



A Brief Analysis of the *Aragalaya*

Centre for Policy Alternatives - Social Indicator
May 2023

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Introduction

Sri Lanka's *Aragalaya* ('public uprising' in Sinhala) is a unique historic moment in the country's 75 years of independence. The country has been marred by ethno-religious violence for decades and has witnessed unsuccessful attempts at reforming the state that culminated in two youth insurgencies and a civil war. Electorally, Sri Lankans had short-lived relative success in democracy in 1994 and 2015. Unfortunately, none of these were able to a) garner widespread popular support that cut across ethno-religious divides and b) introduce long-lasting reforms to the state apparatus. *Aragalaya's* strengths and failures are weighed against this backdrop.

Aragalaya was unique in many respects; it was an organic, voluntary, largely citizen driven movement with no visible leadership, thus highlighting a genuine call for reforms with no overtly evident party motives. It highlighted the strength of youth mobilization and the use of digital media in toppling governments. It fleetingly cut across ethnic divides the country has been plagued with for decades, and was able to highlight struggles that were considered peripheral to the majoritarian core. It was also a non-violent movement that was successful in winning its immediate demand of ousting the country's top leadership.

Since the Mirihana protests in March 2022, *Aragalaya* turned into a potent force capable of effecting visible political change.

The unprecedented nature of the protests drew the attention of many political analysts within and outside Sri Lanka. Against this backdrop, many important questions were raised; Is Aragalaya merely the struggle that culminated in the Galle Face green with largely the participation of the urban middle class? Is it an uprising of the radical sections of society? Can we talk about an Aragalaya outside the Galle Face site? These are questions which we must constantly ask ourselves in order to understand the mutual bearing of material/ideological conditions and political action. We must not reduce Aragalaya to the Galle Face site alone, but acknowledge that the site changes in the face of repression and transforms and finds expression in myriad different ways.

Keeping this in mind, this report is a modest attempt at providing empirical evidence on the participants of Sri Lanka's *Aragalaya* and the public perception of them using data gathered from the island-wide survey on the *Aragalaya* conducted by the Social Indicator, the survey arm of the Centre for Policy Alternatives¹. Analysis of data and the anecdotal evidence emerging out of the interviews is followed by an explanatory note that attempts to shed light on the movement's background, central components and the critical changes it was able to introduce. To this end, the report progresses in four sections: starting off with an analysis of the survey data of the *Aragalaya* and its agents, it then presents the timeline of the immediate crisis and people's struggle from October 2019 to July 2022. Next, it documents the economic trajectory that gave rise to Sri Lanka's political crisis in 2022. Finally, it presents a brief account of the social bases of the struggle shedding light on the multiplicity of actors and the organic nature of the movement.

1. See https://www.cpalanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Survey-on-Aragalaya_Sep2022_Topline-Report_English_FINAL.pdf

Citizens' Experiences of and Attitudes towards the *Aragalaya*

Non-violent protest is one of the most powerful democratic tools people use against oppressive rulers and unjust policies. South Asia has a rich history of democratic protests be it against their local oppressors or against colonial powers. To cite a few examples from the region, India was able to bring the British empire to its knees and forced it to grant independence to the colony that was considered the 'Jewel in the Crown' through the strategy of non-violent protests of the Indian Independence Movement. Neighboring Nepal was able to bring centuries long monarchical order to an end and usher in democracy through *Jana Andolan* (people's uprising) I and II, its non-violent protest campaign. Perhaps to a lesser extent, Sri Lankans too possess a history of non-violent civic activism against injustices and oppression of the majoritarian state. However, none of the previous protests were able to attract popular support like the *Aragalaya* did.

Against a backdrop of mismanagement and controversial policies that led to an unprecedented economic crisis, Sri Lankans took to the streets to protest against the incumbent government from March to July 2022. Unlike in the past, these protests were not associated with any particular political party or one single organized group. People from diverse groups (ethnic, religious, age and gender) joined the protests. These protestors exhibited enormous creativity, inclusiveness and a strong commitment

to non-violence in their struggle against the Rajapaksa regime. Although there are numerous anecdotal narratives on who protested, where they came from, and what was their social and economic backgrounds, there is very little empirical knowledge about them. This lack of empirical knowledge paved the way for various groups with vested interests to assign various labels to people who participated in the *Aragalaya*.

It is in this context, this report aims to inquire into the profiles of those who participated in the protests and the general public's perception of them using data from the island-wide survey on the *Aragalaya* conducted by the Social Indicator, the survey arm of the Centre for Policy Alternatives¹. This survey included a random sample of 1000 men and women across all districts from all major ethnicities – Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim and Upcountry Tamil. The survey was conducted in the months of September to October 2022. Therefore, its findings reflect the experience and attitudes of the public in the immediate aftermath of the Galle Face protests. In addition to the empirical data, this section also engages with anecdotal evidence to elaborate and provide further interpretations.

Widespread participation

The protest near President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's private residence in Nugegoda on the evening of 31 March 2022² marked the beginning of the nonviolent, nonpartisan, voluntary civil demonstrations against the Rajapaksa government. This incident began with a peaceful vigil of few people. Later thousands of men and women joined the protest and decided to march towards President's private residence. It became an event that attracted national and international media coverage following commotion between the security forces, police and the protestors. Although, protests and demonstrations against the Rajapaksa government had already started before the incident, this incident became a key turning point of the subsequent mass protests by encouraging people across the country to voice out against the establishment.

People engaged in protests in numerous ways while committing to non-violence and distancing themselves from political parties. Most of these protests were ad-hoc and spontaneous and in most, the participation was voluntary. Social media was used as a powerful tool to mobilize people. By livestreaming the events activists succeeded in attracting thousands to join the protests online. Social media activists succeeded in not only raising public awareness but also in popularizing slogans such as *Gota Go Home* and *Kaputu Kaak*.

Civic activism peaked its creativity with different generations, classes and geographies independently engaging in mass protests across the country. In addition to mass rallies held in Colombo and other main cities, people also protested in their neighborhoods and on the roadside holding placards and candles and chanting various slogans denouncing the President, his extended family and his government. Employees, both blue and white collared, gathered in front of their workplaces to protest during their lunch breaks. University students, staff and teachers gathered in front of their universities while various trade and student unions organized protest marches demanding President Rajapaksa to step down. Artists played music, danced and painted in protesting against the corrupt system that made the country go bankrupt. Muslims gathered at Galle Face to break their Ramadan fasts³ and distributed fruits and food to other communities in a display of solidarity with the protestors. After 13 years, on 19 May 2022, protestors also lit candles, offered prayers and honored thousands killed during the last stages of the war in 2009. Protestors also celebrated the Sinhala and Tamil New year at Galle Face⁴. At the auspicious time, fires were lit to boil milk amidst the chanting of *seth piriith* by the Maha Sangha. Milk rice and various other traditional sweets donated by supporters of the movement were distributed to the protestors by volunteers⁵. Protesters also played creative *Raban* (traditional drums) tunes made for the occasion⁶.

In the initial phase, opposition political parties and individual politicians played an active role in defying the attempts of the government to obstruct protests. However, with the protests gaining momentum, people took to the streets without fear.

Protesting went on to become a part of the daily routine for some urban classes that they even carried banners and placards wherever they went in anticipation of a protest somewhere close by.

Interestingly, bystanders including those who used both public and private transportation were also seen extending their support to the protesters in solidarity with the cause. Vehicles tooted horns to the tune of *Kaputu Kaak* slogan in support of the protestors. During the height of protests, many vehicles carried black flags and posters though they were not participating in a particular protest action. Therefore, even outside of key protest rallies such as those on 9 April and 9 July, people participated widely.

The entire world witnessed the enthusiasm of the Sri Lankan public in protesting against the Rajapaksa regime due to the economic crisis. The survey conducted by the Social Indicator, the survey arm of the Centre for Policy alternatives, provides empirical evidence on the participation of Sri Lankans in protest campaigns during the period of March to July 2022.

Rural-urban dynamics of the protests

The results of this island-wide survey reveal that closer to one quarter of the participants had joined at least one of the protests that took place between March to July 2022. Participation at the household level was recorded higher than at the individual level.

Table 01: Participation in any of the protests organized within the neighborhood or elsewhere during the period of March to July

Participation		%
Did you participate in any of the protests organized within your neighborhood or elsewhere during the period of March to July?	Yes	24.2
	No	74.3
Did you or a member of your immediate family participate in any of the protests organized within your neighborhood or elsewhere during the period of March to July?	Yes	30.8
	No	69.2
Base		1069

The survey reveals that close to one third of Sri Lankans (either self or someone from the immediate family) participated in the protests. More men and women from households in Municipal Council areas were involved in protest campaigns than those from households in Urban Councils and *Pradeshiya Sabah* areas. Multiple factors can account for this difference. Unlike in highly urban areas, people living in rural settings cannot afford to openly go against the incumbent government since they are under the heavy influence of patronage networks. An amicable relationship between the local politicians of the ruling party and the villagers is necessary for the continuation of a range of benefits from having access to fertilizer to continue their agricultural work, to obtaining a job for their children in a government office, and ensuring an uninterrupted supply of various welfare benefits. Therefore, it is not easy for those who are already receiving various government benefits to protest against the government. In contrast to beneficiaries of patronage politics, those who are excluded from the patronage network of the ruling party, have less to lose by participating in the protests.

In addition, unlike the urban households, rural families were less affected by the economic crisis. The shortage of fuel, cooking gas and various essential items such as milk and medicine affected urban households more than rural households. Rural life was not either too dependent on these items or they anyway did not have access to these even prior to the crisis. A middle aged woman from Monaragala elaborating the impact of the economic crisis said:

“We use firewood for cooking and get vegetables from our garden or from the neighborhood to prepare our meals. Therefore, when Colombo was struggling with shortage of essential items and cooking gas, it did not affect us the same way. People in our village do not travel out of the village on a daily basis. Hence fuel crisis that affected urban areas did not really affect us⁷.”

The experience in the urban cities were drastically different to the villages. A middle aged man from Colombo sharing his experience on how he got affected by the crisis said;

“I am running a welding garage. When there is no electricity, the garage cannot function and therefore there’s no business. I have to feed five people from the income I get from this business. However, when there are power cuts, customers go to the big welding shops where generators are available⁸.”

A university professor from one of the city universities sharing his experience said;

“I had to stay in fuel queues three times just to get seven liters of petrol. Each time, I stayed for more than 15 hours in miles long fuel queues and had to return home with no success as fuel ran out as my car approached the fuel pump. Due to the scarcity of fuel and the desperation of people, those queues often turned into very tense spaces that did not suit a decent human being. Therefore, after buying seven liters I did not use my car until there were no shortages anymore. I started cycling to my university⁹.”

A domestic worker from Colombo who’s paid a daily wage had the following to say;

“I work as a domestic worker at a house six kilometers away from my own house. I have to reach work by 9 and work until 5 in the evening. I get paid 1200 LKR per day and I am the sole income earner at home. I have to feed three people with my income. During the fuel crisis there was no public transportation and so I had to walk 12 kilometers daily, to and from work. Walking long distances after working all day is extremely tiring. However, I did not have an option as that was the only income for my entire family¹⁰.”

As the above anecdotes illustrate, the impact of the economic crisis and shortages was unprecedented on the city dwellers compared to the rural families. Therefore, the higher participation of city dwellers in the protests is understandable.

Age and gender distribution of participants

Protestors represented both young (up to 29 years) and old (30 years and above) age groups. One third of young Sri Lankans and one fifth of those who belong to the thirty and above age group claimed that they participated in the protests. University students, young men and women took the lead in organizing

many protests and played a key role in mobilizing people. Youth (discussed later in greater detail) played a key role especially in Colombo protest sites and in *GotaGoGama*. A young office executive sharing her experience during the time of the *Aragalaya* said;

“Those days we used to go to office after spending few hours at one of the protest sites. Even during office hours, we shared news about the protests through social media in order to join such events and extend our solidarity¹¹.”

Similarly, another young man who is originally from Kandy and working in Colombo shared his experience and said he skipped office work and functions to attend the protests. He also said that like many of his friends he always carried a placard with him in anticipation of a protest event¹². A young man from the Anuradapura district who camped in one of the tents at *GotaGoGama* said that he had not gone home in weeks as he felt it is important to strengthen the *Aragalaya* by staying at the Galle Face protest site¹³. While he was there, he also managed to develop a substantial follower-base on social media through which he educated citizens on corruption of various politicians.

In addition to youth, young children accompanying their parents too participated in the protests. In neighborhood protests/vigils, parents were seeing bringing their entire families to the demonstrations where along with their parents, young kids too held placards and chanted slogans. Some parents had brought their children even for street protests which were often met with violent opposition by the police.

Against this backdrop, the National Child Protection Authority urged parents and guardians to prevent children from participating in protests and demonstrations¹⁴. This triggered a debate on whether children have a right to protest or not. A parent supportive of participation of children in protests said:

“At the moment, Sri Lankan parents of children under the age of 18 years have only two options – either keep children in their comfort zones at home, in the dark about the unpromising future that they are most likely to have, or, enlighten them about the true economic, social, and political situations in the

country and guide them to be responsible citizens, seeking to change that situation as they grow up.”

During the height of the popular uprising, some parents made a point to take their children to a protest site in the same way that they take them to a book fair. For those parents *Aragalaya* was a democratic moment in their lifetime and they did not want to miss that opportunity¹⁵. However, some parents said that they took their children to the protest site as everyone used to do that and at times even their children demanded to be taken to such places¹⁶.

Despite the presence of a strong patriarchal culture, women not only participated in the protest campaigns but were also often seen leading protest marches walking shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts. The survey shows that close to one fifth of Sri Lankan women have taken part in the protests while the participation of men is ten points higher than that of women. Sharing her experience, a young female researcher from Colombo said she and her friends joined almost all of the main rallies held in Colombo and also frequently visited the *GotaGoGama* protest site at Galle Face¹⁷. Protest sites were characterized by a gender neutral atmosphere and most of the people joined the rallies and demonstrations along with their friends, families or neighbors (discussed later). In addition, women were also affected by the economic crisis in a more direct manner. The shortages of essential items such as medicine, cooking gas, milk powder and fuel caused a great deal of frustration among women as much as their male counterparts and some demonstrations were characterized by an increased female participation as a result of this. Women took to the streets clanging pots and pans in a quest to exhibit their dissent of the regime. Women played an active role be it a musical event, dance or religious performance during the *Aragalaya*.

Ethnic bases of the protests

The other fascinating feature of the *Aragalaya* was that people from all ethnic and religious backgrounds expressed

solidarity with the protestors. In a society where politics as well as people's struggles have been ethnically divided since its independence, such inter-ethnic solidarity (however fleeting it is) is an extremely commendable achievement for Sri Lankan democracy. The survey findings confirm that the *Aragalaya* was not a struggle of one ethnic or religious community like in the past. Most of the citizens' uprisings since independence have either been ethnically organized or at least seen (or presented) as struggles related to a particular ethnic community. However, the findings of this survey suggest that a considerable percentage of each ethnic community participated in the protest campaigns that were held from March to July 2022.

Table 02: Did you participate in any of the protests organized within your neighborhood or elsewhere during the period from March to July 2022? Disaggregated by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Yes	No	Don't Know/ Not Sure	Base
Sinhala	25.4%	73.7%	1.0%	832
Tamil	15.6%	79.2%	5.2%	77
Up-Country Tamil	25.6%	71.8%	2.6%	78
Muslim	19.8%	79.0%	1.2%	81

About a quarter of Sinhala and Up-Country Tamil respondents and one fifth of the Muslim community claimed that they participated in the protests from March to July 2022. On the contrary to claims of some commentators that the Tamil community did not join the *Aragalaya*, the survey findings reveal that about 16 percent of the Tamil community participated in the protests. However, there are differences between Tamil and other communities in terms of the level of participation. For example, participation of youth (18 to 29 years) compared to their older counterparts is high among the Sinhala, Up-Country Tamil and Muslim communities. On the contrary, the participation of the above-30-years age groups is high among the Tamil community.

Religious bases of the protests

Buddhist monks and Catholic and Islamic priests played a very active role in the protests. In addition to participating, they also

addressed the press and conducted religious rituals at the protest sites especially at *GotaGoGama*. Their presence enhanced the legitimacy of the protestors and their actions. Roman Catholic nuns played a key role not only in protest marches but also in spending nights at the protest sites. The findings of the survey show that more than one fifth of each religious community has taken part in the protest campaign. Almost close to a half (48 percent) of the Catholic community claim that they participated in the protests held between March and July 2022.

While farmers were protesting against the banning of chemical fertilizers and teachers and principals were protesting against anomalies in their salaries, the Catholic community protested demanding justice for the victims of the Easter Attacks. In the morning of Easter Sunday 2019, an extremist Islamist terrorist group carried out a suicide bombing campaign targeting mainly the country's Catholic community¹⁸. The then incumbent *Yahapalana* government failed to prevent this despite having had prior knowledge of the attacks from foreign intelligence agencies¹⁹. The main victim group of the attacks, the Catholic community demanded the government to reveal those who were responsible for this brutal attack²⁰. The attacks triggered anxiety among communities and also fueled tensions between Muslims and other communities²¹. Against this backdrop, people demanded a political leadership that can assure national security even at the cost of democracy. This new political climate favored Gotabaya Rajapaksa's bid for the presidency in 2019. Gotabaya Rajapaksa contested the elections and won on the promise of bringing those responsible to book²². He received a massive electoral mandate enabling him to initiate challenging and unpopular policies²³. However, over the first two years of his rule, not only did he fail to deliver justice to the Easter attack victims²⁴ but also made many policy blunders. In fact, Gotabaya Rajapaksa's government was accused of protecting those who were responsible for the Easter attacks²⁵. Some even accused Gotabaya Rajapaksa to be the mastermind of the attacks as he benefited from the attacks the most²⁶. Both the Catholic and Muslim communities – victims of the Easter Attacks in different ways – viewed the bombings as a ploy to come to

power²⁷. Against this backdrop, it is understandable why both communities showed comparatively high interest in joining the protests that demanded the resignation of Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his government.

Youth in the *Aragalaya*

One notable aspect of the *Aragalaya* was the increased participation of youth. They were at the forefront of the demonstrations, raising placards and chanting anti-government slogans. Some political analysts saw this as a new era of youth awakening to facilitate political transformation by challenging the existing corrupt system attached to patronage politics, and the protests were dubbed as the “protests of a new generation”²⁸.

Despite the recognition of youth as a group that differs from adults in their approach to engaging in politics, there is no considerable difference between the expectations of youth and adults when it comes to receiving patronage benefits from politicians they voted for. A considerable amount of respondents from both groups openly acknowledged that they expect political patronage at least sometimes, even in a context where there were discussions about bringing forth a system change.

