



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.

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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.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The findings of this survey has been categorised into four key sections - The New Government, Security and Freedom, Trust in Institutions and Media in Sri Lanka.

With regard to the 2015 Presidential Election, around 55% of Sri Lankans agree with the submission that President Sirisena owes his victory to the minority vote, whilst 31.8% do not. When asked why they think that President Sirisena won the January 2015 Presidential Election, 36.9% of Sri Lankans believe the victory was a result of his promises to the public and the new form of governance that he proposed.

When it comes to reconciliation, divisions in opinion between the communities on key issues persist. Sri Lankans are divided on whether the National anthem should be sung in Sinhala and Tamil. 29.3% of Sri Lankans strongly agree that it should be sung in both languages while 32.1% strongly disagree. Majority from the Tamil, Up Country Tamil and Muslim communities say that it should be sung in both languages, while only 13.4% from the Sinhalese community state the same.

On the topic of a credible mechanism look into accountability for what happened during the last stages of the war, 42.6% of Sri Lankans stated that there should be such a mechanism, while 36.3% said no. Among the 32.2% from the Sinhala community who are in favour of such a mechanism, majority (57.8%) said that it should be a mechanism that was exclusively domestic while 34% said that it should be a combination of both domestic and international. The Tamil community has the least amount of faith in an exclusively domestic mechanism with only 7% in favour of one. 44.9% said it should be an exclusively international one and 35.5% said a combination of the two.

President Sirisena in his election manifesto pledged to bring about a change in the manner in which the country was being governed and unveiled his road map for Constitutional reform and pledged to deliver a 'new country' in 100 days. Majority of Sri Lankans (87.8%) said that they were aware of President Sirisena's 100 day programme while only 9.7% were not aware of it. When asked about their level of satisfaction with the information provided by the Government on the progress of its 100 day programme, only 7% of Sri Lankans said that they were strongly satisfied while 44.1% were somewhat satisfied. 10.5% said they were strongly dissatisfied, while 15.2% were somewhat dissatisfied.

On the topic of Right to Information, 31.9% of Sri Lankans stated that they were aware of the term Right To Information whilst a majority of 52.8% were not aware of the same.

Support for the idea of allocating a fixed quota for women candidates for each district at the election was highest among the Tamil community with 93.7% of the respondents agreeing to the same (76.5% strongly agreeing). On a National level, 44.4% of Sri Lankans strongly agreed with 8.4% strongly disagreeing.

Majority of Sri Lankans (73.8%) believe that their vote has an impact on the outcome of an election, a notable increase from 2014 (59.5%). When asked of how free people feel in expressing their opinion on politics, irrespective of where they are and who they are with, 46.6% believe that they are completely free. This is an increase in comparison to 2013 (35.4%) and 2014 (31.2%). Almost 80% of Sri Lankans believe that they have the freedom to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured, a slight increase from 74.4% in 2013.

There has been an overall decrease in trust when it comes to the Central Government. 74.5% of Sri Lankans stated that they have trust in the Central Government while 10.9% say they have no trust. Analysing the data of surveys conducted in the past, we note a decrease in the level of trust as 84.2% in 2013 and 79.7% in 2014 stated that they trust the Central Government, and this has reduced to 74.5% in 2015.

There has been an increase in the trust that Sri Lankans have for the Army, as 44.2% in 2015 stated that they have a great deal of trust in comparison to the 33.7% in 2014. The Tamil community has the least amount trust in the Army with 52% stating that they have no trust, followed by the Up Country Tamil with 47%.

There has been a notable change in opinion among Sri Lankans when it comes to the Election Commission. 17.2% said that they have a great deal of trust and 45.1% said some trust in the Election Commission, an increase when compared to 2014, where only 7.6% had a great deal of trust and 31% said some trust.

When comes to the media landscape under President Sirisena's administration, 51.7% of Sri Lankans agree (with 12.7% strongly agreeing) that the media is completely free to criticise the Government as they wish. This is a noteworthy increase when compared to the previous years - 42% in 2011, 42.5% in 2013 and 39.2% in 2014.

Almost 40% of Sri Lankans think that the media should have a right to publish any views and ideas without Government control while 45.7% are of the opinion that the Government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it considers harmful to society. Majority of Sri Lankans (78.6%) are of the opinion that the news media should constantly investigate and report on corruption and the mistakes by the Government.

INTRODUCTION

Following the historic Presidential Election of January 2015, the Sirisena Government embarked on the 100 - day governance programme promised during the election campaign. This included an anti-corruption drive, reduction of the powers of the Executive President, work towards the introduction of Right to Information (RTI) legislation, a new electoral system, the reintroduction of independent oversight commissions and various measures to foster reconciliation, including the return of private land to citizens in the North and the lifting of the unofficial ban on singing the National anthem at public functions in Tamil.

This survey records public perceptions and opinions on the state of democracy in the country and the level of confidence in the new framework of governance. Data was collected from all districts thereby making the survey comprehensive and rich with insights into the perceptions and practices of democracy in Sri Lanka.

This survey was conducted by Social Indicator (SI), the survey research unit of the Centre for Policy Alternatives.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was carried out using a semi-structured questionnaire administered through face-to-face interviews. Sixty (60) trained Field Researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with 1987 respondents in both the Sinhala and Tamil languages across all 25 districts. The sample of respondents was selected with the use of a multi-stage stratified random sampling technique that represents the 4 major ethnic communities in the country.

Questionnaire

The ongoing political, socio-economic and cultural debates, discussions with regard to democracy and governance in the country, along with existing surveys on democracy were taken into consideration when the questionnaire was designed. The questionnaire was finalised with a group 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 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. A sample of 2000 respondents spread across all districts using the Population Proportionate Sampling (PPS) method was polled and ethnic proportions accounted for. The sample size was determined in order to produce results within a 2% error margin at 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 rule¹. At each selected household, a respondent was determined using the last birthday method².

¹ 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.

When allocating samples in the Northern Province, SI adhered to a slightly different method due to the difficulties in accessing current data for a sound sample frame. As with the rest of the country, the sample was stratified across electorates and within each electorate polling centres were selected randomly. However, the starting point of each polling centre was selected by the field researcher, whilst the households were selected randomly using the right hand rule and respondents selected using the last birthday method.

Fieldwork for the entire study was conducted from 03rd of March to 31st of March 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 an extensive training on the study, the survey instrument and field techniques. In order to ensure the quality of field research, SI deployed a group of Supervisors to conduct quality control processes during and after fieldwork such as accompanied visits, spot-checks and back-checks 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 it being analysed. 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).

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 and 2014. It is important 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 respondents, figures do not add up to a 100%.

KEY EVENTS PRIOR TO AND DURING FIELDWORK

Presidential Elections January 08th 2015

The seventh Presidential Election was held on the 08th of January 2015. Elections were called on the 20th of November by former President Mahinda Rajapaksa two years ahead of schedule. Former President Mahinda Rajapaksa was the United People's Freedom Alliance's (UPFA) candidate, seeking a third term in office whilst President Maithripala Sirisena, the former Minister of Health in Rajapaksa's Government and General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) represented the common candidate from the New Democratic Front (NDF) which consisted of the United National Party (UNP) led opposition coalition. President Sirisena won with 6,217,162 (51.28%) of all votes cast compared to Rajapaksa's 5,768,090 (47.58%). The voter turnout, the highest in any Sri Lankan Presidential Election, was 81.52% - a total of 12,123,452 voters.

Reconciliation Measures

Six years after the end of the war, approximately 822 families live in 4 camps of which 579 are from the Sampur area in Trincomalee. In March 2015, around 1000 hectares of land from the high security zone was given back to the people in the North, a promise made by the Government during its election campaign. As such, more than 500 hundred displaced families from Sampur in Trincomalee were resettled in their respective original lands.

The unofficial ban on signing the National anthem in Sinhala and Tamil, which existed since 2010, was lifted in March 2015.

Visit of the Special Rapporteur and the Extension to the UNHCR report

The Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-recurrence, Pablo de Greiff, visited Sri Lanka from the 30th of March to the 3rd of April 2015. The main objective of his visit was to examine the opportunities and restrictions faced by the country in its efforts to address violations and abuses of human rights including those that resulted from the 30 year conflict. Meanwhile, the release of the OHCHR investigation on Sri Lanka, the (OISL) report mandated by the OHCHR on alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity, which was to be released in March, was deferred to September.

Northern Provincial Resolution on Genocide

The Northern Provincial Council of Sri Lanka passed a resolution on February 10, 2015 stating that the Tamils of Sri Lanka are victims of genocide. The resolution requested appropriate measures from the International Criminal Court to address the issue, as a result of the lack of faith of the Tamil people in any domestic commission.

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THE NEW GOVERNMENT

Summary

- When asked if the recent Presidential Election was conducted in a free and fair manner, 88.6% of Sri Lankans said yes, while only 5.1% said no.
- Around 55% of Sri Lankans agree with the submission that President Sirisena owes his victory to the minority vote, whilst 31.8% do not.
- When asked why they think that President Sirisena won the January 2015 Presidential Election, 36.9% of Sri Lankans believe the victory was a result of his promises to the public and the new form of governance that he proposed.
- Since the conclusion of the recent Presidential Election, the three main good/positive developments that have taken place in Sri Lanka according to Sri Lankans are a reduction in the prices of goods (62.2%), increase in salaries (18.7%) and decrease in corruption (10.4%).
- Three bad/negative developments since the election are the effect on development activities (6.3%), promises not being kept (3.8%) and reduction in prices not reflected in daily lives (3.5%).
- Almost 60% of Sri Lankans are satisfied with the interim government while 15.6% are dissatisfied. 55.1% from the Sinhala community, 72.6% from the Tamil community, 62.2% from the Up Country Tamil community and 63.8% from the Muslim community expressed their satisfaction.
- Sri Lankans are divided on whether the National anthem should be sung in Sinhala and Tamil. 29.3% of Sri Lankans strongly agree that it should be sung in both languages while 32.1% strongly disagree. Majority from the Tamil, Up Country Tamil and Muslim communities say that it should be sung in both languages, while only 13.4% from the Sinhalese community state the same.
- When respondents were asked if there should be a credible mechanism to look into accountability for what happened during the last stages of the war, 42.6% of Sri Lankans stated that there should be, while 36.3% said no.

- Among the 32.2% from the Sinhala community who are in favour of such a mechanism, majority (57.8%) said that it should be a credible mechanism that was exclusively domestic while 34% said that it should be a combination of both domestic and international.
- The Tamil community has the least amount of faith in an exclusively domestic mechanism with only 7% in favour of one. 44.9% said it should be an exclusively international one and 35.5% said a combination of the two.
- At the time of fieldwork in March 2015, 43.9% of Sri Lankans said that the new Government had done enough to combat corruption while 41.2% said they had not.
- Majority of Sri Lankans (87.8%) said that they were aware of President Sirisena's 100 day programme while only 9.7% were not aware of it.
- When asked about their level of satisfaction with the information provided by the Government on the progress of its 100 day programme, only 7% of Sri Lankans said that they were strongly satisfied while 44.1% were somewhat satisfied. 10.5% said they were strongly dissatisfied, while 15.2% were somewhat dissatisfied.
- On the topic of Right to Information, 31.9% of Sri Lankans stated that they were aware of the term Right To Information whilst a majority of 52.8% were not aware of the same.
- Among those who indicated that they were aware of the term Right to Information, the Sinhalese community remained the most well informed with 35.8% indicating that they were aware, followed by 26% from the Tamil community, 17.9% from the Muslim community and 9.6% from the Up Country Tamil community.
- Support for the idea of allocating a fixed quota for women candidates for each district at the election was highest among the Tamil community with 93.7% of the respondents agreeing to the same (76.5% strongly agreeing). On a National level, 44.4% of Sri Lankans strongly agreed with 8.4% strongly disagreeing.
- Majority of Sri Lankans (73.8%) believe that their vote has an impact on the outcome of an election, a notable increase from 2014 (59.5%).

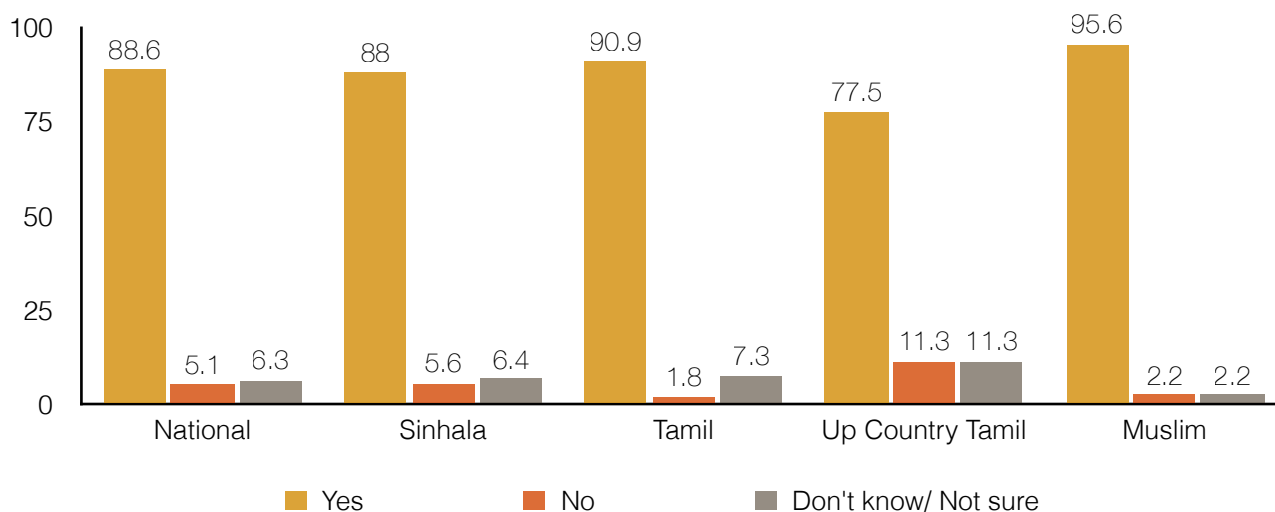
January 8, 2015

Seeking a third term in office, former President Mahinda Rajapaksa called for elections to be held on the 08th of January 2015. Maithripala Sirisena contested as the common candidate and was elected as President with a majority of 51.28% votes. He served as the acting Defence Minister during the final 2 weeks of the war, and was former Minister of Health in Rajapaksa's Government and the General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). The “yahapalanaya” or good governance platform of the Sirisena campaign promised a transparent and accountable government.

When asked if the recent Presidential Election was conducted in a free and fair manner, 88.6% of Sri Lankans said yes, while only 5.1% said no.

From an ethnic perspective, 88% from the Sinhala community, 90.9% from the Tamil community, 77.5% of the Up Country Tamil community and 95.6% from the Muslim community said that it was held in a free and fair manner (*Refer Graph 1.1*).

Graph 1.1: In your opinion, do you feel the recent Presidential Election was conducted in a free and fair manner?



