



CONFIDENCE IN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE INDEX

Centre for Policy Alternatives
Social Indicator

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

- A significant majority of Sri Lankans (80%) state that their income is insufficient to cover their needs.
- In comparison to other localities, it is mostly the people in Pradeshiya Sabha areas who face difficulties in covering their needs.

DIFFICULTIES DUE TO THE CRISIS SITUATION

- An overwhelming majority (83%) indicate that they have compromised the quality of food or the food items that they used to purchase.
- Around 42% state that they have reduced the portion/ size of their meals, or the number of meals consumed per day.
- A majority of Sri Lankans (66%) have difficulties in obtaining medicine or medical treatments.
- A significant proportion (87%) indicate that they have difficulties in affording increased household expenses.
- A little more than one-third of Sri Lankans indicate that either they or someone in their families have lost employment.

TRUST IN LEADERS

- A high percentage of people place their trust in Anura Kumara Dissanayake (48.5%) to do the right thing in resolving the current economic crisis.
- While 36.6% state that they trust Ranil Wickremesinghe to do the right thing, 29.1% express faith in Sajith Premadasa.
- Mahinda Rajapaksa is the least trusted leader to do the right thing in resolving the current economic crisis (11.9%).
- Minority communities seem to have more trust in Sajith Premadasa in comparison to the Sinhala community.
- It is mostly the youth who are in favor of Anura Kumara Dissanayake in comparison to the elderly population.

OPINION ON THE YOUTH WHO LED THE ARAGALAYA

- Majority of Sri Lankans share a positive perception of the youth involved in the *Aragalaya*.
- A significant proportion of the Sri Lankans (84%) agree that the *Aragalaya* is led by civic minded youth with the aim of reforming the country to become a better democracy.
- Most Sri Lankans (88%) disagree that the *Aragalaya* is led by a group of people who have no political knowledge, but rather are drug users.
- Around 82% of the population express their disagreement that youth involved in the *Aragalaya* are connected to violent groups.

ON REMOVAL OF THE YOUTH WHO LED ARAGALAYA FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT PREMISES

- Around two-thirds disapprove of the removal of youth who led the *Aragalaya* from the Presidential Secretariat premises. This is the common opinion shared among the four ethnicities, as well as across urban and rural localities and age groups.

ON PASSING OF EMERGENCY LAW

- A majority across the country (65%) disapprove of the passing of Emergency Law by Parliament on 27 July 2022.
- From an ethnic perspective, around one-fourth from both Sinhala and Tamil communities approve of this.

ON PROPOSALS TO THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT BY THE PROTESTORS

- Almost everyone believes all politicians should be audited and their unaccounted wealth should be confiscated by the state.
- Nine out of every ten Sri Lankans think a general election should be held soon.
- An overwhelming majority (87%) feel that the twentieth Amendment should be repealed and an Amendment similar to the nineteenth Amendment should be introduced.
- A little more than 83% state they agree with the proposal that an interim government composed of all parties in Parliament should be established.
- Three out of four Sri Lankans are of the opinion that the Executive Presidential System should be completely abolished.

ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S SUPPORT

- One quarter of Sri Lankans rank China as the country most likely to come forward to assist Sri Lanka to overcome the current economic crisis.
- One-fifth of Sri Lankans rank the USA and India as the most likely countries to come forward to assist Sri Lanka.
- Sri Lankans above 50 years of age view China more favorably than their younger counterparts.

ON CONFIDENCE IN REACHING NORMALCY

- Nearly 60% are of the opinion that it will take a long time for the country to return to its normal status.
- There appears to be pessimism across all ethnicities, localities, and age categories.

INTRODUCTION

The country is currently experiencing the worst economic crisis since its post independent history. In April, Sri Lanka has defaulted its debt payments for the first time. Since then people have been struggling with shortages of fuel, food, medicine in addition to soaring inflation. In response, hundreds of thousands of Sri Lankans across the island joined protesting against the Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the Rajapaksa family rule for mismanaging the economy and leading the country to an unprecedented economic crisis. As a result of these democratic and non-violent civic activism of the youth, Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the country and submitted his resignation. In this midst of power vacuum, Ranil Wickremesinghe was elected as the 8th Executive President by the Members of the Parliament. Against this backdrop, an island wide poll was designed with the aim of

capturing the public experience and opinion of the *Aragalaya* as well as various other aspects of the current economic and political crisis.

The research study was conducted during the period of 1st to 5th August 2022 by Social Indicator (SI), the survey research arm of the Centre for Policy Alternatives. A total of 1100 individuals across the country belong to Sinhala, Tamil, Up-Country Tamil and Muslim and different age, gender and different economic groups were interviewed using face to face interview technique. The survey research team consisted of Dr. Pradeep Peiris, M.Krishnamoorthy, Muditha Pathirana, Ishara Jayarathne and Azraa Faaiz. We sincerely thank Dr.Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu for his support in making this study a success. The cover photograph is courtesy of Selvaraja Rajasegar, Editor of Maatram ([https:// maatram.org](https://maatram.org))

METHODOLOGY

A semi-structured questionnaire administered among 1100 respondents from the four main ethnic communities (Sinhala, Tamil, Up-Country Tamil, and Muslim) was used in the third wave of the Confidence in Democratic Governance Index. The sample which consisted of both men and women was distributed between both urban and rural localities in all 25 districts. The respondents were selected using a random sampling technique, while a multistage random stratified sampling technique was used to select the sample locations. Field work for the poll

was conducted from 1st to 5th August 2022 employing SI's countrywide field network. A total of 82 field enumerators - both male and female from the four main ethnic communities participated in the study. Approximately 10% of the total sample was quality checked in order to ensure the quality of the data collected. The dataset was weighted to reflect the actual district and ethnic proportion of the population. The data set was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

A significant majority of Sri Lankans (80%) state that they have difficulties in covering their needs- half of them (40%) indicate that they have great difficulties. In terms of

locality, it is mostly the people in Pradeshiya Sabha areas who face difficulties in covering their needs in comparison to others. (Please refer figures 1, 2 and 3)

Figure 1: Status of income and expenditure by National and Ethnicity

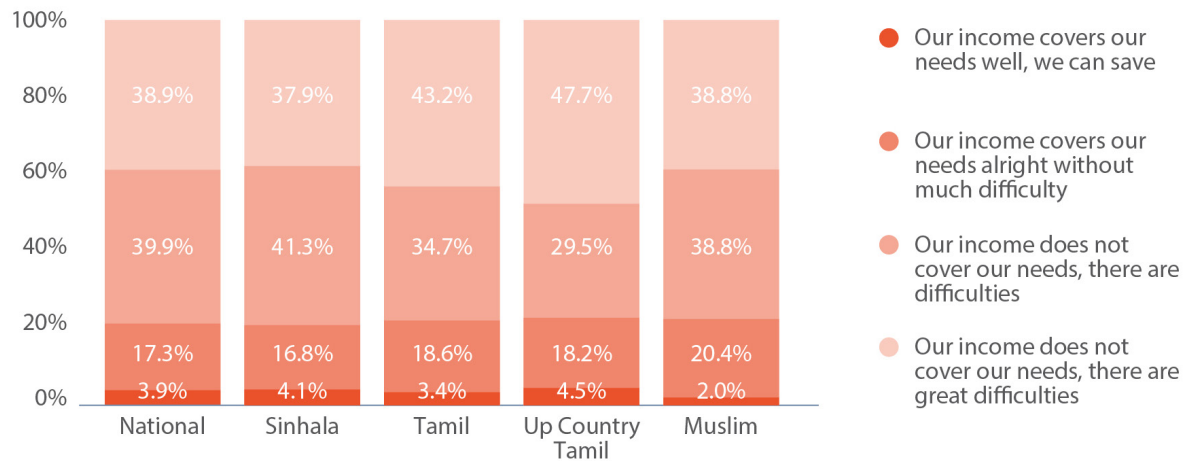


Figure 2: Status of income and expenditure by Locality

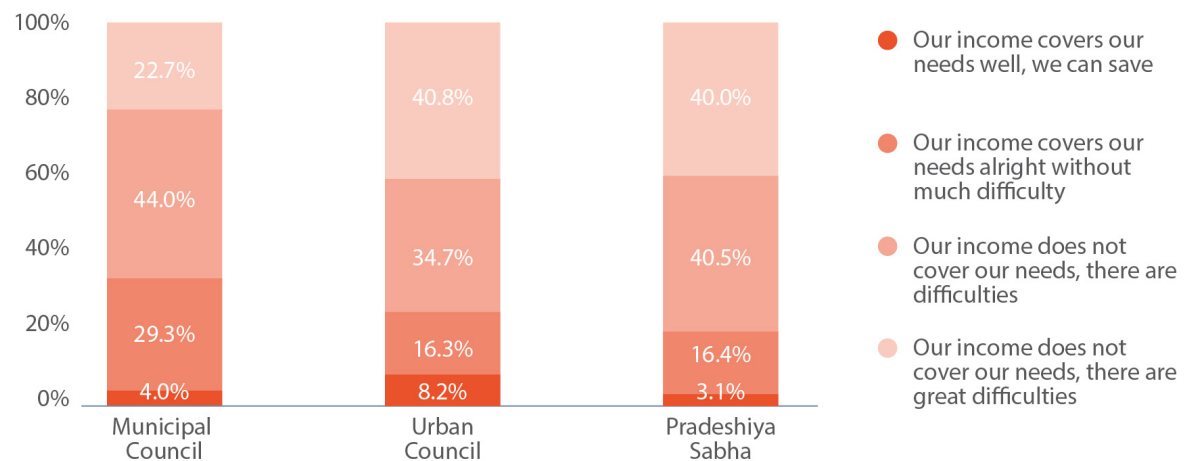
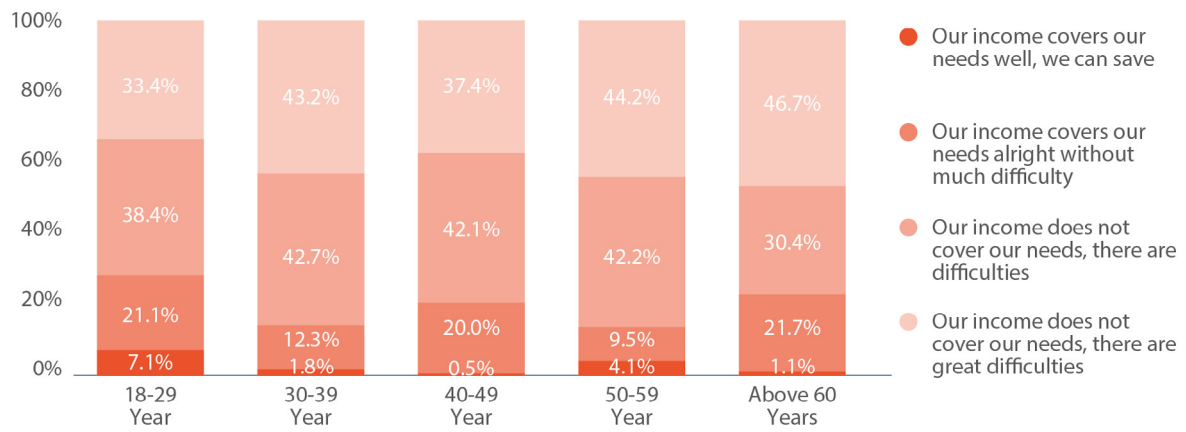