Table 03: Expectations of patronage benefits (at least sometimes when in need) when voting for a politician among youth who participated in any of the protests between March to July 2022

		At least sometimes	Not at all
If I or someone I know is in need to get some service delivered from a government office	18 - 29 years	47.2%	52.8%
	Above 30 years	49.1%	50.9%
If I or someone I know is in need to get a public road repaired	18 - 29 years	61.3%	38.7%
	Above 30 years	65.0%	35.0%
If I or someone I know is in need to get government remittance such as Samurdhi, Wadihiti Dimana, Natural Disaster relief, etc.	18 - 29 years	49.6%	50.4%
	Above 30 years	53.3%	46.7%
If I or someone I know is in need to get government jobs	18 - 29 years	43.8%	56.2%
	Above 30 years	46.9%	53.1%

If I or someone I know is in need to get a permit to use natural resources such as sand, trees, rock, land etc.	18 - 29 years	38.8%	61.2%
	Above 30 years	40.8%	59.2%
If I or someone I know is in need to find a better school for children	18 - 29 years	36.4%	63.6%
	Above 30 years	36.8%	63.2%

While patronage acted as a hindrance and discouraged youth from participating in the protests in certain instances, in certain others, youth did not consider their involvement in patronage networks to be an obstacle in winning demands of the protests.

According to the survey, majority of youth respondents who participated in the protests between March and July 2022, reported that they expect politicians they voted for, to help them or someone they know, at least sometimes when a public road needs repair (65.3 percent). Additionally, 56.3 percent of respondents expected help when receiving government remittances, while 50.3 percent expected help when receiving services from a government office. Interestingly, close to 40 percent of youth respondents expected help “at least sometimes when in need” when obtaining a permit to use natural resources and to get government jobs. Saman²⁹, an electrician from Kalutara stated that despite having the necessary qualifications, he was able to secure his job at the Pradeshiya Sabha by working for the local chairman for his election campaign. Highlighting a paradox, he’s caught up in, Saman also went on to say:

“Sri Lanka has suffered from years of corruption and bad politics by the Rajapaksas. That is why I support the *Aragalaya*. I even participated in the Galle Face *Aragalaya* with my friends ... However, our Chairman is a good man. So, while we participated in the Galle Face protests, we also guarded our Pradeshiya Sabha Chairman’s house. If in case someone tried to attack the house, we protected it.”

Saman is also trying to secure a job for his younger brother through the same chairman.

The function of patronage networks discouraged and in some cases led to the overall rejection of the *Aragalaya* movement by some youth. Within the group of youth who did not participate

in the protests, patronage expectations especially of getting a government job were high. Within this group, a considerable number of youth indicated that they expect to receive patronage benefits at least sometimes when they or someone they know is in need. Among these respondents, a high percentage reported that they expect help with repairing public roads (58.5 percent), obtaining government jobs (46.1 percent), receiving government remittances (45.2 percent), and accessing services from government offices (44.6 percent). Wasana from Pelawatte³⁰ revealed youth may not participate in the *Aragalaya* protests since most of them have government jobs and are afraid of losing them by participating in the protests. She also went on to say how parents of these youth too are unsupportive of the protests for the same reasons. Furthermore, certain private companies in the locality too have contacts with local politicians and by participating in protests, youth are afraid to be in jeopardy by both public and private sector recruiters.

There is also the case of powerful individuals who are placed in both the vertical political patronage network and horizontal social networks concerning day-to-day lives that place youth in a difficult situation of rejecting these figures altogether and joining the protests. Mahesh³¹, a Dhamma school teacher from the Wellawaya area said “I think the system should change. I stand with those at the *Aragalaya*”. He also went on to speak about Jagath, a parliamentarian from the area;

“Jagath aiya does not care about which political party we support. He helps everyone ...Even though he is a parliamentarian, he is always in the village. We are so happy to see him with us, even though he is such a huge political figure. He sits with us, drinks tea at small shops, and eats with us. He and his close circle are humble people ... He has also helped a few of my friends with things like retrieving their driving license after they were caught violating road rules by the police. He even assisted villagers in obtaining fuel during the fuel shortage period.”

Youth participation thus was characterized by the heavy presence of patronage networks.

***Aragalaya* had a wider participation base than other contemporary protests**

The popular uprisings from March to July 2022 were preceded by a series of protests across the country; Teachers' unions waged protests over the question of salary anomalies, farmers protested against the banning of chemical fertilizers, Catholic community protested demanding justice for the victims of Easter Attacks, Families of the disappeared protested in the Northern and Eastern provinces demanding international justice. These protests mainly attracted the communities directly affected by the issues in question despite most of the issues having a national bearing affecting all communities directly or indirectly. Although those protests have challenged the government, the public participation was not comparable to the scale of the *Aragalaya*. Public participation in the *Aragalaya* was three-times higher than participation in protests against the fertilizer ban, the most widely participated contemporary protests in Sri Lanka.

According to the 'Confidence in Democratic Governance Index' of the Centre for Policy Alternatives, more than two-third of the population was of the opinion that chemical fertilizers should not have been banned until a viable solution was found³². However, only 9 percent of the country claimed that they participated in protests against the government's decision to ban chemical fertilizers. According to survey findings, public participation in other protests held between 2019 to 2022, was even lower than the protests against banning of chemical fertilizers. Therefore, irrespective of the magnitude of the issue, they failed to stimulate an overwhelming response from the public.

Table 04: Protests that have taken place during the three years from 2019 to 2022

	Participated in person %
1. Protests against the ban of chemical fertilizers	9.1
2. Protests on missing persons during war	1.0
3. Protests on forced cremations during the Covid-19 pandemic	1.8

4. Protests requesting a solution to the human-elephant conflict	2.1
5. Protests on land issues of the people in the North and East provinces	4.7
6. Protests on land issues in other provinces	1.0
7. Protests on selling of the Western Container Terminal of the Colombo port to an Indian company	1.0
8. Protests by Trade Unions	7.0

Who are these protestors?

Aragalaya, perhaps for the first time in Sri Lanka's post-independence history was able to mobilize citizens en masse without the active involvement of political parties. Generally political parties, especially the main parties were the ones who exhibited the required capacity to mobilize large numbers of people nationally. However, *Aragalaya* was the exception to the rule, continuing actively for more than three months without the active involvement of any particular political party. Although opposition parties played a critical role at the very beginning of the protests, once it started to gain momentum, protestors consciously distanced themselves from political parties. In fact, young activists proudly referred to their struggle as a *nirpaakshika Aragalaya* (non-partisan). However, political organizations such as trade unions, students' unions and various civil society organizations were actively engaged in the protests held in Colombo as well as in other main cities. People joined protest campaigns voluntarily as they shared common feelings of despair, disenchantment, frustration and anger towards the incumbent government in particular and the past and present ruling elites in general.

This now brings us to the question of the level of political involvement of the protestors. Having discussed the broad spectrum of demographics and geographies of the protestors, we now look at if the protestors were already politically active citizens or if the movement alone was successful in inspiring civic activism in an otherwise politically inactive citizenry. Survey reveals that even though the *Aragalaya* was successful in attracting politically less-active citizens, majority has been generally politically active in varying degrees. The survey

reveals that only about one-third of people who had participated in the protests had been involved in similar activities during the 12-month period before the beginning of the wave of protests. Among those who took part in the *Aragalaya*, about one-third said that they had participated in a demonstration/political meeting or rally concerning a national or local issue. However, more than half of those who participated in the *Aragalaya* said that they used social media to air their political opinion. The survey clearly shows that those who participated in the *Aragalaya* had some experience in political activism than those who did not participate. Therefore, the protests instilled interest in active civic engagement in Sri Lankans who would otherwise exhibit a passive attitude towards political activism.

Table 05: Have you done the following to influence rules, laws or policies during the 12 months period before the *Aragalaya* in April 2022?

	Yes	No
Engaged in social media to voice my political opinion (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp etc.)	52.5	11.6
Taken part in a protest campaign/march on some national or local issue	34.7	3.4
Attended a demonstration about a political issue that would have an impact on the country	34.4	3.0
Attended a political meeting or rally	32.4	8.2
Participated/ worked with a neighborhood or community group on a particular issue that involves politics/ policies	26.0	6.4
Signed a petition regarding a change in law/policy of the country or a politically relevant topic	23.9	3.1
Taken part in a strike / boycott	18.9	4.5
Contacted an elected official/ politician to ask for a favor or raise an issue	15.4	5.8

Occupy Galle Face

People started to protest across Sri Lanka against the Gotabaya Rajapaksa government since March 2022 against the backdrop of a severe economic crisis. The protest near Gotabaya Rajapaksa's private house in Mirihana³³ was popularly considered as a turning point in the intensification of civic activism. The peaceful protest that started as a candle light vigil later took a violent turn

when the police started to use tear gas and water cannons to disperse the crowd. In order to suppress further protests, the President declared a nationwide emergency on 1 April 2022³⁴. In addition, an island-wide 36-hour curfew was also imposed on the evening of 2 April 2022³⁵. On the following day, the government imposed a social media blackout though it only lasted for 15 hours³⁶. These measures exacerbated the suffering and in turn the public's anger towards the regime.

On 9 April 2022, a large demonstration at the Galle Face Green was planned³⁷ by protestors using social media extensively³⁸. Despite the government's numerous efforts at sabotage, hundreds of thousands of people from all walks of life gathered at the Galle Face Green. They all demanded the resignation of the Rajapaksa government and to bring everyone who looted the country to book. On the night of 9 April, a handful of protestors setup tents to continue the demonstration. Later, the numbers of protestors grew exponentially and they transformed the area near the Presidential Secretariat into a permanent protest site named *GotaGoGama*³⁹. With mobile toilets and health facilities, the Galle Face protest site became a protest village. The protest village expanded gradually with more features such as a library, a public university and a community kitchen been added. Artists visited the site in solidarity with the protestors and performed against the corrupt regime. Scholars also visited the site and delivered public lectures. Organized groups as well as random individuals made visits to *GotaGoGama* even from far away areas. People visited the site to extend their solidarity as well as to express their anger towards and frustration with the government.

Table 06: Have you been to *GotaGoGama* protest site at Galle Face Green?

	%
Yes	11.0
No	87.9
No response	1.1
Base	1069

Although protest campaigns were held in many towns across the country, the protest site at Galle Face Green – popularly known as *GotaGoGama* – was considered as the main protest site where hundreds of thousands of people gathered for months in protesting against the Gotabaya Rajapaksa government. According to the survey findings, little more than 10 percent of adult Sri Lankans have been to the *GotaGoGama* protest site. Furthermore, the study reveals that more men compared to women and more young people compared to those who are in the age bracket of 30+ have participated in protests at the Galle Face protest site. More than one-fifth of each of those who follow Catholicism and Islam claimed to have been to the Galle Face protest site. Proportionally, more Catholics and Muslims than Buddhists had been to the Galle Face protest site.

Table 07: Have you been to *GotaGoGama* protest site at Galle Face Green?

		Yes	No	No response
Youth-Old	18 - 29 Years	15.5%	84.2%	0.3%
	Above 30 Years	8.4%	90.0%	1.6%
	Base	118	940	12
Sex	Male	15.7%	83.3%	0.9%
	Female	6.3%	92.4%	1.3%
	Base	118	940	12
Ethnicity	Sinhala	10.3%	88.9%	0.7%
	Tamil	13.0%	85.7%	1.3%
	Up-Country Tamil	7.6%	87.3%	5.1%
	Muslim	19.8%	79.0%	1.2%
	Base	118	939	12
Religion	Buddhism	9.3%	89.9%	0.8%
	Hinduism	10.8%	86.3%	2.9%
	Islam	21.4%	77.4%	1.2%
	Christianity (Roman Catholic)	23.8%	76.2%	0.0%
	Christianity (Non-RC)	0.0%	90.0%	10.0%
	Base	117	940	12

How they participated

More than half of those who went to the Galle Face protest site had gone there with their friends, 19 percent with their family members and 16 percent with their neighbors or community groups. Sagarika, a young Sinhala woman from a suburb of Colombo shared her experience as follows;

“During the *Aragalaya* period, my friends and I went to the Galle Face protests site many times. We sent text messages (SMS) to each other if we were free and then went there and spent a couple of hours after work. We felt that we must be there to extend solidarity with fellow protestors and that it was our democratic responsibility⁴⁰.”

Shenali, a young English-speaking Christian woman, said she and her church friends used to go to the Galle Face protest site before going to work and sometimes after work too⁴¹. Jayasinghe, a retired private sector employee from Battaramulla said that he went to the Galle Face protest site with his brother-in-law and his family as he was curious to see what was happening there⁴². Ammaarah, a Muslim girl in her 20s, said she was so excited to participate in the protests and frequently visited the Galle Face protest site with her friends⁴³.

Table 08: With whom did you go to *GotaGoGama*?

	%
With friends	55.3
With colleagues/ co-worker	5.4
With neighborhood or community group	15.9
With family members	18.6
Myself only	4.8
Base	118

Attitudes towards the *Aragalaya*

The *Aragalaya*, a non-violent citizens’ uprising during the period of March to July 2022, was one of the most unique democratic experiences Sri Lankans have encountered since independence. Majority of the Sri Lankans woke from their long slumber and

used the *Aragalaya* to exert people's sovereignty in holding rulers accountable. Further, they demanded a system change in order to change the course of the disastrous path that the country had taken since independence. Sri Lankans not only stood against President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and the Rajapaksa family, they also demanded all politicians to be held accountable.

Against this backdrop, parliamentarians, especially the MPs from the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), rallied around Ranil Wickremesinghe and voted him in as the President for the remaining two years of the eighth executive presidency of Sri Lanka. The priorities of the new President were evident; his main objective was to somehow consolidate the powers of the Executive Presidency, a position he received at an unexpected moment by emerging as the savior of the Rajapaksas and SLPP parliamentarians. For that he had to weaken, if not destroy, the protest movement that challenged the hegemony of the traditional political elite. The man who supported protestors when the former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's Mirihana house was surrounded later became an arch enemy of the protests and called in the military and police to brutally crackdown the protestors once he became the President. In addition, he unleashed a propaganda campaign to undermine protestors using both government and private media. The young protestors were accused of being connected to anti-democratic parties and were portrayed as uncivilized, violent drug addicts.

According to the results of the survey that was conducted in September 2022, an overwhelming majority of Sri Lankans harbor positive and appreciative attitudes towards those who participated in the *Aragalaya*. The *Aragalaya* was seen as an inclusive movement of civic-minded people who came together voluntarily without any influence of political parties for a common cause concerning the country's future. This perception was prevalent equally among men and women, all ethnic and religious groups as well as groups from urban and rural localities.

Despite President Wickremesinghe's continuous efforts to intimidate protestors and critics, various groups although on a much smaller scale, continued to raise their voice and

mobilize people against the undemocratic moves of the current government.

Table 09: Perception on people who led the *Aragalaya*

%	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Don't Know
I think the <i>Aragalaya</i> was led by civic-minded youth with the aim of reforming the country into a better democracy.	81.7	6.4	7.9	4.0
I think that the people who participated in the <i>Aragalaya</i> protested for a common cause concerning the country's future.	88.4	3.6	5.0	3.0
I think the <i>Aragalaya</i> is an inclusive event and people from all ethnic and religious groups participated in it.	93.8	2.7	1.0	2.5
I think the <i>Aragalaya</i> is an inclusive event and both males and females participated in it.	73.7	10.1	9.2	7.0
I think people voluntarily participated in the <i>Aragalaya</i> and they were not there because they were allied to any political party.	82.0	7.7	5.8	4.5
I think that the people who were engaged in the <i>Aragalaya</i> are broad-minded and modern in their thinking.	72.5	11.4	9.2	6.9
I think that the <i>Aragalaya</i> is led by a group of people who are uncivilized and are drug users.	11.8	11.7	64.8	11.7
I think the youth who participated in the <i>Aragalaya</i> also took part in unleashing violence.	19.5	12.7	57.0	10.7
I think the young people who led the <i>Aragalaya</i> were connected to anti-democratic parties.	16.6	13.2	54.2	16.0

It must be recognized that following President Wickremesinghe's brutal assault on Galle Face protestors on 22 July 2022⁴⁴, the dynamics of the protest movement also changed radically. Post-assault, instead of volunteer ad-hoc protests of unorganized civilians, protests became more organized and led by formal political organizations such as trade unions, students' unions and political parties and a majority of the urban middle classes distanced themselves from the protests and embraced the leadership of Wickremesinghe as their only hope.

Under the leadership of President Wickremesinghe, the spiraling economic crisis came under control to a certain degree. This paved the way for the SLPP parliamentary group to re-emerge in the public arena. With their newly found strength, some SLPPers have even started to question the bona fide of the *Aragalaya*

and argue that the country has suffered economically due to the uprising. They accused the *Aragalaya* as an opportunistic political project and demanded legal action against the protestors for the violation of law.

Despite efforts of the ruling party politicians to discredit the protestors, Sri Lankan public continue to hold the protestors in high regard. An overwhelming majority of Sri Lankans (82 percent) felt that the *Aragalaya* had a positive impact on the country while only 18 percent felt that the *Aragalaya* did more negative things to society and the country. For a significant majority (81 percent), *Aragalaya* was a necessity of the moment and only 19 percent think that the *Aragalaya* was a result of opportunistic politics. Interestingly, a little over half of the population (60 percent) says that legal action should be taken if the protestors have violated the law. This shows the high level of legitimacy enjoyed by the protest campaign and the protestors.

The preceding discussion makes it clear that the spontaneous, unorganized civic protests that broke out throughout Sri Lanka and culminated in the Galle Face Green as the main protest site from March to July 2022 enjoyed widespread legitimacy among the general public. The movement was not only able to achieve its immediate demands but also inculcated a feeling of civic responsibility in many quarters of the Sri Lankan society. It cut across deep seated ethnic and religious divides that have plagued the country for many decades. It witnessed a high participation of youth and signaled a digital turn in civic activism. Youth participation like participation of many other groups such as those in rural localities too was overshadowed by patronage concerns. *Aragalaya* also threatened the elite political leadership that has been unresponsive to public demands for decades. The democratic essence of the *Aragalaya* is thus an eye opener to those unaccountable leaders in power and is reflective of the strength of people's struggles in winning political demands. The succeeding sections provide short explanatory notes on the timeline of the struggle, economic policies that resulted in the current crisis and actors of the *Aragalaya* in order to better understand the empirical analysis presented here.