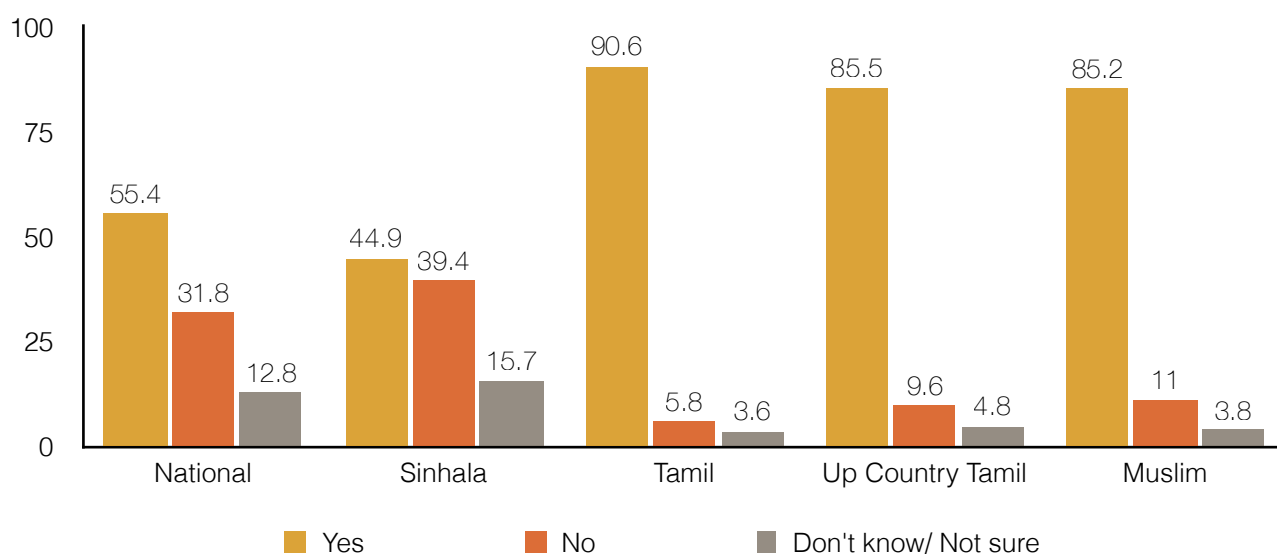
It has been said by some that President Sirisena owes his victory to the minority vote. 55.4% of Sri Lankans agree with this. 31.8% of Sri Lankans do not think he owes his victory to the minority vote.

When analysing the responses from an ethnic perspective, 90.6% from the Tamil community, 85.5% from the Up Country Tamil community, 85.2% from the Muslim community and 44.9%

from the Sinhalese community are of the opinion that President Sirisena owes his victory to the minority vote.

Among those who don't agree that President Sirisena owes his victory to the minority vote are 39.4% from the Sinhala community, 5.8% from the Tamil community, 9.6% from the Up Country Tamil community and 11% from the Muslim community. (Refer Graph 1.2)

Graph 1.2: It has been said by some that President Sirisena owes his victory to the minority vote. Do you agree?



The respondents were asked to indicate one reason as to why they believe President Sirisena won the January 2015 Presidential Election. 36.9% of Sri Lankans believe the victory was a result of his promises given to the public in his election manifesto and the new form of governance that he proposed. 28.2% said that it was due to the failure, corruption, crime and malpractice of the previous regime. 15.4% were of the opinion that the reason for the victory was because of the increase in the minority votes for President Sirisena.

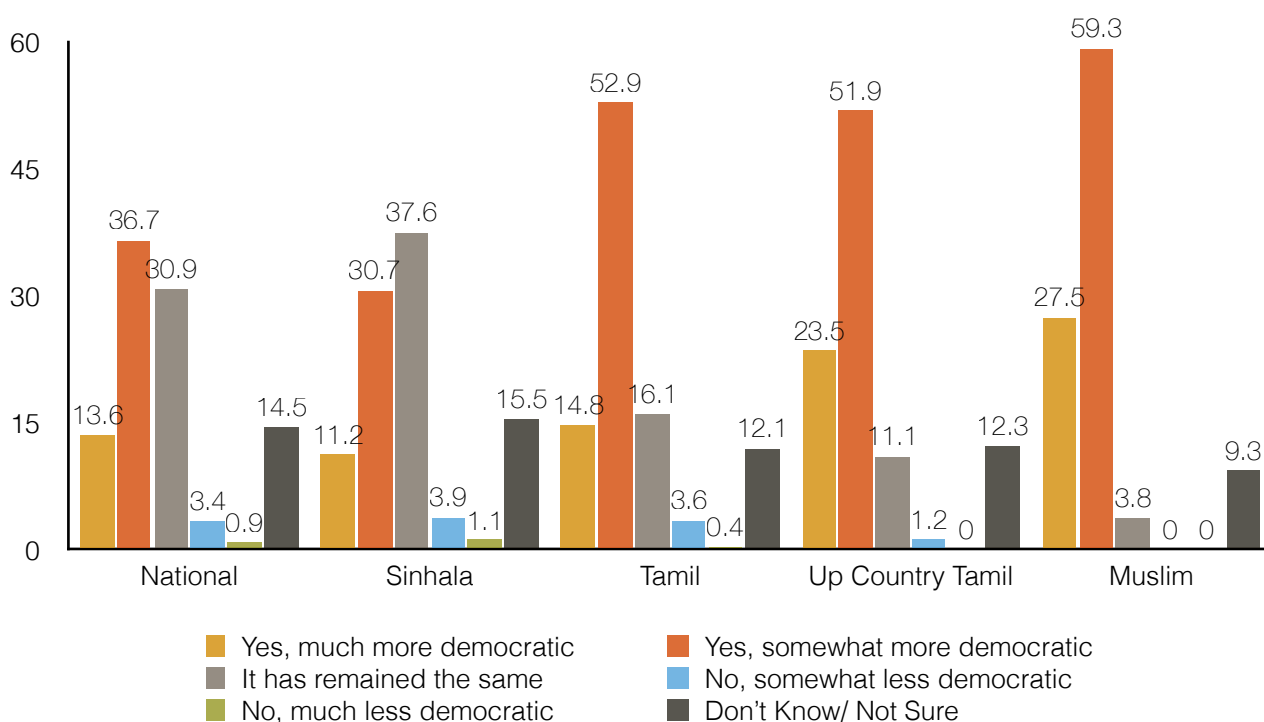
From an ethnic perspective, 35.8% from the Sinhala, 41.1% from the Tamil, 51.9% from the Up Country Tamil and 35% from the Muslim communities said that President Sirisena won the 2015 Presidential Election as a result of his promises given to the public in his election manifesto and the new form of governance that he proposed.

10.9% from the Sinhala, 27.9% from the Tamil, 25.3% from the Up Country Tamil and 32.8% from the Muslim communities stated that the reason for the victory was because of the increase in the minority votes for President Sirisena. 31.5% from the Sinhala, 19.6% from the Tamil, 8.9% from the Up Country Tamil and 20.6% from the Muslim communities said it was due to the failure, corruption, crime and malpractices of the previous regime.

When asked if the level of democracy in the country has increased following the January 2015 Presidential Elections, 13.6% of Sri Lankans said that it is much more democratic now while 36.7% said that it is somewhat more democratic. 30.9% are of the opinion that the level of democracy has remained the same. 4.3% stated that the level of democracy is lesser than what it was prior to January 2015.

The Muslim community is the most positive with 27.5% stating that it is much more democratic and 59.3% stating that it is somewhat more democratic in Sri Lanka following the recent Presidential Elections. (Refer Graph 1.3)

Graph 1.3: Some say that following the Presidential Election, the level of democracy in Sri Lanka has increased. Do you agree with this statement?



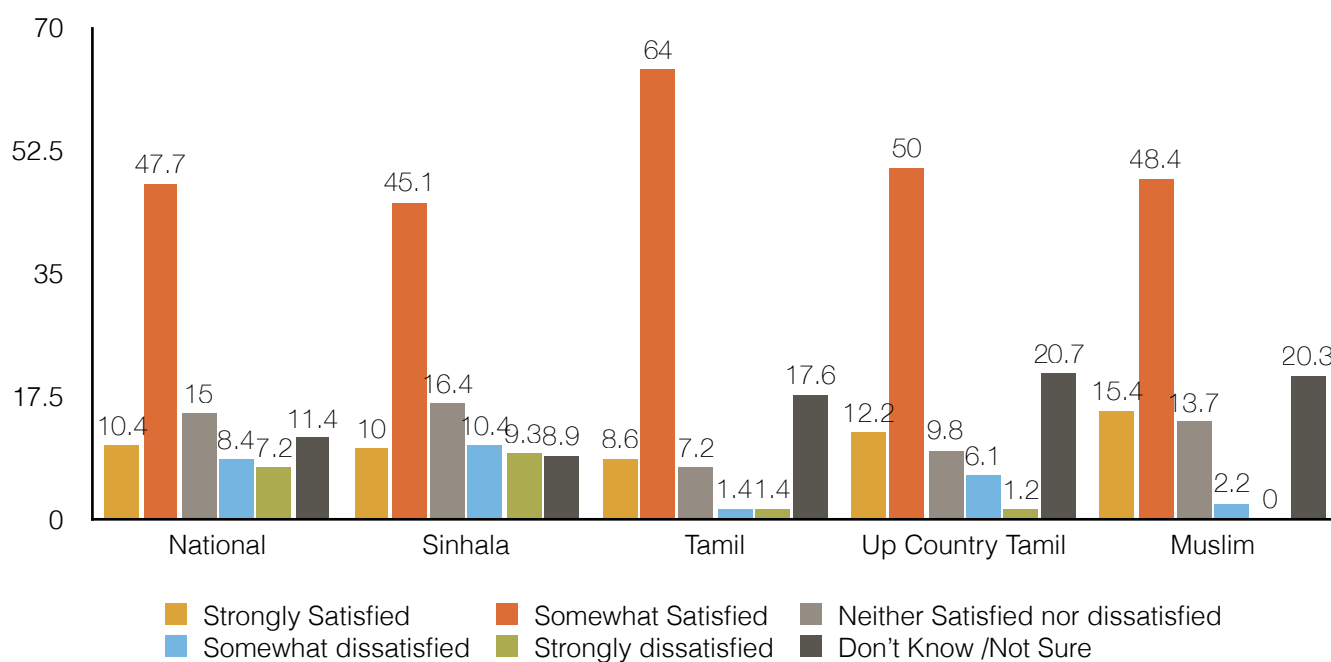
Since the conclusion of the recent Presidential election, the three main good/positive developments that have taken place in Sri Lanka according to Sri Lankans are a reduction in prices of goods (62.2%), increase in salaries (18.7%) and decrease in corruption (10.4%). Three bad/negative developments since the election are the effect on development activities (6.3%), promises not being kept (3.8%) and reduction in prices not reflected in reality (3.5%).

New Government

A 27 member cabinet which was meant to serve for the first 100 days of the new administration was appointed on the 13th of January 2015. A further 11 more cabinet members were sworn in on the 22nd of March 2015.

58.1% of Sri Lankans are satisfied with the Interim Government while 15.6% are dissatisfied. 55.1% from the Sinhala community, 72.6% from the Tamil community, 62.2% from the Up Country Tamil community and 63.8% from the Muslim community expressed their satisfaction. (Refer Graph 1.4)

Graph 1.4: How satisfied are you with the Interim Government that was appointed by the President?

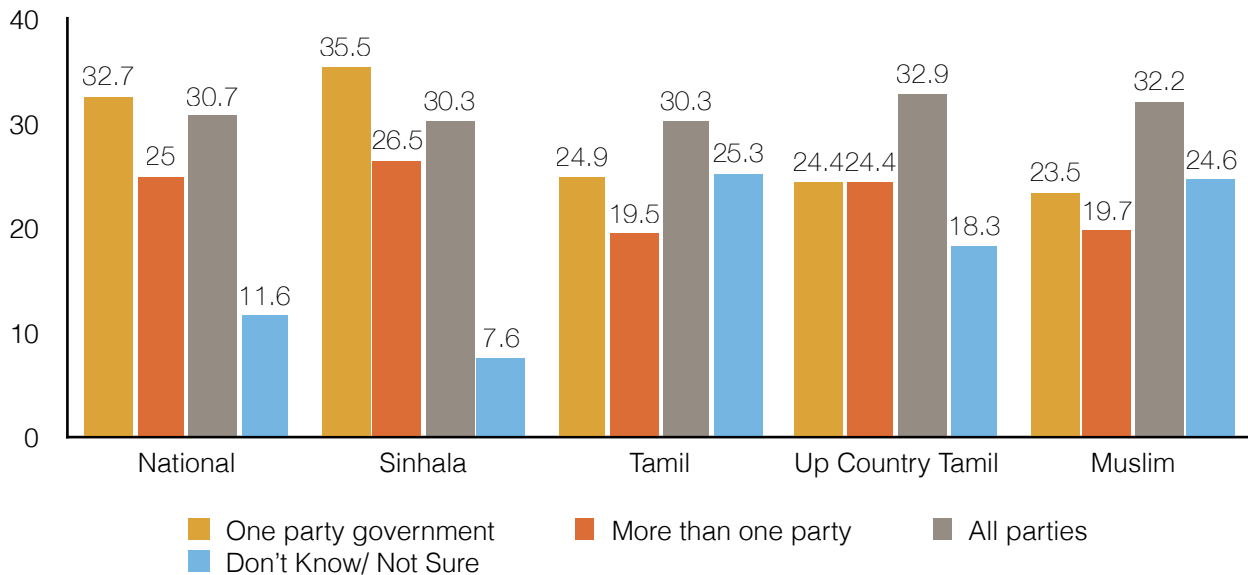


When asked what sort of a Government Sri Lanka should have following the upcoming General Election, 32.7% of Sri Lankans are of the opinion that there should be a Government with one party, while 25% are of the opinion that it should consist of more than one party and 30.7% that it should be an all-party Government.

Among those who say that there should be a Government with one party are 35.5% from the Sinhala community, 24.9% from the Tamil Community, 24.4% from the Up Country Tamil Community and 23.5% from the Muslim community.

