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

Address: 24/2 28th Lane, off Flower Road
Colombo 7, Sri Lanka
Telephone: +94 (11) 2565304/5/6
Fax: +94 (11) 4714460
Web: www.cpalanka.org
Email: info@cpalanka.org

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

Address: 105, Fifth Lane, Colombo 03
Telephone: +94(11)2370472/4/6 Fax: +94(11) 2370475
Web: http://cpalanka.org/survey-research/ Email: info@cpasocialindicator.org

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The findings of this survey have been categorised into five key sections - Economy and Development, Post War Sri Lanka, The Government, Media, and the Role of Religion and Ethnicity in Politics.

On the Sri Lankan economy, 31.9% of Sri Lankans believe that the general economic situation in the country has got a little better while almost 27% say that it has got a little worse and 18.5% say that it has got a lot worse. When it comes to the current economic situation of the country, 36.7% of Sri Lankans believe that it is somewhat good while 30.6% say somewhat bad and 19.5% say that it is very bad.

The financial situation of the household seems to have got worse in the last 2 years - almost 30% of Sri Lankans say that it has got a little worse while 25.6% say that it has got a lot worse. 24.2% of Sri Lankans state that they have gone without medicine or medical treatment in the last year, with the Up Country Tamil community (58.2%) being the most affected. Compromising on food quality, 42.7% of Sri Lankans say that they have cut back on the amount or quality of food they have purchased with again the Up Country Tamil community being the most affected (almost 60%).

When it comes to reconciliation, divisions in opinion between the communities persist. 40.8% of Sri Lankans believe that the Government has done a little, but not enough to address the root causes of the conflict, which resulted in thirty years of war. 39.9% from the Tamil community and 33.3% from the Up Country Tamil community believe that the Government has done nothing to address the root causes of the war while 35% from the Sinhalese community said the Government has done a lot to address the root causes.

Around 54% of Sri Lankans say that they approve of the increase in the role of the forces in civilian tasks, with 17% saying that they strongly approve. 41.6% from the Sinhalese community said that they somewhat approve of this role while 30.2% from the Tamil community said that they strongly disapproved.

From a list of key institutions that affect how the country is run, citizens place the most amount of trust in the Army, Civil service and the Central Government. 33.7% of Sri Lankans stated that they have a great deal of trust in the Army and they trust political parties the least with 37.8% stating that they have no trust and only 3.1% said that they have a great deal of trust. The institution that the Sinhalese community trusts the most is the Army (41.3%), while it is the Courts for the Tamil (35.7%), Up Country Tamil (36.3%) and Muslim (26.9%) communities.

With Presidential elections due next year, it is worth highlighting that 44.3% of Sri Lankans think that the Constitution should limit a President to serving a maximum of two terms while 27.6% say that there should be no limit. From the four communities, it is mainly the Muslim community (69.7%) who believe that there should be limit of two terms while 59.5% from the Up Country Tamil community, 57.3% from Tamil and 38.4% of Sinhalese say the same.
Commenting on the media in Sri Lanka, 30% of Sri Lankans said that they somewhat agree that the media in Sri Lanka is completely free to criticise the government as they wish. 40.5% of Sri Lankans believe that the media should have a right to publish any views and ideas without Government control while another 34% of Sri Lankans believe that the Government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it considers harmful to society.

On the role of religion and ethnicity in politics, 37.9% of Sri Lankans said that the role of Buddhism in Sri Lankan politics is the right amount while 37.8% of Sri Lankans said that the role is too much. The view that the role of Buddhism in Sri Lankan politics is too much is felt by majority of the Tamil (79.3%), Up Country Tamil (91.1%) and Muslim (83.4%) communities while only 23.1% from the Sinhalese community felt the same. Close to 50% of Sinhalese believe that it is the right amount.

59.2% of Sri Lankans think that Sri Lankan’s Constitution should recognise ethnicity while 15.6% say that the Constitution should have no reference to ethnicity.
INTRODUCTION

This is the third wave of the survey on Democracy in Post war Sri Lanka since it was first conducted in August 2011. The objective of this survey is to record public perspectives on democracy in post war Sri Lanka - what it means to people, how they participate in it, their perceptions of the Government and key public institutions.