1. See https://www.cpalanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Survey-on-Aragalaya_Sep2022_Topline-Report_English_FINAL.pdf
2. See <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/31/tear-gas-as-sri-lanka-protesters-try-to-storm-presidents-house>
3. See <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2022/0616/It-takes-a-protest-village-Gota-Go-Gama-unites-diverse-Sri-Lankans>
4. See http://www.colombopage.com/archive_22A/Apr14_1649948028CH.php
5. See <https://www.nst.com.my/world/world/2022/04/788885/thousands-sri-lankans-celebrate-new-year-anti-government-protest-site>
6. See <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/04/14/avurudu-celebrated-at-gae-face-top-artist-joins-protest/>
7. Interview with a middle aged housewife from Monaragala.
8. Interview with an owner of a welding garage from Kolonnawa, Colombo.
9. Interview with a university professor.
10. Interview with a domestic worker in her late fifties from Battaramulla.
11. Interview with a young English-speaking female executive from Colombo city.
12. Interview with a young Sinhalese-speaking male executive from Colombo.
13. Interview with a young man from Anuradhapura at GotaGoGama.
14. See <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/04/07/dont-take-kids-to-protests-appeals-ncpa/>
15. Interviews conducted in Colombo with middle income families.
16. Interviews conducted in Colombo with middle income families.
17. Interview with a female researcher from Colombo.
18. See <https://www.bbc.com/news/topics/cdmjmkw6krwt?page=3>
19. See <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-48044636>
20. See <https://economynext.com/easter-sunday-attack-sri-lanka-catholics-demand-for-justice-expose-mastermind-118639/>
21. See <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/sri-lankas-easter-bombings-peaceful-coexistence-under-attack>
22. See <https://www.news.lk/news/political-current-affairs/item/28463-easter-sunday-attacks-president-promises-to-bring-those-responsible-to-book>
23. See <https://www.reuters.com/article/sri-lanka-election-idINKBN1XR033>
24. See <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/gota-said-easter-terror-commission-report-cant-be-implemented-because-it-will-cost-him-popularity-cardinal/>
25. See <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/21/sri-lanka-catholics-slam-govt-over-easter-attacks-probe>
26. See <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/gotabaya-real-master-behind-attacks-says-tna-mp> ; <https://economynext.com/sri-lanka-president-is-not-master-mind-of-easter-attack-secretary-88835/> ; <https://www.ft.lk/news/Eran-accuses-Gotabaya-of-politically-benefitting-from-Easter-Sunday-attacks/56-747637>
27. See <https://www.tamilguardian.com/content/colombo-s-archbishop-alleges-grand-conspiracy-behind-easter-sunday-attacks> ; <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/10-points-to-ponder-on-the-easter-sunday-terrorist-massacre-the-commission-report/>
28. See <https://groundviews.org/2022/04/10/protesting-in-style-the-arrival-of-a-new-generation/>
29. Interview conducted with a youth from Kalutara.
30. Interview with a youth from Pelawatte.
31. Interview with a youth from Wellawaya.
32. See <https://www.cpalanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Confidence-in-Democratic-Governance-Index-February-2022.pdf>
33. See <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/04/01/37-people-injured-in-mirihana-protest/>
34. See <https://crisis24.garda.com/alerts/2022/04/sri-lanka-authorities-impose-nationwide-state-of-emergency-in-response-to-ongoing-protests-april-1-update-5>
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36. See <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/04/03/sri-lanka-imposes-nationwide-social-media-blackout-netblocks/>
37. See <https://www.newswire.lk/2022/04/09/protests-begin-in-co-demanding-presidents-rn/>
38. See <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/199165>
39. See <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/198324>
40. Interview with a young female office executive
41. Interview with a young female office executive
42. Interview with a retired private sector individual
43. Interview with a young Muslim girl
44. See <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/22/military-raids-sri-lanka-protest-camps-leaders-arrested>

Timeline of the *Aragalaya*

This section provides the timeline of the events that led to the unprecedented politico-economic crisis in Sri Lanka that gave rise to the *Aragalaya*. While the crisis was in the making for many years, this timeline provides quick reference to the important milestones of Sri Lanka's crisis and the *Aragalaya* from the launching of Gotabaya Rajapaksa's election manifesto in 2019 to his resignation in 2022.

- **October 2019**

- Launching his election manifesto Gotabaya Rajapaksa said that he will put an end to corruption and also strengthen necessary mechanisms to punish those found guilty of corruption¹

- **November 2019**

- Gotabaya Rajapaksa released his relief package at a rally in Kurunegala²
- The Election Commission chairman declared Gotabaya Rajapaksa as the seventh Executive President of Sri Lanka³
- Gotabaya Rajapaksa was sworn-in as 7th Executive President at the *Maha Maluwa* of the Ruwanweliseya in Anuradhapura⁴
- Major General (retired) Kamal Guneratne was appointed as the Secretary to the Defence Ministry⁵
- Dr. P. B Jayasundera, former secretary of the treasury was appointed as the Secretary to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa⁶
- The newly appointed President assumed duties at the Presidential Secretariat, Colombo following religious observances⁷
- Paving the way for Gotabaya Rajapaksa to form a new cabinet, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe resigned⁸
- Mahinda Rajapaksa assumed duties as the Prime Minister⁹
- New governors appointed for six provinces took their oaths before President Gotabaya Rajapaksa¹⁰
- Fifteen Ministers were sworn in before Gotabaya Rajapaksa at the Presidential Secretariat¹¹
- Gotabaya Rajapaksa called on Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith at his residence. His Eminence Cardinal said that the President must bring perpetrators of Easter Sunday attacks to justice. Further, he added that anyone who caused harm cannot be allowed to walk free¹²
- Gotabaya Rajapaksa met with members of the committee

inquiring into the Easter Sunday attack. He instructed to identify those responsible for the attack and bring them before the law¹³

- Cardinal Malcom Ranjith said that people involved in the Easter attack are being protected and he demanded that the commission reports be revealed¹⁴

• **December 2019**

- Public Administration Ministry announced that the National anthem will be sung only in Sinhala¹⁵

• **January 2020**

- The Government announced the removal of a number of taxes, including the Pay As You Earn Tax (PAYE) and also the reduction of the Value Added Tax¹⁶
- The cabinet decided to withdraw the Counter Terrorism Bill introduced by the previous government¹⁷
- Urging the government to resolve six of their demands including issues pertaining to the Mahapola scholarship, the students of the Inter-University Students Federation (IUSF) staged a protest¹⁸
- As Promised in the election campaign, President decided to raise the daily wage of Estate workers' to Rs.1,000 from March 2020¹⁹
- Demanding the salary anomalies to be removed teachers and principals from different unions staged a protest²⁰
- A teachers' protest was held in front of the Education Ministry over salary issues²¹
- The Ministry of Public Services, Provincial Councils and Local Government issued a circular to eliminate the teacher-principal salary anomaly²²
- A 43 year old Chinese woman was identified as the first Covid patient in Sri Lanka²³

• **February 2020**

- "We ensure the freedom of expression of the people" - Gotabaya Rajapaksa at the 72nd Independence day ceremony²⁴

March 2020

- A nationwide curfew in Sri Lanka was introduced to prevent the spread of the Covid – 19 pandemic ²⁵
- A Presidential Task Force for Covid -19 was established²⁶
- The number of Covid-19 patients increased up to 81²⁷
- Sri Lanka's Covid- 19 fatalities rose up to 152²⁸

June 2020

- Addressing the Presidential Task Force on Covid- 19, Gotabaya Rajapaksa said that they did the best in tackling the pandemic-
*Api Thamayi hodatama kare*²⁹

September 2020

- President Gotabaya Rajapaksa stated that his verbal orders must be considered as circulars. He made this remark during a visit to Haldumulla while inspecting public works³⁰

October 2020

- The import tax on essential items such as dhal, canned fish and, sugar was lifted³¹

February 2021

- “I am a Sinhala-Buddhist leader. I am not hesitant to say that at any time. I rule the country according to the teachings of Buddhism” - Gotabaya Rajapaksa at the 73rd Independence Day celebration³²

March 2021

- Although the World Health Organization pointed out that there is no scientific evidence that suggests cremation prevents infection, the government forced the Muslim community to cremate their dead since the beginning of the pandemic. Later, they chose Iranathivu island in the Gulf of Mannar (300 km away from Colombo) as the burial ground³³

April 2021

- Import and export control department banned the importation of chemical fertilizers and agro chemicals³⁴

May 2021

- X-Press Pearl ship caught fire in Sri Lankan waters and sank off the coast of Colombo several days later³⁵

June 2021

- Protests were held against the fertilizer ban in Dehiattakandiya³⁶
- It was decided to give a Rs. 5000 allowance from 02 June to the people affected by the third COVID-19 wave³⁷
- Former Parliamentarian Duminda Silva was released from prison following a Presidential pardon from Gotabaya Rajapaksa and was appointed as the Chairman of the National Housing Development Authority³⁸

July 2021

- Basil Rajapaksa assumed duties as Finance Minister³⁹
- “KDU to be brought under the UGC act” – Gotabaya Rajapaksa⁴⁰
- Joseph Stalin; IUSF Convener and 29 others were arrested for staging a protest against the General Sir John Kotelawala National Defence University (KNDU) bill⁴¹
- Protests continued demanding the KNDU bill to be withdrawn⁴²
- Representatives of the Inter-Medical Students Action Committee, the intercompany employees union, university professors and students staged a protest against the proposed KNDU bill⁴³
- The Federation of University Teachers Associations (FUTA) urged the government to drop plans to introduce the KNDU Bill in the guise of an ‘Amended Bill’⁴⁴

August 2021

- Cabinet granted their approval to import 99,000 metric tons of organic fertilizer from China⁴⁵

September 2021

- The national plant quarantine service detected harmful bacteria in the fertilizer sample from China⁴⁶
- Chinese ship carrying organic manure found to have harmful bacteria reached Sri Lankan waters⁴⁷
- Framers protested against the Chinese ship that arrived with Organic fertilizer found to have harmful bacteria⁴⁸

- Sri Lanka halted the importation of Chinese organic manure after the second lab test confirmed that it contains harmful bacteria⁴⁹

• **October 2021**

- President Gotabaya Rajapaksa appointed a 13-member task force, 'One Country, One Law' headed by Gnanasara Thero⁵⁰

• **November 2021**

- Venerable Muruththettuwa Ananda Thero was appointed as the Chancellor of the University of Colombo⁵¹
- The Budget 2022 allocated Rs. 85 billion for the rural development program 'Gama Samaga Pilisandara'⁵²

• **December 2021**

- An uneasy situation occurred at the convocation of the University of Colombo with a number of students showing their displeasure of the appointment of the Venerable Muruththettuwa Ananda Thera as the Chancellor of the University⁵³
- Secretary to the President, Dr. P. B. Jayasundara tendered his resignation letter to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa⁵⁴

• **January 2022**

- Sri Lanka paid off a 500 million USD sovereign bond that was due in January 2021- Central Bank Governor Nivard Cabraal⁵⁵

• **March 2022**

- Sri Lanka introduced seven-hour scheduled power cuts⁵⁶
- Two new #hashtags by pro- (#WeAreWithGota) and anti-government (#GoHomeGota) activists started to make their way on the internet⁵⁷
- The government controlled the importation of 370 items⁵⁸. New limitations require one to have the permission for the importation of the items.
- Demanding solutions for the crisis situation, a public protest took place in front of the President's house in Mirihana⁵⁹

• **April 2022**

- Ajith Nivard Cabraal, central bank governor resigned after seven months in office as the country's economic and humanitarian

crisis worsened.⁶⁰

- Galle Face Green was crowded with anti-government protestors⁶¹
- The occupied space at Galle Face Green was named ‘*Gota-Go-Gama*’ with the protestors setting up camps there⁶²
- A tense situation occurred in Rambukkana when police fired live bullets at protestors killing one person and injuring 14⁶³
- Public who were protesting in front of the Prime Minister’s office set up a site named - ‘*Maina-Go-Gama*’⁶⁴
- The National Audit Office recommended that the government immediately recover the revenue lost in the sugar scam by the importer⁶⁵
- Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe was appointed as the Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka while K.M.M. Siriwardena was appointed as the new Secretary to the Ministry of Finance.⁶⁶

• May 2022

- Sri Lanka’s Consumer Affairs Authority imposed price controls on rice⁶⁷
- A group of supporters of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa gathered at Temple Trees urging him not to resign⁶⁸
- A tense situation occurred at the ‘GotaGoGama’ after the pro-Mahinda supporters attacked the protestors⁶⁹
- The ancestral home of the Rajapaksas in Medamulana in Hambantota was set on fire by a group of protestors⁷⁰
- The houses of several SLPP MPs were attacked by the protestors and some were set ablaze⁷¹
- A group of protestors who tried to enter Temple Trees forcefully were tear-gassed by the police⁷²
- With the violent situation that occurred, the number of people admitted to the Colombo National Hospital rose up to 157⁷³
- SLPP Polonnaruwa District Parliamentarian Amarakeerthi Athukorala allegedly committed suicide⁷⁴
- Students who marched in protest towards the Parliament road set up a site named- ‘*Horu-Go-Gama*’⁷⁵
- Gotabaya Rajapaksa accepted the resignation of Mahinda Rajapaksa as the Prime Minister⁷⁶
- Following the resignation of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, Cabinet Ministers began to resign⁷⁷
- After the attack and vandalism by pro-government goons, GotaGoGama was rebuilt⁷⁸
- The Ministry of Defense stated that the tri forces were ordered to shoot all those who plunder public property or cause personal harm⁷⁹
- Following a day of violence, Mahinda Rajapaksa left the

Temple Trees⁸⁰

- With the reports that Mahinda Rajapaksa and his family members have sought refuge at the Naval base, Trincomalee, a protest broke out, outside the place⁸¹
- The Attorney General advised Inspector General of Police CD Wickramaratne to conduct fully-fledged investigations into the attack on peaceful protestors⁸²
- The residence and shrine of Gnana Akka were destroyed by some protesters in Anuradhapura⁸³
- All police stations were instructed to exercise their maximum legal powers including opening fire on those involved in violent incidents⁸⁴
- The protesters at the ‘GotaGogama’ were informed to evacuate immediately by the police as they were said to be violating curfew law⁸⁵
- Following the outbreak of violence, tri forces were deployed to tighten security in the Colombo City⁸⁶
- President Gotabaya Rajapaksa appointed Ranil Wickremesinghe as the Prime Minister⁸⁷
- Around 2,725 individuals were arrested with various charges following the violent incidents that took place on 09 May⁸⁸
- Central Bank Governor Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe said, the Central Bank will have to print money but with utmost responsibility and restraint⁸⁹
- ‘*No-Deal-Gama*’ was established opposite Temple Trees, against the appointment of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and political deals. This site was earlier known as MynaGoGama⁹⁰
- Queues started to grow in front of petrol sheds. Some sheds were to run out of stock⁹¹
- The Police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse the IUSF protesters who attempted to enter the Presidential Secretariat⁹²
- Trade unions and a collection of mass organizations engaged in a protest opposite the Fort Railway station demanding the arrest of those who took part in the violent attack on 09 May at GotaGoGama⁹³
- “The price of a 450g loaf of bread to be increased by Rs.30, while other bakery products to go up by Rs.10”- All Ceylon Bakery Owners’ Association (ACBOA) ⁹⁴
- Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe requested the non-essential public sector employees not to report to duty with the fuel shortage in the country⁹⁵
- The Public Administration and Home Affairs Ministry made directions to Ministry Secretaries, Chief Secretaries of Provincial Councils and Department Heads to formulate a

mechanism to call for duty only the essentially needed staff to public institutions⁹⁶

- Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as the Minister of Finance, Economic Stabilization and National Policies⁹⁷
- Flower Road in Kollupitiya was temporarily closed due to a protest by the public at the ‘No Deal Gama’⁹⁸
- A shortage of 76 varieties of essential medicines occurred⁹⁹
- Given the crisis situation the government decided to revise taxes and increased Value added Tax from 8 to 12 percent and Telecommunication Levy from 11.25 to 15 percent¹⁰⁰

• June 2022

- A total of 3.3 tons of essential medical supplies donated by the Government of India were handed over to the 1990 *Suwaseriya* Ambulance Service by the High Commissioner Gopal Baglay¹⁰¹
- The Ceylon Electricity Board Engineers’ Union decided to proceed with their scheduled trade union action which was to cause a total power system failure across the country¹⁰²
- By an extraordinary gazette notification, supply of electricity was declared as an essential service by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa¹⁰³
- Basil Rajapaksa resigned from his Parliamentary seat¹⁰⁴
- Muslim doctor, Shihabdeen Mohamed Shafi who was sent on compulsory leave by falsely accusing him of performing sterilization operations on Sinhalese women, decided to donate arrears of his salary amounting over Rs. 2.67 million for the purchase of essential medicines¹⁰⁵
- “Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport (MRIA) was running at a monthly loss of Rs. 10 million” - Civil Aviation Minister Nimal Siripala De Silva¹⁰⁶
- Dhammika Perera was sworn in as the Minister of Investment Promotion¹⁰⁷
- Protestors gathered outside the house of Dhammika Perera who was sworn in as a national list MP from the SLPP replacing Basil Rajapaksa¹⁰⁸
- The government decided to import 50,000 metric tons of rice under the Indian loan assistance program¹⁰⁹
- The protesters at Galle Face shouted slogans against the move by the Sri Lankan government to award the renewable energy project to Adani Group without following proper tender

procedures¹¹⁰

- The government declared a two-week period of work-from-home for public servants from 20 June 2022¹¹¹
- Minister Kanchana Wijesekera requested the people not to queue up for petrol¹¹²
- With the increasing number of patients, the essential and life-saving drug categories in hospitals were running out¹¹³
- IUSF organized a protest march against the shortage of gas, fuel, medicine, and food¹¹⁴
- Sri Lankan economy came to a complete standstill as the country ran out of fuel¹¹⁵
- The staff of the Lady Ridgeway Hospital for Children (LRH) in Colombo, staged a demonstration in front of the hospital demanding solutions to the crisis¹¹⁶
- The report prepared by the Presidential Task Force working on ‘One Country-One Law’ was handed over to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa by Ven. Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara Thera, the head of the task force¹¹⁷
- Seven men including YouTuber Rathindu Senaratne and Lahiru Weerasekara, national organizer of ‘Youth for Change’ who were arrested for indulging in violent activities near the Education Ministry and police headquarters, were remanded till 1 July¹¹⁸
- The Railways Trade Union Alliance (RTUA) staged a protest in Colombo demanding the withdrawal of the government if it’s unable to provide solutions¹¹⁹
- “The government decided to implement a token system dedicated to filling stations to supply fuel for those waiting in queues” - Kanchana Wijesekera¹²⁰
- The All Island Canteen Owners Association (AICOA) decided to increase prices of all food items by 10 percent¹²¹
- All-Island Three-Wheeler Drivers’ Union President Lalith Dharmasekera said that three wheeler fare for the second kilometer has been increased to Rs. 90¹²²
- The Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) decided to increase the fuel prices¹²³
- The cabinet ministers decided to issue fuel only for essential services until 10 July¹²⁴
- Postal Department decided to open Post and sub-post offices only three days a week considering the current fuel shortage¹²⁵
- Following a meeting at the Transport Ministry, it was decided to increase the bus fares by 30 percent. The minimum fare was raised up to Rs.40¹²⁶
- President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was reported to have written to Vladimir Putin asking for cooperation in oil purchases¹²⁷

- A total of 26 train services including office and intercity trains which were scheduled to operate were cancelled following difficulties faced by the Station Masters (SMs) and junior staff in reporting for work due to the fuel crisis¹²⁸
- Dr. Nandalal Weerasinghe was re-appointed as Governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL) for another term of six years by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa.¹²⁹