30.3% from the Sinhala, 30.3% from the Tamil, 32.9% from the Up Country Tamil and 32.2% from the Muslim communities believe that following the next General Election that there should be an all party Government. (Refer Graph 1.5)

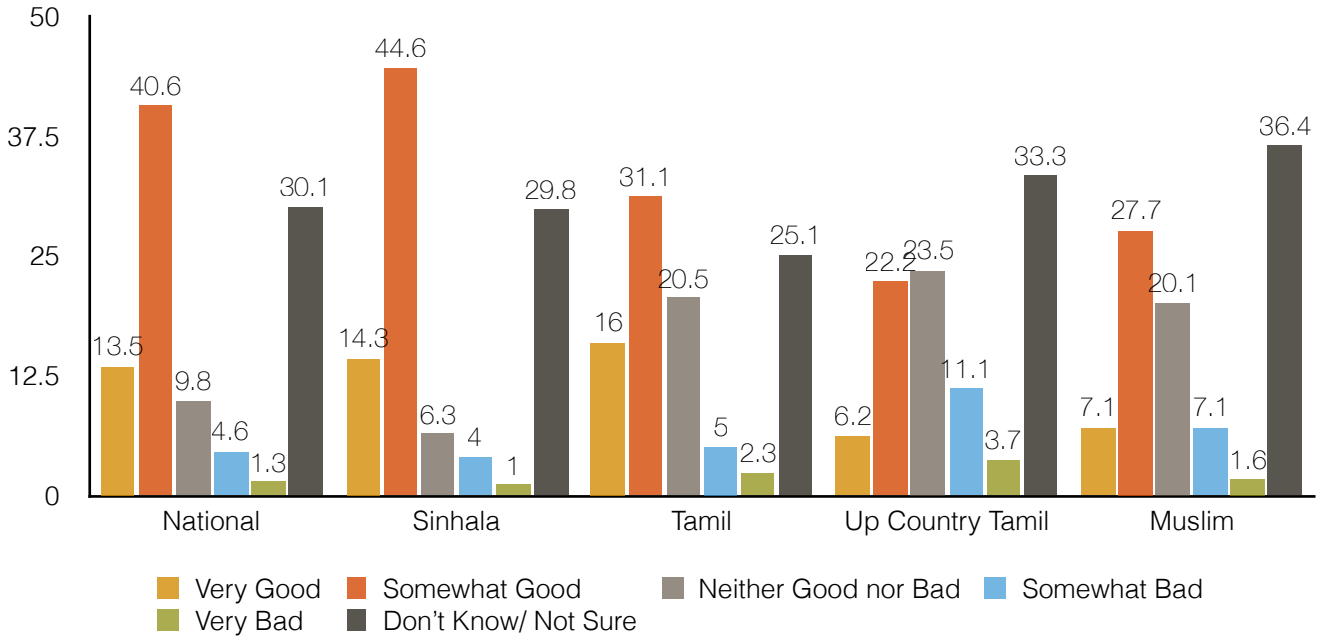
Graph 1.5: Following the next General election, do you think there should be a Government with one party, more than one party or on that consists of all parties



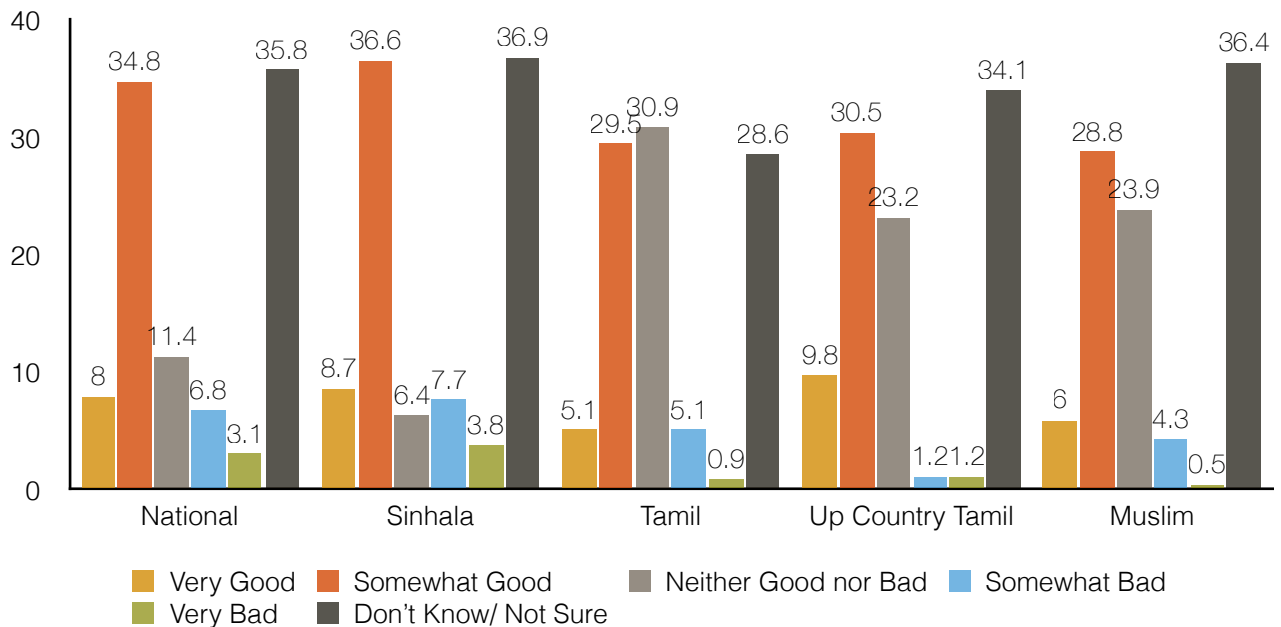
Respondents were asked for their opinion on the Government's handling of foreign relations with China, the United States and India. Approval for the handling of foreign relations is highest for India, with 19.6% of Sri Lankans saying it is very good and 40.7% saying it is somewhat good. 13.5% of Sri Lankans believe that the Government's handling of relations with China is very good, while 40.6% say it is somewhat good. On handling of foreign relations with the United States, approval is lesser in comparison, with only 8% of Sri Lankans saying very good and 34.8% saying somewhat good. (Refer Graph 1.6)

Graph 1.6: How would rate the Government's handling of our foreign relations with China, United States of America and India?

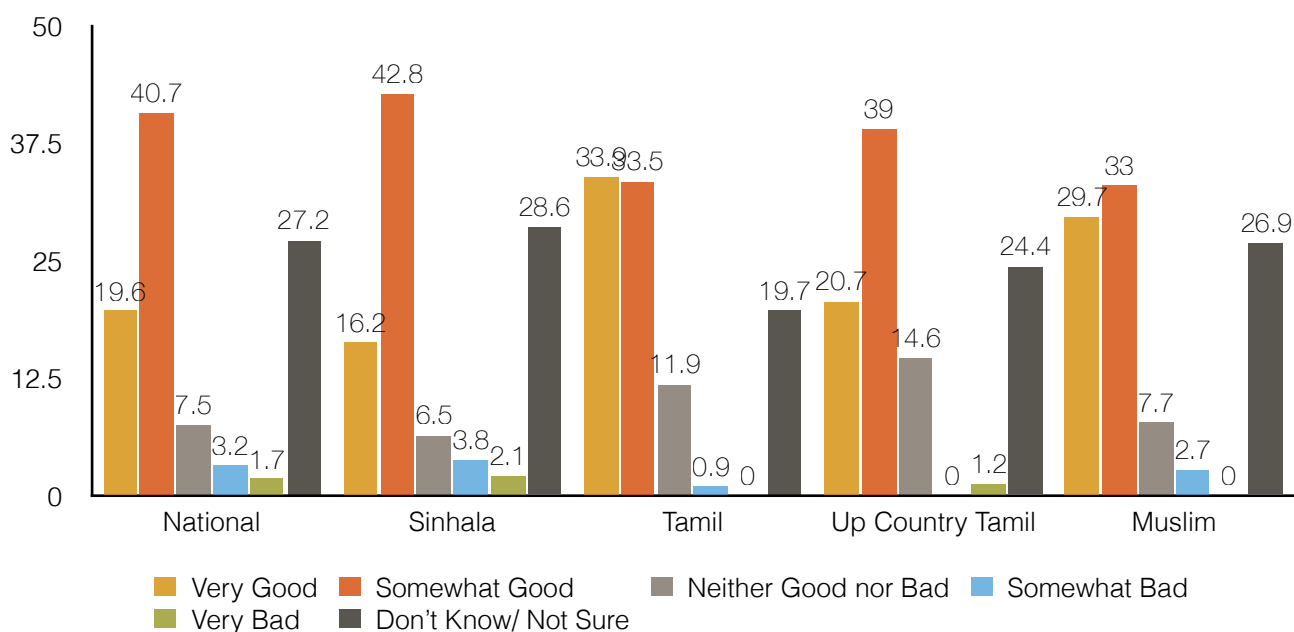
a) China



b) United States



c) India



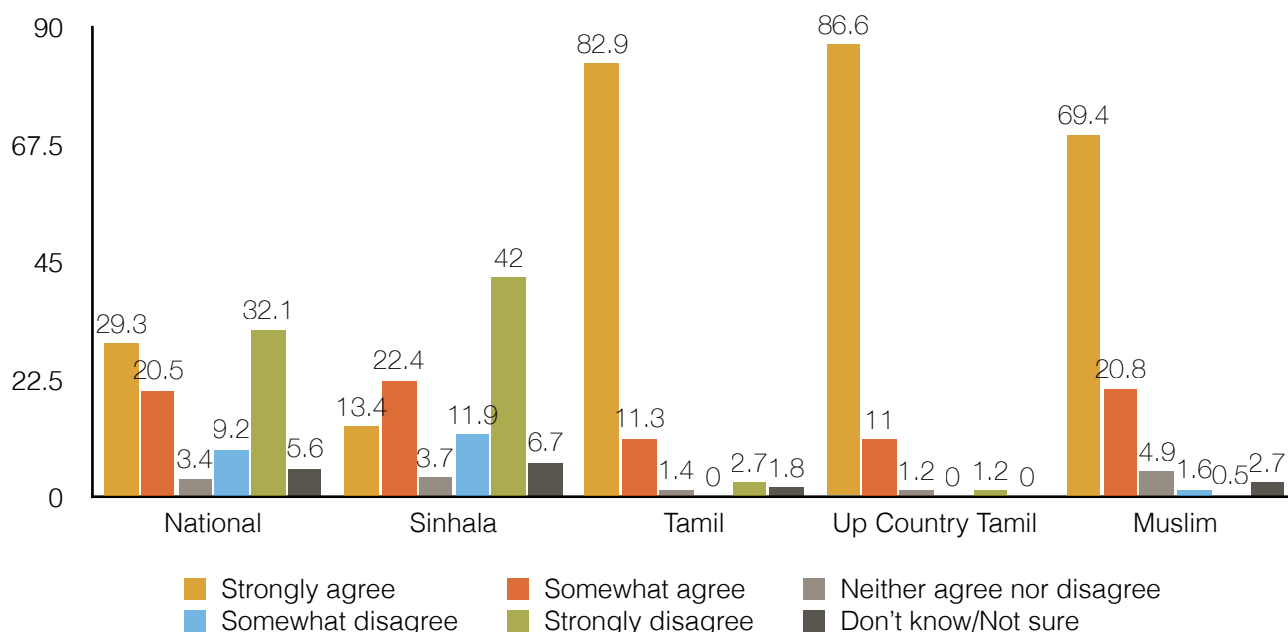
Reconciliation

In March 2015, President Sirisena issued a circular to all institutions stating that there was no bar on singing the Sri Lankan National anthem in Tamil. This unofficial ban had been in existence since 2010. While 29.3% of Sri Lankans strongly agree that the National anthem should be sung in Sinhala and Tamil, 20.5% said that they somewhat agree. However, 32.1% of Sri Lankans strongly disagree that the National anthem should be sung in Sinhala and Tamil.

Looking at perspectives on this issue across the four main ethnic communities, 86.6% from the Up Country Tamil community, 82.9% from the Tamil community, 69.4% from the Muslim community strongly agree that the National Anthem should be sung in both Sinhala and Tamil while only 13.4% from the Sinhala community agree with the same.

53.9% from the Sinhala community, 2.7% from the Tamil community, 1.2% from the Up Country Tamil community and 2.1% from the Muslim Community believe that the National Anthem should not be sung in both languages. (*Refer Graph 1.7*)

Graph 1.7: “The National Anthem should be sung in Sinhala and Tamil” - how strongly do you agree or disagree with this statement?



When respondents were asked if there should be a credible mechanism to look into accountability of what happened during the last stages of the war, 42.6% of Sri Lankans stated that there should be, while 36.3% opposed it.

From an ethnic perspective, 83.9% from the Tamil community, 75.6% from the Up Country Tamil community, 61.7% from the Muslim community and 32.2% from the Sinhala community believe that there should be a credible mechanism to look into accountability of what happened during the last stages of the war.

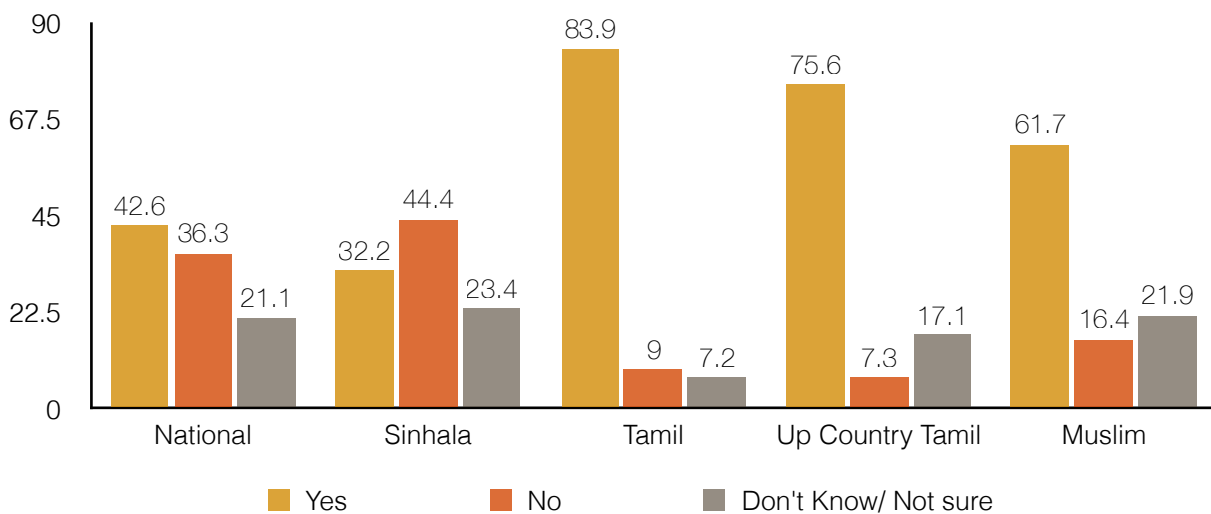
Among those who are not in favour of a credible mechanism are 44.4% from the Sinhalese community, 9% from the Tamil community, 7.3% from the Up Country Tamil community and 16.4% from the Muslim community. (Refer Graph 1.8)

Those who said that there should be a credible mechanism to look into accountability of what happened during the last stages of the war, were asked how this mechanism should be formed. Among the 42.6% of Sri Lankans who said yes to a credible mechanism, 39% believe this mechanism should be exclusively domestic, 18.3% believe it should be exclusively international, while 37% stated that it should be a combination of both domestic and international.

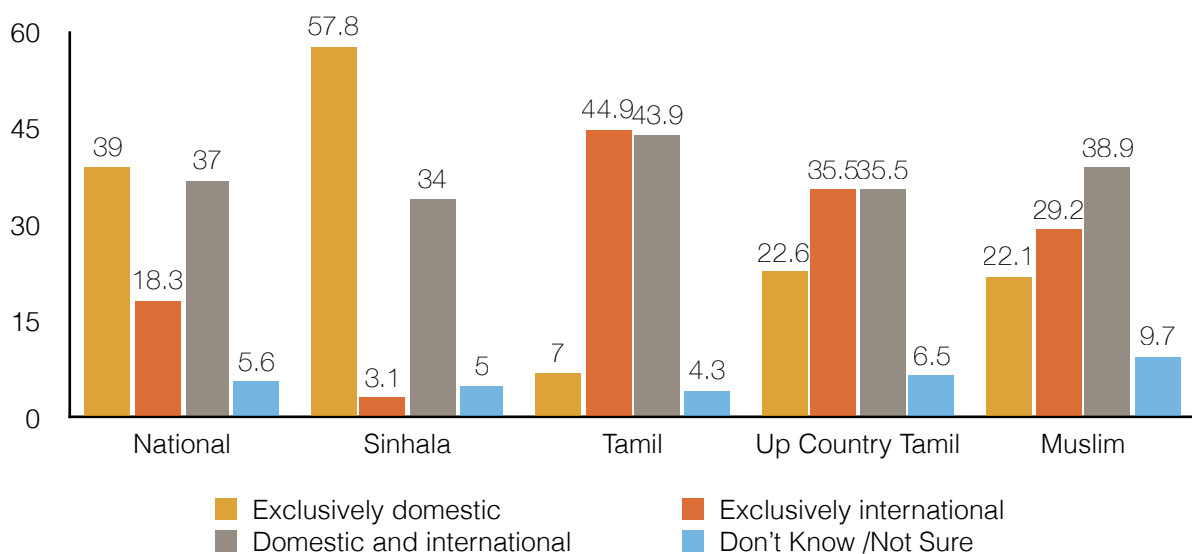
Among the 32.2% of Sinhalese who are in favour of such a mechanism, majority (57.8%) said that it should be an exclusively domestic mechanism while 34% said that it should be a combination of both domestic and international.