Figure 3: Status of income and expenditure by Age



DIFFICULTIES DUE TO THE CRISIS SITUATION

A significant proportion state that they are experiencing grave difficulties due to the economic crisis. Approximately 83% indicate that they have compromised the quality of food or the food items that they used to purchase. Close to 42% of the population indicate that they have reduced the portion/size of meals or number of meals consumed on an average day. Furthermore, in obtaining medicine or medical treatments a majority of Sri Lankans (66%) have difficulties. A large proportion (87%) of Sri Lankans face difficulties in affording increased household expenses. It is important to highlight that more than one-third of Sri Lankans indicate that either they or someone in their family have lost employment. (Please refer figure 4)

From an ethnic perspective, a significant percentage of the Muslim community (62.9%) experience changes in their food consumption. It is noteworthy to point out that a considerable number from the Up-country Tamil community (45.2 %) state that either they or someone in their families have lost employment. (Please refer figure 5)

These difficulties are equally felt across urban and rural localities. However, an overwhelming majority (89.1%) in Pradeshiya Sabha areas state that they face difficulties as a result of increased household expenses. It is mostly the people in Municipal Council and Pradeshiya Sabha areas who have compromised their quality of food or the food items that they used to purchase. (Please refer figure 6)

Figure 4: Difficulties due to the crisis situation by National

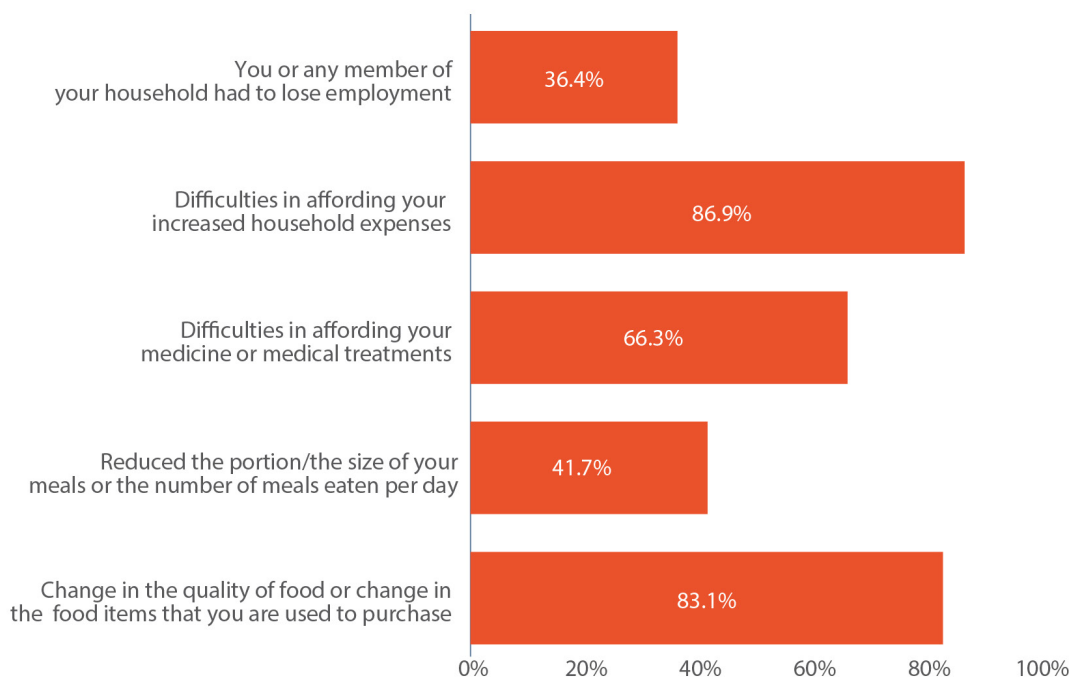


Figure 5: Difficulties due to the crisis situation by Ethnicity

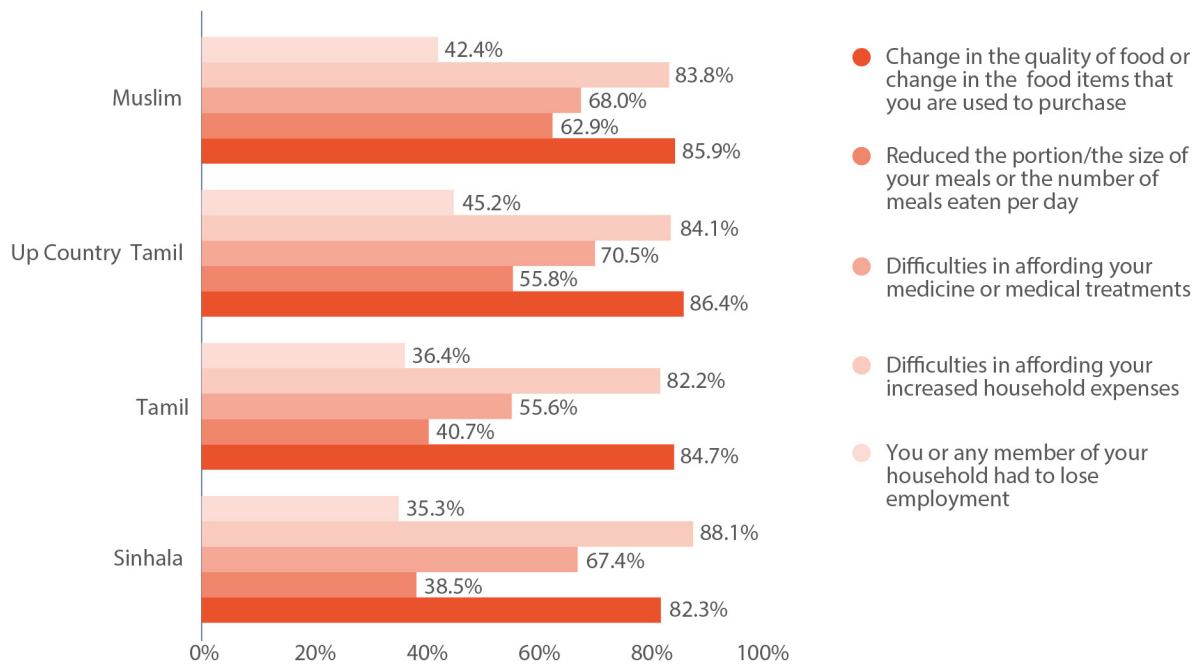


Figure 6: Difficulties due to the crisis situation by Locality

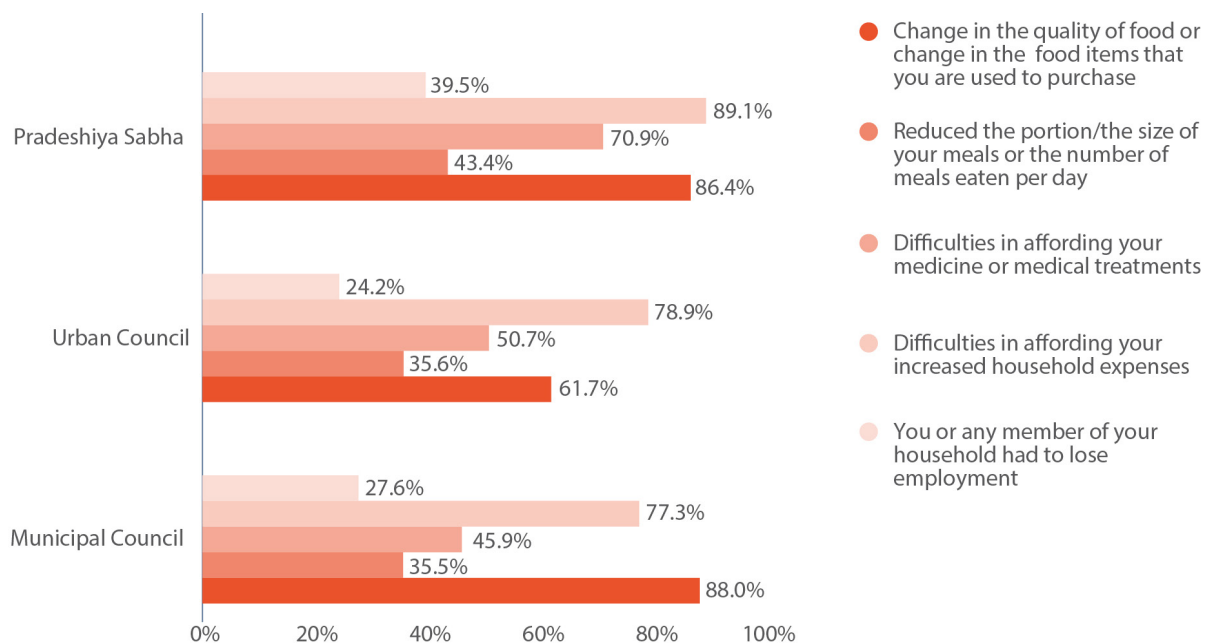


Table 1: Difficulties due to the crisis situation by Age

	18 - 29 Years	30 - 39 Years	40 - 49 Years	50 - 59 Years	Above 60 Years
Change in the quality of food or change in the food items that you used to purchase.	78.0%	83.8%	86.2%	87.2%	89.1%
Reduced the portion/the size of your meals or the number of meals eaten per day.	37.3%	41.6%	39.7%	50.7%	50.0%
Difficulties in affording your medicine or medical treatments.	57.9%	62.7%	72.1%	82.2%	72.8%
Difficulties in affording your increased household expenses.	83.6%	86.5%	87.8%	92.6%	89.2%
You or any member of your household had to lose employment.	36.2%	34.4%	39.5%	36.7%	35.6%

TRUST IN LEADERS

When inquired as to what extent they trust national level leaders to do the right thing in resolving the current economic crisis, people place their highest level of trust in Anura Kumara Dissanayake (48.5%). One-third (36.6%) of Sri Lankans trust Ranil Wickremesinghe while nearly 30% place their trust in Sajith Premadasa. The findings highlight that Mahinda Rajapaksa is the least trusted leader (11.9%). (Please refer figure 7)

From an ethnic perspective, slightly more than one out of three of the Sinhalese state that they trust Ranil Wickremesinghe to do the right thing in resolving the current economic crisis. Minority communities place a significantly higher level of trust in Sajith Premadasa in comparison to the Sinhala community. Moreover, a considerable proportion from

all the four ethnic groups trust Anura Kumara Dissanayake to do the right thing in resolving the current economic crisis. (Please refer figure 8)

While Anura Kumara Dissanayake and Ranil Wickremesinghe enjoy the confidence of both rural and urban communities, people in the Municipal council areas express more confidence in Sajith Premadasa to do the right thing in resolving the current economic crisis when compared to other localities. (Please refer figure 9)

