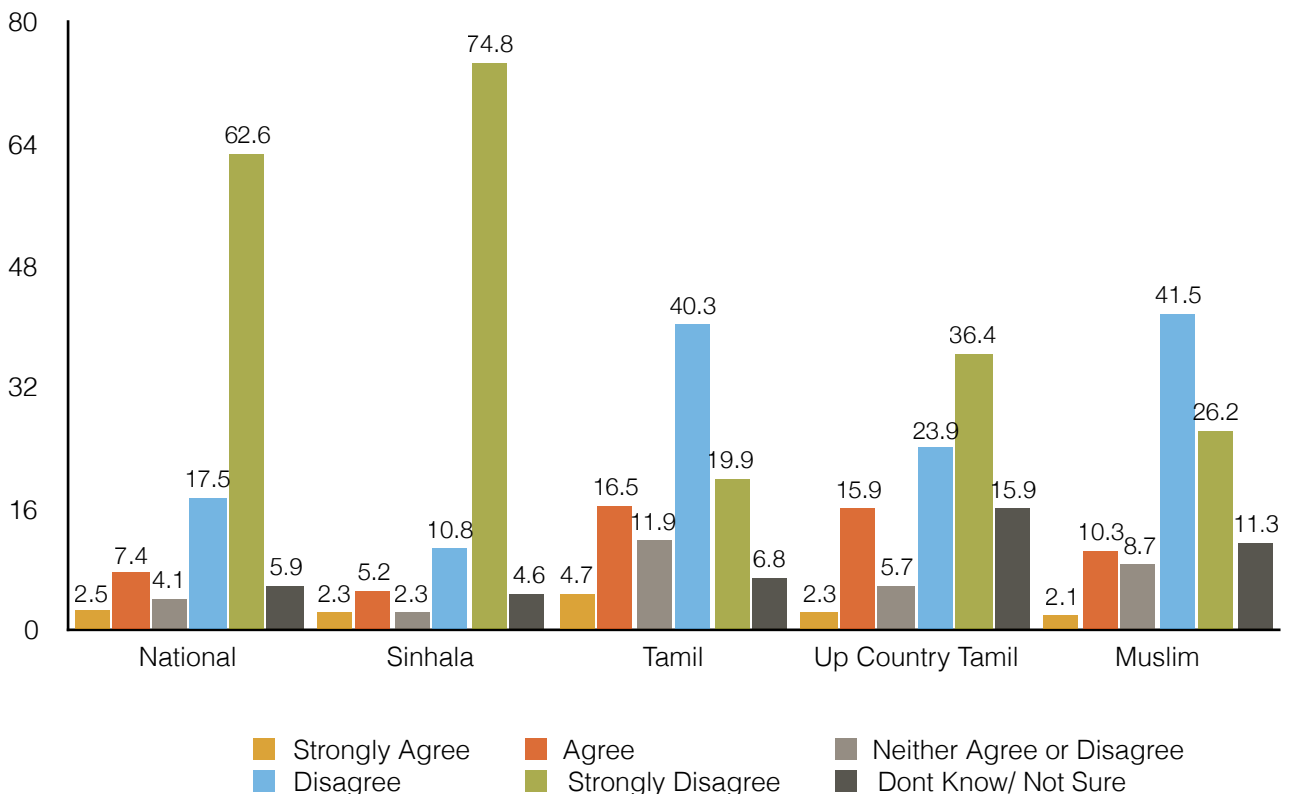
The least amount of distrust were expressed by the Up Country Tamil and Muslim communities with 4.6% respectively. The Tamil community with 5.9% also appeared to have a similar degree of distrust. However, the Sinhala community was noticeably more distrustful of the FCID than the other communities with the level of distrust at 25.1%. (Refer Graph 5.8)

Most Sri Lankans disagreed (80.1% with 62.6% strongly disagreeing) with the suggestion that corruption by any Government can be ignored as long as the country is being developed. There was a similarly positive response by the public rejecting corruption of any kind in the March 2015 survey, with 79% of Sri Lankans disagreeing with the idea of ignoring corruption as long as the country is being developed. In the survey carried out in 2011, 65% of Sri Lankans did not think that corruption can be ignored.

Graph 5.8: How much trust do you have in the Financial Crimes Division in Sri Lanka, in carrying out investigations in relation to combatting corruption and fraud in the country?



Graph 5.9: Some people say that since corruption is inevitable in any government, as long as the country is being developed, they can ignore the corruption. To what extent do you agree with this statement?



International Relations

Respondents were asked for their opinion in relation to the Government's handling of foreign relations. Nearly 61% of Sri Lankans are satisfied with President Sirisena and his Government's handling of international relations while only 10% indicate dissatisfaction. The most satisfied in this respect is the Muslim community with 75.2% followed by 71.2% from the Up Country Tamil community, 75% from the Tamil community and 56% from the Sinhala community. It is the Sinhala community that is most dissatisfied, with 12.3% indicating the same. (Refer Graph 5.10)

Graph 5.10 Please indicate your level of satisfaction on the performance of President Sirisena and his government, in handling International Relations?