- **July 2022**

- With railway guards' inability to report to work due to fuel scarcity, the Fort Railway station experienced overcrowded trains¹³⁰
- Several teachers' and principals' unions protested in Colombo demanding the government to withdraw without destroying the country and the education¹³¹
- The Principals and Teachers' unions held a protest at Slave Island. They demanded the government to open schools to continue studies and guarantee uninterrupted education¹³²
- The Federation of University Teachers' Associations (FUTA) conducted a protest march inviting the public to gather in Colombo on Saturday, 9 July to end this anarchical rule¹³³
- Police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse the protest march staged by the students of IUSF at the entrance to Bank of Ceylon Mawatha, Colombo¹³⁴
- Galle, Matara and Kandy railway stations were overcrowded and the public was demanding to operate trains despite the cancellation order¹³⁵
- As a result of the protests protestors were able to take control of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's official residence and the Presidential Secretariat¹³⁶
- A large number of people gathered outside Carlton House in Tangalle protesting¹³⁷
- Prime Minister Wickremesinghe's private residence on 5th Lane in Colombo was set on fire¹³⁸
- While the second Test cricket match between Australia and Sri Lanka was being held at the Galle International Cricket Ground, a large number of protesters were seen protesting at the Galle Fort¹³⁹
- Protesters who stormed the President's Residence in Fort recovered a large sum of money inside the mansion¹⁴⁰
- Following the protestors surrounding the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC) and Independent Television Network (ITN) corporation premises, their live and recorded telecasts were suspended¹⁴¹

- The Gazette Extraordinary was issued by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, appointing Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe as the acting President ¹⁴²
- Gotabaya Rajapaksa signed his resignation letter on 13 July ¹⁴³
- The protesters stormed into the Prime Minister's Office at Flower Road, Colombo¹⁴⁴
- After the arrival of Gotabaya Rajapaksa in Male, Maldives, Sri Lankans there staged a protest demanding the Maldivian government to send him away¹⁴⁵
- The speaker stated that he received a resignation letter from President Gotabaya Rajapaksa through the Singapore Embassy in Sri Lanka¹⁴⁶

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Economic trajectory of Sri Lanka's current political crisis

Sri Lanka faces an unprecedented socio-economic and political crisis since its independence in 1948. In April 2022, Sri Lanka announced its first sovereign debt default thus becoming the first country in Asia-Pacific to have entered sovereign default in the 21st century¹. The country's economic woes have been in the making for decades. Years of economic mismanagement, lack of durable economic policy reforms, unsustainable commercial borrowings and fiscal indiscipline are few of the long-term mistakes that spearheaded economic deterioration in the island. In the short-term, multiple external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Easter Sunday bombings, a restrictive trade regime, the creation of a weak investment climate, weak monetary policy and an administered exchange rate contributed to external imbalances which adversely affected Sri Lanka's economy.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa who took office in November 2019 made some short-sighted decisions that involved deep tax cuts - to the wealthy in particular, and increased tax holidays for corporations, despite the country's exceptionally low tax to GDP ratio². Sri Lanka lost approximately one million tax payers from 2020 -2021³ with public revenue losses amounting to nearly 2.22 million USD directly attributed to the 2019 and 2020 tax cuts⁴. The tax cuts increased fiscal deficits that resulted in international agencies downgrading Sri Lanka's credit ratings which shut

the country from international capital markets – and as a result there was an overdependence on the country's official reserves as well as an excess printing of money which resulted in high inflation⁵. The government at the time continued to service debt despite the depletion of official reserves and net foreign assets in the banking system which eventually led to a foreign exchange liquidity crisis, adverse impacts of which were felt across the island with shortages in a range of essential items such as food, cooking gas, medicine, fuel as well as inputs for agriculture and industry. High inflation hit the most vulnerable households and exacerbated pre-existing challenges. The UN estimated around 5.7 million women, men, girls, and boys needed humanitarian assistance as of June 2022⁶. The poverty rate increased from 13.1 to 25.6 percent between 2021 and 2022⁷ and is expected remain above 25 percent in the next few years to come⁸. Urban poverty has tripled from 5-15 percent⁹.

Campaigning on a platform of self-sufficiency Gotabaya Rajapaksa's government imposed import restrictions so high that Sri Lanka was almost a closed economy. Furthermore, the immediate ban on chemical fertilizers¹⁰ destroyed agricultural yields including paddy and maize yields and major export earners such as tea and rubber¹¹. The fertilizer crisis coupled with an increase in input costs resulted in a 40- 50 percent drop in agricultural productivity¹² which led to a supply- driven food insecurity issue. In September 2022, The World Food Programme reported that one third of Sri Lankan households remain food insecure (6.3 million people), of which 66,000 are severely food insecure¹³. According to the UN, 39 percent of the population or 8.7 million people are not consuming adequate diets, leading to malnutrition¹⁴. Overall, a massive reduction in food supply has been reported with around a 50 percent drop in paddy and 65 percent drop in maize¹⁵.

Following is a brief account of the long and short-term economic policies and domestic and international factors that led to the current crisis.

Balance of trade deficit: Sri Lanka has had a trade deficit for decades. In February 2023, the country's trade deficit fell to 39

million USD as compared to a 781.3 million USD in February 2022¹⁶. This decline was a result of a restrictive importation regime introduced as a measure to emerge out of the island's economic crisis. Despite restrictions on the importation of especially intermediate goods, the country's trade deficit remains, highlighting unsustainable economic policies. Sri Lanka's main exports are textiles and tea with roughly a 40 and 17 percent respectively of total exports while the country imports petroleum, essential food, machinery and other industrial equipment¹⁷ contributing to a widening trade deficit. Exports were stagnant at around 10 billion USD during the five-year period from 2010 to 2014, while imports had been on average at about 18 billion USD giving rise to a trade deficit of about 8 billion USD annually¹⁸. Sri Lanka's trade deficit stands at an average of 409.8 million USD as of January 2023¹⁹. Diversification of the country's exports and a turn towards an industrial economy have been topics on the table²⁰ under many regimes. This long unaddressed imbalance was one of the factors that exacerbated the crisis with the government being unable to generate the required foreign currency for essential imports when it had to default on its debt²¹.

Increased external borrowings: The deficit resulted in increased governmental borrowings from external sources that were used for both the repayment of maturing debt and payments of annual interest. This led to a sizeable increase in the government's foreign borrowings that have been on the rise since 2014 and by the end of April 2022, the total outstanding external debt of the central government was 34.8 billion USD²². In the absence of a clear vision for boosting the local economy and exports, the money borrowed was mainly used to fund public services and to import goods²³. Additionally, since the ending of the civil war, the country has also been heavily relying on foreign loans for infrastructure development projects²⁴.

The dynamics of the governmental external borrowings started to change since 2007. In the 90's and early 2000s, Sri Lanka mainly depended on concessionary loans provided by Asian Development Bank and the World Bank²⁵. These loans had long payback periods, very low interest rates, a grace period and the

loan conditions were favorable to low-income earning countries. As a result, although the government was dependent on external borrowings, the debt burden was not heavily felt on the economy. The nature of the external borrowings started to take a different approach with the country being elevated to a middle-income earning country in 1997²⁶. With the country entering this classification, the accessibility of concessionary loans became difficult²⁷ and as an alternative the government opted for commercial loans, mainly by issuing International Sovereign Bonds (ISBs). Commercial loans in general, especially ISBs have a very short payback period and high interest rates which is very risky for countries like Sri Lanka.

Thus, the central government debt to GDP ratio rose from 86.8 percent in 2019 to 100.6 percent in 2021²⁸ which is highly unsustainable given that the country lacks a vision to promote and diversify exports. Moreover, the government spent its foreign exchange reserves on repaying the borrowings and interests, shrinking its gross official reserves from 7.6 billion USD in 2019 to 3.1 billion USD in 2021²⁹. Commercial borrowings also come with adverse political implications in the event a country fails to meet its obligations (which is the case more often than not given the lack of promise of the economies of these borrowing countries). A stark example of this was China taking control of the Hambantota port on a 99-year lease in 2017 as a result of Sri Lanka's inability to settle the loans it received as part of China's Belt and Road initiative³⁰.

Depleting foreign reserves: The trade deficit and increased borrowings impacted the country's foreign reserves adversely. Sri Lanka's gross official reserves that stood at 7.6 billion USD at the end of 2019, fell to 5.7 billion USD by the end of 2020 as the payments were much greater than the inflows of foreign currency amidst the ongoing pandemic³¹ (especially with the tourism sector which accounted for about 5 percent of the country's GDP³², taking a blow). The gross official reserves declined to 3.1 billion USD by the end of 2021 and to a 1.9 billion USD by 2022³³. Government's short sighted decision to not seek IMF assistance on time, only aggravated the situation³⁴. The lack of foreign currency reserves led to a shortage of vital imports

of food and fuel. As Sri Lanka highly depends on imports for essential food, fuel and pharmaceutical items, the lack of foreign reserves to pay for import bills meant that the supply of such goods was limited and highly rationed.

Currency printing: Sri Lanka printed large volumes of money since 2020 triggering the worst currency crisis in the country's history³⁵. It is reported that the amount printed from January 2020 to March 2022 was 23 times more than the entire money printed from 1952-2020³⁶. CBSL allegedly printed 119.08 billion LKR on 6 April 2022, the highest amount reported on a single day for the entire year of 2022³⁷. Such mindless printing was indicative of a lack of understanding of basic economic theories on the part of the government and also resulted in rising inflation. Inflation coupled with other woes such as shortages in fuel, electricity and gas provided the impetus for the *Aragalaya*.

Tax cuts: The short-sighted series of tax cuts introduced by the Rajapaksa government in 2019 resulted in almost a 50 percent of revenue loss in the first year of the introduction of the policy³⁸. According to the Inland Revenue Department, the revenue collection which was at 1,025,319,006,780 LKR in 2019 went down to 523,933,624,905 LKR in 2020³⁹. In May 2022, Prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe stated public revenue losses of around 2.22 million USD was a direct result of the 2019-2020 tax cuts⁴⁰. The sweeping tax cuts were termed as a "historic mistake" by the then Finance minister Ali Sabry in May 2022⁴¹. The changes resulted in the loss of almost a million tax payers between 2020 and 2022⁴². Sri Lanka has one of the lowest tax-to-GDP ratios in South Asia and with the tax cuts it dropped to 7.7 percent in 2021 from an 8.1 percent in 2020⁴³. Against a backdrop of an increasing debt-to-GDP ratio, lack of revenue spelled disaster to an already suffering economy⁴⁴.

Breakdown in public communication: The crisis also highlighted a lack of honesty on the part of the government in relation to its communications with the public and manipulation of budget numbers as per the discretion of finance ministers. Such manipulative moves have a long history in the country's politics. In the absence of a longstanding national economic policy and

a vision, budgets prepared are reflective of the personal agendas of each finance minister or regime in power rather than of what best suits the country. Examples of such moves include but are not limited to Minister Ravi Karunanayake's meddling of education and health services provisions as well as exchange rate numbers in the 2016 budget⁴⁵ and the shortsighted and unrealistic suggestions of Basil Rajapaksa's maiden budget for 2022⁴⁶. Lack of transparency in government communications triggered many RTI requests⁴⁷ directed at various government entities since the public was unaware of the full extent of the crisis especially at the onset of it.

Public sector employment: Sri Lanka has a massive public sector with around a 1.5 million public sector employees i.e. a public servant for every 14 citizens of the population of 22 million⁴⁸. Highlighting the unsustainability of the enterprise, in May 2021 Economy next reported that Sri Lanka's state workers took 86 cents of every tax rupee home during the pandemic⁴⁹. With many unnecessary public sector appointments that stem from the country's patronage network of politics, the public sector is seen more as an inefficient burden than a blessing. Until September 2022, wage and pension bill of public servants as a share of taxes was 85.9 percent⁵⁰. This was cited as another major factor that resulted in a waste of government revenue.

Hits to the tourism industry: The tourism industry has been the third largest foreign exchange earner in the country and an important income generator⁵¹. Easter Sunday bombings in April 2019⁵² impacted the tourism sector and the pandemic only hindered its recovery from the incident. Sri Lanka's reliance on the tourism industry has only been on the rise in recent years with it been named as the top country to travel in 2019 by Lonely Planet⁵³. Prior to the pandemic the country recorded a revenue of 4.66 billion USD which accounts for 5.2 percent of the GNP⁵⁴. With the onset of the pandemic, in 2020 the situation drastically changed with Sri Lanka recording only a 1.08 billion USD in tourism revenue i.e. a 77 percent decrease⁵⁵. Given the importance played by tourism revenue in Sri Lanka's economy, such hits further worsened the nation's financial standing.

Agro-sector crisis: Sri Lankan government's overnight transition to organic farming spelled disastrous results for both farmers and consumers. The Rajapaksa government, with the aim of moving towards 100 percent organic agriculture, chose to ban chemical fertilizers in 2021 without increasing the production of organic fertilizers⁵⁶. This organic farming experiment led to a 40 percent fall in rice yields and an equally large fall in the yields of many other crops⁵⁷. As a result, tea exports dropped to a 25-years low in 2022 with a 4.5 percent decrease in earnings compared to 2021⁵⁸ and rice harvests had dropped by a 40 percent in the Maha season 2021 compared to the previous year⁵⁹. Technocratic experts who supported Rajapaksa's election campaign were said to be left out of the hasty decision⁶⁰ that contributed to both a supply-driven food insecurity issue and a surge in food prices⁶¹. Furthermore, the government also had to spend more in importing 1/3 of its rice requirement⁶² at a time it was strapped for foreign cash.

Russia-Ukraine conflict: The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine threatens many sectors of the world economy and has led to a staggering price inflation of crude oil, sunflower oil and wheat all around the world. The global impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict further aggravated the crisis situation in Sri Lanka where crude oil prices hit a record high of more than 125 USD per barrel in 2022⁶³. As a result, ordinary Sri Lankans who were already financially struggling and in fact had become unemployed with the Covid-19 pandemic also fell victim to stagflation⁶⁴.

The crisis was thus a result of multiple factors that contributed to unsustainable levels of debt and a severe balance of payments crisis, only exacerbated by short-sighted policy blunders of the Rajapaksa government.

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Actors of the *Aragalaya*

Against a deteriorating economy and unstable political setup, protests broke out in several parts of the country starting from March 2022¹. The protestors called for the immediate resignation of the President and demanded justice and accountability for economic calamities that were unfolding. Despite imposing a state of emergency and arresting many peaceful protesters unconstitutionally², the protests spread widely throughout the country with the Galle Face green in the heart of Colombo taking center stage as the primary protest site of the *Aragalaya*. In a research study conducted by CPA in May 2022 nearly half of the respondents (48.5 percent) claimed that either they or a member of their immediate family had participated in the protests organized against those responsible for the current economic crisis³. Although there was some involvement of several opposition parties during the initial stages of the *Aragalaya*⁴ - most protestors considered themselves to not be affiliated with any political party with many also expressing much discontent about the conduct of the parliamentary opposition⁵.

The uniqueness of the *Aragalaya* was that it did not have any recognizable leadership, it was sporadic, non-consolidated and involved diverse groups of people from different socio-economic strata of the society, all protesting for a systemic change in Sri Lanka and was successful in winning its immediate demands. This organic coming together of different groups also helped the

movement spread across the country and helped garner global attention to the crisis in Sri Lanka. The following account briefly highlights the plurality of social bases of the *Aragalaya*.

Social media activists: Social media played a crucial role in the success of the *Aragalaya*. The role of social media in the *Aragalaya* was so crucial that some media outlets even went on to term the struggle as a “social media-fuelled mass protest”⁶. There were hashtags trending calling for the resignation of top leaders and social media was inundated with both pro and anti-government hashtags⁷. Social media access was restricted from time-to-time since the beginning of the protests in March and a government ordered social media ban restricting access to various different platforms was issued by the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka on 2 April 2022⁸, a move that the government had to reverse within 15 hours⁹. Many supportive of the *Aragalaya* were able to use VPNs thus making the ban ineffective¹⁰. 9 July 2022 was earmarked as an important milestone of the struggle in which all forms of agitation including social media activism was to culminate in a final bid to oust the president. Highlighting the role of social media, Reuters went on to report how protestors considered coordinated social media activism to be an effective method to reach a wider audience of around “5 million households and 8 million active Facebook accounts”¹¹.

With the *Aragalaya* gaining momentum, many social media activists connected to the struggle were also seen arrested or attacked. Some influential figures who came under attack included popular YouTuber Rathindu Suramya Senarathna, also known as Ratta¹² and YouTuber Dilan Senanayake¹³ among many others¹⁴. It was also claimed that there were mudslinging campaigns aimed at destroying the image of those who were involved in the struggle¹⁵ and there were also instances of YouTubers having fall-outs with protestors as was the case with the popular YouTuber Samantha Piyumal Samarasinghe, also known as Motivation Appachchi¹⁶. These go on to show the organic non-consolidated nature of the struggle.

Artists: Another important group of the *Aragalaya* was the artists. The space at *GotaGoGama* was a venue for the free creative expression of a myriad of emotions spanning hope, unity, disenchantment, anger and resilience. There were art camps organized for people from diverse backgrounds to express their emotions on canvas. There were also murals and sculptures put up against oppression, a people's university organized for the discussion of socio-legal issues by scholars and artists and workshops organized for creative alternative storytelling that challenge the establishment's narration of history¹⁷. Digital projections against oppression displayed on the walls of the Presidential Secretariat coupled with a pride march and testimonies of the disappeared featuring grief related to the country's long history of disappearances that cut across ethnic divides¹⁸ only made the message of the struggle more evocative. The culmination of all these different artistic endeavors not only made the protests peaceful but also was a call for unity for all Sri Lankans who were for decades divided along ethnic lines. Artists from various creative genres were part of the protests once again signaling how the *Aragalaya* was able to appeal to various different segments of society. Hiran Abeysekera¹⁹, Nanda Malini, Swarna Mallawarachchi²⁰, Jehan Appuhamy²¹ and Dinupa Kodagoda²² are few among many of the artists who joined the protests.

Student/trade unions: Student and trade unions played a major role in organizing the protests. Inter University Students' Federation (IUSF) tapping into their vast network played a crucial role in galvanizing support for the protests²³. Even though student union protests are generally viewed in a negative light, IUSF'S involvement in the *Aragalaya* was much welcome by both the public and university students who generally are not a part of IUSF related politics²⁴. Inter-University Bhikkhu Federation (IUBF) was another student union that had an active involvement in the *Aragalaya*²⁵. Wasantha Mudalige and Galwewa Sridhamma Thera, the two conveners of IUSF and IUBF respectively were arrested and detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) for their active involvement in the protests²⁶.