Although there is a higher level of trust in Anura Kumara Dissanayake across all age categories, it is mostly the youth who have a high level of trust in him in comparison to the elderly population. (Please refer figure 10)

Figure 7: Trust towards national level political leaders by National

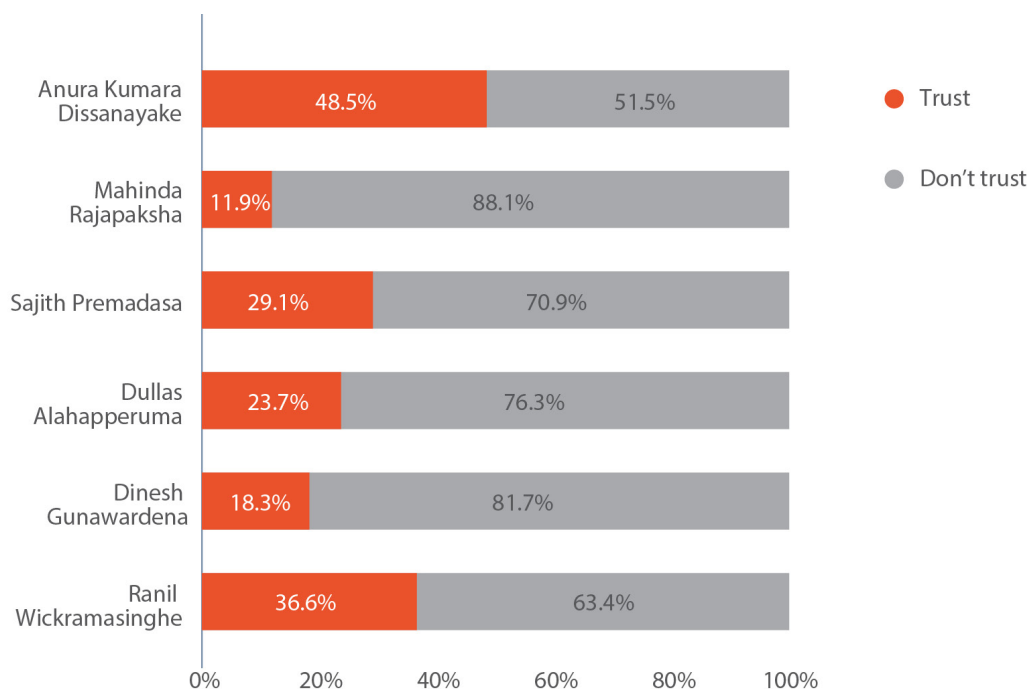


Figure 8: Trust towards national level political leaders by Ethnicity

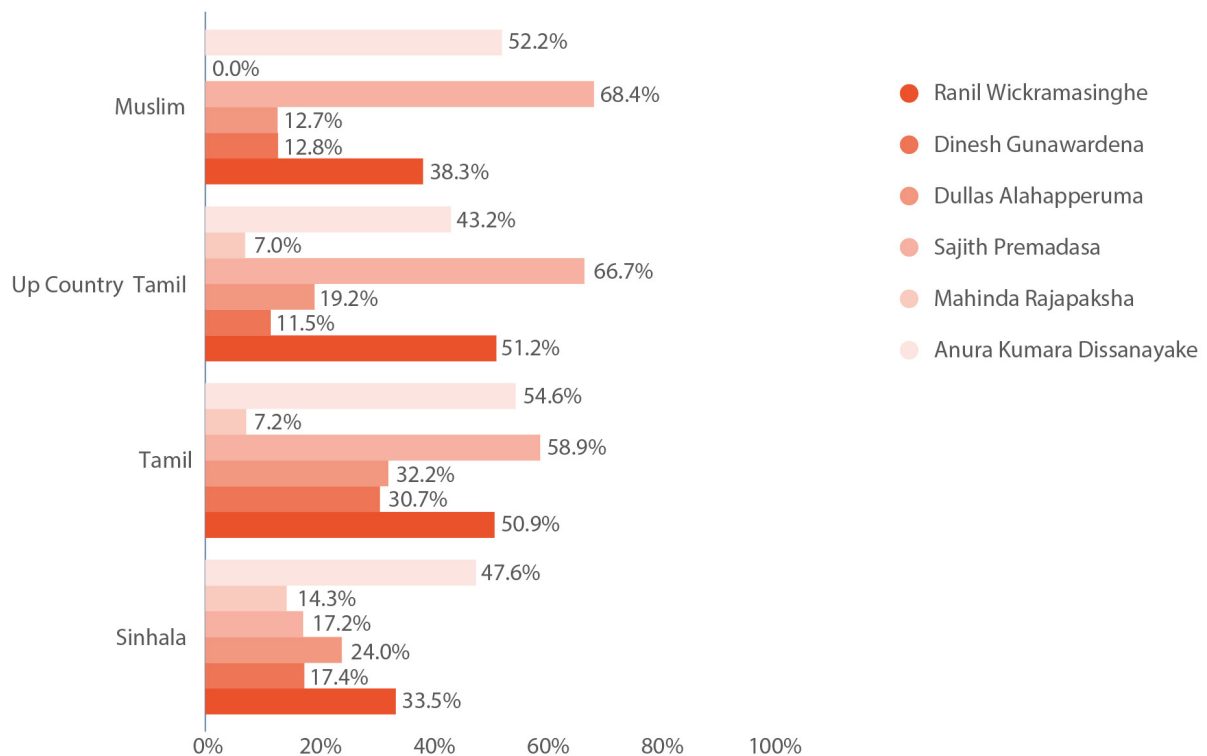


Figure 9: Trust towards national level political leaders by Locality

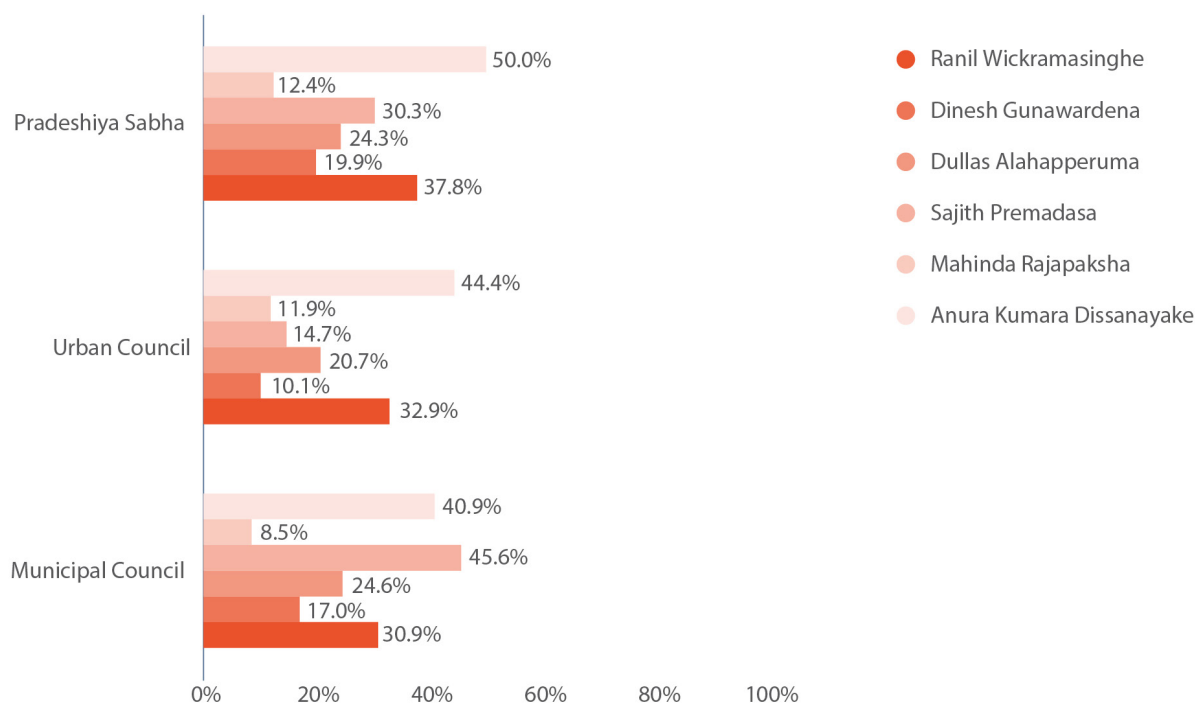
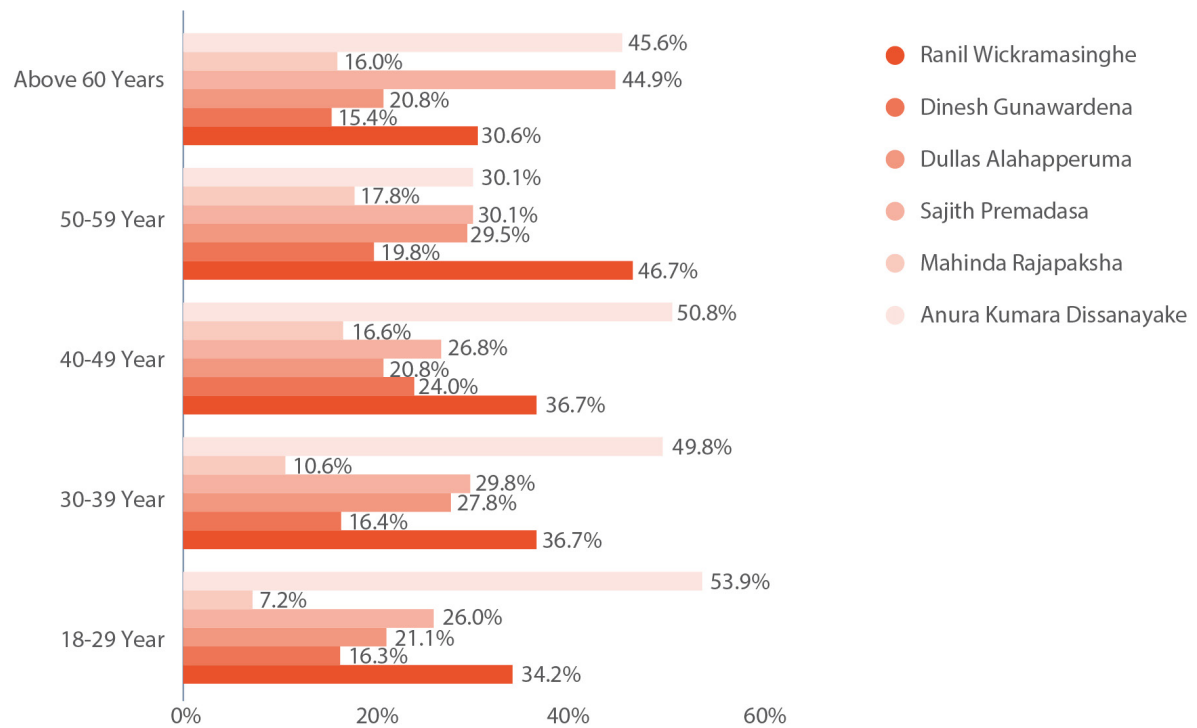