Much has taken place since the survey was last conducted in 2013. Some key issues include the increase in attacks on places of worship, increase in intolerance and hate speech directed at the Muslim community, detention of human rights defenders, censorship of media, forced evictions in Colombo due to the Government’s beautification campaign and the continuing militarisation in the country.

As in the previous years, a rigorous methodology was utilised to design and conduct this survey in the 25 districts of the country. Quality control at different stages of fieldwork as well as post fieldwork ensured that data collection was accurate and collected without bias.

The previous survey results were used by Members of Parliament, academics, policy makers, journalists and civil society in discussions related to governance, reconciliation, development and accountability. The findings from this report and further analysis of the data we hope will continue to contribute to the discourse on democracy in post war Sri Lanka.

This study was conducted by Social Indicator, the survey research unit of the Centre for Policy Alternatives, with the generous assistance of AusAid. The Principal Researcher was Iromi Perera while fieldwork for the study was managed by M. Krishnamoorthy and Data Processing by Shashik Dhanushka.

We would like to thank Dr Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu for his valuable input in finalising this report and vikalpa.org for the cover photo.
KEY EVENTS DURING FIELDWORK

• Outbreak of communal violence

On the 15th of June 2014 clashes between Muslims and Sinhalese arose in the Southern Province, following a rally that was held by the Bodu Bala Sena (Buddhist Power Force) that made derogatory speeches against the Muslim community\(^1\). At the rally the BBS condemned an incident (amongst other accusations directed towards the Muslim community) that had occurred on the 12th of June 2014 between a Buddhist monk and Muslim youth where the youth had allegedly beaten up a monk. Incidents of violence occurred in Dharga town, Cheenawatte, Ambepitiya, Mahagoda, Kotapitiya, Adhikarigoda and Meeripenna in the areas of Aluthgama and Beruwela. The mobs attacked Muslim houses and places of business and four people were killed, around eighty injured, over sixty homes and businesses (which also includes one garment factory) set on fire, two mosques burnt and suffered extensive damage\(^2\). The affected Muslim families in these areas were housed in nearby mosques and schools for several days before being able to return home.


METHODOLOGY

This island wide opinion poll was conducted in all 25 districts of Sri Lanka. Using a structured questionnaire, face to face interviews were conducted with a sample of 2000 respondents, out of which 1900 interviews were considered as complete interviews.

The questionnaire used in the 2013 Democracy in Post War Sri Lanka survey was revised after examining current discussions and debates on democracy and governance along with existing survey instruments on surveys done on the similar topics. The additions to the questionnaire were translated into Sinhala and Tamil and a pilot survey was done to test the instrument and the translations before fieldwork commenced.

Sampling and fieldwork

In this survey, Social Indicator (SI) used a multi stage stratified random sampling technique. The sample size was determined in order to produce results within a 2% error margin at 95% confidence level and to make necessary disaggregation for the analysis intended. A sample of 2000 respondents spread across all districts using the Population Proportionate Sampling (PPS) method was polled. Ethnic proportions were accounted for. Electorates were chosen as the strata to distribute the sample and polling booths within each electorate were chosen randomly. Within each polling booth the starting point of the survey was selected from the 2008 voters registry whilst the respondents were selected randomly using the right hand rule and last birth date method. Within each polling booth, a maximum of 15 respondents were interviewed.

When allocating samples in the Northern Province, SI adhered to a slightly different method due to the difficulties in terms accessibility and obtaining current data for a sound sample frame. As with the rest of the country, the sample was stratified across electorates and within each electorate polling booths were selected randomly. The respondents in the Northern Province from each polling booth were selected using the snowball method. Fieldwork for the entire study was conducted from 9th June to 31st July 2014. Fieldwork in the Southern Province, as well as interviews with the Muslim community in other districts were temporarily halted after the communal riots in Aluthgama on the week of 15th June, and resumed in the second week of July.

Training of Field Researchers

A total of 50 Field Researchers participated in this study. The Field Researchers consisted of both male and female enumerators from three ethnic communities – Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim. Prior to starting fieldwork, they were given comprehensive training on the study, the survey instrument and field techniques. In order to guarantee the quality of field research, SI deployed a group of Supervisors to conduct quality control processes during and after fieldwork - such as back-checks, spot-checks and accompanied visits to ensure the quality of the data collected. Debrief sessions were conducted in the middle of fieldwork in order to further improve fieldwork.
Data Processing and analysis

All the completed questionnaires were sent to a team who have been trained to scrutinise and check questionnaires before being keyed into the computers. After scrutiny they were keyed into a computer database using a data entry interface. The dataset was further cleaned by the Data Processing team before it was sent for data analysis. Before starting the analysis process, the dataset was weighted in order to reflect actual geographical and ethnic proportions in the survey data set. The dataset was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 17.0, a specialised statistical tool widely used by social researchers the world over.