Multiple different trade unions were also part of the *Aragalaya* not only during the initial Galle Face phase but also in the latter half of 2022²⁷ and they continue to keep the reform agenda alive. Trade unions represented a wide spectrum of sectors from electricity to farming, teaching and ports²⁸. In a wave of *Aragalaya* related protests in June 2022, Joseph Stalin, General Secretary of Ceylon Teachers' Union (CTU) too was arrested²⁹, a move that was widely condemned and criticized by many quarters³⁰. From mobilizing protestors to getting them down to Colombo despite strikes in the transportation sector, many trade unions including the CTU played a critical role³¹. From being an active part of the protests to condemning repression of the *Aragalaya* and criticizing the persecution of *Aragalaya* activists, the Federation of University Teachers' Associations (FUTA) too was at the forefront of the protests³². Trade Union Coordination Centre (TUCC) even organized a second phase of the *Aragalaya* in October 2022³³.

Religious organizations: *Aragalaya* was indicative of a religious pluralism that is not typical of the Sri Lankan politico-social landscape. While the country has been marred by ethnic and religious tensions for decades, *Aragalaya* was able to successfully transcend these boundaries and bring together clergy and laymen from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds. Interfaith support received by the *Aragalaya* was characterized by the participation of clergy from all main faiths in the island as well as celebrations of Easter, Ramadan and New Year³⁴. Stories about forging of special bonds between different ethnic and religious groups in breaking the fast for iftar³⁵, sharing of sweets for Awrudu³⁶, and celebrating vesak³⁷ were in abundance. Many however express concerns over the endurance of these inter-ethnic and inter-religious bonds beyond the *Aragalaya*³⁸. Certain religious figures also fell victim to reprisals from the government. Catholic priest Jeewantha Peiris was one such figure whom the police wanted to arrest for his involvement in anti-government protests³⁹.

Apart from the collectives mentioned above, Sri Lanka's *Aragalaya* was dubbed as a largely youth driven movement⁴⁰ characterized by social media youth activism, student politics

and the voluntary participation of a massive youth populace. Furthermore, certain political parties especially those of the parliamentary opposition were supportive of the protests in varying different degrees. Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) organized protests in the initial phase of the *Aragalaya*⁴¹ and condemned the use of PTA provisions against protestors⁴² while the Frontline Socialist Party (FSP) was criticized for trying to claim ownership of the struggle using their undergraduate front IUSF⁴³. There were also civil society organizations working on issues pertaining to war veterans⁴⁴ and enforced disappearances⁴⁵ that were part of the *Aragalaya*. As some commentators stated, the lack of leadership of the struggle was both the *Aragalaya*'s strength and weakness⁴⁶.

Aragalaya was an organic movement that was characterized by a plurality of social bases that generally demanded systemic reforms. While the immediate demands were in relation to the economic woes, actors had a far reaching agenda that went beyond the immediate economic concerns, an agenda that called for reforms of a corrupt, unaccountable political culture. Galle Face was a mere site in which multiple different struggles manifested and it's important to untether *Aragalaya* from the Colombo site so as not to obliterate myriad other struggles that were part of the *Aragalaya*. Given the plurality of bases representing the *Aragalaya* and the uncoordinated, organic nature of it, it is important to ask ourselves the question 'what do we mean by the *Aragalaya*?'. Is it simply a congregation at the Galle Face? Or is it an ongoing struggle that calls for wider reforms?

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1. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa37/5986/2022/en/> ; <https://www.saaganthology.com/article/whiplash-and-contradiction-in-sri-lanka%E2%80%99s-aragalaya>
 2. Ibid.
 3. See https://www.cpalanka.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/English_-_Confidence-in-democratic-governance-index-wave-2.pdf
 4. See <https://www.ft.lk/columns/Scope-of-Aragalaya-and-future-of-SL/4-739944> ; <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/212143>
 5. See <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/212143> ; <https://economynext.com/sri-lankas-aragalaya-protestors-form-xcore-political-movement-106216/>
 6. See <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/the-listening-post/2022/7/16/gotagohome-the-hashtag-that-defined-sri-lankas-revolution>

7. See <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/03/14/battle-of-the-hashtags-gohomegota-vs-wearewithgota/> ; <https://www.newscutter.lk/sri-lanka-news/latest-news/go-home-gota-hashtag-trends-people-express-their-discontent-in-the-gov-online-14032022-27217/>
8. See <https://www.mediasupport.org/blogpost/occupygalleface-sri-lankas-digital-generation-defies-information-clampdown/>
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. See <https://thewire.in/south-asia/seething-anger-and-digital-mobilisation-how-a-group-of-activists-brought-down-lankas-govt>
12. See <https://economynext.com/sri-lankan-youtuber-and-anti-government-protestor-ratta-arrested-94936/>
13. See https://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking_news/A-govt-concocted-script-to-defame-Aragalaya-activists-Ratta/108-251198
14. On 17 June 2022, 9 suspects involved in violence were ordered to be arrested including Wasantha Mudalige, Lahiru Weerasekera, Rathindu Senaratne alias Ratta, Jagath Manuwarna, Dhammika Munasinghe, Rathkarawwe Jinaratana Thero, Eranga Gunasekara, Jehan Appuhamy and Galwewa Siridhamma Thero. See <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/06/17/nine-key-suspects-involved-in-violent-acts-ordered-to-be-arrested/>
15. See <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/220530>
16. See <https://www.sundaytimes.lk/220515/news/prominent-youtuber-ousted-from-aragalaya-on-accusations-of-misusing-funds-482739.html>
17. See <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/sri-lankan-artists-gota-go-gama-national-crisis-1234635472/> ; <https://asiafoundation.org/2022/08/31/artists-at-the-front-lines-of-sri-lankas-peoples-struggle/>
18. See <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/sri-lankan-artists-gota-go-gama-national-crisis-1234635472/> ; <https://asiafoundation.org/2022/08/31/artists-at-the-front-lines-of-sri-lankas-peoples-struggle/> ; <https://island.lk/the-art-of-dissent-the-aragalaya-showcased-the-most-creative-form-of-protest/> for more on the different creative outlets GotaGoGama made available to the protestors and the artists behind these initiatives.
19. See <https://en.jaffnazone.com/news/6690#!>
20. See <https://www.hirunews.lk/english/301791/artistes-including-nanda-malini-and-swarna-mallawarachchi-at-galle-face-protest-video>
21. See <https://www.colombotimes.net/actor-appuhamy-begins-his-protest-from-katuwapitiya-church-in-negombo-to-galle-face/>
22. See <https://www.sundayobserver.lk/2022/07/23/youth-observer/aesthetic-values-youth-uprising-dinupa-and-nadika>
23. See <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20220714181518211> ; <https://island.lk/student-unions-and-hegemony-confrontations-and-continuations/>
24. See <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20220714181518211>
25. See <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/223040> These student unions are also credited for keeping the spirit of the Aragalaya alive through continuous attempts even after the initial Galle Face phase had passed.
26. See <https://island.lk/aragalaya-livewires-demand-compensation-for-iustf-iubf-convenors-over-detention/> ; https://www.dailymirror.lk/caption_story/Demanding-release-of-Aragalaya-activists/110-248635
27. See <https://sundaytimes.lk/online/news-online/Trade-Unions-rally-in-Colombo-to-launch-second-stage-of-Aragalaya/2-1139295>
28. Ibid.
29. See <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/213092>
30. See <https://lankanewsweb.net/archives/17344/futa-vehemently-condemns-the-arrest-of-ceylon-teachers-union-chairman-joseph-stalin/> ; <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/8/4/concerns-as-sri-lanka-arrests-top-protest-leader-joseph-stalin>
31. See <https://jacobin.com/2022/08/sri-lanka-joseph-stalin-ceylon-teachers-union-protest-cost-of-living-crisis>
32. See <https://www.newsfirst.lk/2022/07/29/futa-condemns-the-repression-of-aragalaya-activists/> ; <https://island.lk/accusing-govt-of-repression-futa-pledges-solidarity-with-protesters/>
33. See <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/223127>
34. See <https://asiafoundation.org/2022/07/20/notes-from-the-field-sri-lankas-revolutionary-aragalaya/>
35. See <https://www.sundaytimes.lk/220501/plus/together-they-protest-together-they-break-fast-481109.html>
36. See <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/198799>
37. See <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/203143>
38. See <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-61295238>
39. See <https://www.ucanews.com/news/sri-lankan-catholic-priest-surrenders-gets-bail/98378>

40. See <https://www.ft.lk/columns/Rebuilding-of-the-nation-by-its-youth-Aragalaya/4-737641> ; <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20220714181518211>
41. See <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/193592>
42. See <https://economynext.com/sri-lanka-main-opposition-sjb-denounces-use-of-pta-to-detain-protestors-98962/>
43. See <https://www.colombotelegraph.com/index.php/janatha-aragalaya-the-peoples-struggle-in-sri-lanka/>
44. See <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/211736>
45. See Ibid; <https://groundviews.org/2022/06/05/the-disappeared-and-the-struggle-of-love/>
46. See <https://www.dailymirror.lk/insight/A-lack-of-leadership-was-Aragalayas-strength-and-weakness/374-256719>

Annexure

1. Survey on Argalaya: an Overview

A national survey on Aragalaya (popular uprising) was conducted by Social Indicator, the survey research arm of the Centre for Policy Alternatives, from September to October 2022 to capture attitudes towards Aragalaya and the youth who led the Aragalaya, the household economic status of the public, and the public opinion on Neo-Liberal reforms which might come into being in Sri Lanka.

Methodology

The survey interviewed a total of 1000 sample respondents across all 25 Districts of the country. A systematic sample of respondents from the Tamil, Muslim, and Up-Country Tamil ethnic communities and also the Urban and Rural community was considered. Prior to analysis, the dataset was weighted to reflect national demographics in order to allow meaningful subgroup analyses. The data set was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results are subject to a +/- 3.5% margin of error.

A maximum of 25 interviews per local government body (MC, UC, and PS) and a maximum of 10 interviews per Grama Niladari division were conducted. The Local Government Body was selected randomly. The Grama Niladari division and the starting point were selected by the relevant field enumerators. Households were selected by the 'right-hand rule'.

Questionnaire

Face-to-face interviews were conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was designed in English and translated into Sinhala and Tamil. In order to test the clarity of the language, sequence effect of the questions, and relevance of the answer categories, the survey questionnaire was pre-tested on the field by a group of senior field researchers, among a diverse group of respondents from Sinhala and Tamil speaking communities. The survey questionnaire was fine-tuned following the pre-test.

Fieldwork

A total of 57 field enumerators – both male and female – participated in this study. They were given a comprehensive training on the study, the survey questionnaire, and field techniques by the research team. Interviews were conducted in the first language of both the respondent and the field enumerator. To ensure the quality of the data collected, accompanied visits and back-checks were done during and after fieldwork. Data collection was carried out from 22nd September to 10th October 2022.

2. Research Instrument

STUDY ON ARAGALAYA - SEPTEMBER 2022
CONDUCTED BY SOCIAL INDICATOR
 N0: 6/1B, 1/1, LAYARDS ROAD, COLOMBO 5
 Phone No: 0112584050

Questionnaire Serial No: Enumerator No: Start Time:

Good morning /afternoon/ evening. My name is _____ and I represent Social Indicator, a research organisation that conducts independent research on social issues. We are currently conducting a study on knowledge, attitude and perception on Aragalaya. We would appreciate it if you could please provide some of your valuable time to answer a few questions on this. I hereby assure you that your views expressed will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

1. If you were able to decide on the top three sectors the national budget should make allocations on, what would these three sectors be?

Sector	Rank
1. Allocation for military and national security	
2. Development of the agriculture sector	
3. Development of the education sector	
4. Improved health facilities	
5. Improve the condition of the public service	
6. Relief for low-income families	
7. Development of infrastructure facilities	
8. Other.....	

2. I will read out a few statements about your income. Please tell me which of the following statements describe your situation
1. Our income covers our needs well, we can save
 2. Our income covers our needs alright without much difficulty
 3. Our income does not cover our needs, there are difficulties
 4. Our income does not cover our needs, there are great difficulties
 5. Could not understand
 98. No Opinion
3. How soon do you think the country's economy will return to its normal status?
1. Very soon
 2. Takes some time
 3. Takes a long time
 99. Don't know/ Not sure

Protest- Civic engagement

Perception

4. Now I am going to read a few statements regarding the youth who led/ participated in *Aragalaya*. -Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with these statements.

Statements	Strongly Agree	Some what Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. I think the Aragalaya was led by civic-minded youth with the aim of reforming the country to a better democracy.	1	2	3	4	5	99
2. I think the Aragalaya is an inclusive event and people from all ethnic and religious groups participated in it.	1	2	3	4	5	99
3. I think the Aragalaya is an inclusive event and both males and females participated in it.	1	2	3	4	5	99
4. I think people voluntarily participated in Aragalaya and they were not there because they were allied to any political party.	1	2	3	3	4	99
5. I think that the people who participated in Aragalaya protested for a common course concerning the country's better future.	1	2	3	3	4	99
6. I think that the people who were engaged in Aragalaya are broad-minded and modern in their thinking.	1	2	3	3	4	99
7. I think that Aragalaya is led by a group of people who are uncivilised and drug users.	1	2	3	3	4	99
8. I think the youth who participated in Aragalaya also took part in unleashing violence.	1	2	3	3	4	99
9. I think the young people who led the Aragalaya were connected to anti-democratic parties.	1	2	3	3	4	99

Attitude

5. Now I am going to read a few statements regarding the *Aragalaya*. Please tell me with which statement you agree

5.1

A. Aragalaya had a positive impact on our country	B. Aragalaya left more negative things to the society and the country
1. Agree with (A) 2. Agree with (B) 3. Neither 4. Could not understand 5. No Opinion	

5.2

A. Aragalaya was a necessity of the moment	B. Aragalaya was a result of the opportunistic politics
1. Agree with (A) 2. Agree with (B) 3. Neither 4. Could not understand 5. No Opinion	

5.3

A. Legal actions should not be taken against the young people who engaged in Aragalaya	B. If the protesters have violated the law it is okay to take legal actions against them
1. Agree with (A) 2. Agree with (B) 3. Neither 4. Could not understand 5. No Opinion	

Knowledge

6. Where in Colombo, did the main protest site of Aragalaya take place?

DD/ MM/ YY 99. Don't know/not sure. 1. Correct 2. Incorrect

7. Could you please tell me the date of former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's resignation?

DD/ MM/ YY 99. Don't know/not sure. 1. Correct 2. Incorrect

8. Ranil Wickremesinghe was elected as 8th Executive President by the Parliament. Do you remember the date it happened?

- 1. President's official residence - Janadhipathi Mawatha, Colombo 01
- 2. Presidential Secretariat Office – Galle Face
- 3. Prime Minister's Office – Flower Road
- 4. Prime Minister's official residence -Temple Trees, Galle Road
- 5. Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC)
- 6. Other
- 99. Don't know/ not sure

9. Ranil Wickremesinghe was elected as 8th Executive President by the Parliament. Do you remember the date it happened?

DD/ MM/ YY 99. Don't know/not sure. 1. Correct 2. Incorrect

Participation

10.	Yes	No	Don't know/not sure
1. Did you participate in any of the protests organised within your neighbourhood or elsewhere during the period of March to July.	1	2	99
2. Did a member of your immediate family participate in any of the protests organised within your neighbourhood or elsewhere during the period of March to July.	1	2	99

11. Have you been to Gota Go Gama protest site at Galle Face Green?

1. Yes
2. No (Go to Q 13)
98. No response (Go to Q 13)

12. If yes, with whom did you go there? (Multiple responses)

1. With friends
2. With colleagues/ co-worker
3. With neighbourhood or community group
4. With family members
5. Myself only
6. Other

13. People have various opinions in terms of participating in protests. There are some people who do not like to protest while there are people who are very active in terms of participating in protests. There are also people who participate in protests as long as it addresses a concern that impact them personally. Out of the following which statement describe your situation the most in participating in protests?

1. I personally do not like to take part in protests.
2. I may participate in protests if my personal interests are challenged, otherwise I don't generally like to protest.
3. I may participate in protests on issues that have a direct impact on my family or relatives.
4. If the protests are against any social injustice, I may participate.
98. No opinion/ No response

Participation - Past practice Before April 2022

14. Have you done the following to influence rules, laws or policies during 12 months period before Aragalaya, April 2022?

	Yes	No
1. Participated/ worked with a neighbourhood or community group on a particular issue that involves politics/ policy	1	2
2. Contacted an elected official/ politician to ask for a favour or raise an issue	1	2
3. Taken part in a protest campaign/march on some national or local issue	1	2
4. Signed a petition regarding a policy/ law of the country	1	2
5. Attended a political meeting or rally	1	2
6. Taken part in a strike/ boycott	1	2
7. Attended a demonstration about a political issue that would have an impact on the country	1	2
8. Engaged in social media to voice my political opinion (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp etc)	1	2

15. There have been several protests taken place in Sri Lanka during the last three years. I would like to know about the protest that you could participate in person out of the following given below.

Protest	Participated	Did not participate	Not aware
1. Protest against the chemical fertiliser ban	1	2	99
2. Protest on missing persons during the war	1	2	99
3. Protest on forced cremations during the Covid 19	1	2	97
4. Protest on issues in online education during the covid 19	1	2	97
5. Protest requesting solutions to Human- Elephant Conflict	1	2	97
6. Protest on land issues of the people in North and East	1	2	97
7. Protest in land issues in other provinces (other than North and East)	1	2	97
8. Protest on selling Western Container Terminal at Colombo Port to an Indian company	1	2	97
9. Protest in Gota Go Gama in Galle face Green	1	2	97
10. Local level protests that support Gota Go Gama	1	2	97
11. Protests by Trade Unions - Trade Union actions	1	2	97

System change

16. At present, people talk/discuss about a need for a change in the way the country is governed (system change). Please tell me whether you support it or not?
1. Yes, I support a change in the way the country is governed
 2. No, I don't support a change in the way the country is governed
 98. No opinion
 99. Don't know

Willing to make compromises

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. As a result of a change in the way the country is governed if you have to compromise your usual travelling and transportation would you still agree with it?	1	2	3	4	99
2. As a result of a change in the way the country is governed, if you have to compromise the usual food items you are used to purchase , would you still agree with it?	1	2	3	4	99
3. As a result of a change in the way the country is governed, if you were to pay more taxes , would you still agree with it?	1	2	3	4	99
4. As a result of a change in the way the country is governed, if you or any one of your family members were to lose a job , would you still agree with it?	1	2	3	4	99

What they mean by system change

18. Now I am going to read out a few statements about the involvement of the private sector. Could you please tell me whether you agree with these or not?