Figure 10: Trust towards national level political leaders by Age



PERCEPTION ON YOUTH WHO LED THE *ARAGALAYA*

In general, a significant proportion of Sri Lankans share a positive perception of the youth involved in the *Aragalaya*. An overwhelming majority (84%) are of the opinion that the *Aragalaya* is led by civic minded youth. While 88% disagree that the *Aragalaya* is led by a group of people who have no political knowledge but are rather drug users, 82% are of the opinion that these youth are not connected to violent groups. (Please refer figure 11)

There appears to be an overwhelmingly positive perception across all ethnic communities towards the youth involved in the *Aragalaya*. On the contrary, it is only a limited proportion of Sri Lankans (mostly those from the Sinhala community) who hold a negative view towards the youth involved in the *Aragalaya*. (Please refer figure 12)

A large proportion from all age categories share positive opinions about the youth involved in *Aragalaya*. (Please refer table 2)

Figure 11: Perception on youth who led the *Aragalaya* by National

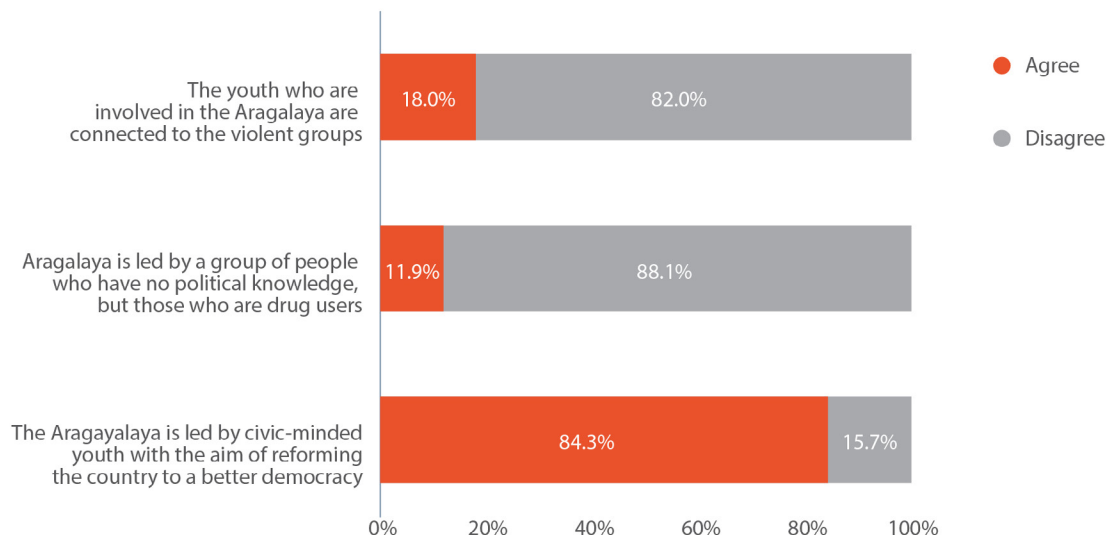


Figure 12: Perception on youth who led the *Aragalaya* by Ethnicity

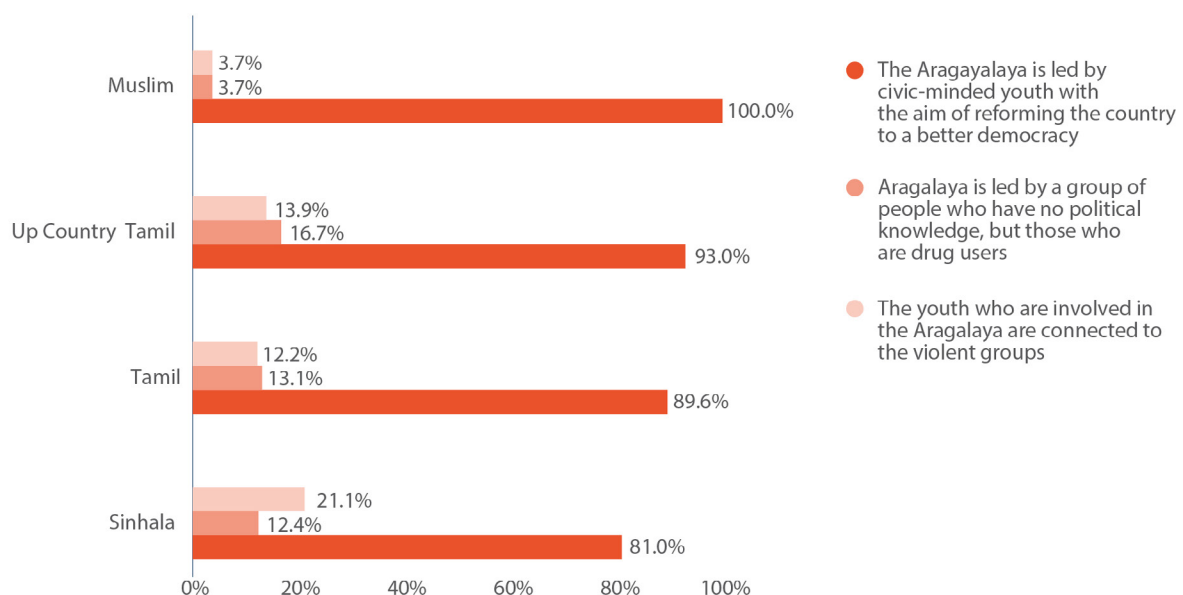
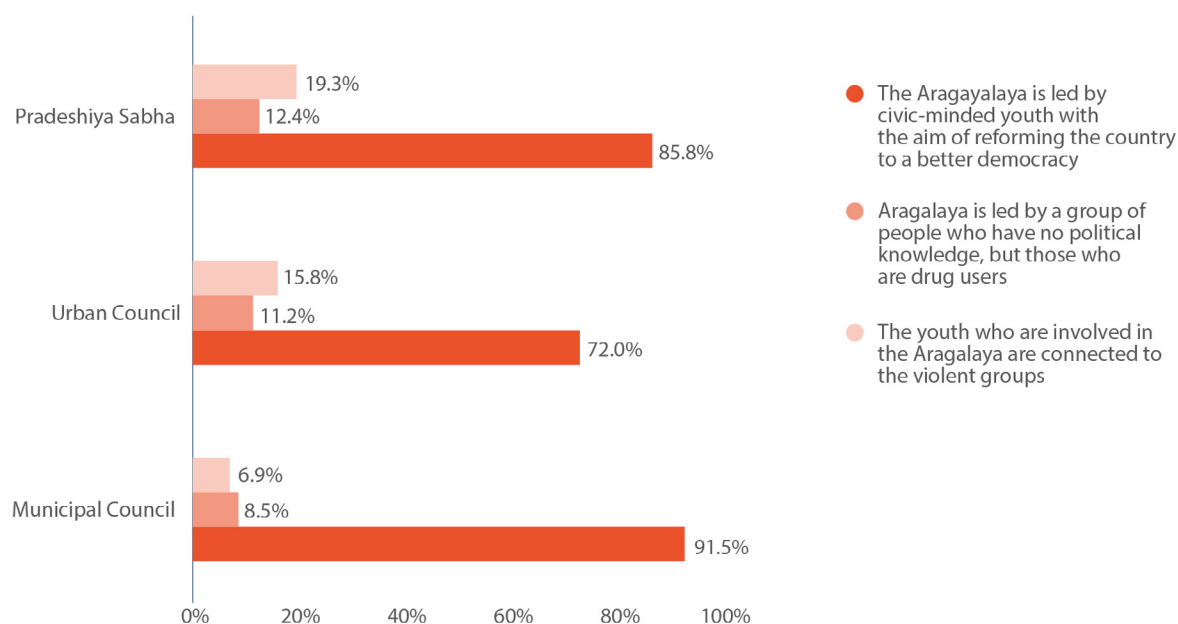


Figure 13: Perception on youth who led the *Aragalaya* by LocalityTable 2: Perception on youth who led the *Aragalaya* by Age

		18 - 29 Years	30 - 39 Years	40 - 49 Years	50 - 59 Years	Above 60 Years
The Aragayalaya is led by civic-minded youth with the aim of reforming the country to a better democracy.	Agree	88.9%	84.0%	80.2%	82.9%	75.3%
	Disagree	11.1%	16.0%	19.8%	17.1%	24.7%
Aragalaya is led by a group of people who have no political knowledge, but those who are drug users.	Agree	7.1%	11.8%	14.4%	12.0%	29.4%
	Disagree	92.9%	88.2%	85.6%	88.0%	70.6%
The youth who are involved in the Aragayalaya are connected to violent groups.	Agree	13.4%	16.8%	19.1%	24.3%	30.6%
	Disagree	86.6%	83.2%	80.9%	75.7%	69.4%

PERCEPTION ON REMOVAL OF PROTESTORS FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARIAT PREMISES

Around two-thirds disapprove of the way the government removed protestors from the Presidential Secretariat premises. From an ethnic perspective, while a significant proportion of the Muslim community (83%)

disapprove, 30% of the Sinhala community approve of this. A majority from each age group disapprove of this as well. (Please refer figures 14, 15 and figure 17)

Figure 14: Perception on removal of the protestors from the Presidential Secretariat premises by National

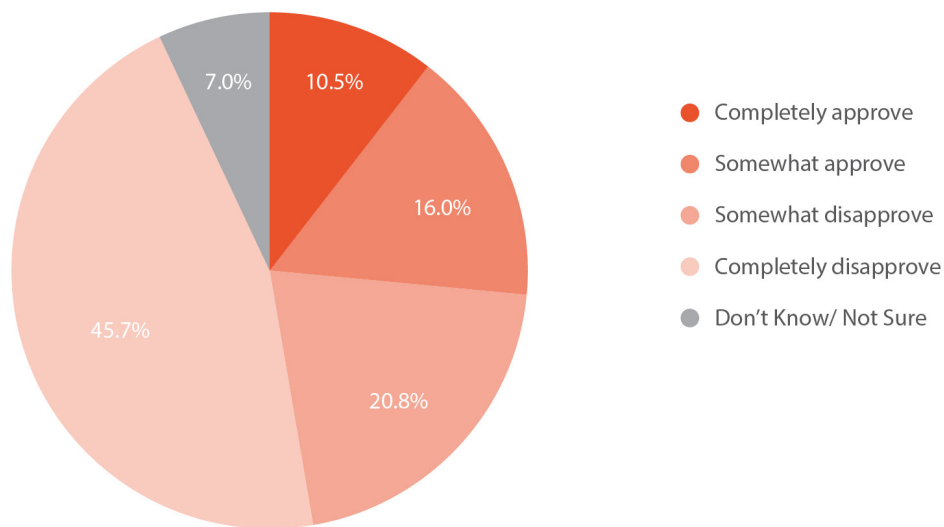


Figure 15: Perception on removal of the protestors from the Presidential Secretariat premises by Ethnicity