The Tamil community has the least amount of faith in an exclusively domestic mechanism with only 7% in favour of one. 44.9% said it should be an exclusively international one and 35.5% said a combination of the two. (Refer Graph 1.9)

Graph 1.8: Do you think there should be a credible mechanism to look into accountability of what happened during the last stages of the war?



Graph 1.9: If yes, should this mechanism to assess the above be;

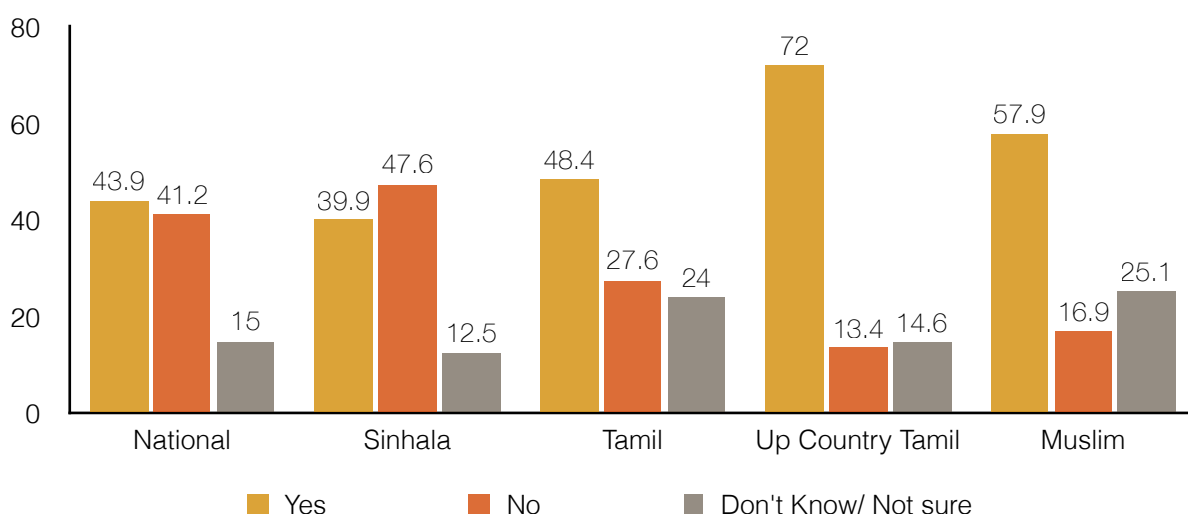


Corruption

At the time of fieldwork in March 2015, 43.9% of Sri Lankans said that the new Government had done enough to combat corruption while 41.2% said that they haven't done enough.

From an ethnic perspective, 39.9% from the Sinhala community, 48.4% from the Tamil community, 72% from the Up Country Tamil community and 57.9% from the Muslim community stated that the new Government had done enough to combat corruption. However, almost 50% from the Sinhalese community said that the Government had not done enough to combat corruption, followed by 27.6% from the Tamil Community, 13.4% from the Up Country Tamil Community and 16.9% from the Muslim Community. (Refer Graph 1.10)

Graph 1.10: In your opinion has the new Government done enough to combat corruption?

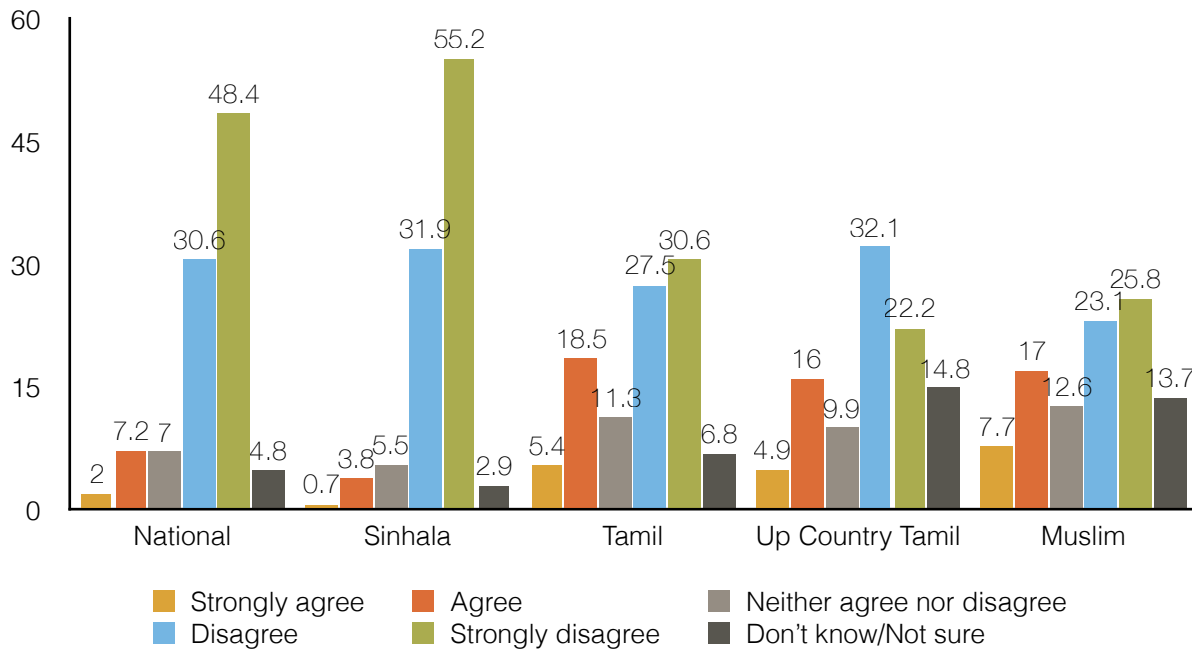


When it comes to corruption, there has been a positive response by the public, rejecting corruption of any kind. 79% disagreed (with 48.4% strongly disagreeing and 30.6% somewhat disagreeing) with the idea of ignoring corruption by any Government as long as the country is being developed. This is a significant positive change when compared with the survey in 2011, where 65% of Sri Lankans did not think that corruption can be ignored.

4.5% from the Sinhalese community, 23.9% from the Tamil community, 20.9% from the Up Country Tamil community and 24.7% from the Muslim community are among those who agree that since corruption is inevitable in any Government, corruption can be ignored so long as the country is being developed.

In comparison to the survey conducted in 2011, there has been a considerable increase in all communities of those who say that corruption cannot be ignored. This is most notable in the Sinhalese community - with 87.1% in 2015 stating that corruption cannot be ignored in comparison to the 73.9% in 2011. (Refer Graph 1.11)

Graph 1.11: 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?



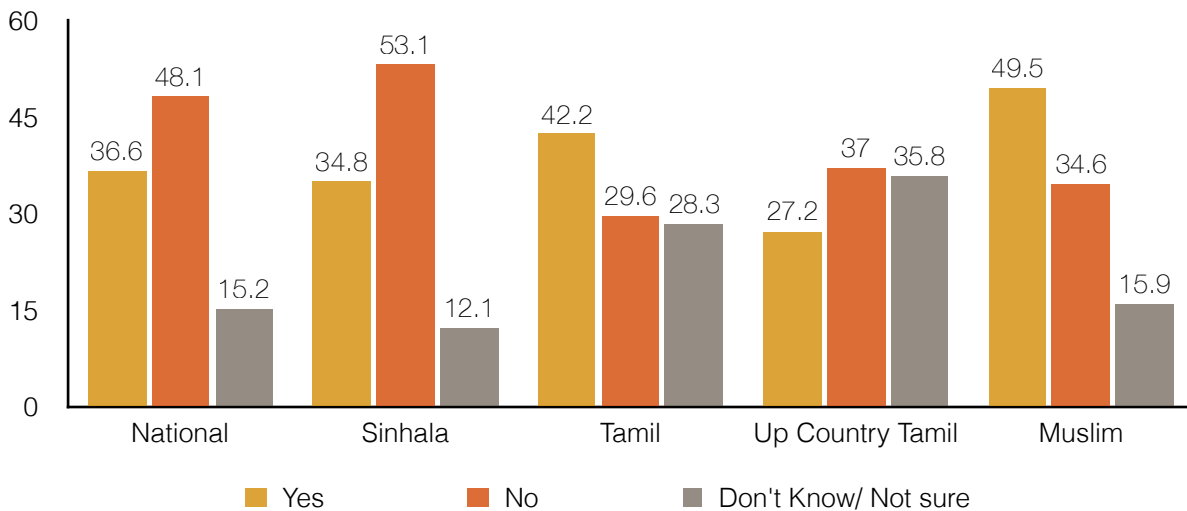
Almost 50% of Sri Lankans said that they are not aware of the way in which Mohan Peiris was removed from the position of Chief Justice while 36.6% indicated their awareness.

From an ethnic perspective, 49.5% from the Muslim community, 42.2% from the Tamil community, 34.8% from the Sinhala community and 27.2% from the Up Country Tamil community are aware of the way in which Mohan Peiris was removed from the position. (Refer Graph 1.12)

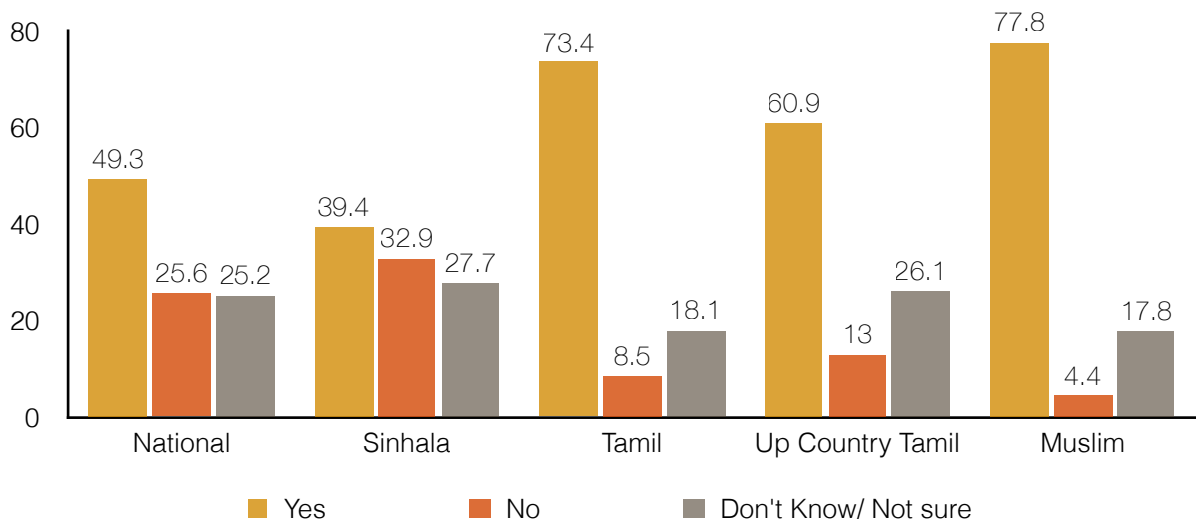
Among those who stated that they were aware, 49.3% of Sri Lankans approve of the way in which Mohan Peiris was removed from the position of Chief Justice, while 25.6% do not.

From amongst those who approved, the Muslim community with 77.8% of respondents was the highest when compared with the other ethnic communities. (Refer Graph 1.13)

Graph 1.12: Are you aware of the way in which Mohan Peiris was removed from the position of Chief Justice?



Graph 1.13: If yes, do you approve?



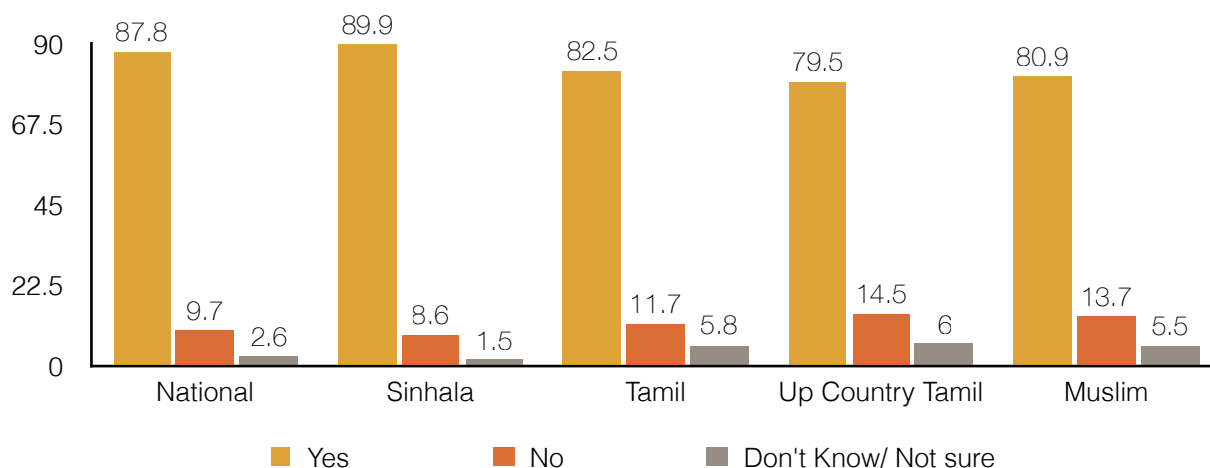
The 100 Day Programme

President Sirisena in his election manifesto pledged to bring about a change in the manner in which the country was being governed, by eradicating dictatorship, corruption, nepotism and reinstating the Rule of Law. He unveiled his road map for Constitutional reform and pledged to deliver a 'new country' in 100 days.

Respondents were asked about various aspects of the 100 day plan to gauge their level of awareness and satisfaction. 87.8% of Sri Lankans said that they were aware of President Sirisena's 100 day programme while only 9.7% were not aware of it. From an ethnic perspective, 89.9% from the Sinhala community, 80.9% from the Muslim community, 82.5%

from the Tamil community and 79.5% from the Up Country Tamil community stated their awareness of the 100 day programme. The Up Country Tamil community (14.5%) followed by the Muslim community (13.7%) were the least aware of the 100 day programme. (Refer Graph 1.14)

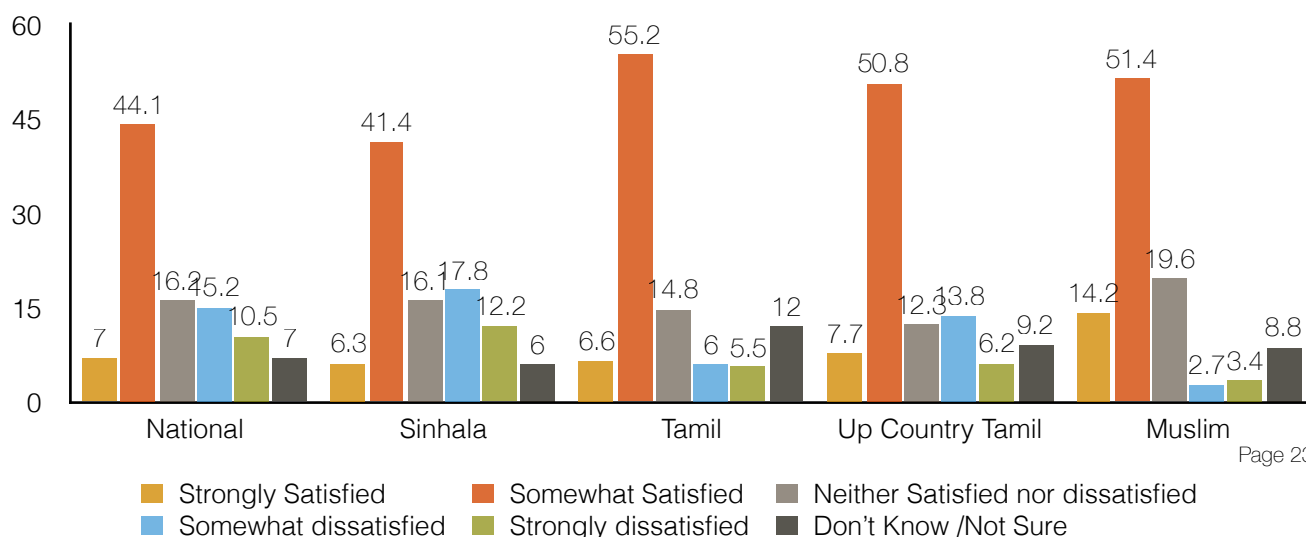
Graph 1.14: Are you aware of the newly elected Government's 100 day programme?