Ideology - Socialist vs liberal

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. An increased involvement of the private sector in health services will improve the health sector in the country.	1	2	3	99
2. An increased involvement of the private sector in the education sector will improve the quality of education.	1	2	3	99

Ideology - Authoritarian vs democratic

19. Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?
1. Democracy is preferable to any other kind of governance.
 2. In certain situations, a dictatorial government can be preferable to a democratic government.
 3. It doesn't matter to people like me whether we have a democratic or a non-democratic government.
 99. No opinion/ Don't Know

Ideology - Centralist vs Federal

20. I will read out two statements. Please tell with which statement you agree.

A. Power needs to be devolved to the Provincial Councils while reducing the Power of the central government	B. It is ok to decentralize certain powers but powers of the central government should not be reduced
1. Agree with (A) 2. Agree with (B) 3. Neither 4. Could not understand 5. No Opinion	

Ideology - Pluralist vs majoritarian

21. I will read out two statements. Please tell with which statement you agree.

21.1

A. It is okay for the majority religion to be given the foremost place in the constitution	B. In order to maintain every citizens' right to equality, no religion should be given the foremost place in the constitution
1. Agree with (A) 2. Agree with (B) 3. Neither 4. Could not understand 5. No Opinion	

21.2

A. All ethnic groups should be given the freedom to remember those who died as a result of the 30 year-long war	B. All ethnic groups should have the freedom to remember those who died due to the 30 year-long war subject to government-imposed conditions on the right to remember
1. Agree with (A) 2. Agree with (B) 3. Neither 4. Could not understand 5. No Opinion	

Political leadership

22. There are different ways in which a country can be governed. I will read out some suggestions. Please indicate as to what extent you agree/ disagree with the following statements.

Statements	Strongly Agree	Some what Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1. Having a strong leader who can make decisions without having to worry about the parliament and elections.	1	2	3	4	99
2. Having an expert to make decisions according to what he thinks is best for the country, without worrying about the parliament and elections.	1	2	3	4	99
3. The Army (the military) should come in to govern the country.	1	2	3	4	99
4. The country should be governed by those chosen by the people in a free and fair election.	1	2	3	4	99
5. All major decisions about the country should be taken by religious leaders rather than politicians.	1	2	3	4	99

23. In general people expect various support from the politicians whom they voted for. I am going to read a few statements which carries such expectations. How far do you think that politicians you voted for should come to help you in the following instances?

Scenarios you expect help from a politician	At all times when in need	Whenever possible when in need	Sometimes when in need	Not at all when in need
1. If I or someone I know is in need to get some service delivered from a government office	1	2	3	4
2. If I or someone I know is in need to get a public road repaired	1	2	3	4
3. If I or someone I know is in need to get a government remittance such as Samurdhi, Wadihiti Dimana, Natural Disaster relief, etc	1	2	3	4
4. If I or someone I know is in need to get government jobs	1	2	3	4
5. If I or someone I know is in need to get a permit to use natural resources such as sand, trees, rock, land etc	1	2	3	4

6. If I or someone I know is in need to get a permit to use natural resources such as sand, trees, rock, land etc	1	2	3	4
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Economic system – Neoliberal

24. There are different ways in which a country can be governed. I will read out some suggestions. Please indicate as to what extent you agree/ disagree with the following statements.

A. The government should allow foreign companies to invest in our country, as an increase in trade benefits everyone	B. The government should not allow foreign companies to invest in our country as they exploit us
1. Agree with (A) 2. Agree with (B) 3. Neither 4. Could not understand 5. No Opinion	

25.

A. The government should impose a limit of income in order to reduce the income gap of its citizens	B. The government should not restrict a person’s earning capacity
1. Agree with (A) 2. Agree with (B) 3. Neither 4. Could not understand 5. No Opinion	

26.

A. Government corporations should be privatised as running businesses is not the government’s responsibility	B. Government corporations should not be privatised as it is necessary for the country’s development
1. Agree with (A) 2. Agree with (B) 3. Neither 4. Could not understand 5. No Opinion	

27.

A. The number of government employees should be reduced in order to reduce the government spending	B. The number of government employees should not be reduced, even though it impacts high government spending
1. Agree with (A) 2. Agree with (B) 3. Neither 4. Could not understand 5. No Opinion	

Economic system - Welfare

28.

A. People should take care of their own welfare instead of government spending on various welfare programmes	B. It is the government’s responsibility to take care of its people. So the government should spend on welfare programmes
1. Agree with (A) 2. Agree with (B) 3. Neither 4. Could not understand 5. No Opinion	

29.

A. It is the government’s responsibility to ensure that every citizen has a job	B. It is the individual’s responsibility to find a job and not the governments’
1. Agree with (A) 2. Agree with (B) 3. Neither 4. Could not understand 5. No Opinion	

Government employment vs Private employment

30. There are different ways in which a country can be governed. I will read out some suggestions. Please indicate as to what extent you agree/ disagree with the following statements.
1. Very Important
 2. Important
 3. Not Important
 4. Not Important at all
 99. Don't know/not sure
31. While some people have contacts which are important in terms of getting government jobs, some do not have such personal contacts. Do you or anyone in your family know someone who can be helpful to you if you or anyone in your family want to get a government job?
1. Yes
 2. No
 98. No response

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

R1	Respondent's Age:	
R2	Respondent's Sex:	1.Male 2. Female
R3	Respondent's First Language:	1.Sinhala 2. Tamil 3. English

D1. Religion

1. Buddhism
2. Hinduism
3. Islam
4. Christianity (Roman Catholic)
5. Christianity (Non-RC)
6. Other(specify)

D2. Ethnicity

1. Sinhala
2. Tamil
3. Up-Country Tamil
4. Muslim
5. Burgher
6. Other(specify)

D3. Occupation Sector of the Respondents

1. Government
2. Private
3. Non-Governmental
4. Other (specify)

D4. Civil Status

1. Single
2. Married
3. Separated
4. Divorced
5. Living together
6. Other (specify)

D5. Does the respondent have children? If yes, how many? And the age of each child?

1. Number of Children of the respondent's	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Age							

D6. Are there any immediate family members employed in the Government sector?

1. Yes
2. No
98. Not Applicable

D7. Occupation of Main Income Earner:

D7. Occupation of Main Income Earner:

D8. Respondent's Occupation:

D9. Educational Qualifications:

1. Cannot Read or Write
2. Literate but no formal education
3. Up to Grade 5
4. Grade 6 – 9
5. Up to O/L
6. O/L
7. Up to A/L
8. A/L
9. Vocationally trained
10. Technically trained
11. Professional
12. Graduate
13. Postgraduate

D10. Total Monthly Income of Household:

D11. Type of Area: - 1. Municipal Council 2. Urban Council 3. Pradeshiya Sabha

D12. District:

Thank You

3. Results: Demographics of the Survey Sample

Age	%
18 - 29 Yrs	36.7
Above 30 Yrs	63.3
Base	1069

Sex	%
Male	49.9
Female	50.1
Base	1069

Ethnicity	%
Sinhala	77.9
Tamil	7.2
Up-Country Tamil	7.4
Muslim	7.5
Base	1069

Religion	%
Buddhism	74.3
Hinduism	13.0
Islam	7.9
Christianity (Roman Catholic)	3.9
Christianity (Non-RC)	0.9
Base	1069

District	%
Colombo	6.9
Gampaha	5.8
Kalutara	6.0
Kandy	5.3
Matale	5.4
Nuwara Eliya	5.3
Galle	3.8
Matara	3.8
Hambanatotota	3.8
Kurunegala	3.8
Puttalam	4.3
Anuradapura	3.8
Polonnaruwa	3.8
Badulla	9.0
Monaragala	3.8
Rathnapura	4.8
Kegalle	3.8
Jaffna	0.7
Mannar	1.7
Vavuniya	0.7
Mullaitivu	0.7
Kilinochchi	0.7
Batticaloa	1.7
Ampara	5.5
Trincomalee	5.4
Base	1069

Income	%
Less than Rs.10,000.00	2.9
Rs.10,001.00 - Rs.15,000.00	3.9
Rs. 15,001.00 - Rs. 20,000.00	6.9
Rs. 20,001.00 - Rs. 25,000.00	7.2
Rs. 25,001.00 - Rs. 30,000.00	9.6
Rs. 30,001.00 - Rs. 35,000.00	4.7
Rs. 35,001.00 - Rs. 40,000.00	10.8
Rs. 40,001.00 - Rs. 45,000.00	5.1
Rs. 45,001.00 - Rs. 50,000.00	11.3
Rs. 50,001.00 - Rs. 75,000.00	12.1
Rs. 75,001.00 - Rs. 100,000.00	8.8
Above 100,000.00	3.8
No response	12.9
Base	1069

Educational Qualifications	%
Cannot Read or Write	0.8
Literate but no formal education	0.7
Up to Grade 5	3.5
Grade 6 – 9	7.3
Up to O/L	20.1
O/L	15.9
Up to A/L	10.1
A/L	23.7
Vocationally trained	2.3
Technically trained	0.9
Professional	4.6
Graduate	9.4
Postgraduate	0.7
Base	1069

Tables:

National Frequency and Desegregations by Age, Sex, Ethnicity
and Local Government Body

Q1. If you were able to decide on the top three sectors the national budget should make allocations on, what would these three sectors be? - Chose 1

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Allocation for military and national security	4.5	7.1	5.6	3.4	5.5	0.0	1.3	1.3	3.9	2.7	4.9
Development of the agriculture sector	29.9	26.5	34.7	25.1	31.1	29.5	27.5	20.0	22.7	16.1	33.3
Development of the education sector	28.8	34.6	22.9	34.5	29.0	26.9	30.0	27.5	24.7	32.1	29.1
Improved health facilities	14.7	13.7	13.1	16.2	14.5	12.8	20.0	12.5	17.5	10.7	14.6
Improve the condition of the public service	1.7	0.8	2.3	1.1	1.4	2.6	2.5	2.5	3.2	0.9	1.5
Relief for low-income families	17.7	15.8	18.2	17.1	15.5	26.9	16.3	32.5	26.6	32.1	14.0
Development of infrastructure facilities	1.2	1.0	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.3	2.5	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.2
Other	1.6	0.5	1.9	1.5	1.7	0.0	0.0	3.8	0.0	5.4	1.5
Base	1069	393	533	537	832	78	80	80	154	112	802

Q1. If you were able to decide on the top three sectors the national budget should make allocations on, what would these three sectors be? Chose 2

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Allocation for military and national security	2.8	3.1	2.5	2.1	3.4	3.4	0.0	0.0	1.2	1.9	0.0	3.4
Development of the agriculture sector	21.0	23.7	19.5	22.3	19.7	21.3	23.7	16.5	19.8	18.7	29.7	20.3
Development of the education sector	27.9	23.2	30.6	31.0	24.9	28.2	25.0	32.9	21.0	21.3	23.4	29.8
Improved health facilities	25.6	25.0	26.0	22.9	28.5	25.8	23.7	25.3	25.9	26.5	27.0	25.3
Improve the condition of the public service	4.7	4.1	5.0	3.9	5.4	4.3	3.9	7.6	6.2	5.2	2.7	4.9
Relief for low-income families	14.3	15.6	13.6	12.4	16.3	13.1	22.4	15.2	19.8	20.6	15.3	13.0
Development of infrastructure facilities	2.9	4.1	2.4	4.5	1.3	3.1	1.3	2.5	3.7	4.5	0.0	3.0
Other	.6	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	1.8	0.5
Don't Know	.2	0.5	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0
Base	1069	392	677	533	534	832	76	79	81	155	111	803

Q1. If you were able to decide on the top three sectors the national budget should make allocations on, what would these three sectors be? Chose 3

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Development of the agriculture sector	17.8	11.7	21.4	16.1	19.4	17.4	18.2	21.5	18.8	12.9	20.7	18.3
Development of the education sector	17.5	16.6	18.0	18.9	16.2	16.7	22.1	16.5	22.5	24.5	10.8	17.2
Improved health facilities	32.4	35.7	30.5	33.0	31.7	34.8	26.0	20.3	25.0	25.8	36.0	33.1
Improve the condition of the public service	3.8	6.6	2.1	3.7	3.9	2.6	9.1	7.6	7.5	3.9	3.6	3.9
Relief for low-income families	14.9	15.6	14.5	12.7	17.0	13.3	19.5	26.6	16.3	15.5	19.8	14.1
Development of infrastructure facilities	8.3	10.5	7.0	9.4	7.3	9.1	3.9	5.1	6.3	8.4	1.8	9.2
Other	.8	1.0	0.6	1.1	0.6	0.7	1.3	0.0	1.3	2.6	0.9	0.4
Don't Know	1.3	0.8	1.6	2.1	0.6	1.4	0.0	0.0	2.5	6.5	0.0	0.5
Base	1069	392	676	534	536	833	77	79	80	155	111	804

Q2. I will read out a few statements about your income. Please tell me which of the following statements describe your situation?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Our income covers our needs well, we can save	2.1	3.6	1.2	2.8	1.3	1.9	1.3	3.9	2.5	7.2	2.7	1.0
Our income covers our needs alright without much difficulty	16.6	17.7	15.9	15.6	17.7	16.0	17.1	17.1	21.3	23.5	12.5	15.9
Our income does not cover our needs, there are difficulties	35.1	36.9	34.1	37.1	33.1	32.6	40.8	48.7	43.8	32.7	36.6	35.3
Our income does not cover our needs, there are great difficulties	46.2	41.8	48.8	44.4	47.9	49.5	40.8	30.3	32.5	36.6	48.2	47.8
Base	1062	390	672	531	532	829	76	76	80	153	112	799

Q3. How soon do you think the country's economy will return to its normal status?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Very soon	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.9	1.2	1.3	3.8	1.3	1.3	0.9	1.5
Takes some time	15.3	15.6	15.2	18.5	12.1	14.5	19.5	10.1	25.0	18.8	14.3	14.8
Takes a long time	63.0	63.8	62.5	62.9	63.1	64.5	58.4	53.2	61.3	55.2	64.3	64.4
Don't know/ Not sure	20.2	19.1	20.8	17.4	22.9	19.8	20.8	32.9	12.5	24.7	20.5	19.3
Base	1069	392	678	534	536	833	77	79	80	154	112	803

Q4.1. I think the *Aragalaya* was led by civic-minded youth with the aim of reforming the country to a better democracy.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	81.7	77.3	83.0	80.4	79.8	86.8	91.1	87.7	76.8	90.9	81.4
Neither	6.4	7.4	5.6	7.1	7.2	3.9	3.8	2.5	5.2	3.6	7.0
Disagree	7.9	10.0	8.8	7.1	9.1	3.9	3.8	2.5	12.9	0.0	8.0
Don't Know	4.0	5.3	2.6	5.4	3.8	5.3	1.3	7.4	5.2	5.5	3.6
Base	1069	678	534	536	832	76	79	81	155	110	803

Q4.2. I think the *Aragalaya* is an inclusive event and people from all ethnic and religious groups participated in it.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	88.4	91.1	86.9	88.2	88.6	87.7	89.6	92.4	91.3	87.8	90.1	88.4
Neither	3.6	3.8	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.8	2.6	3.8	1.3	1.9	3.6	3.9
Disagree	5.0	4.1	5.6	5.6	4.5	6.0	2.6	1.3	0.0	6.4	0.0	5.4
Don't Know	3.0	1.0	4.1	2.6	3.4	2.4	5.2	2.5	7.5	3.8	6.3	2.4
Base	1069	392	678	534	536	832	77	79	80	156	111	802

Q4.3. I think the *Aragalaya* is an inclusive event and both males and females participated in it.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	93.8	96.7	92.2	95.9	91.8	94.2	94.8	91.1	91.3	95.5	91.9	93.8
Neither	2.7	2.3	3.0	1.9	3.6	2.9	1.3	5.1	0.0	0.0	2.7	3.2
Disagree	1.0	0.5	1.2	0.8	1.1	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.0	0.7
Don't Know	2.5	0.5	3.7	1.5	3.6	1.7	3.9	3.8	8.8	1.9	5.4	2.2
Base	1069	392	676	533	535	832	77	79	80	155	111	803

Q4.4. I think people voluntarily participated in *Aragalaya* and they were not there because they were allied to any political party.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	73.7	79.1	72.8	74.6	71.8	80.5	83.5	77.8	77.6	79.5	72.1
Neither	10.1	12.2	10.5	9.7	11.7	6.5	5.1	3.7	6.4	10.7	10.8
Disagree	9.2	4.3	11.8	6.5	10.1	3.9	6.3	7.4	6.4	1.8	10.7
Don't Know	7.0	4.3	4.9	9.1	6.5	9.1	5.1	11.1	9.6	8.0	6.4
Base	1069	392	533	536	832	77	79	81	156	112	802

Q4.5. I think that the people who participated in *Aragalaya* protested for a common cause concerning the country's better future.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	82.0	77.1	82.0	81.8	81.7	84.2	86.1	80.2	84.4	78.4	82.2
Neither	7.7	9.3	7.3	8.2	8.4	6.6	6.3	2.5	3.2	12.6	7.9
Disagree	5.8	3.1	6.6	5.2	6.3	2.6	5.1	4.9	7.1	1.8	6.1
Don't Know	4.5	1.5	4.1	4.8	3.6	6.6	2.5	12.3	5.2	7.2	3.9
Base	1069	677	534	537	832	76	79	81	154	111	802

Q4.6. I think that the people who were engaged in *Aragalaya* are broad-minded and modern in their thinking.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	72.5	69.3	70.4	74.8	70.6	79.2	81.0	77.8	71.2	71.2	73.1
Neither	11.4	12.3	13.9	9.0	12.9	6.5	8.9	4.9	13.5	14.4	10.5
Disagree	9.2	10.6	10.3	8.0	10.3	3.9	6.3	4.9	11.5	3.6	9.5
Don't Know	6.9	5.1	5.4	8.2	6.3	10.4	3.8	12.3	3.8	10.8	7.0
Base	1069	677	533	535	832	77	79	81	156	111	802

Q4.7. I think that *Aragalaya* is led by a group of people who are uncivilised and drug users.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	11.8	9.4	13.1	12.6	10.8	11.6	13.0	20.3	3.7	14.2	7.1	11.8
Neither	11.7	14.8	9.9	15.0	8.4	12.8	6.5	11.4	6.2	10.3	12.5	11.8
Disagree	64.8	66.9	63.7	63.4	66.4	64.6	61.0	63.3	70.4	60.6	63.4	65.9
Don't Know	11.7	8.9	13.3	9.0	14.4	10.9	19.5	5.1	19.8	14.8	17.0	10.5
Base	1069	393	677	533	535	834	77	79	81	155	112	803

Q4.8. I think the youth who participated in *Aragalaya* also took part in unleashing violence.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	19.5	17.9	20.5	19.7	19.4	20.3	19.5	21.3	10.0	20.0	14.3	20.2
Neither	12.7	12.2	13.0	13.9	11.6	13.8	6.5	11.3	10.0	8.4	15.2	13.2
Disagree	57.0	61.2	54.5	57.5	56.5	56.1	55.8	62.5	62.5	60.0	58.0	56.4
Don't Know	10.7	8.7	12.0	9.0	12.5	9.8	18.2	5.0	17.5	11.6	12.5	10.2
Base	1069	392	677	534	536	833	77	80	80	155	112	802