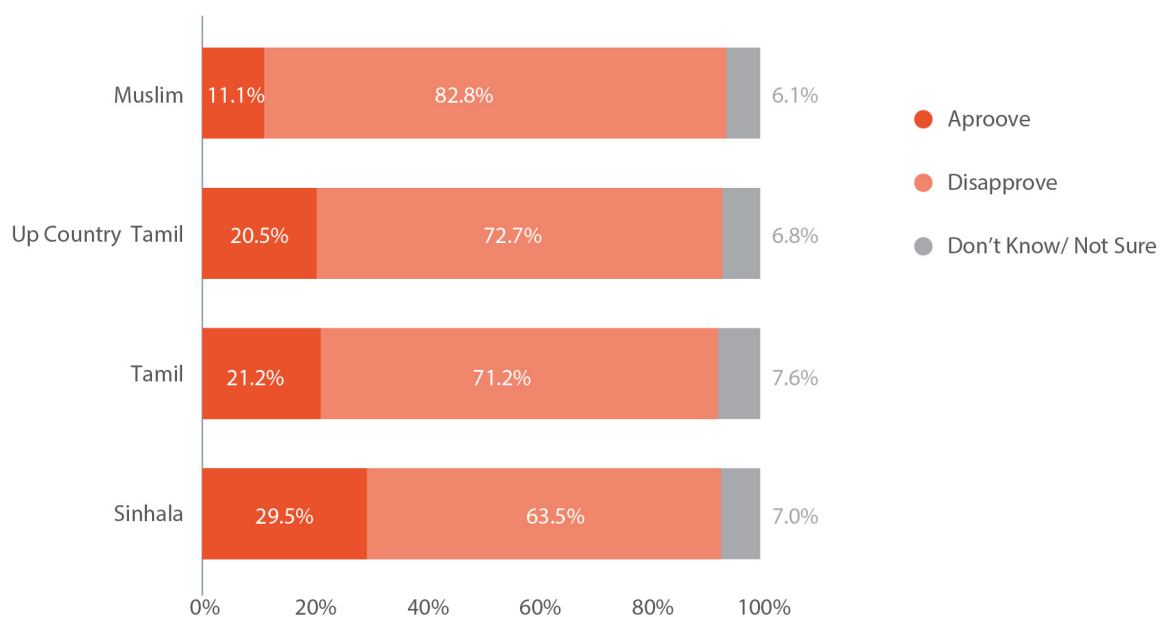


Figure 16: Perception on the removal of the protestors from the Presidential Secretariat premises by Locality

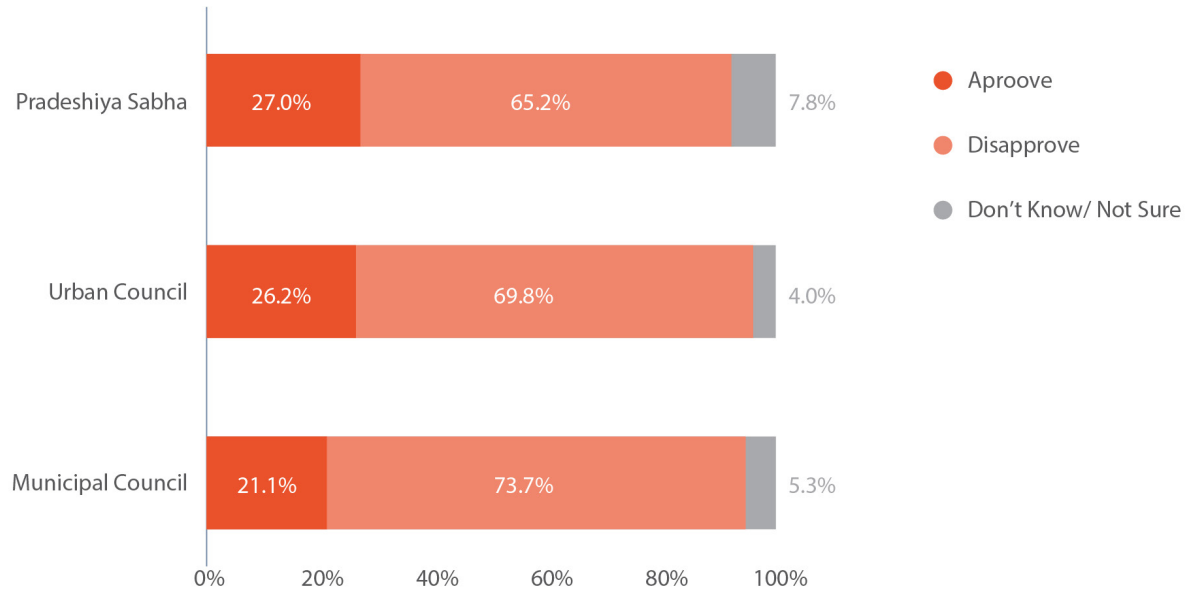
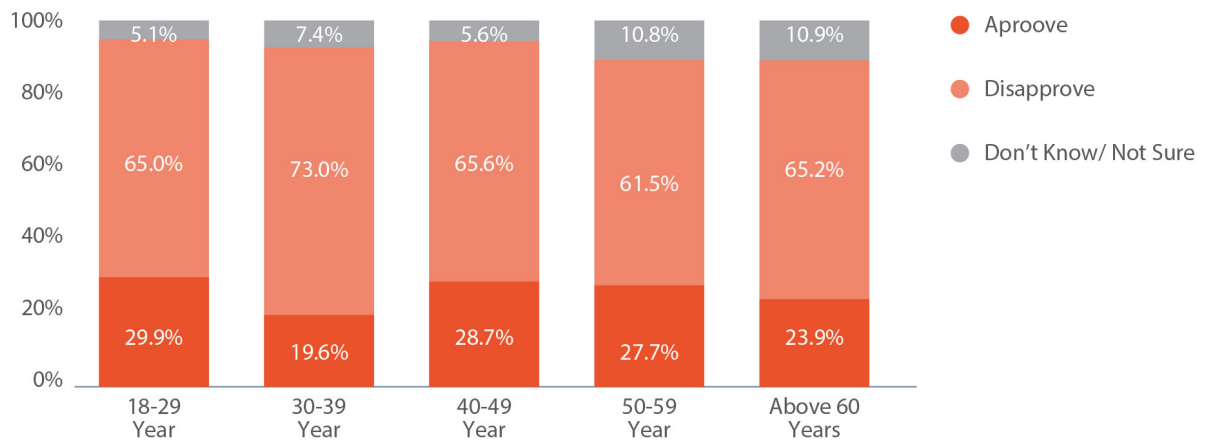


Figure 17: Perception on removal of the protestors from the presidential secretariat premises by Age



PERCEPTION ON PASSING OF EMERGENCY LAW

When asked about the perception on the passing of Emergency Law by Parliament on 27th July 2022, two-thirds of the Sri Lankans state that they disapprove of it. In terms of ethnicity, around one-fourth from both

Sinhala and Tamil communities approve of this. Further, a majority from both rural and urban localities and all the age categories disapprove of this. (Please refer figures 18, 19, 20 and 21)