How to read this report:

• This report presents the top line results of the survey and the findings have been presented descriptively and graphically based on national data and disaggregation by ethnicity. The findings have been presented in five chapters - Economy and Development, Post War Sri Lanka, The Government, Media and the Role of Religion and Ethnicity in Politics.

• Comparative data for 2011 and 2013 is available for almost all questions, however only findings that show significant shift or change in opinion has been mentioned in this report. While the comparison is useful to see change (or lack thereof) in opinion over the three years, it cannot predict future trends or allow for strong conclusions about shift in opinion until more data is available from future surveys.

• For questions that required more than one answer (multiple response questions) from respondents, the figures do not add up to a 100%.
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THE ECONOMY

Summary

• When asked how the general economic situation in the country has changed over the last 2 years, 31.9% believe that it got a little better while almost 27% say that it has got a little worse and 18.5% say that it has got a lot worse.

• On the current economic situation of the country, 36.7% of Sri Lankans believe that it is somewhat good while 30.6% say somewhat bad and 19.5% say that it is very bad.

• When it comes to the financial situation of the household, things seem to have gotten worse in the last 2 years. Almost 30% of Sri Lankans say that it has got a little worse while 25.6% say that it has got a lot worse.

• 24.2% of Sri Lankans state that they have gone without medicine or medical treatment in the last year, with the Up Country Tamil community (58.2%) being the most affected.

• Compromising on food quality, 42.7% of Sri Lankans say that they have cut back on the amount or quality of food they have purchased.

• Almost 60% of the Up Country Tamil community, 43.1% from the Sinhala community, 47.9% from the Tamil Community and 25% from the Muslim community say that they have made these choices regarding food quality in the last year.
### The Economy

Sri Lankans appear divided on the general economic situation in Sri Lanka. 12.4% say that it has got a lot better while 31.9% say it has got a little better. However, almost 27% say that it has got a little worse and 18.5% say that it has got a lot worse. 30.6% from the Tamil community and 32.9% from the Up Country Tamil community say that it has got a lot worse while 35.8% from the Muslim community say that it has got a little worse. Almost 40% from the Up Country Tamil community however, do say that it has got a little better *(Refer Graph 1.1).*

**Graph 1.1: How do you think the general economic situation in this country has changed over the last two years?**

![Graph 1.1](image)

Commenting on the current economic situation of the country, 36.7% of Sri Lankans believe that it is somewhat good while 30.6% say somewhat bad and 19.5% say that it is very bad. 45.7% from the Muslim community and 31% from the Sinhalese community believe that Sri Lanka’s current economic situation is somewhat bad while 33% from the Tamil and 30% of Up Country Tamil communities say that it is very bad. However, around 38% from the Sinhala and Up Country Tamil communities and 35% from the Tamil community also believe that the current economic situation is somewhat good *(Refer Graph 1.2).*

**Graph 1.2: Thinking about the current economic situation in the country, how would you describe it?**

![Graph 1.2](image)
The Household

When it comes to the financial situation of the household, things seem to have got worse in the last 2 years. Almost 30% of Sri Lankans say that it has got a little worse while 25.6% say that it has got a lot worse. However, 21.5% say that the financial situation in their household has got a little better. 41% from the Up Country Tamil community and 31% from the Tamil community say that the financial situation in their household has got a lot worse while 44.6% from the Muslim community and 28.1% from the Sinhalese community said that it has got a little worse when compared to 2 years ago (Refer Graph 1.3).

Graph 1.3: How does the financial situation of your household now compare with what it was 2 years ago?

With many households feeling a financial strain in the household, difficult choices have been made over the last year with regard to medical treatment and quality of food intake. 24.2% of Sri Lankans state that they have gone without medicine or medical treatment in the last year, with the Up Country Tamil community (58.2%) being the most affected (Refer Graph 1.4.a).