Q4.9. I think the young people who led the *Aragalaya* were connected to anti-democratic parties.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	16.6	12.0	19.2	18.0	15.3	16.4	18.2	22.8	11.3	21.4	15.3	15.9
Neither	13.2	16.3	11.5	15.2	11.4	14.5	9.1	10.1	7.5	9.1	10.8	14.3
Disagree	54.2	56.2	52.9	52.2	56.0	53.4	50.6	62.0	57.5	55.8	56.8	53.5
Don't Know	16.0	15.5	16.4	14.6	17.4	15.7	22.1	5.1	23.8	13.6	17.1	16.3
Base	1069	393	677	534	536	834	77	79	80	154	111	804

Q5.1. Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Aragalaya had a positive impact on our country	82.0	87.8	78.6	81.6	82.5	81.4	91.2	70.4	89.4	80.2	84.3	82.0
Aragalaya left more negative things to the society and the country	18.0	12.2	21.4	18.4	17.5	18.6	8.8	29.6	10.6	19.8	15.7	18.0
Base	838	311	528	434	405	662	57	54	66	121	89	628

Q5.2. Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
The Aragalaya was a necessity of the moment	80.9	85.9	78.0	77.5	84.3	79.6	94.0	75.8	86.3	79.2	85.1	80.7
Aragalaya was a result of the opportunistic politics	19.1	14.1	22.0	22.5	15.7	20.4	6.0	24.2	13.7	20.8	14.9	19.3
Base	937	341	596	472	464	730	67	66	73	130	87	720

Q5.3. Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Legal actions should not be taken against the young people who engaged in Aragalaya	42.0	45.7	39.8	41.5	42.6	34.9	84.4	50.0	71.0	49.6	61.2	38.1
If the protesters have violated the law it is okay to take legal actions against them	58.0	54.3	60.2	58.5	57.4	65.1	15.6	50.0	29.0	50.4	38.8	61.9
Base	919	346	573	468	451	730	64	56	69	137	85	698

Q6. Where in Colombo, did the main protest site of *Aragalaya* take place?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Correct	87.1	88.3	91.4	82.8	90.6	72.4	72.5	80.2	89.7	82.0	87.4
Incorrect	3.6	3.1	2.2	5.0	2.9	5.3	8.8	4.9	3.9	1.8	3.9
Don't know/not sure.	9.2	8.7	6.4	12.1	6.5	22.4	18.8	14.8	6.5	16.2	8.7
Base	1069	393	534	535	832	76	80	81	155	111	803

Q7. Could you please tell me the date of former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's resignation?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Correct	4.9	5.6	7.5	2.2	4.3	13.0	5.1	2.5	8.4	1.8	4.7
Incorrect	30.7	33.7	31.1	30.2	32.2	16.9	34.2	25.0	22.6	22.3	33.4
Don't know/not sure.	64.4	60.7	61.4	67.5	63.5	70.1	60.8	72.5	69.0	75.9	61.9
Base	1069	392	533	536	833	77	79	80	155	112	803

Q8. On July 09th and 10th the protestors captured a few government buildings/premises. Could you please name a few of them? (Do not read answers. Multiple answer possible)

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
National											
President's official residence - Janadhipathi Mawatha, Colombo 01	70.5	73.6	73.7	67.5	74.2	59.7	60.3	54.3	68.2	65.8	71.9
Presidential Secretariat Office - Galle Face	17.1	15.2	18.4	15.7	16.0	23.4	11.5	28.4	17.5	13.5	17.5
Prime Minister's Office - Flower Road	1.2	0.9	0.6	1.7	1.2	1.3	0.0	1.2	2.6	0.9	0.9
Prime Minister's official residence - Temple Trees, Galle Road	2.8	1.3	1.5	3.9	2.9	2.6	2.6	1.2	2.6	5.4	2.4
Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC)	.7	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.0	6.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
Don't know/ not sure	7.8	8.4	5.3	10.5	5.5	13.0	19.2	14.8	9.1	14.4	6.5
Base	1069	392	533	535	832	77	78	81	154	111	802

Q8. On July 09th and 10th the protestors captured a few government buildings/premises. Could you please name a few of them? (Do not read answers. Multiple answer possible)

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
National											
President's official residence - Janadhipathi Mawatha, Colombo 01	.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Presidential Secretariat Office – Galle Face	57.8	59.4	62.9	51.9	57.2	69.1	57.6	55.1	62.3	52.2	57.7
Prime Minister's Office – Flower Road	19.4	17.9	16.8	22.4	19.3	16.4	18.2	26.5	18.9	10.1	20.4
Prime Minister's official residence - Temple Trees, Galle Road	18.1	21.6	16.8	19.5	19.0	9.1	24.2	12.2	18.9	33.3	16.4
Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC)	4.6	5.5	3.3	6.2	4.4	5.5	0.0	6.1	0.0	4.3	5.3
Don't know/ not sure	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Base	817	291	428	389	678	55	33	49	106	69	641

Q8. On July 09th and 10th the protestors captured a few government buildings/premises. Could you please name a few of them? (Do not read answers. Multiple answer possible)

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Presidential Secretariat Office – Galle Face	2	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Prime Minister's Office – Flower Road	47.4	46.3	48.8	45.5	47.3	58.8	40.0	36.4	50.8	57.1	46.0
Prime Minister's official residence - Temple Trees, Galle Road	36.6	33.1	35.0	39.0	37.2	23.5	46.7	40.9	40.7	19.0	37.9
Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (SLRC)	15.8	20.6	15.8	15.5	15.5	17.6	13.3	18.2	8.5	23.8	16.1
Don't know/ not sure	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Base	510	175	297	213	438	34	15	22	59	42	409

Q9. Ranil Wickremesinghe was elected as 8th Executive President by the Parliament. Do you remember the date it happened?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Correct	5.1	4.7	7.1	3.0	5.3	6.5	2.5	3.7	3.9	0.9	5.9
Incorrect	19.3	20.1	18.6	20.0	18.8	18.2	20.3	24.7	22.6	9.9	19.9
Don't know/not sure.	75.7	75.2	74.3	77.1	75.9	75.3	77.2	71.6	73.5	89.2	74.2
Base	1069	677	533	536	833	77	79	81	155	111	803

Q10.1. Did you participate in any of the protests organised within your neighbourhood or elsewhere during the period of March to July.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Yes	24.2	30.0	20.8	29.4	19.1	25.4	15.6	25.6	19.8	31.6	21.4	23.2
No	74.3	69.0	77.4	69.5	79.1	73.7	79.2	71.8	79.0	65.8	75.0	75.8
Don't Know/ Not Sure	1.5	1.0	1.8	1.1	1.9	1.0	5.2	2.6	1.2	2.6	3.6	1.0
Base	1069	393	677	534	535	832	77	78	81	155	112	803

Q10.2. Did a member of your immediate family participate in any of the protests organised within your neighbourhood or elsewhere during the period of March to July.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Yes	24.4	29.0	21.9	26.5	22.4	25.6	17.1	21.5	22.2	31.6	18.9	23.8
No	73.2	69.7	75.2	71.3	75.2	73.0	75.0	73.4	74.1	64.5	73.9	74.8
Don't Know/ Not Sure	2.3	1.3	3.0	2.3	2.4	1.4	7.9	5.1	3.7	3.9	7.2	1.4
Base	1069	393	677	533	536	832	76	79	81	155	111	803

Q 11. Have you been to Gota Go Gama protest site at Galle Face Green?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Yes	11.0	15.5	8.4	15.7	6.3	10.3	13.0	7.6	19.8	22.6	12.6	8.6
No (Go to Q 13)	87.9	84.2	90.0	83.3	92.4	88.9	85.7	87.3	79.0	77.4	87.4	89.9
No response (Go to Q 13)	1.1	0.3	1.6	0.9	1.3	0.7	1.3	5.1	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.5
Base	1069	393	677	534	536	832	77	79	81	155	111	803

Q 11. Have you been to Gota Go Gama protest site at Galle Face Green?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Yes	11.0	15.5	8.4	15.7	6.3	10.3	13.0	7.6	19.8	22.6	12.6	8.6
No (Go to Q 13)	87.9	84.2	90.0	83.3	92.4	88.9	85.7	87.3	79.0	77.4	87.4	89.9
No response (Go to Q 13)	1.1	0.3	1.6	0.9	1.3	0.7	1.3	5.1	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.5
Base	1069	393	677	534	536	832	77	79	81	155	111	803

Q12. If yes, with whom did you go there? (Multiple responses) Response 1

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
With friends	55.3	68.9	40.4	56.5	51.5	62.8	22.2	66.7	31.3	23.5	61.5	69.6
With colleagues/ co-worker	5.4	4.9	5.3	7.1	3.0	4.7	11.1	16.7	6.3	0.0	0.0	8.7
With neighbourhood or community group	15.9	9.8	22.8	14.1	21.2	14.0	33.3	0.0	18.8	29.4	15.4	10.1
With family members	18.6	16.4	21.1	16.5	24.2	14.0	33.3	16.7	37.5	47.1	7.7	7.2
Myself only	4.8	0.0	10.5	5.9	0.0	4.7	0.0	0.0	6.3	0.0	15.4	4.3
Base	118	61	57	85	33	86	9	6	16	34	13	69

Q13. People have various opinions in terms of participating in protests. There are some people who do not like to protest while there are people who are very active in terms of participating in protests. There are also people who participate in protests as long as it addresses a concern that impact them personally. Out of the following which statement describe your situation the most in participating in protests ?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
I personally do not like to take part in protests.	25.0	29.4	22.3	27.8	22.7	29.5	24.1	45.7	25.2	24.1	25.2
I may participate in protests if my personal interests are challenged, otherwise I don't generally like to protest.	9.4	10.4	10.1	8.8	9.1	14.1	8.9	7.4	9.0	11.6	9.2
I may participate in protests on issues that have a direct impact on my family or relatives.	10.8	8.7	11.8	9.7	11.4	12.8	7.6	6.2	12.3	14.3	10.1
If the protests are against any social injustice, I may participate.	49.0	45.4	51.1	46.8	54.4	33.3	26.6	30.9	44.5	36.6	51.6
No opinion/ no response	5.7	6.1	4.7	6.9	2.4	10.3	32.9	9.9	9.0	13.4	4.0
Base	1069	676	534	536	833	78	79	81	155	112	803

Q14.1. Participated/ worked with a neighbourhood or community group on a particular issue that involves politics/ policy

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Yes	11.3	10.7	11.7	15.9	6.7	10.1	16.9	15.2	13.8	7.7	19.8	10.8
No	88.7	89.3	88.3	84.1	93.3	89.9	83.1	84.8	86.3	92.3	80.2	89.2
Base	1069	393	676	534	536	832	77	79	80	155	111	803

Q14.2. Contacted an elected official/ politician to ask for a favour or raise an issue

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Yes	8.2	7.7	8.6	11.3	5.2	5.8	16.9	18.8	15.0	10.3	12.6	7.1
No	91.8	92.3	91.4	88.7	94.8	94.2	83.1	81.3	85.0	89.7	87.4	92.9
Base	1069	392	677	533	536	832	77	80	80	155	111	802

Q14. 3. Taken part in a protest campaign/march on some national or local issue

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Yes	11.1	9.7	14.8	7.5	10.3	14.3	15.2	11.3	8.4	11.7	11.5
No	88.9	90.3	85.2	92.5	89.7	85.7	84.8	88.8	91.6	88.3	88.5
Base	1069	392	534	536	832	77	79	80	155	111	802

Q14. 4. Signed a petition regarding a policy/ law of the country

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Yes	8.3	6.4	10.7	6.0	7.0	16.9	15.2	7.5	7.7	9.0	8.3
No	91.7	93.6	89.3	94.0	93.0	83.1	84.8	92.5	92.3	91.0	91.7
Base	1069	392	534	536	832	77	79	80	155	111	803

Q14.5. Attended a political meeting or rally

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Yes	14.0	14.5	17.3	10.7	13.6	9.1	24.1	13.8	5.2	20.7	14.8
No	86.0	87.0	82.7	89.3	86.4	90.9	75.9	86.3	94.8	79.3	85.2
Base	1069	676	533	535	833	77	79	80	155	111	803

Q14.6. Taken part in a strike/ boycott

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Yes	8.0	4.3	8.8	7.3	7.5	9.2	15.2	5.0	7.1	5.4	8.6
No	92.0	95.7	91.2	92.7	92.5	90.8	84.8	95.0	92.9	94.6	91.4
Base	1069	392	534	536	832	76	79	80	155	112	803

Q14.7. Attended a demonstration about a political issue that would have an impact on the country

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
		Above 30 Yrs									
Yes	10.7	10.5	14.1	7.3	10.1	15.6	10.1	12.5	9.0	7.1	11.5
No	89.3	89.5	85.9	92.7	89.9	84.4	89.9	87.5	91.0	92.9	88.5
Base	1069	392	533	536	832	77	79	80	155	112	802

Q14.8. Engaged in social media to voice my political opinion (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp etc)

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
		Above 30 Yrs									
Yes	21.3	32.9	25.8	16.8	21.5	23.4	18.8	20.0	21.9	21.4	21.2
No	78.7	67.1	74.2	83.2	78.5	76.6	81.3	80.0	78.1	78.6	78.8
Base	1069	392	534	536	833	77	80	80	155	112	803

Q15.1. Protest against the chemical fertiliser ban

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Participated	9.1	11.2	12.2	6.0	10.1	6.5	7.7	1.2	4.5	3.6	10.7
Did not participate	87.7	85.8	84.5	90.9	87.3	90.9	83.3	93.8	89.0	91.0	87.0
Not aware	3.2	3.0	3.4	3.2	2.6	2.6	9.0	4.9	6.5	5.4	2.2
Base	1069	676	534	536	832	77	78	81	154	111	803

Q15.2. Protest on missing persons during the war

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Participated	0.7	0.7	0.9	0.4	0.2	6.5	0.0	0.0	1.3	1.8	0.5
Did not participate	88.8	89.7	89.3	88.4	87.4	92.2	89.9	100.0	81.9	83.0	90.9
Not aware	10.5	9.6	9.8	11.2	12.4	1.3	10.1	0.0	16.8	15.2	8.6
Base	1069	677	533	535	833	77	79	80	155	112	803

Q15.3. Protest on forced cremations during the Covid 19

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Participated	1.8	1.8	2.4	1.1	1.0	2.6	3.8	7.5	2.6	0.9	1.9
Did not participate	89.3	89.0	88.4	90.3	89.4	89.6	87.3	91.3	82.7	84.8	91.3
Not aware	8.8	9.2	9.2	8.6	9.6	7.8	8.9	1.3	14.7	14.3	6.9
Base	1069	392	534	535	832	77	79	80	156	112	802

Q15.4. Protest on issues in online education during the covid 19

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Participated	2.1	1.5	2.6	1.5	1.9	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.6	0.9	2.2
Did not participate	89.6	90.1	89.0	90.3	90.1	85.7	85.9	92.5	86.5	81.1	91.4
Not aware	8.3	8.4	8.4	8.2	7.9	11.7	11.5	5.0	10.9	18.0	6.4
Base	1069	392	534	536	832	77	78	80	156	111	803

Q15.5. Protest requesting solutions to Human- Elephant Conflict

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Participated	4.7	2.6	6.6	2.8	5.8	2.6	0.0	0.0	3.9	0.0	5.5
Did not participate	87.6	90.1	86.9	88.4	88.7	83.1	74.7	95.0	84.5	86.5	88.4
Not aware	7.7	7.4	6.6	8.8	5.5	14.3	25.3	5.0	11.6	13.5	6.1
Base	1069	392	533	535	832	77	79	80	155	111	803

Q15.6. Protest on land issues of the people in North and East

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Participated	0.8	0.8	1.3	0.4	0.2	6.5	1.3	1.2	0.0	1.8	0.9
Did not participate	85.1	84.9	85.8	84.5	84.0	92.2	77.5	96.3	79.9	75.7	87.5
Not aware	14.0	14.3	12.9	15.1	15.7	1.3	21.3	2.5	20.1	22.5	11.6
Base	1069	392	534	535	833	77	80	81	154	111	803

Q15.7. Protest in land issues in other provinces (other than North and East)

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Participated	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.0	3.9	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.6
Did not participate	84.3	84.2	84.5	85.0	83.6	84.5	82.9	75.6	93.8	78.6	69.4	87.5
Not aware	15.1	15.3	14.9	14.2	15.9	15.5	13.2	21.8	6.3	21.4	29.7	11.8
Base	1069	392	677	534	536	833	76	78	80	154	111	803

Q15.8. Protest on selling Western Container Terminal at Colombo Port to an Indian company

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Participated	1.0	0.0	1.5	1.9	0.2	1.0	1.3	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	1.2
Did not participate	89.2	89.0	89.4	89.9	88.4	90.1	79.2	82.3	96.3	85.8	90.1	89.8
Not aware	9.9	11.0	9.2	8.2	11.4	8.9	19.5	17.7	2.5	14.2	9.9	9.0
Base	1069	392	677	534	536	832	77	79	81	155	111	803

Q15.9. Protest in Gota Go Gama in Galle face Green

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Participated	9.9	7.4	13.9	5.8	9.1	11.7	6.3	18.8	21.3	8.9	7.8
Did not participate	88.1	90.7	83.7	92.7	88.9	88.3	88.6	81.3	78.7	89.3	89.8
Not aware	2.0	1.9	2.4	1.5	1.9	0.0	5.1	0.0	0.0	1.8	2.4
Base	1069	677	533	535	832	77	79	80	155	112	803

Q15.10. Local level protests that support Gota Go Gama

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Participated	24.0	20.1	30.0	18.1	25.6	11.8	27.8	14.8	26.5	22.5	23.8
Did not participate	73.4	76.7	67.8	78.9	72.5	81.6	65.8	82.7	71.0	70.3	74.3
Not aware	2.6	3.2	2.2	3.0	1.9	6.6	6.3	2.5	2.6	7.2	1.9
Base	1069	677	534	535	832	76	79	81	155	111	803

Q15.11. Protests by Trade Unions - Trade Union actions

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Participated	7.0	5.1	8.1	8.6	5.2	8.2	1.3	3.8	2.5	3.9	5.4	7.7
Did not participate	85.6	89.1	83.6	85.2	86.2	85.1	85.7	84.8	92.5	90.3	70.3	86.9
Not aware	7.4	5.9	8.3	6.2	8.6	6.7	13.0	11.4	5.0	5.8	24.3	5.4
Base	1069	393	677	533	535	832	77	79	80	154	111	803

Q16. At present, people talk/discuss about a need for a change in the way the country is governed (system change). Please tell me whether you support it or not?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Yes, I support a change in the way the country is governed	82.5	86.0	80.6	83.9	81.2	85.3	70.1	65.8	82.5	85.7	73.0	83.3
No, I don't support a change in the way the country is governed	4.9	3.8	5.5	5.1	4.9	4.8	7.8	5.1	2.5	7.1	4.5	4.5
No opinion	9.5	7.1	10.9	8.2	10.8	8.2	19.5	12.7	10.0	7.1	14.4	9.3
Don't know	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.8	3.2	1.7	2.6	16.5	5.0	0.0	8.1	2.9
Base	1069	392	676	534	536	832	77	79	80	154	111	803