Figure 18: Perception on the passing of Emergency Law by National

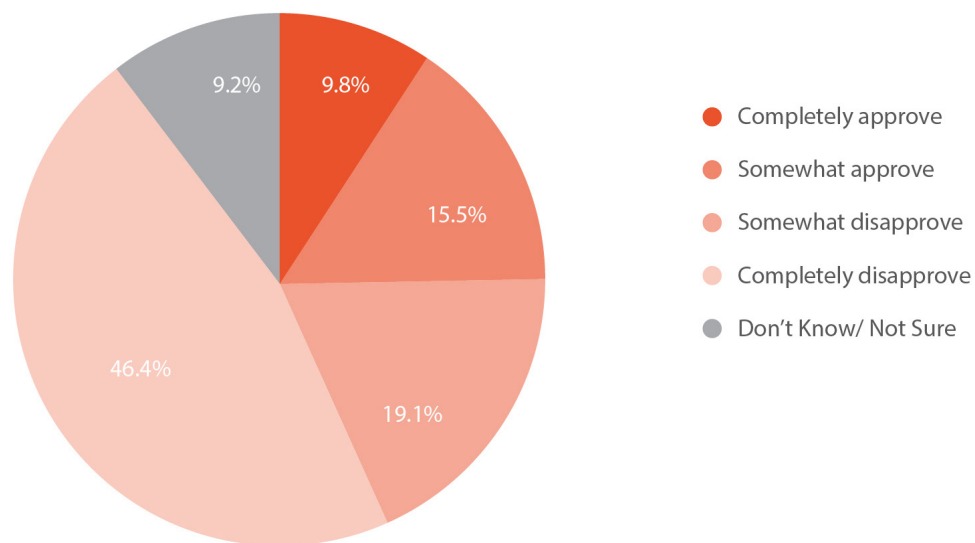


Figure 19: Perception on the passing of Emergency Law by Ethnicity

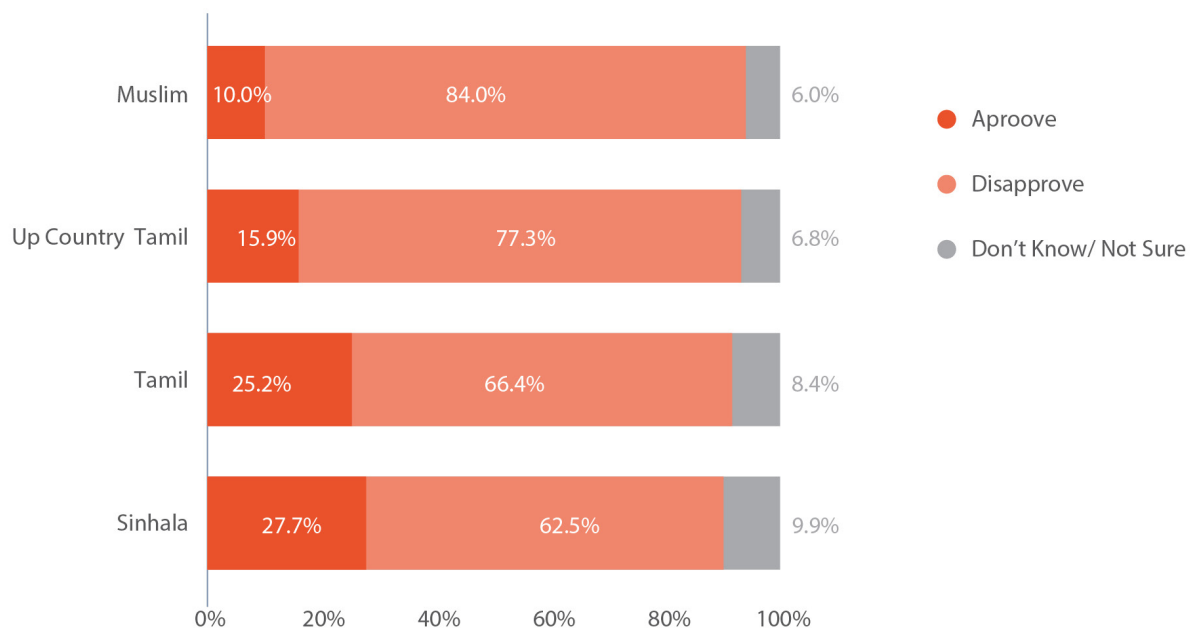


Figure 20: Perception on the passing of Emergency Law by Locality

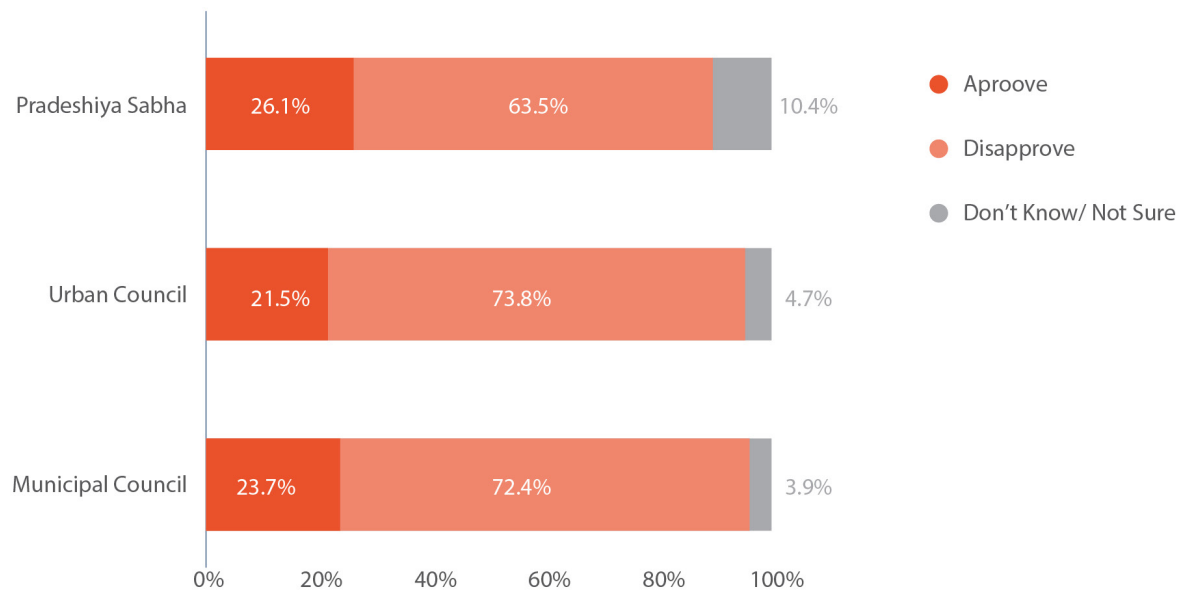
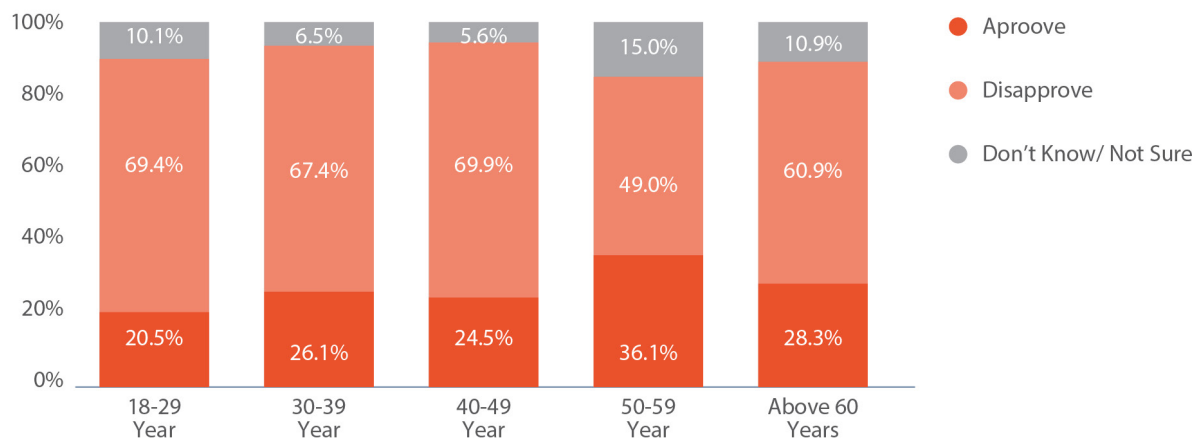


Figure 21: Perception on the passing of Emergency Law by Age



PERCEPTION ON PROPOSED DEMANDS

When it comes to the demands put forward by the protestors/ public to the government, an overwhelming majority indicates that they support these proposals. Almost every Sri Lankan believes that all politicians should be audited, and their unaccounted wealth should be confiscated by the state. Nine out of every ten Sri Lankans think the general election should be held soon. Furthermore, around 87% feel that the 20th Amendment should be repealed and an Amendment similar to the 19th Amendment should be introduced. A little more than 83% state they agree with the proposal that an interim government composed of all parties in Parliament should be established. Three out

of four Sri Lankans are of the opinion that the Executive Presidential System should be completely abolished. (Please refer figure 22)

It is noteworthy that a vast majority from the four ethnic groups are in agreement with these demands. Yet, support for the abolishment of the Executive Presidency is slightly lower amongst the Sinhala community. (Please refer figure 23)

It is clear that support for the abolishment of the Executive Presidency is a bit lower in both rural and urban areas in comparison to the support extended to other demands. Further, there appears to be significant support for these demands from all age categories. (Please refer figures 24 and table 3)