When asked about their level of their satisfaction in relation to how effectively the Government was providing them with information regarding the progress of its 100 day programme, only 7% of Sri Lankans said that they were strongly satisfied while 44.1% were somewhat satisfied. 10.5% said they were strongly dissatisfied, while 15.2% were somewhat dissatisfied.

The Muslim community (65.6%) appear to be the most satisfied with the Government's effectiveness in providing the public with information regarding the progress of its 100 day programme, while the Sinhalese community is the most dissatisfied with 30% expression dissatisfaction, with 12.2% saying that they are strongly dissatisfied. (Refer Graph 1.15)

Graph 1.15: How satisfied are you with how effectively the government is providing you with information regarding the progress of its 100 day programme?

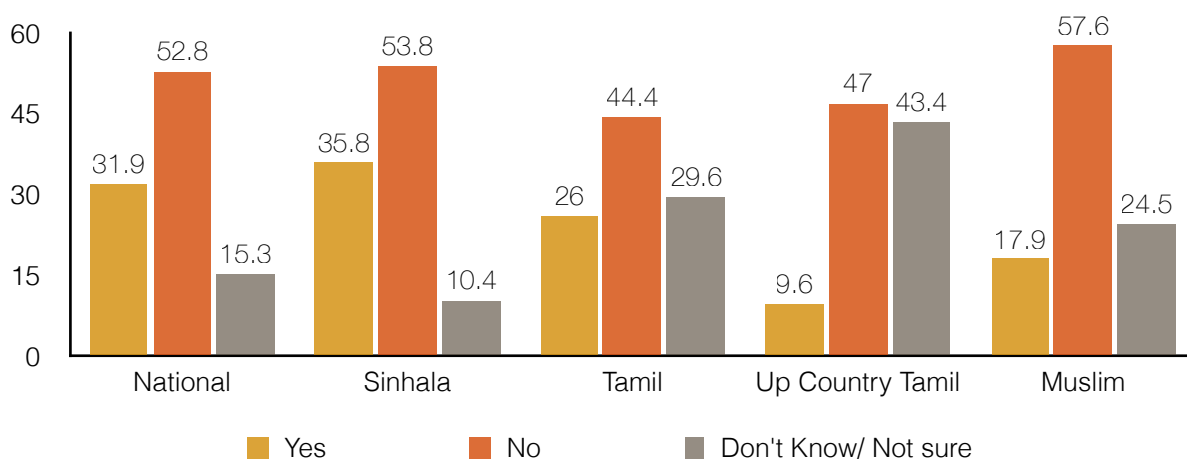


One of the key features in President Sirisena's election manifesto was to ensure that access to information be made a statutory right. The Right to Information Bill if passed, deems to specify grounds on which access may be denied, to establish a Right To Information Commission, to appoint information officers and to set out procedures for obtaining official information and for matters connected therewith or in relation to the same. With many discussions around RTI taking place within polity and society, it was important to seek a wider public opinion in this regard. The respondents were asked if they were aware of the term 'Right to Information' and if the Right to Information Act is introduced in Sri Lanka as promised in the 100 day programme, how it would empower them as a citizen.

31.9% of Sri Lankans stated that they were aware of the term Right To Information whilst most (52.8%) were not aware. Among those who indicated that they were aware of the term Right to Information, the Sinhalese community remained the most well-informed with 35.8% indicating that they were aware, followed by 26% from the Tamil community, 17.9% from the Muslim community and 9.6% from the Up Country Tamil community.

Among the respondents who were least informed was the Muslim community with 57.6% indicating that they were not aware of the term 'Right to Information', followed by 53.8% from the Sinhala community, 47% from the Up Country community and 44.4% from the Tamil community. (Refer Graph 1.16)

Graph 1.16: Are you aware of the term 'Right to Information'?



When asked how they think they would be empowered as citizens if the Right to Information Act was to be introduced, only 30% of Sri Lankans actually answered this question. 13.3% said that they will be able to access information and be more informed regarding things that affect them and the country.

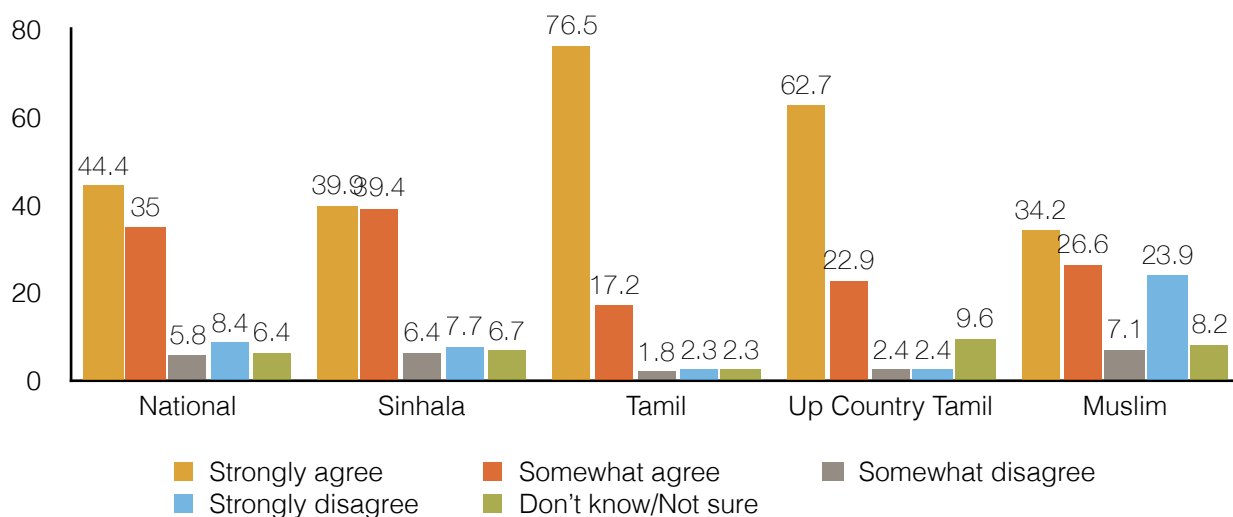
Quota for women

A fixed quota for women candidates is a much debated topic in the past few months. Support for allocating a fixed quota for women candidates for each district at the election was highest among the Tamil community with 93.7% of the respondents agreeing to it (76.5% strongly agreeing). On a National level, 44.4% of Sri Lankans strongly agreed and 8.4% strongly disagreed.

Since 2011 it is evident throughout the surveys conducted that there are shifts in opinion among all four ethnic groups. When assessing the 2015 data with the surveys conducted in the past there appears to be a decline in the agreement to a fixed quota for women candidates among the Sinhalese community - in 2011, 53.5% strongly agreed with the statement, 40.3% in 2013, 45.3% in 2014 to 39.9% in 2015.

Furthermore, there is a considerable drop in the rate of the Muslim respondents who strongly disagree with the idea of allocating a fixed quota for women candidacies for each district at the elections. In 2011 it was 19.5% from the Muslim community who strongly disagreed, 30.5% in 2013 and 43.4% in 2014 - to noteworthy decline in 2015 with only 23.9% from the Muslim community stating that they strongly disagree. (Refer Graph 1.17)

Graph 1.17: What do you think of the idea of allocating a fixed quota for women candidacies for each district at the elections?

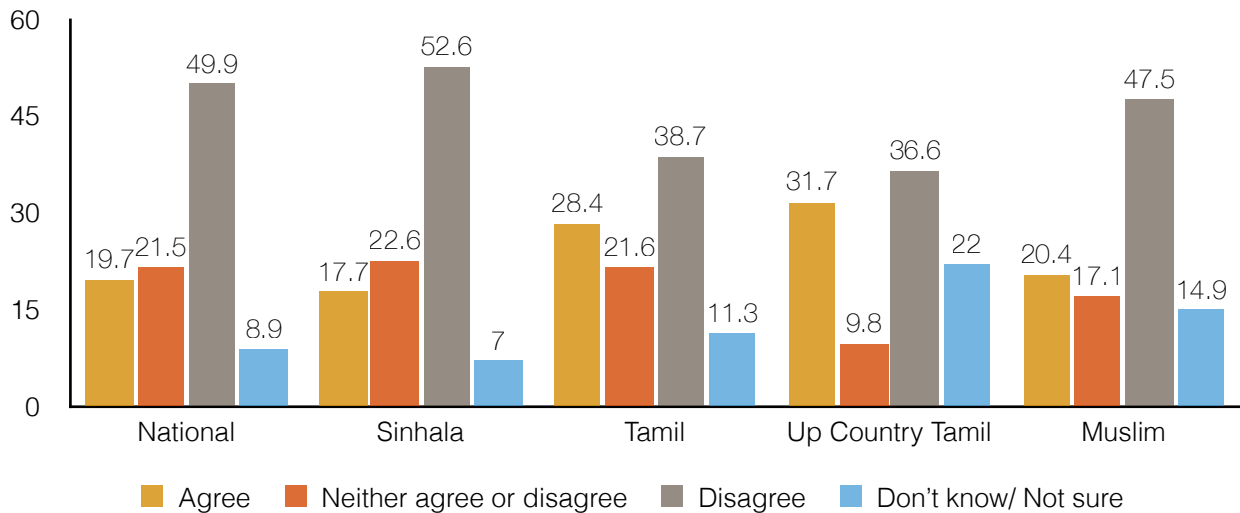


Political efficacy

Almost 20% of Sri Lankans believe that they have no say in what the Government does while almost 50% believe that they do. This is a significant change in opinion when compared to 2014 where 28.1% said that they have no say and 36.4% said that they have a say. 28.4%

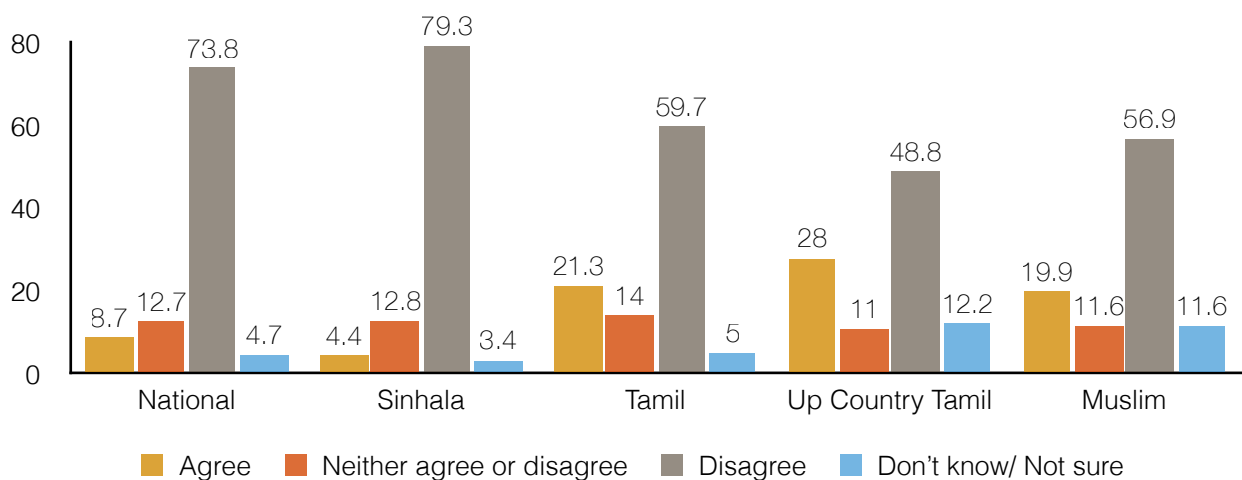
from the Tamil community and 31.7% from the Up Country Tamil community believe that they have no say in what the Government does, again a significant shift in opinion since 2014 where it was 51.6% and 60.3% respectively. (Refer Graph 1.18)

Graph 1.18: “People like me have no say in what the government does”. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?



Majority of Sri Lankans (73.8%) believe that their vote has an impact on the outcome of an election, a notable increase from 2014 (59.5%). 4.4% of the Sinhalese community, 21.3% from the Tamil community, 28% from the Up Country Tamil community and 19.9% from the Muslim community believe their vote has no impact on the outcome of an election, again a positive improvement in opinion when compared to 2014 where it was 12.2%, 23%, 34.2% and 25.6% respectively. (Refer Graph 1.19)

Graph 1.19: “My vote has no impact on the outcome of an election”. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?



2

SECURITY AND FREEDOM

Summary

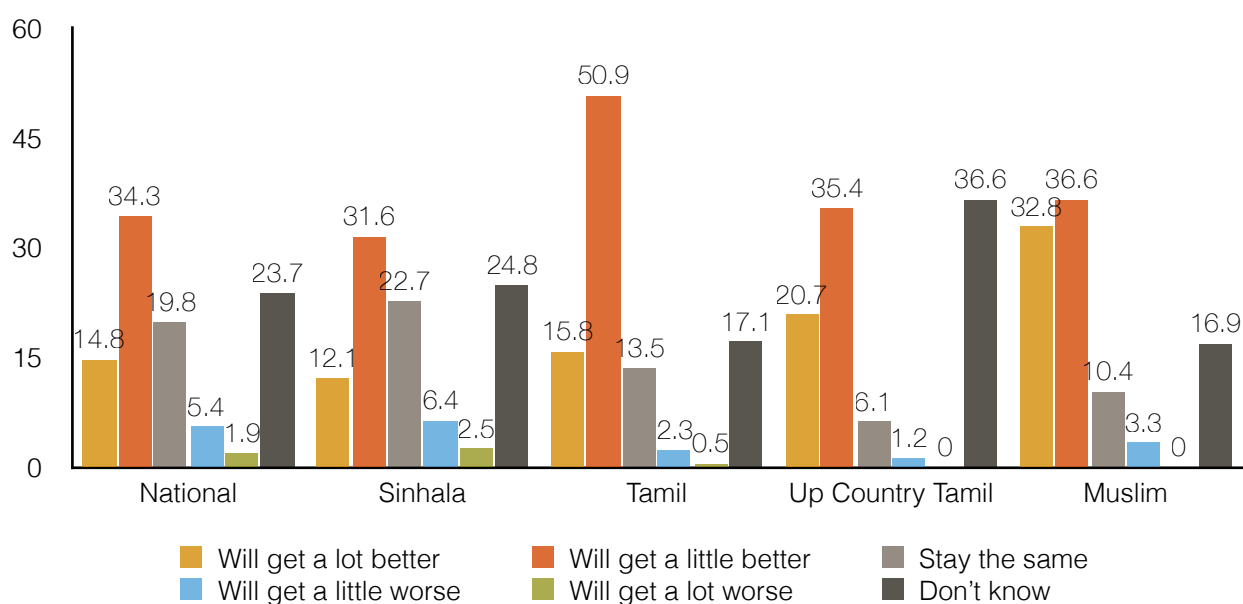
- When analysing the data from the past surveys, the percentage of Sri Lankans who say that the general security situation will get better has decreased in 2015. 79.7% in 2011 and 83.6% in 2013 stated that the general security situation of the country will get better. In 2015 this has decreased to 49.1%.
- When asked of how free people feel in expressing their opinion on politics, irrespective of where they are and who they are with, 46.6% believe that they are completely free. This is an increase in comparison to 2013 (35.4%) and 2014 (31.2%).
- From an ethnic perspective, when comparing the data with the surveys conducted in the past, it appears that in the Tamil and Muslim communities, the percentage of those who feel that they are not at all free has reduced in 2015. In the Tamil community, 16.1% stated that they are not free at all, in comparison to the 18.9% in 2011, 29.2% in 2013 and 28.3% in 2014.
- Almost 80% of Sri Lankans believe that they have the freedom to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured, a slight increase from 74.4% in 2013.
- Majority from the Sinhalese community (82.3%) believe that they are completely free to choose who to vote for, while 68.6% from the Tamil community, 70.4% from the Up Country Tamil community and 63.7% from the Muslim community stated the same.
- When asked how free they feel to protest/ attend a demonstration against political injustice, 35.5% of Sri Lankans feel completely free while 5.5% don't feel free at all.