Compromising on food quality, 42.7% of Sri Lankans say that they have cut back on the amount or quality of food they have purchased. Almost 60% of the Up Country Tamil community, 43.1% from the Sinhala community, 47.9% from the Tamil Community and 25% from the Muslim community say that they have made these choices in the last year (Refer Graph 1.4.d).

Around 15% of Sri Lankans say that they have cut back on the number of meals they have per day, with the Up Country Tamil community again being the most affected with 44.3% saying that they have cut back, along with 36.6% from the Tamil community who said the same (Refer Graph 1.4.c).

When asked if they have had to delay in paying their rent or a house payment, only 10.1% of Sri Lankans said that they had to do so in the last year (Refer Graph 1.3).

When compared to the data from 2013, it appears that more Sri Lankans have cut back on the quality of food and the number of meals this year. In 2013, 30.6% of Sri Lankans said that they cut back on the quality of food while 9.8% said they cut back on the number of meals per day.
Graph 1.4: Have you or any member of your family gone without the following in the past 12 months?

a. Gone without medicine or medical treatment

b. Delayed paying your rent or making a house payment

c. Cut back on the number of meals you have per day

d. Cut back on the amount or quality of food you purchase
**Development**

*Graph 1.5: Out of the following list, what are the three most important areas the Government should pay urgent attention to?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Sinhala</th>
<th>Tamil</th>
<th>Up Country Tamil</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cost of Living</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
<td>73.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure/Roads</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing poverty</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing poverty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>47.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respondents were given a list and were asked to select the three most important areas that they felt the Government should pay urgent attention to. The list included infrastructure/roads, agriculture, health, cost of living, crime, corruption, reducing poverty, unemployment, management of economy, education and flood relief. Overall, the three main areas that were selected were cost of living, infrastructure/roads and reducing poverty. In 2013, the three main areas that were selected were cost of living, reducing poverty and education while in 2011, the cost of living was the key priority as well.

Cost of living was an area selected by all four communities with the Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim communities selecting it as their first most important area while for the Up Country Tamil community it came in second, with reducing poverty being their most important area. Reduction in poverty was also common across the Sinhala and Tamil communities. For the Muslim community, education took second most important following by health (Refer Graph 1.5).

The post war development drive of the Government has been largely focussed on the infrastructural and when asked about the key results they would like to see from the current development drive, majority of Sri Lankans (79.3%) said they would like to see a reduction in the cost of living, followed by creation of more jobs (58.1%) and improved infrastructure (55%). In 2013, the first two results were the same and better education facilities was the third choice with 38.4%.

Across all four main communities, reduction in the cost of living was the number one result they would like to see from the current development drive of the Government. For the Sinhalese community, the second key result they would like to see is improved infrastructure (61.1%) followed by creation of more jobs (56.17%). Creation of more jobs is the second most important result the Tamil (73%), Up Country Tamil (57.1%) and Muslim (52.4%) communities would like to see. The Tamil community (42.9%) also prioritises better education facilities, the Up Country Tamil community (46.5%) and Muslim community (35.2%) improved healthcare service.
2
POST WAR SRI LANKA

Summary

• Around 80% of Sri Lankans believe that the general security situation in the country has got a lot better in the last two years, with 38.4% stating that it has got a lot better.

• On reconciliation, 40.8% of Sri Lankans believe that the Government has done a little, but not enough to address the root causes of the conflict which resulted in thirty years of war.

• 39.9% from the Tamil community and 33.3% from the Up Country Tamil community believe that the Government has done nothing to address the root causes of the war while only 3.1% from the Sinhalese community and 6.3% from the Muslim community expressed the same.

• 35% from the Sinhalese community said the Government has done a lot to address the root causes while only 2.3% from the Tamil, 11.5% from the Up Country Tamil and 8.6% from the Muslim communities said the same.

• Around 54% of Sri Lankans say that they approve of the increase in the role of the forces in civilian tasks, with 17% saying that they strongly approve.

• 41.6% from the Sinhalese community said that they somewhat approve of this role while 30.2% from the Tamil community said that they strongly disapproved.

• 24.5% of Sri Lankans say that after the end of war Sri Lanka is much more democratic.

• 73.4% of Sri Lankans think that the official language of Sri Lanka is Sinhala only, with only 11% saying it is Sinhala and Tamil.