Figure 22: Perception on proposed demands by National

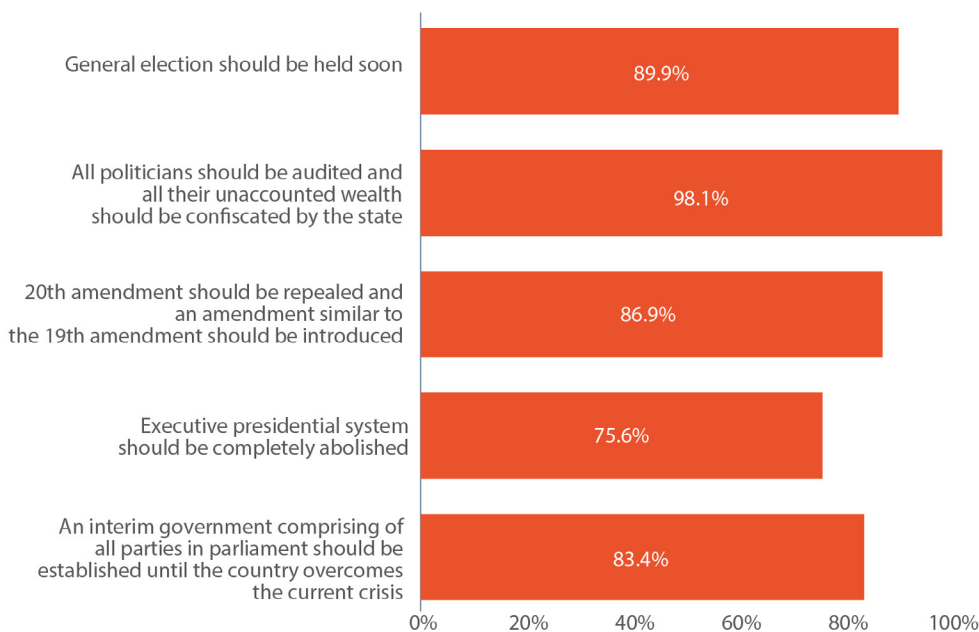


Figure 23: Perception on proposed demands by Ethnicity

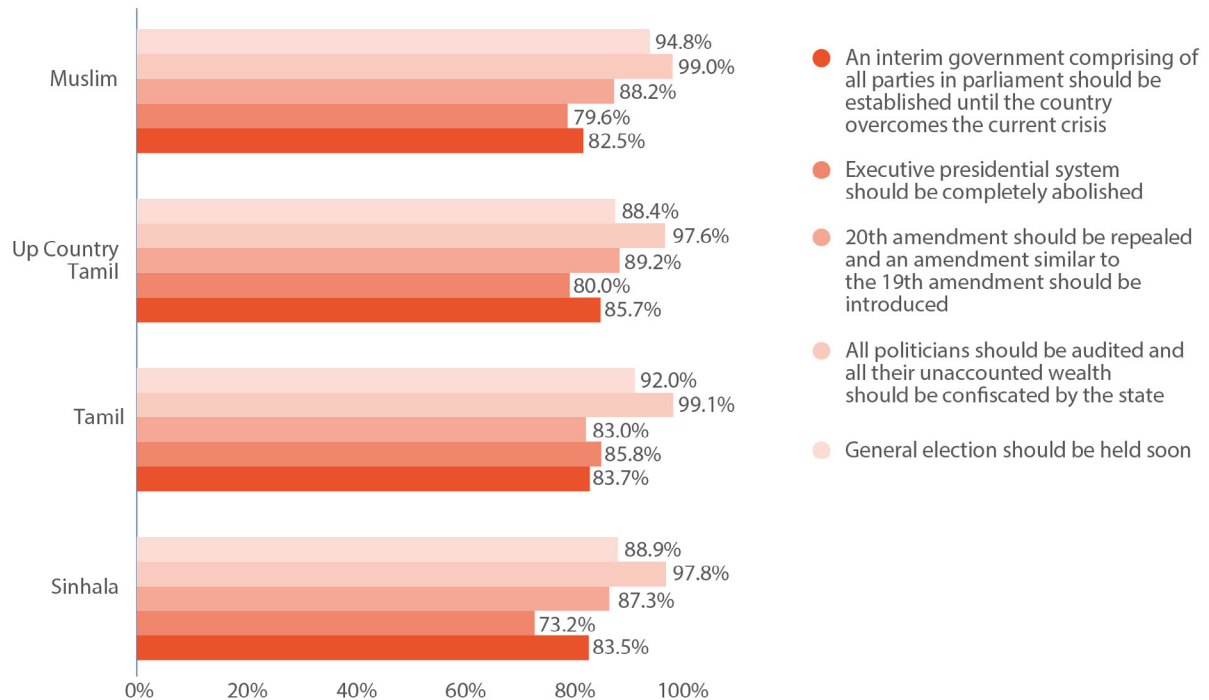


Figure 24: Perception on proposed demands by Locality

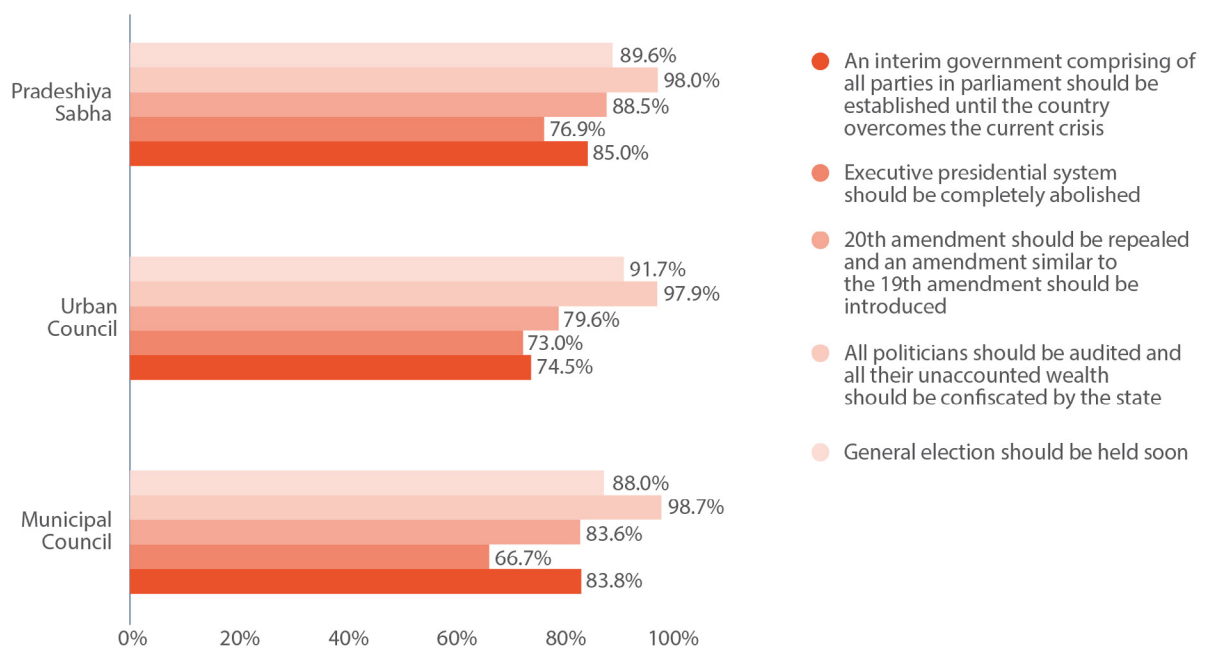


Table 3: Perception on proposed demands by Age

		18 - 29 Years	30 - 39 Years	40 - 49 Years	50 - 59 Years	Above 60 Years
An interim government composed of all parties in Parliament should be established until the country overcomes the current crisis.	Agree	81.7%	81.6%	82.3%	86.7%	92.5%
	Disagree	18.3%	18.4%	17.7%	13.3%	7.5%
The Executive Presidential System should be completely abolished.	Agree	79.5%	77.7%	72.7%	67.5%	70.7%
	Disagree	20.5%	22.3%	27.3%	32.5%	29.3%
The 20th Amendment should be repealed and an Amendment similar to the 19th amendment should be introduced.	Agree	88.7%	85.6%	83.1%	87.9%	90.6%
	Disagree	11.3%	14.4%	16.9%	12.1%	9.4%
All politicians should be audited and all their unaccounted wealth should be confiscated by the state.	Agree	97.4%	98.2%	98.4%	97.9%	100.0%
	Disagree	2.6%	1.8%	1.6%	2.1%	0.0%
General election should be held soon.	Agree	94.4%	88.7%	84.9%	84.9%	91.6%
	Disagree	5.6%	11.3%	15.1%	15.1%	8.4%

PERCEPTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S SUPPORT

With regards to the international community, one quarter of Sri Lankans rank China as the country which is most likely to come forward to assist Sri Lanka to overcome the current economic crisis. However, one-fifth of Sri Lankans rank the USA and India as the most likely countries to come forward to assist Sri Lanka. Therefore while China ranks one, India and the USA rank two on the list of most likely countries to assist Sri Lanka. (Please refer figure 25)

From an ethnic perspective, Sinhalese have a mixed opinion on which country would support Sri Lanka the most. However, the minority communities believe that India would be the country which is most likely to come forward to assist Sri Lanka. In terms of locality, people in both urban and rural areas rank China as the number one country. Moreover, Sri Lankans above 50 years of age view China more favorably than their younger counterparts. (Please refer figures 26, 27 and 28)