With the end of nearly three decades of war it is essential to evaluate the level of freedom and security people perceive to have at present. In order to assess the extent of the public's opinion on their level of freedom and security, respondents were asked their views on what they assume the future of the general security situation in the country would be, how free they feel to express their feelings about politics irrespective of where they are and who they are with, to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured and to protest/ attend a demonstration against political injustice.

General security situation in the country

When analysing the data from the past surveys, the percentage of Sri Lankans who say that the general security situation will get better has decreased in 2015. 79.7% in 2011 and 83.6% in 2013 stated that the general security situation of the country will get better. In 2015 this has decreased to 49.1% stating that the general security situation of the country in the future will get better whilst 7.3% stated that it will get worse and 19.8% stated that there will be no change. From an ethnic perspective a majority of the Tamil (66.7%), Up Country Tamil (56.1%) and Muslim (69.4%) communities believe that the general security situation of the country in the future will get better. (Refer Graph 2.1)

Graph 2.1: How do you think the general security situation in this country will change over the next 2 years?

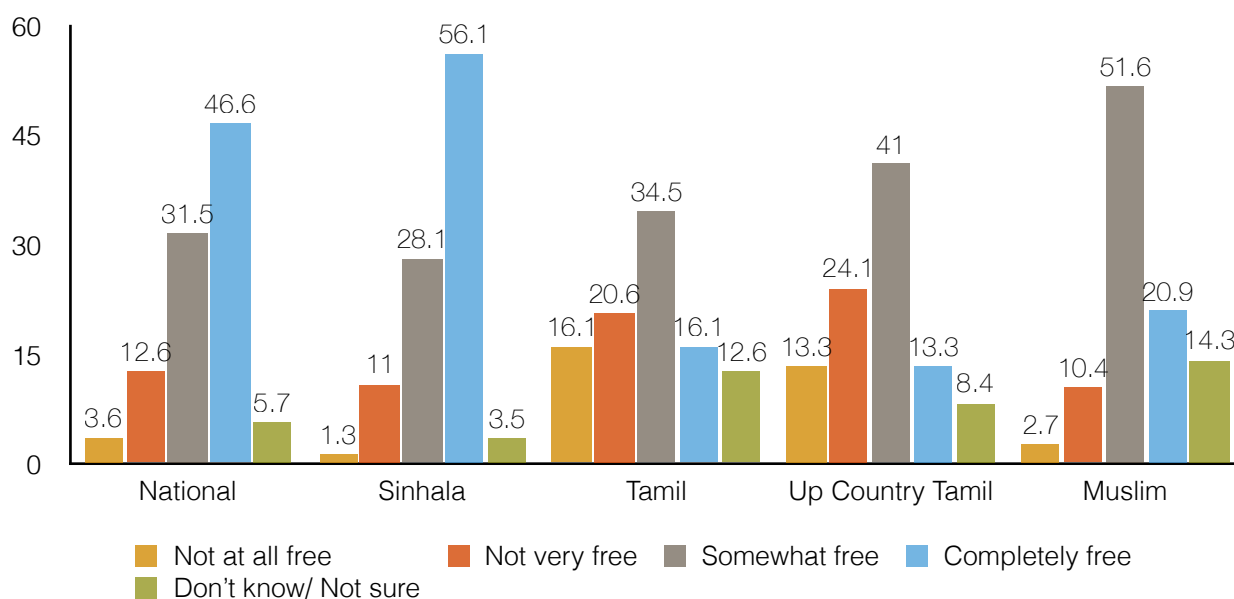


Freedom of expression

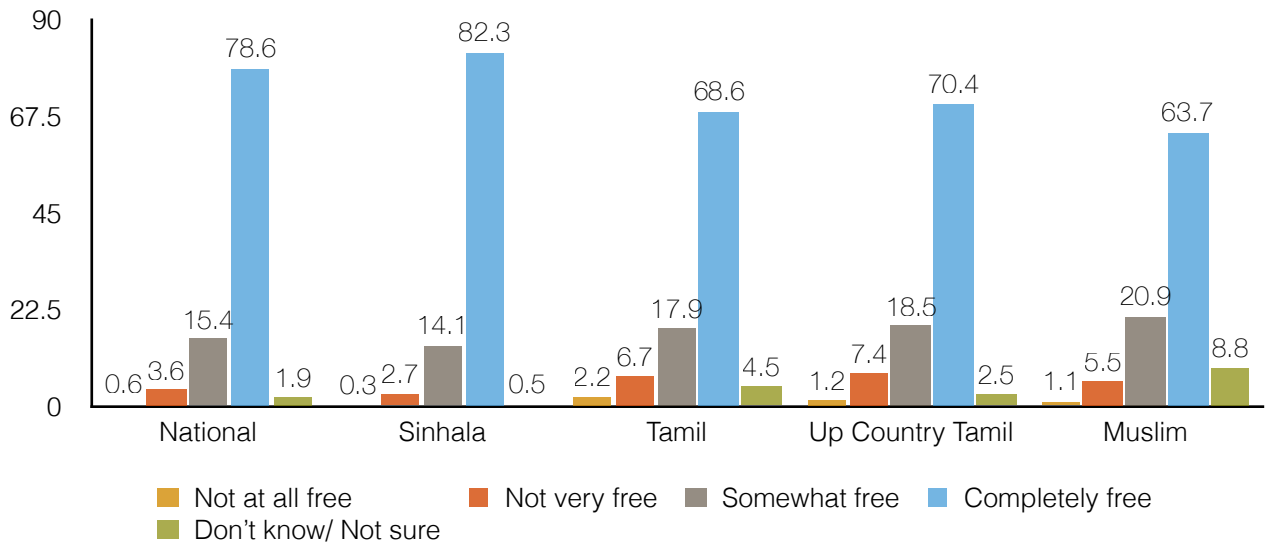
When asked of how free people feel in expressing their opinion on politics, irrespective of where they are and who they are with, 46.6% believe that they are completely free. This is an increase in comparison to 2013 (35.4%) and 2014 (31.2%). Almost 8% of Sri Lankans stated in 2014 that they are not at all free to express their feelings about politics and this reduced to 3.6% in 2015.

From an ethnic perspective, when comparing the data with the surveys conducted in the past, it appears that in the Tamil and Muslim communities, the percentage of those who feel that they are not at all free has reduced in 2015. In the Tamil community, 16.1% stated that they are not free at all, in comparison to the 18.9% in 2011, 29.2% in 2013 and 28.3% in 2014. In the Muslim community only 2.7% believe that they are not at all free in comparison to the 9.1% in 2011, 15.8% in 2013 and 24.6% in 2014. (Refer Graph 2.2)

Graph 2.2: How free do you feel to express your feelings about politics, irrespective of where you are and who you're with?

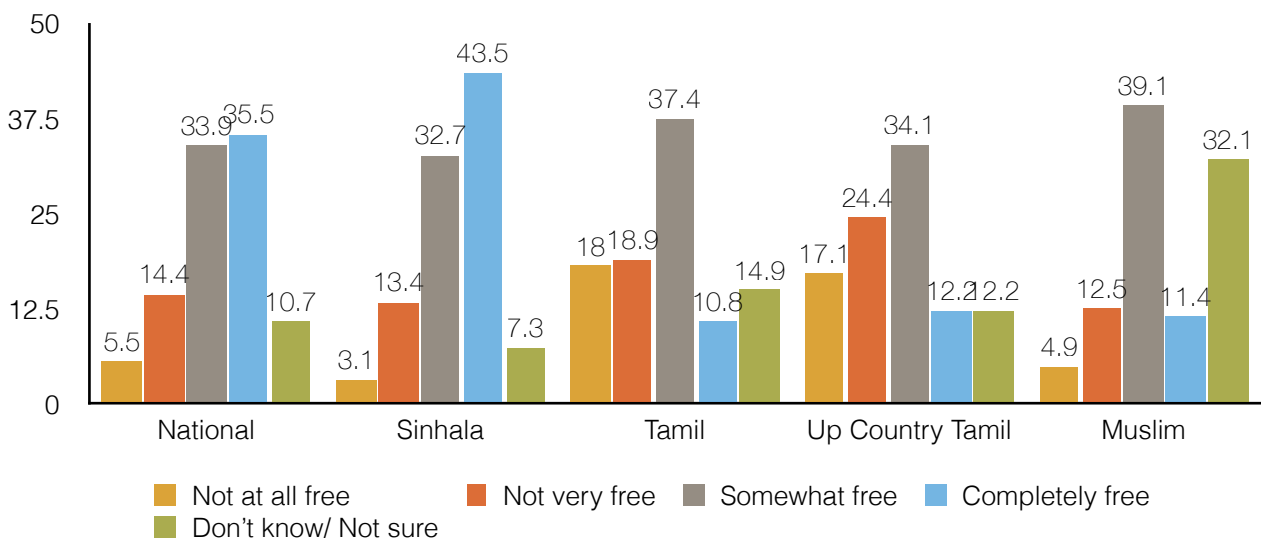


Almost 80% of Sri Lankans believe that they have the freedom to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured, a slight increase from the 74.4% in 2013. Majority from the Sinhalese community (82.3%) believe that they are completely free to choose who to vote for, while 68.6% from the Tamil community, 70.4% from the Up Country Tamil community and 63.7% from the Muslim community stated the same. (Refer Graph 2.3)

Graph 2.3: How free do you feel to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured?

When asked how free they feel to protest/ attend a demonstration against political injustice, 35.5% of Sri Lankans feel completely free while 5.5% don't feel free at all. This is an improvement when comparing the data from 2013 where almost 10% of Sri Lankans believed that they were not at all free to attend a protest/ demonstration against political injustice while 19% said that they were not very free.

In 2013, 32.9% from the Tamil community and 12.2% from the Muslim community stated that they were not at all free. In 2015 this has reduced to 18% and 4.9% respectively. (Refer Graph 2.4)

Graph 2.3: How free do you feel to protest/ attend a demonstration against political injustice?

3

TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

Summary

- There has been an overall decrease in trust when it comes to the Central Government. 74.5% of Sri Lankans stated that they have trust in the Central Government while 10.9% say they have no trust. Analysing the data of surveys conducted in the past, we note a decrease in the level of trust as 84.2% in 2013 and 79.7% in 2014 stated that they trust the Central Government, and this has reduced to 74.5% in 2015.
- Majority of Sri Lankans (71.6%) say they trust the Police – 14.6% have a great deal of trust while 57% have some trust, while 21.3% indicate that they have no trust.
- From an ethnic perspective, 40.1% Tamil community and 30.1% from the Up Country Tamil community have no trust in the police. It must be noted that the lack of trust has increased in the Tamil and Up Country Tamil communities when comparing the findings to previous surveys.
- There has been an increase in the trust that Sri Lankans have for the Army, as 44.2% in 2015 stated that they have a great deal of trust in comparison to the 33.7% in 2014.
- The Tamil community has the least amount trust in the Army with 52% stating that they have no trust, followed by the Up Country Tamil with 47%.
- In 2014, 26.3% of Sri Lankans said that they have a great deal of trust in the courts and in 2015, this has increased to 37.3%.
- There has been a notable change in opinion among Sri Lankans when it comes to the Election Commission. 17.2% said that they have a great deal of trust and 45.1% said some trust in the Election Commission, an increase when compared to 2014, where only 7.6% had a great deal of trust and 31% said some trust.
- In 2014, 17.5% of Sri Lankans said that they have no trust in the Election Commission and this has reduced to 6.2% in 2015.

There are many institutions that are responsible in representing the public and their needs. These institutions have either direct or indirect interaction with the people of the country ranging from the Central Government to Non Governmental Organisations (NGO). When assessing the level of democracy in a country it is imperative these factors are considered and monitored to bring about an overall understanding. Therefore, people were questioned with regard to how much trust they had in the Central Government, Provincial Government, Local Government, Civil Service, Police, Army, Courts, Parliament, Political parties, the Election Commission and NGO's.

Central Government

There has been an overall decrease in trust when it comes to the Central Government. 74.5% of Sri Lankans stated that they have trust in the Central Government while 10.9% say they have no trust. Analysing the data of surveys conducted in the past, we note a decrease in the level of trust as 84.2% in 2013 and 79.7% in 2014 stated that they trust the Central Government, and this has reduced to 74.5% in 2015.

Police

71.6% of Sri Lankans say they trust the Police – 14.6% have a great deal of trust while 57% have some trust, while 21.3% indicate that they have no trust. From an ethnic perspective, 40.1% Tamil community and 30.1% from the Up Country Tamil community have no trust in the Police. It must be noted that the lack of trust has increased in the Tamil and Up Country Tamil communities when comparing the findings to previous surveys. In the Tamil community, 29.2% in 2011 and 31.5% in 2014 said that they have no trust in the Police. In the Up Country Tamil community, 29.1% in 2011 and 19.2% in 2014 said that they have no trust in the Police.

Army

There has been an increase in the trust that Sri Lankans have for the Army, as 44.2% in 2015 stated that they have a great deal of trust in comparison to the 33.7% in 2014. From an ethnic perspective, the Tamil community has the least amount trust in the Army with 52% stating that they have no trust, followed by the Up Country Tamil with 47%.

When comparing the data with the findings from 2011 and 2014, there has been an increase in the mistrust towards the Army among the Tamil and the Up country Tamil communities. In 2011, 32.8% of the Tamil community and 27.3% of the Up Country Tamil community had no trust, whilst in 2014 this increased to 39.9% and 35.9% respectively.