• If an unjust law is passed by the Government, 29% of Sri Lankans believe that there is nothing they can do about it.
Security

Around 80% of Sri Lankans believe that the general security situation in the country has got a lot better in the last two years, with 38.4% stating that it has got a lot better. 42.1% from the Sinhalese community and 43.6% from the Up Country Tamil community believe it has got a lot better while 42.3% from the Tamil community and 46.6% from the Up Country Tamil community say it has got a little better (Refer Graph 2.1).

Graph 2.1: How do you think the general security situation in this country has changed over the last 2 years?

Reconciliation

On reconciliation, 40.8% of Sri Lankans believe that the Government has done a little, but not enough to address the root causes of the conflict which resulted in thirty years of war. 27.9% say that the Government has done a lot while 22.5% said that they do not know. The difference in opinion between the 4 main communities is noteworthy, with 39.9% from the Tamil community and 33.3% from the Up Country Tamil community stating that the Government has done nothing while only 3.1% from the Sinhalese community and 6.3% from the Muslim community expressed the same. 35% from the Sinhalese community said the Government has done a lot while only 2.3% from the Tamil, 11.5% from the Up Country Tamil and 8.6% from the Muslim communities said the same (Refer Graph 2.2).

In 2013, 26.5% from the Tamil community and 13.4% from the Up Country Tamil community said the Government has done nothing, an increase when compared to this year’s 39.9% and 33.3% respectively.
Graph 2.2: In your opinion, in the past two years, do you think the government has done enough to address the root causes of the conflict, which resulted in thirty years of war?

With the role of the forces in civilian tasks, such as selling vegetables or partaking in other economic and recreation roles, increasing every year since the end of the war, how do Sri Lankans feel about it? Around 54% say that they approve, with 17% saying that they strongly approve. 23.2% of Sri Lankans say that they strongly disapprove and 12.7% say the somewhat disapprove. 41.6% from the Sinhalese community said that they somewhat approve of this role while 29.1% from the Up Country Tamil community said that they strongly approved. 30.2% from the Tamil community said that they strongly disapproved while 36.4% from the Muslim community stated that they did not know (Refer Graph 2.3).

When compared to 2013, the National opinion has not changed significantly. However, disapproval in the Tamil community has increased - in 2013, 26.9% said that they disapprove with 17.7% saying that they strongly disapprove. In 2014 this increased to 42.9% stating their disapproval with 30.2% saying strongly disapprove.

Graph 2.3: The role of the forces is expanding to include civilian tasks – such as selling vegetables and other economic and recreation roles. Do you approve or disapprove of this?
24.5% of Sri Lankans say that after the end of war Sri Lanka is much more democratic while 34.2% say that it is somewhat more democratic. 10.2% say that it is remained the same and 20.5% said that they were not sure. Almost 50% of the Up Country Tamil community believe that Sri Lanka is much more democratic after the end of war while 24.7% of Sinhalese, 17% of Tamil and 20.6% of Muslim communities believe the same. Around 40% from the Tamil and Muslim communities and 32.8% from the Sinhalese believe that it is somewhat more democratic. 18.3% of Muslim and 11.3% of Tamil communities however stated that Sri Lanka is somewhat less democratic (Refer Graph 2.3).

Graph 2.3: Some people say that after the end of war, the level of democracy in Sri Lanka has increased. Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with this statement?

![Graph 2.3](image_url)

When asked what the official language of Sri Lanka is, it is noteworthy that 73.4% of Sri Lankans think that it is Sinhala only, with only 11% saying it is Sinhala and Tamil. This view is held by majority of the Sinhalese community with 81.8% saying that it is Sinhala only and 5% saying it is Sinhala and Tamil. 52.4% from the Tamil community, 63.3% from the Up Country Tamil and 34.7% from Muslim also think that the official language of Sri Lanka is only Sinhala. 22.2% from the Tamil, 13.9% from the Up Country Tamil and 44.9% from the Muslim community said that it is Sinhala and Tamil (Refer Graph 2.4).