Figure 25: Perception on the international community's support by National

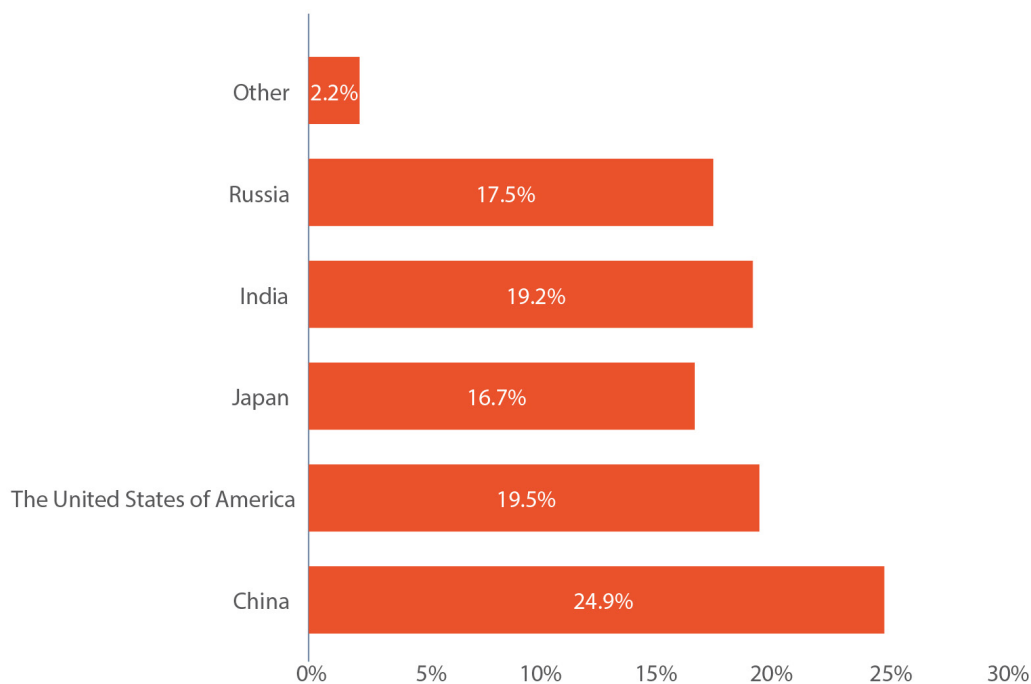


Figure 26: Perception on the international community's support by Ethnicity

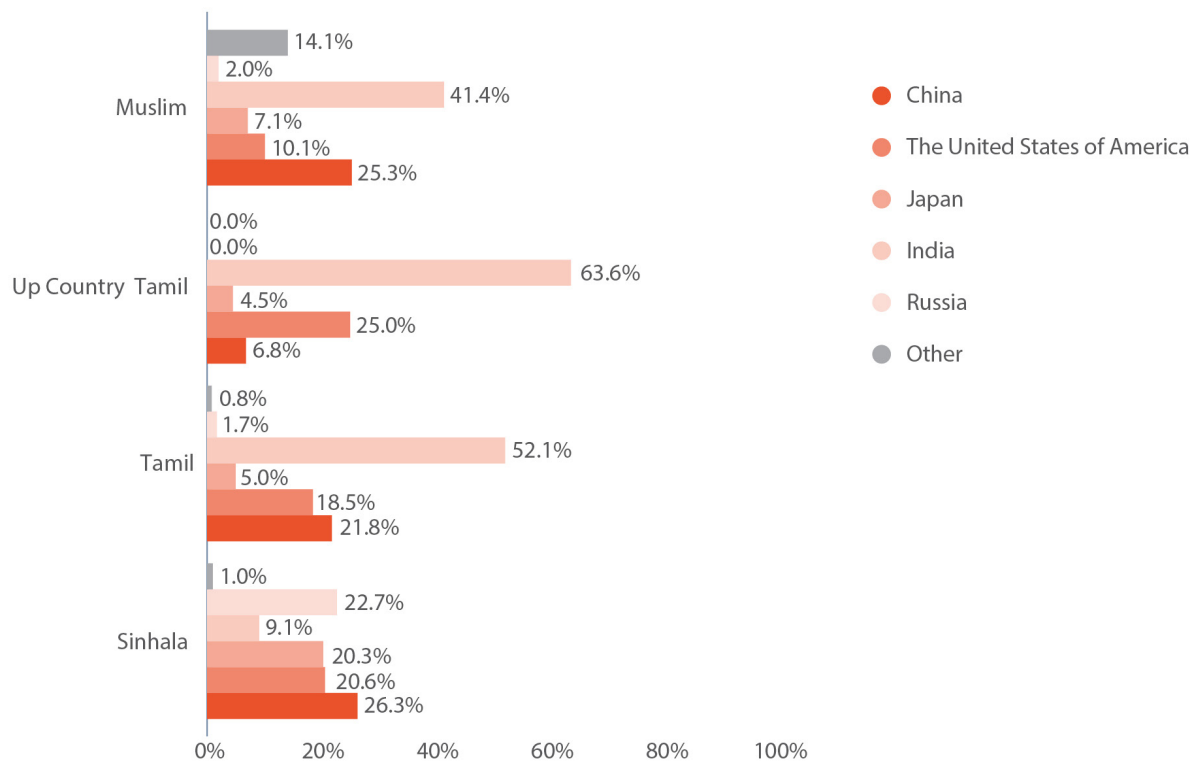


Figure: 27: Perception on the international community's support by Locality

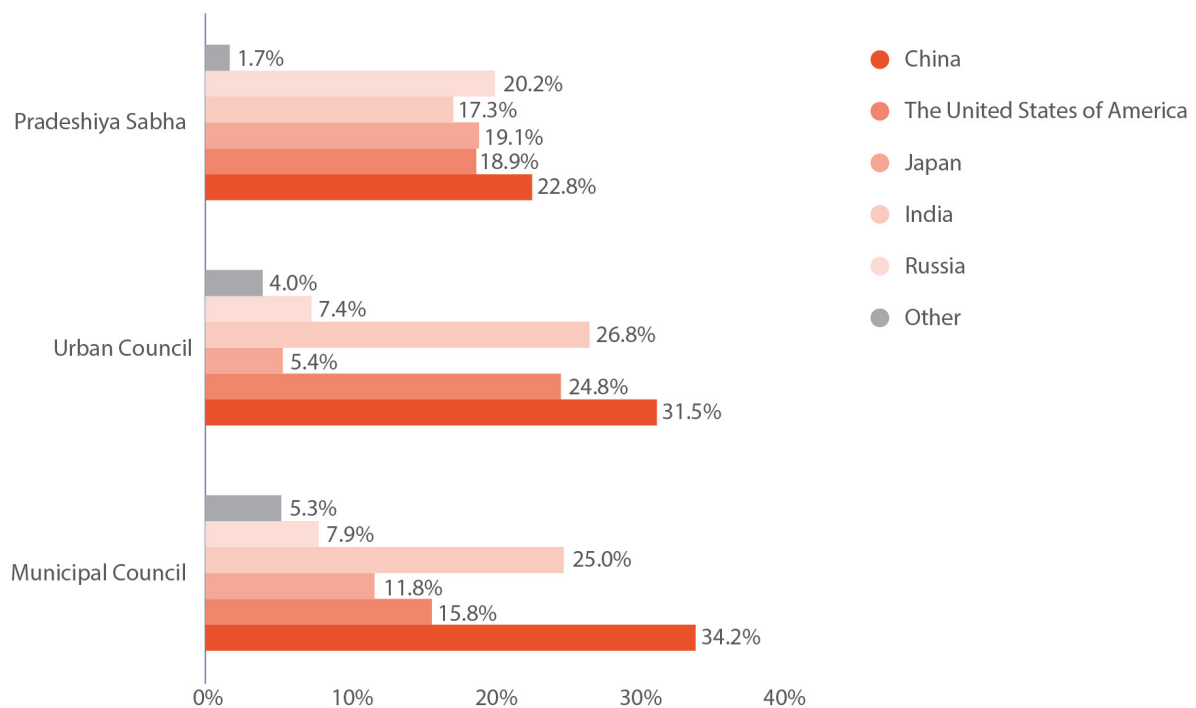
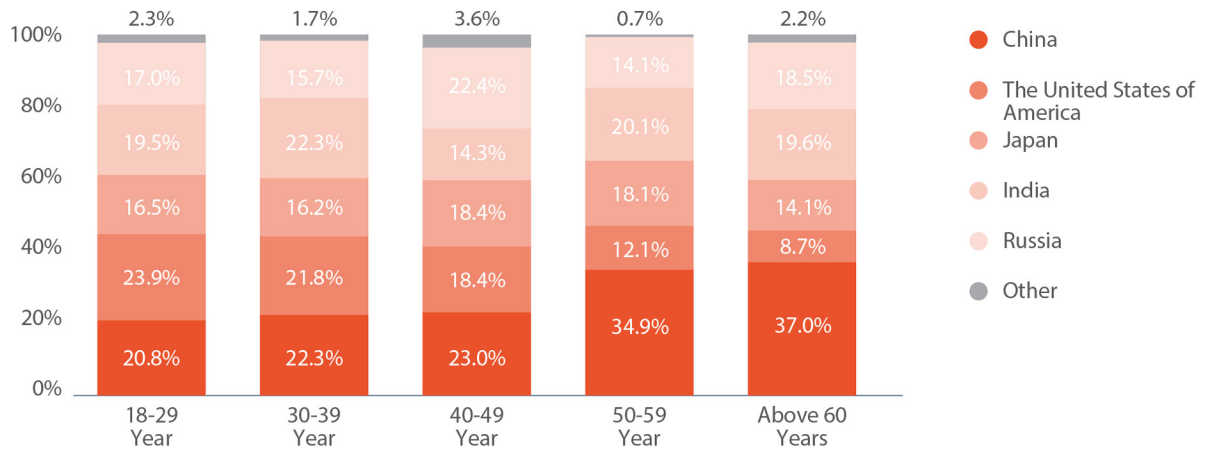


Figure 28: Perception on the international community's support by Age



CONFIDENCE IN REACHING NORMALCY

The findings suggest that people are extremely pessimistic about the country's economic future. Nearly 60% are of the opinion that it will take a long time for the country to return to its normal status with around 20% indicating that they either did not

know or are not sure as to when the country will return to normalcy. There appears to be pessimism across all ethnicities, localities, and age categories. (Please refer figures 29, 30, 31 and 32)

Figure 29: Confidence in reaching normalcy by National

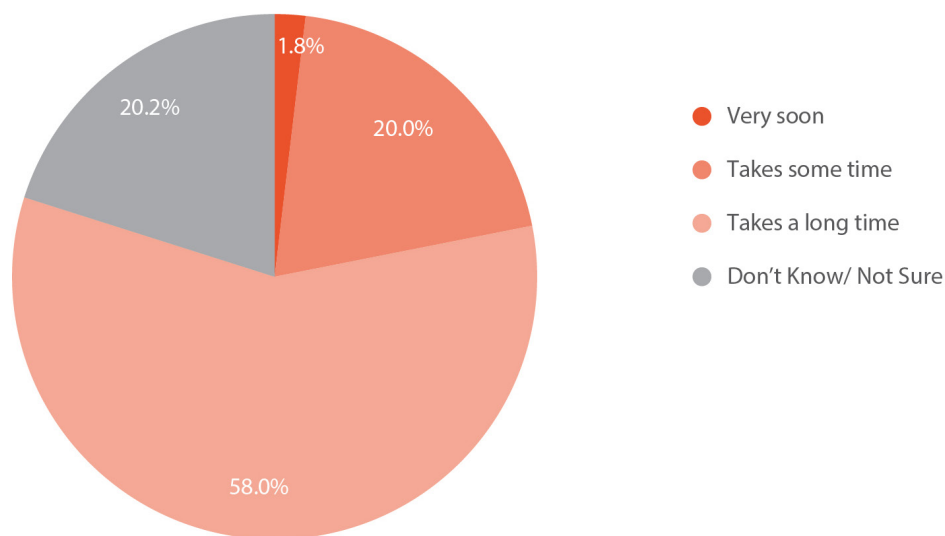


Figure 30: Confidence in reaching normalcy by Ethnicity

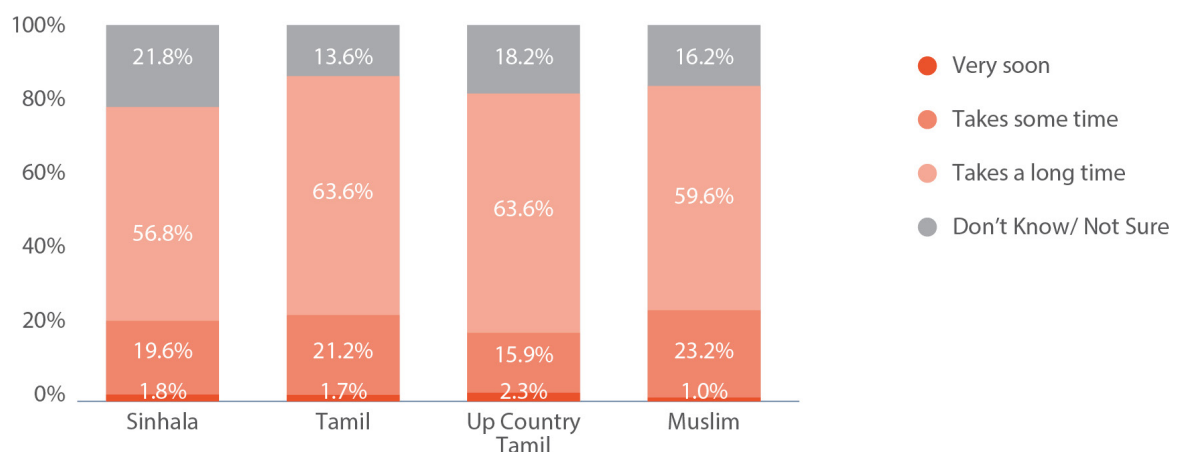


Figure 31: Confidence in reaching normalcy by Locality

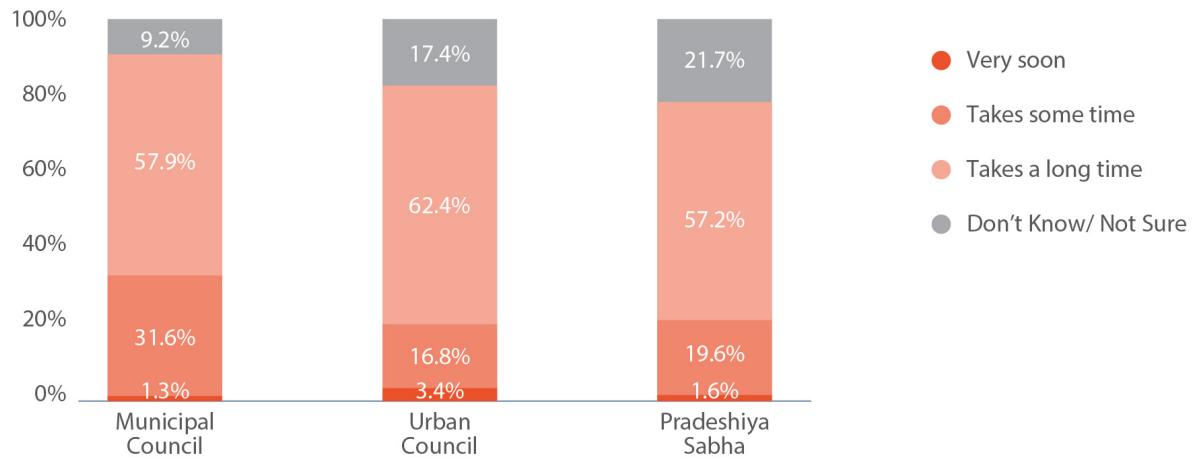
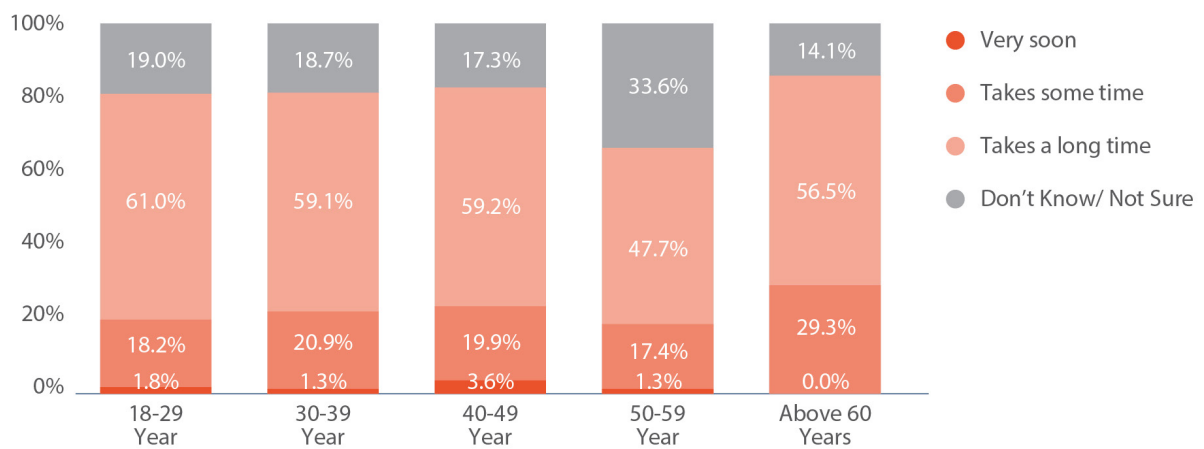


Figure 32: Confidence in reaching normalcy by Age





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

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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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