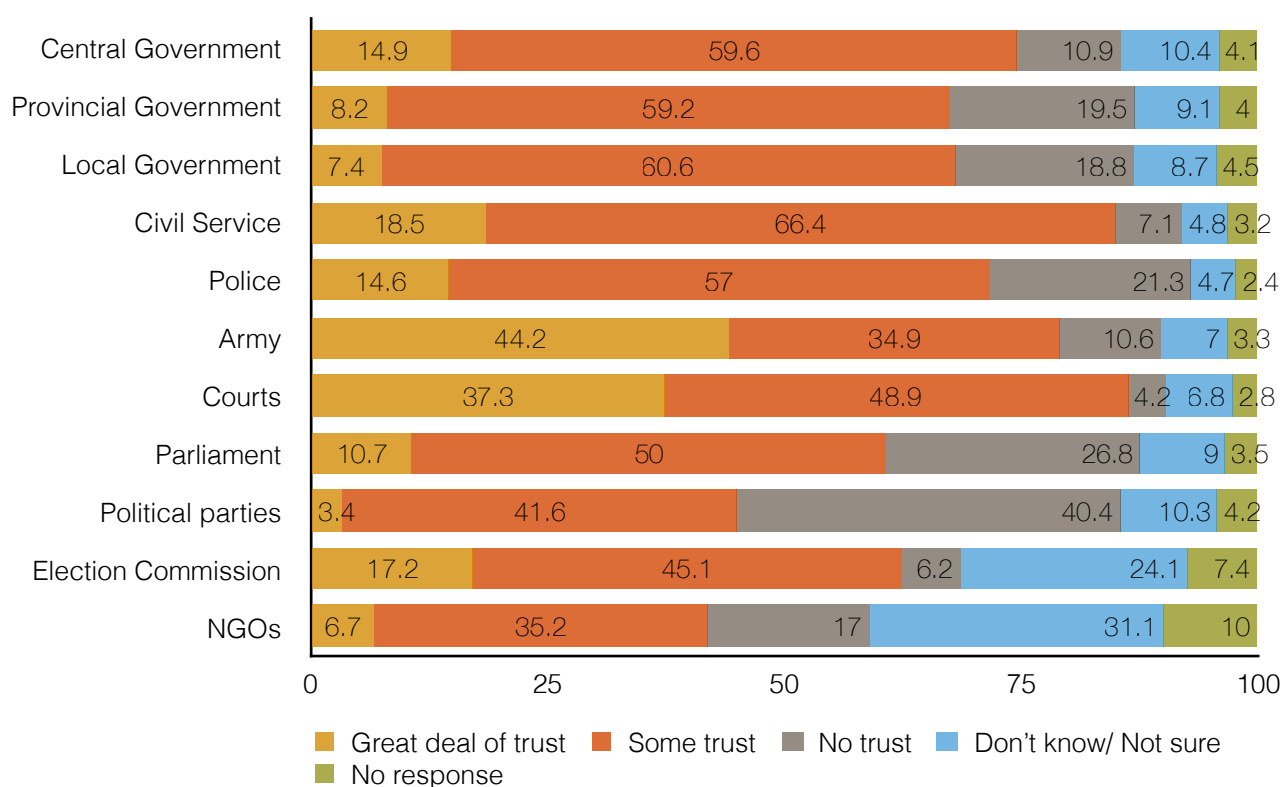
Courts

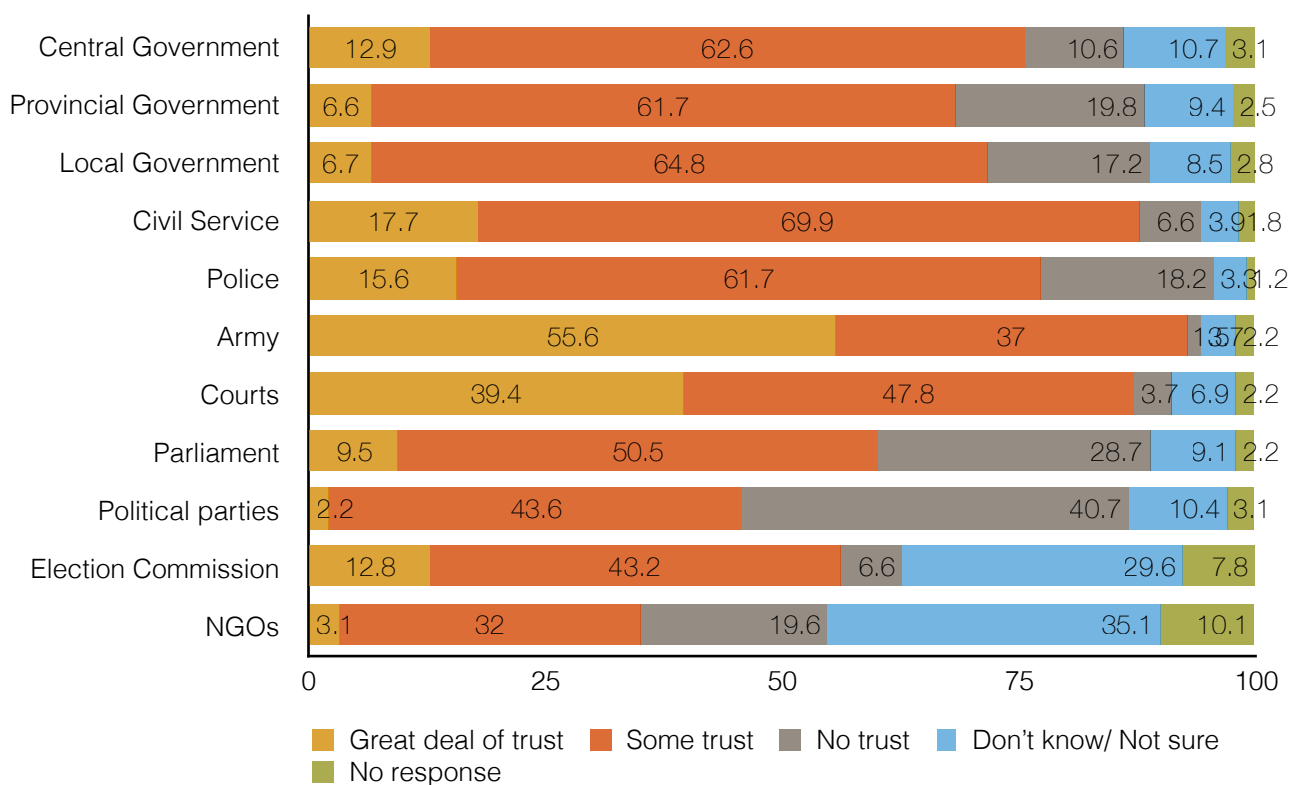
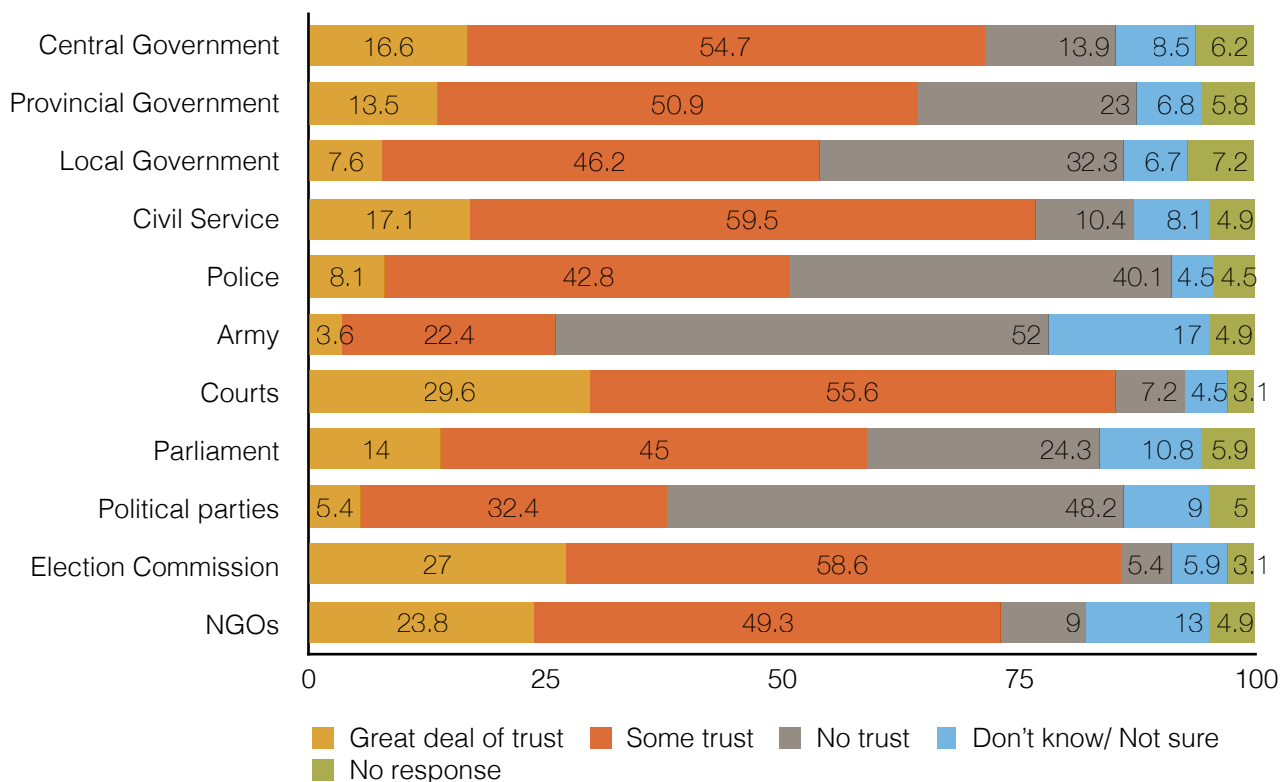
In 2014, 26.3% of Sri Lankans said that they have a great deal of trust in the courts and in 2015, this has increased to 37.3%.

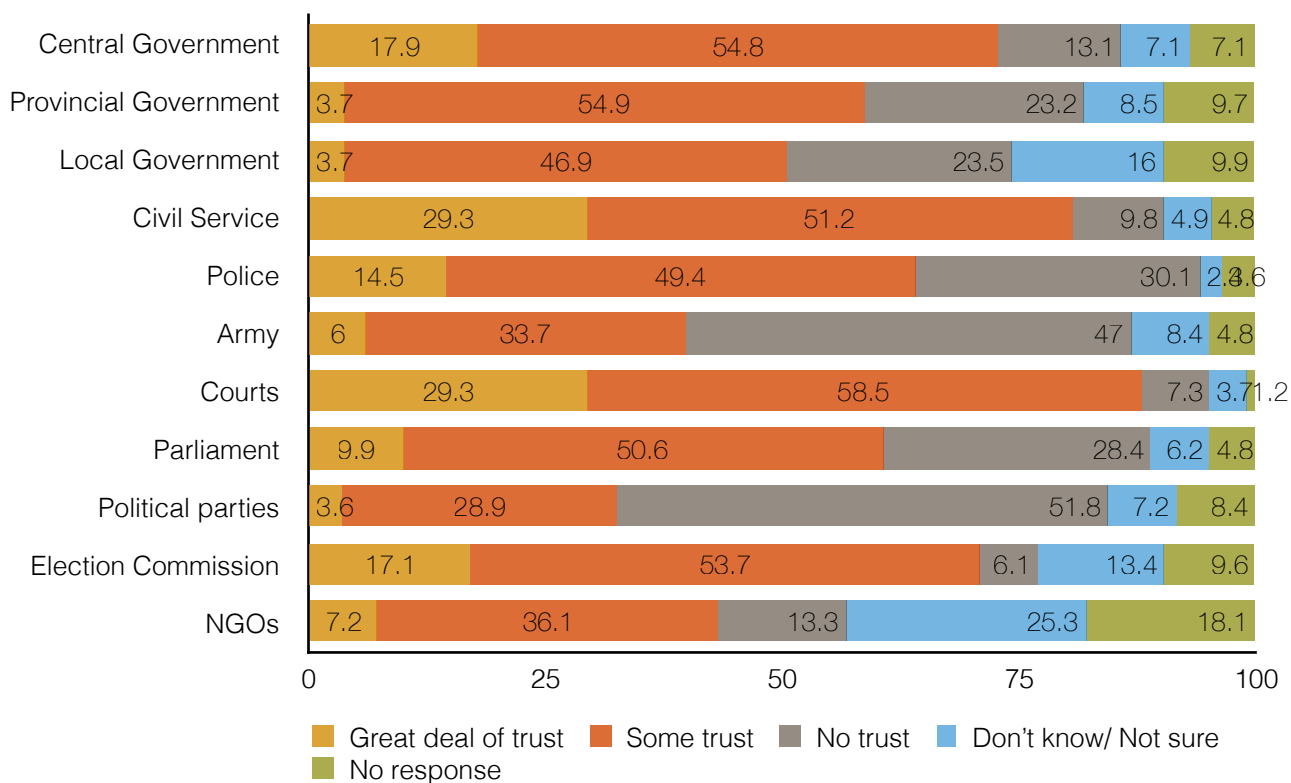
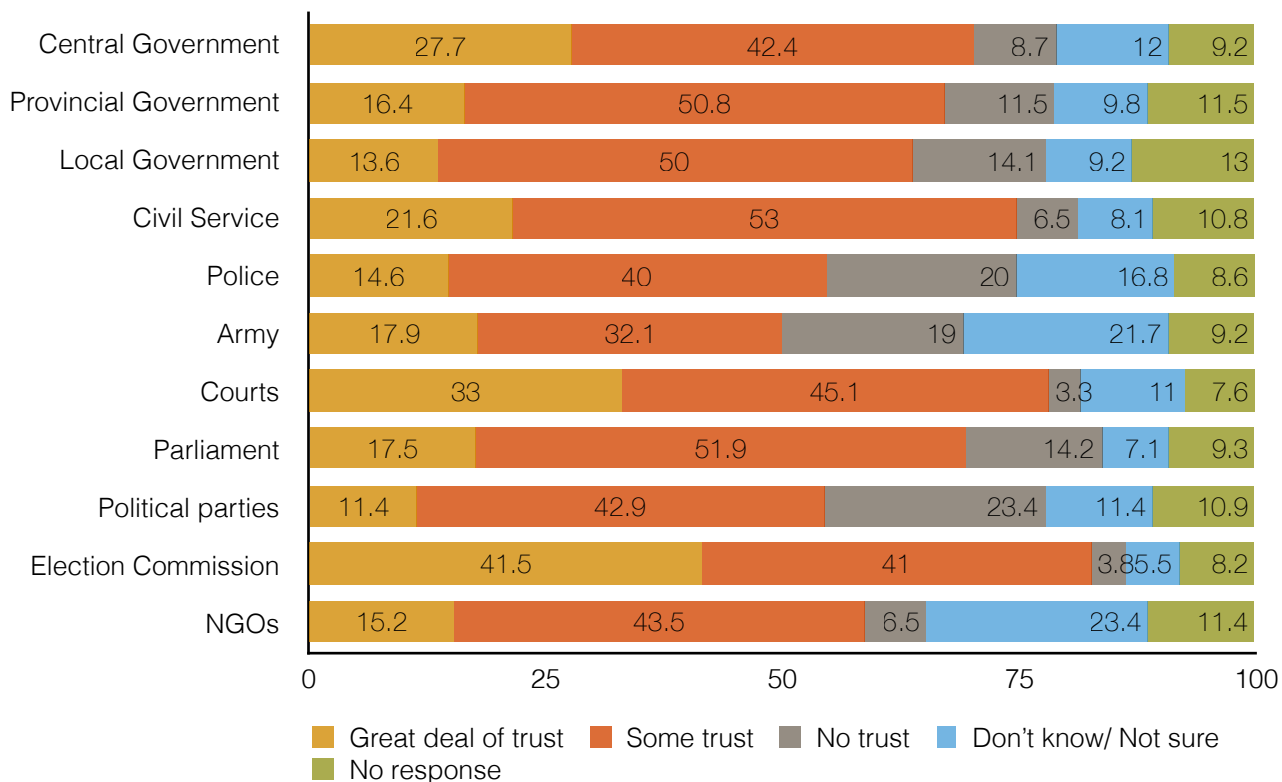
Election Commission

There has been a notable change in opinion among Sri Lankans when it comes to the Election Commission. 17.2% said that they have a great deal of trust and 45.1% said some trust in the Election Commission, an increase when compared to 2014, where only 7.6% had a great deal of trust and 31% said some trust. In 2014, 17.5% of Sri Lankans said that they have no trust in the Election Commission and this has reduced to 6.2% in 2015. This shift in opinion is similar across all four main ethnic communities.