Q17.1. As a result of a change in the way the country is governed if you have to compromise your usual travelling and transportation would you still agree with it?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	76.3	76.4	79.3	73.4	77.6	72.5	63.4	77.9	85.3	72.8	75.1
Disagree	23.7	23.6	20.7	26.6	22.4	27.5	36.6	22.1	14.7	27.2	24.9
Base	1044	385	526	518	827	69	71	77	150	103	791

Q17.2. As a result of a change in the way the country is governed, if you have to compromise the usual food items you are used to purchase, would you still agree with it?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body		
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	69.5	68.2	72.8	66.2	72.5	64.9	46.6	63.6	73.4	55.8	70.5
Disagree	30.5	31.8	27.2	33.8	27.5	35.1	53.4	36.4	26.6	44.2	29.5
Base	1050	387	529	521	826	74	73	77	154	104	793

Q17.3. As a result of a change in the way the country is governed, if you were to pay more taxes, would you still agree with it?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	41.4	41.0	46.3	36.5	42.1	45.8	36.6	34.7	33.8	27.2	44.8
Disagree	58.6	59.0	53.7	63.5	57.9	54.2	63.4	65.3	66.2	72.8	55.2
Base	1035	378	520	515	817	72	71	75	148	103	784

Q17.4. As a result of a change in the way the country is governed, if you or any one of your family members were to lose a job, would you still agree with it?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	26.4	25.7	31.1	21.7	27.0	21.4	32.8	20.8	18.9	21.4	28.5
Disagree	73.6	74.3	68.9	78.3	73.0	78.6	67.2	79.2	81.1	78.6	71.5
Base	1018	377	515	503	804	70	67	77	148	98	772

Q18.1. An increased involvement of the private sector in health services will improve the health sector in the country.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	27.4	30.3	25.8	28.3	26.5	30.6	11.7	22.8	13.8	32.3	30.6	26.0
Neither Agree nor Disagree	17.7	17.3	17.9	18.4	17.0	18.6	19.5	16.5	7.5	14.8	16.2	18.4
Disagree	51.9	50.1	52.9	51.2	52.6	48.1	63.6	55.7	76.3	47.1	49.5	53.1
Don't Know	3.0	2.3	3.4	2.1	3.9	2.6	5.2	5.1	2.5	5.8	3.6	2.5
Base	1069	393	677	533	536	832	77	79	80	155	111	803

Q18.2. An increased involvement of the private sector in the education sector will improve the quality of education.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	23.7	27.2	21.6	22.9	24.4	26.1	11.7	22.8	11.3	22.7	31.3	22.8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19.2	19.8	18.8	21.0	17.4	20.8	18.2	15.2	7.5	18.8	14.3	20.0
Disagree	53.5	50.9	55.2	52.5	54.7	50.0	64.9	55.7	77.5	52.6	50.9	54.1
Don't Know	3.6	2.0	4.4	3.6	3.5	3.1	5.2	6.3	3.8	5.8	3.6	3.1
Base	1069	393	676	533	536	832	77	79	80	154	112	802

Q19. Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Democracy is preferable to any other kind of governance.	79.2	77.4	80.2	81.4	77.1	78.8	77.6	75.6	91.3	76.8	76.6	80.1
In certain situations, a dictatorial government can be preferable to a democratic government.	4.7	6.1	3.8	4.5	4.8	5.0	3.9	2.6	2.5	8.4	1.8	4.4
It doesn't matter to people like me whether we have a democratic or a non-democratic government.	6.6	7.1	6.4	4.9	8.2	6.7	6.6	7.7	2.5	9.7	4.5	6.2
No opinion/ Don't Know	9.5	9.4	9.6	9.2	9.9	9.4	11.8	14.1	3.8	5.2	17.1	9.3
Base	1069	393	677	533	537	832	76	78	80	155	111	803

Q20. Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Power needs to be devolved to the Provincial Councils while reducing the Power of the central government	39.4	41.9	38.1	38.5	40.6	36.8	58.4	37.2	51.3	36.1	32.4	41.0
It is ok to decentralize certain powers but powers of the central government should not be reduced	30.4	30.2	30.6	35.0	26.0	31.9	15.6	34.6	25.0	36.1	23.4	30.4
Neither	7.2	4.3	8.9	8.1	6.2	7.9	2.6	7.7	2.5	7.7	15.3	6.0
Could not understand	5.1	3.8	5.8	3.4	6.7	5.3	3.9	7.7	2.5	2.6	3.6	5.7
No Opinion	17.8	19.7	16.7	15.0	20.6	18.1	19.5	12.8	18.8	17.4	25.2	16.9
Base	1069	391	677	532	535	832	77	78	80	155	111	803

Q21.1. Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
It is okay for the majority religion to be given the foremost place in the constitution	34.1	27.6	37.8	33.1	35.1	41.3	9.2	11.4	6.3	30.3	27.0	35.7
In order to maintain every citizens' right to equality, no religion should be given the foremost place in the constitution	53.5	57.1	51.4	56.6	50.4	46.2	77.6	73.4	87.5	53.5	54.1	53.4
Neither	2.6	5.4	1.2	2.2	3.2	2.6	0.0	6.3	0.0	3.2	3.6	2.4
Could not understand	1.5	1.0	1.6	0.4	2.4	1.7	0.0	2.5	0.0	2.6	0.0	1.5
No Opinion	8.3	8.9	8.0	7.7	9.0	8.2	13.2	6.3	6.3	10.3	15.3	7.0
Base	1069	392	677	534	536	832	76	79	80	155	111	803

Q22. 1. Having a strong leader who can make decisions without having to worry about the parliament and elections.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	55.5	56.6	54.8	53.8	57.2	53.9	63.6	66.7	54.3	68.4	55.9	53.1
Disagree	40.1	39.3	40.6	42.4	37.9	42.5	28.6	25.6	40.7	27.1	29.7	44.1
Don't Know	4.3	4.1	4.6	3.8	4.9	3.6	7.8	7.7	4.9	4.5	14.4	2.9
Base	1069	392	677	533	535	833	77	78	81	155	111	803

Q22.2. Having an expert to make decisions according to what he thinks is best for the country, without worrying about the parliament and elections.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	62.2	68.1	58.8	63.3	61.1	60.1	67.5	65.8	74.1	68.4	48.6	62.8
Disagree	33.3	28.1	36.3	33.0	33.6	35.8	24.7	27.8	22.2	26.5	35.1	34.3
Don't Know	4.5	3.8	4.9	3.7	5.2	4.1	7.8	6.3	3.7	5.2	16.2	2.9
Base	1069	392	677	534	535	833	77	79	81	155	111	802

Q22.3. The Army (the military) should come in to govern the country.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
		Above 30 Yrs									
Agree	22.3	25.0	19.5	25.0	26.6	6.6	11.3	3.7	22.6	17.1	22.9
Disagree	72.5	69.9	76.0	69.0	69.1	81.6	78.8	92.6	71.6	69.4	73.1
Don't Know	5.2	5.1	4.5	6.0	4.3	11.8	10.0	3.7	5.8	13.5	4.0
Base	1069	392	534	535	832	76	80	81	155	111	802

Q22.4. The country should be governed by those chosen by the people in a free and fair election.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
		Above 30 Yrs									
Agree	89.2	88.5	90.2	88.4	88.7	94.9	82.5	95.0	88.5	84.7	90.0
Disagree	8.2	8.4	7.9	8.6	8.7	2.6	16.3	2.5	10.3	9.0	7.7
Don't Know	2.5	3.1	1.9	3.0	2.6	2.6	1.3	2.5	1.3	6.3	2.2
Base	1069	393	533	535	832	78	80	80	156	111	802

Q22.5. All major decisions about the country should be taken by religious leaders rather than politicians.

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Agree	21.9	21.4	22.0	17.0	26.7	23.7	16.9	16.5	13.6	12.9	17.1	24.2
Disagree	74.0	75.0	73.5	80.0	68.0	73.2	71.4	77.2	81.5	82.6	65.8	73.6
Don't Know	4.1	3.6	4.4	3.0	5.2	3.1	11.7	6.3	4.9	4.5	17.1	2.2
Base	1069	392	676	534	535	832	77	79	81	155	111	802

Q23.1.If I or someone I know is in need to get some service delivered from a government office

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
At all times when in need	8.4	7.7	8.8	9.2	7.8	6.5	10.4	24.1	11.3	12.8	9.9	7.3
Whenever possible when in need	13.8	15.1	13.1	13.9	13.8	9.4	23.4	41.8	23.8	12.2	25.2	12.6
Sometimes when in need	26.0	24.2	27.0	26.3	25.6	26.1	20.8	24.1	31.3	20.5	39.6	25.2
Not at all when in need	51.3	52.6	50.6	50.3	52.2	57.6	45.5	10.1	33.8	54.5	25.2	54.3
No Response	.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Base	1069	392	678	533	536	832	77	79	80	156	111	803

Q23.2.If I or someone I know is in need to get a public road repaired

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
At all times when in need	22.1	21.7	22.3	23.3	20.9	20.8	24.7	29.1	27.5	28.4	24.3	20.6
Whenever possible when in need	21.9	18.1	24.0	21.0	22.8	19.6	22.1	38.0	30.0	15.5	29.7	22.1
Sometimes when in need	19.3	21.2	18.3	20.6	17.9	19.1	15.6	25.3	20.0	11.6	24.3	20.1
Not at all when in need	36.0	38.5	34.7	34.7	37.4	39.9	37.7	7.6	22.5	44.5	21.6	36.4
No Response	.6	0.5	0.7	0.4	0.9	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9
Base	1069	392	678	533	535	833	77	79	80	155	111	802

Q23.3.If I or someone I know is in need to get a government remittance such as *Samurdhi*, *Wadithi Dimana*, Natural Disaster relief, etc

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
At all times when in need	12.1	11.7	12.3	12.2	11.9	10.1	15.8	21.5	18.5	17.4	16.1	10.6
Whenever possible when in need	15.5	16.0	15.1	15.4	15.5	11.9	21.1	38.0	27.2	13.5	17.0	15.6
Sometimes when in need	24.2	21.6	25.7	24.9	23.5	25.4	18.4	20.3	21.0	18.1	44.6	22.5
Not at all when in need	47.8	50.1	46.5	47.2	48.5	52.2	44.7	20.3	33.3	51.0	22.3	50.7
No Response	.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Base	1069	393	677	534	536	832	76	79	81	155	112	803

Q23.4.If I or someone I know is in need to get government jobs

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
At all times when in need	10.5	9.9	10.8	10.5	10.4	8.2	18.4	19.2	18.8	17.9	9.0	9.3
Whenever possible when in need	13.5	12.2	14.2	13.7	13.4	10.3	15.8	33.3	25.0	15.4	25.2	11.6
Sometimes when in need	21.4	21.2	21.6	23.6	19.0	21.0	18.4	29.5	20.0	12.8	31.5	21.6
Not at all when in need	53.7	55.6	52.7	51.0	56.5	59.5	47.4	17.9	36.3	53.8	34.2	56.3
No Response	.9	1.0	0.7	1.1	0.6	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1
Base	1069	392	676	533	536	832	76	78	80	156	111	804

Q23.5.If I or someone I know is in need to get a permit to use natural resources such as sand, trees, rock, land etc

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
At all times when in need	7.5	6.6	8.0	7.9	7.1	5.5	14.3	15.2	14.8	14.8	3.6	6.7
Whenever possible when in need	9.7	8.9	10.2	10.1	9.3	7.0	15.6	22.8	19.8	8.4	17.0	9.0
Sometimes when in need	22.3	22.7	22.0	24.0	20.5	22.7	14.3	26.6	22.2	20.0	31.3	21.5
Not at all when in need	59.0	60.5	58.2	56.7	61.4	63.1	55.8	34.2	43.2	56.8	48.2	60.8
No Response	1.5	1.3	1.6	1.3	1.7	1.7	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0
Base	1069	392	677	533	536	832	77	79	81	155	112	803

Q23.6.If I or someone I know is in need to find a better school for children

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
At all times when in need	7.6	7.9	7.4	7.3	7.8	4.6	13.0	26.6	15.0	9.0	4.5	7.7
Whenever possible when in need	9.6	8.7	10.2	10.1	9.1	7.2	11.7	24.1	17.5	9.7	14.4	9.1
Sometimes when in need	19.2	19.4	19.1	20.1	18.4	20.1	11.7	21.5	17.5	21.9	38.7	15.9
Not at all when in need	63.1	63.4	62.9	62.1	64.1	67.7	63.6	27.8	50.0	59.4	42.3	66.6
No Response	.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Base	1069	391	677	533	537	832	77	79	80	155	111	803

Q24. Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
The government should allow foreign companies to invest in our country, as an increase in trade benefits everyone	59.8	64.9	56.7	64.0	55.7	62.6	62.8	31.6	55.6	61.3	55.4	60.0
The government should not allow foreign companies to invest in our country as they exploit us	24.4	22.1	25.7	26.0	22.6	23.2	16.7	41.8	27.2	24.5	24.1	24.4
Neither	3.8	2.0	4.9	3.0	4.5	3.4	3.8	8.9	2.5	3.9	1.8	4.1
Could Not Understand	2.5	0.8	3.5	1.1	3.9	2.4	6.4	2.5	0.0	3.2	1.8	2.5
No Opinion	9.5	10.2	9.2	5.8	13.3	8.4	10.3	15.2	14.8	7.1	17.0	9.0
Base	1069	393	677	534	535	832	78	79	81	155	112	803

Q25. Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
The government should impose a limit of income in order to reduce the income gap of its citizens	22.2	26.7	19.7	21.8	22.6	19.4	36.8	29.1	31.6	26.3	20.7	21.6
The government should not restrict a person's earning capacity	63.1	59.0	65.5	64.4	61.9	68.6	38.2	39.2	54.4	59.6	49.5	65.7
Neither	3.1	2.8	3.3	2.6	3.6	2.9	2.6	7.6	1.3	2.6	1.8	3.4
Could Not Understand	2.3	1.8	2.5	1.3	3.4	1.7	5.3	7.6	0.0	3.2	6.3	1.5
No Opinion	9.3	9.7	9.0	9.9	8.6	7.5	17.1	16.5	12.7	8.3	21.6	7.9
Base	1069	393	676	533	535	832	76	79	79	156	111	802

Q27. Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body				
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
The number of government employees should be reduced in order to reduce the government spending	50.7	52.6	49.7	55.7	45.8	52.6	47.4	39.2	46.3	51.0	38.4	52.4
The number of government employees should not be reduced, even though it impacts high government spending	30.4	29.3	31.0	26.6	34.2	28.2	30.3	39.2	45.0	33.5	35.7	29.0
Neither	10.3	10.7	10.0	9.4	11.2	11.9	1.3	10.1	2.5	9.7	7.1	10.8
Could Not Understand	1.3	1.0	1.5	1.7	0.9	1.2	1.3	2.5	0.0	0.0	4.5	1.1
No Opinion	7.2	6.4	7.8	6.6	7.9	6.0	19.7	8.9	6.3	5.8	14.3	6.6
Base	1069	392	678	533	535	832	76	79	80	155	112	803

Q28. Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
People should take care of their own welfare instead of government spending on various welfare programmes	37.8	43.5	34.6	40.2	35.5	38.5	36.4	35.9	34.6	41.9	20.7	39.4
It is the government's responsibility to take care of its people. So the government should spend on welfare programmes	49.3	44.0	52.4	48.2	50.5	48.3	46.8	48.7	63.0	43.9	48.6	50.6
Neither	5.0	4.1	5.6	4.5	5.6	5.5	2.6	5.1	1.2	3.9	11.7	4.4
Could Not Understand	.7	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.9	0.5	2.6	2.6	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.5
No Opinion	7.1	7.6	6.8	6.8	7.5	7.2	11.7	7.7	1.2	9.0	18.9	5.1
Base	1069	393	677	533	535	832	77	78	81	155	111	802

Q29. Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity				Local Government Body			
	National	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
It is the government's responsibility to ensure that every citizen has a job	34.0	35.5	33.1	34.3	33.6	29.2	55.3	39.7	56.8	31.8	36.0	34.1
It is the individual's responsibility to find a job and not the governments'	50.5	50.0	50.9	50.2	50.8	52.9	34.2	53.8	38.3	57.8	38.7	50.8
Neither	7.7	7.9	7.5	8.8	6.7	9.6	0.0	0.0	2.5	2.6	7.2	8.7
Could Not Understand	.6	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.4	0.0
No Opinion	7.2	6.1	7.8	6.4	8.0	7.5	10.5	6.4	2.5	7.8	12.6	6.4
Base	1069	392	676	534	535	831	76	78	81	154	111	803

Q30. It is often said that it is important to have a personal contact in terms of getting government jobs. But there are also people who do not think that it is important. According to your opinion, how important is it to have a personal contact to get a government job ?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Very Important	19.4	20.4	19.3	19.4	17.2	27.3	24.4	30.0	29.0	17.3	17.8
Important	28.1	29.3	28.7	27.5	25.4	42.9	32.1	38.8	26.5	45.5	25.9
Not Important	28.5	27.5	27.0	30.1	31.9	15.6	15.4	20.0	25.8	22.7	29.9
Not Important at all	19.8	18.6	21.3	18.3	22.0	9.1	16.7	10.0	15.5	9.1	22.2
Don't know/hot sure	4.2	4.3	3.7	4.7	3.6	5.2	11.5	1.3	3.2	5.5	4.2
Base	1069	393	534	535	832	77	78	80	155	110	803

Q31. While some people have contacts which are important in terms of getting government jobs, some do not have such personal contacts. Do you or anyone in your family know someone who can be helpful to you if you or any one in your family want to get a government job ?

	Age		Sex		Ethnicity			Local Government Body			
	18 - 29 Yrs	Above 30 Yrs	Male	Female	Sinhala	Tamil	UC Tamil	Muslim	MC	UC	PS
Yes	17.4	17.0	20.3	14.6	15.2	15.6	24.1	35.8	20.5	15.2	17.2
No	76.1	76.3	74.1	78.2	79.2	77.9	58.2	59.3	73.1	74.1	76.8
No response	6.5	6.6	5.6	7.3	5.5	6.5	17.7	4.9	6.4	10.7	6.0
Base	1069	393	533	536	833	77	79	81	156	112	803

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, and alternatives identified and disseminated.



Centre for Policy Alternatives (Guarantee) Ltd. (CPA)

Address: No. 6/5, Layards Road, Colombo 5, Sri Lanka

Tel: +9411 2081384, +94112081385, +94112081386

Email: info@cpalanka.org

Web: www.cpalanka.org

Email: info@cpalanka.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/cpasl

Twitter: [@cpasl](https://twitter.com/cpasl)

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.



Social Indicator

Address: 6/1B, 1/1, Layards Road, Colombo 05

Telephone: +94 112 584 050

Web: <http://cpalanka.org/survey-research/>