Graph 3.1: How much trust do you have in the following institutions? (National)



Graph 3.2: How much trust do you have in the following institutions? (Sinhala)**Graph 3.3: How much trust do you have in the following institutions? (Tamil)**

Graph 3.4: How much trust do you have in the following institutions? (Up Country Tamil)**Graph 3.5: How much trust do you have in the following institutions? (Muslim)**

4

MEDIA IN SRI LANKA

Summary

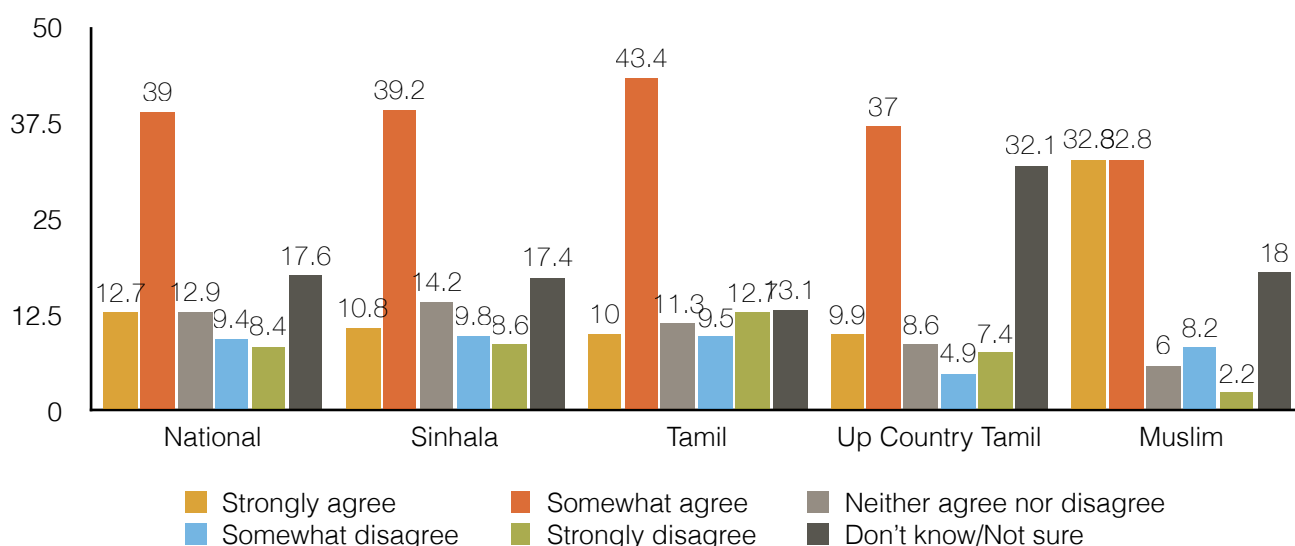
- When comes to the media landscape under President Sirisena's administration, 51.7% of Sri Lankans agree (with 12.7% strongly agreeing) that the media is completely free to criticise the Government as they wish. This is a noteworthy increase when compared to the previous years - 42% in 2011, 42.5% in 2013 and 39.2% in 2014.
- When asked about fair coverage in the State media of opposition political parties' views, 39.3% of Sri Lankans said that they believe that the State media in Sri Lanka gives fair coverage, while 30.9% believe that they don't give fair coverage.
- From an ethnic perspective, the most positive is the Sinhala community with 44.1% indicating that the State media in Sri Lanka gives fair coverage to the views of the opposition political parties whilst the least satisfied is the Tamil community with 48% stating that the State media does not give a fair coverage.
- On the topic of fair coverage, Sri Lankans continue to believe that private media is better at giving fair coverage to the views of opposition political parties. 58.4% of Sri Lankans believe that private media gives fair coverage while 13.1% said that they don't give fair coverage.
- Almost 40% of Sri Lankans think that the media should have a right to publish any views and ideas without Government control while 45.7% are of the opinion that the Government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it considers harmful to society.
- Looking at opinions across the four communities, 54.1% of Sinhala, 24.4% of Up Country Tamil, 20.3% of Tamil and 17.1% from the Muslim communities believe that the Government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it considers harmful to society.
- Majority of Sri Lankans (78.6%) are of the opinion that the news media should constantly investigate and report on corruption and the mistakes by the Government.

When analysing public perceptions regarding freedom of media, people's perceptions on the freedom of the mainstream media to criticise the Government, the extent of bias by State and private media around political reporting and Government control in media coverage and reporting were some of the areas that were examined.

When comes to criticism by the media of Government, 51.7% of Sri Lankans agree (with 12.7% strongly agreeing) that the media is completely free to criticise the government as they wish. (Refer Graph 4.1)

This is a noteworthy increase when compared to the previous years - 42% in 2011, 42.5% in 2013 and 39.2% in 2014.

Graph 4.1: Some people say that the media in Sri Lanka is completely free to criticise the Government as they wish. Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with this statement?

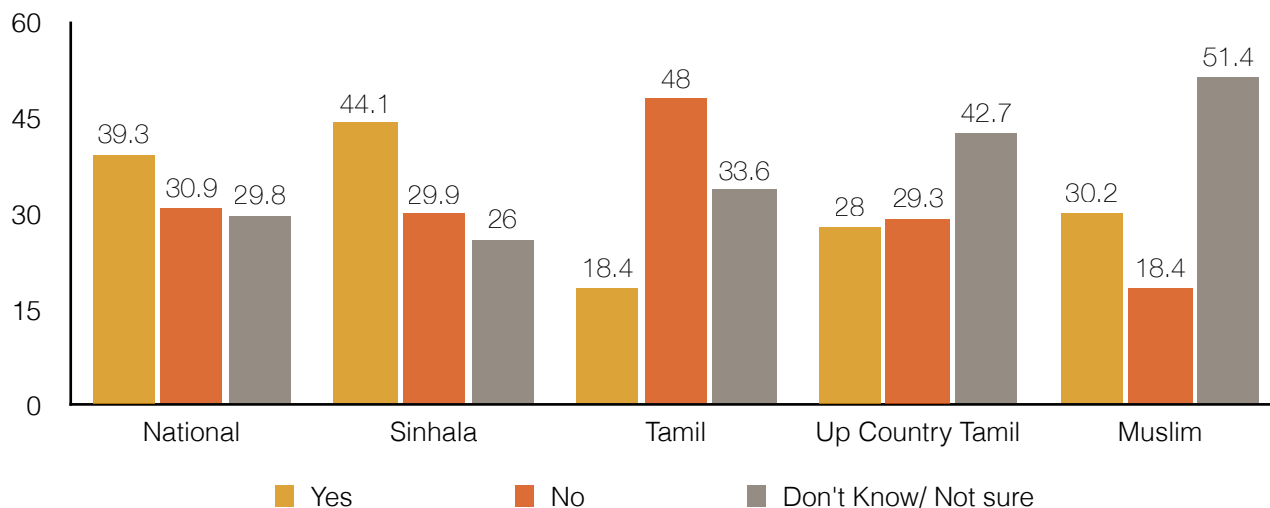


When asked about fair coverage in the State media of opposition political parties' views, 39.3% of Sri Lankans said that they believe that the State media in Sri Lanka gives fair coverage, while 30.9% believe that they don't give fair coverage. This is a positive change in view of State media coverage when compared to previous years - 35.3% in 2011, 40% in 2013 and almost 50% in 2014 said that the State media in Sri Lanka does not give a fair coverage to the views of the opposition political parties.

From an ethnic perspective, the most positive is the Sinhala community with 44.1% indicating that the State media in Sri Lanka gives a fair coverage to the views of the opposition political

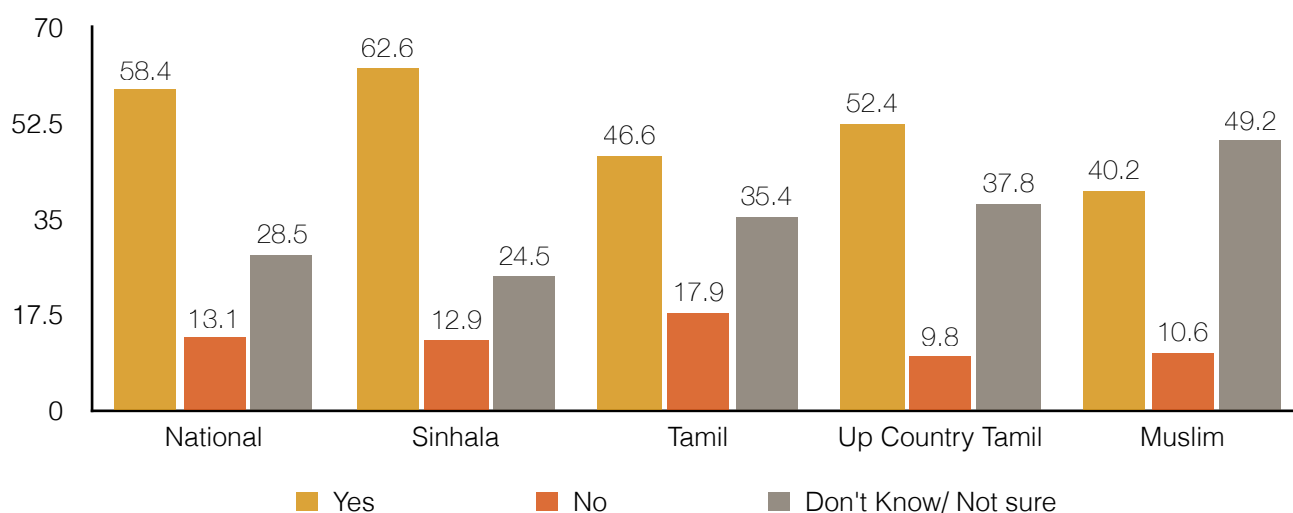
parties whilst the least satisfied is the Tamil community with 48% stating that the State media does not give a fair coverage. (Refer Graph 4.2)

Graph 4.2: Do you think the State media in Sri Lanka gives fair coverage to the views of the opposition political parties?



On the topic of fair coverage, Sri Lankans continue to believe that private media is better at giving fair coverage to the views of opposition political parties. 58.4% of Sri Lankans believe that private media gives fair coverage while 13.1% that they don't give fair coverage. This positive view towards private media coverage has increased over the years – 40.7% in 2011, 48.6% in 2013 and 42.9% in 2014. (Refer Graph 4.3)

Graph 4.3: Do you think the private media in Sri Lanka gives fair coverage to the views of the opposition political parties?



Respondents were asked about whether the media should have a right to publish any views and ideas without Government control or whether the Government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it considers harmful to society.

Almost 40% of Sri Lankans think that the media should have a right to publish any views and ideas without Government control while 45.7% are of the opinion that the Government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it considers harmful to society. It is noteworthy that there has been increase over years of the view that Government should have the right to prevent the media – 33.7% in 2013 and 34% in 2014 to an increase of 45.7% in 2015.

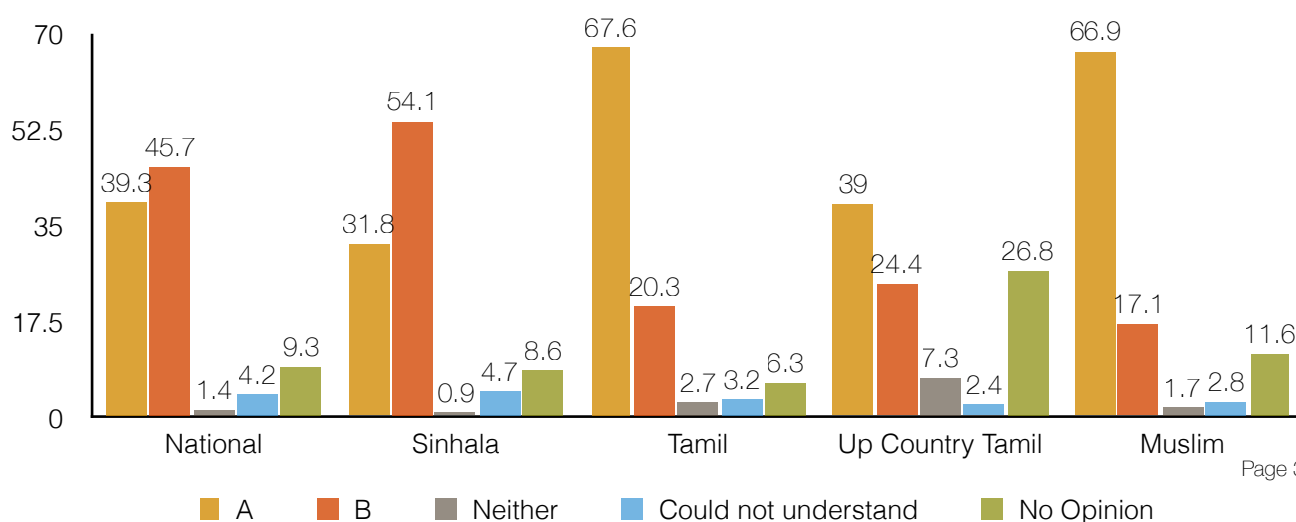
Looking at opinions across the four communities, 31.8% from the Sinhalese, 67.6% from the Tamil, 39% from the Up Country Tamil and 66.9% from the Muslim communities believe that the media should have a right to publish any views and ideas without Government control. On the contrary, 54.1% of Sinhala, 24.4% of Up Country Tamil, 20.3% of Tamil and 17.1% from the Muslim communities believe that the Government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it considers harmful to society.

Of the four communities, it is the Tamil community who mostly feel that the media should have complete control of content without Government intervention, while it is the Sinhalese community who mostly feel that the Government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that it considers harmful to society. (Refer Graph 4.4)

Graph 4.4: Which statement is the most agreeable to you?

(A) The media should have a right to publish any views and ideas without Government Control

(B) The Government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it considers harmful to society



Respondents were asked for their views on negative reporting and whether the media should constantly report on issues like corruption and mistakes made by the Government. 78.6% of Sri Lankans are of the opinion that the news media should constantly investigate and report on corruption and the mistakes by the Government. Only 8.9% are of the opinion that too much reporting on negative events, like corruption, harms the country. The view that the news media should constantly investigate and report has increased in 2015 – 71.2% in 2014 agreed with the same.

From an ethnic perspective, majority from all communities believe that the news media should constantly investigate and report on corruption and mistakes made by the Government. (Refer Graph 4.5)

Graph 4.5: Which statement is the most agreeable to you?

(A) The news media should constantly investigate and report on corruption and the mistakes made by the government

(B) Too much reporting on negative events, like corruption, only harms the country