Graph 2.4: Can you tell me the official language of Sri Lanka?
The Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) was appointed in May 2010 to “focus on the causes of conflict, its effect on the people, and promote national unity and reconciliation, so that all citizens of Sri Lanka, irrespective of ethnicity or religion could live in dignity and a sense of freedom” and in July 2012 the Government of Sri Lanka released a ‘National Plan of Action to Implement the Recommendations of the LLRC’ in response to the final LLRC report. The Action Plan is categorised under five themes – International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights, Land Return and Resettlement, Restitution/Compensatory Relief and Reconciliation. However, only 35.6% have heard of the LLRC and 64.1% said that they have not heard of it. From the 4 main communities, the highest percentage of those who have heard of the LLRC is from the Sinhalese community (38%) and the least from the Up Country Tamil community (19%) (Refer Graph 2.5).

Graph 2.5: Have you heard of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliations Commission (LLRC)?

On the question of allocation of resources, 46.3% of Sri Lankans say that the Government should give priority in allocating resources to rebuilding the conflict affected areas, even if this means that less money is spent in the rest of the country. 20.5% say that there are many other problems facing this country that the Government should focus on, and that rebuilding the conflict affected areas should not be given priority over the needs of the rest of the country. 60.3% from the Tamil community and around 45% from the Sinhala, Up Country Tamil and Muslim sated that priority should be given to rebuilding conflict affected areas (Refer Graph 2.6).

Opinion that Government should give priority to allocating resources to rebuilding conflict affected areas has shifted as support for this has decreased across all four communities when 2013. In 2013 59.1% of Sinhalese, 79.5% of Tamil, 63.5% of Up Country Tamil and 49% of Muslim communities were in favour of priority to rebuilding conflict affected areas and in 2014 there is a decline in support for this.
Graph 2.6: Tell me which statement is the most agreeable to you -

a) The Government should give priority in allocating resources to rebuilding the conflict affected areas, even if this means that less money is spent in the rest of the country

b) There are many other problems facing this country that government should focus on; rebuilding the conflict affected areas should not be given priority over the needs of the rest of the country

**Freedom of expression**

When asked how free they feel to express their feelings about politics, irrespective of where they are and who they are with, 35.5% of Sri Lankans said that they feel somewhat free while 31.2% said they feel completely free. 14.3% said not very free. Looking at opinions from the 4 main communities, 28.3% from the Tamil community and 24.6% from the Muslim community said that they feel they are not at all free to express their feelings about politics, while only 2.4% from the Sinhalese community and 14.1% feel the same (Refer Graph 2.7).

**Graph 2.7: How free do you feel to express your feelings about politics, irrespective of where you are and who you’re with?**
Around 30% of Sri Lankans do not feel free to protest against or attend a demonstration against political injustice. Another 29.4% said that they feel somewhat free while 18.4% said they feel completely free. 23.9% said that they were not sure. 45% from the Tamil community say that do not feel free to protest against or attend demonstration against political injustice, with 28.5% saying they are ‘not at all free’. 20.3% from the Up Country Tamil and 23.4% from the Muslim community also said they are not at all free while only 4.3% from the Sinhalese community said the same (Refer Graph 2.8).

**Graph 2.8: How free do you feel to protest/ attend a demonstration against political injustice?**

![Graph 2.8]

**Political efficacy**

If a person is dissatisfied with the policies of the Government, he or she has a duty to do something about agrees 64.9% of Sri Lankans. This view is shared by the majority from all 4 main communities with 67.4% from the Sinhalese community, 59% from the Tamil community, 57.7% from the Up Country Tamil community and 55.4% from the Muslim community (Refer Graph 2.9).

**Graph 2.9: If a person is dissatisfied with the policies of the government, he/she has a duty to do something about it**

![Graph 2.9]
28.1% of Sri Lankans believe that they have no say in what the Government does while 36.4% disagrees with this statement. From an ethnic perspective, more than half of the Tamil community (51.6%) and Up Country Tamil community (60.3%) believe that they have no say while this view is shared by only 22.6% of Sinhalese and 30.5% from the Muslim community. Around 40% from the Sinhalese community believe that they do have a say (Refer Graph 2.10).

**Graph 2.10: People like me have no say in what the government does**

When asked whether they think that their vote has an impact on the outcome of an election, 59.5% of Sri Lankans said that their vote has an impact while 15.6% said that it has no impact. That their vote has an impact is felt by around 60% of the Sinhalese and Tamil communities (Refer Graph 2.11).

**Graph 2.11: My vote has no impact on the outcome of an election**
If an unjust law is passed by the Government, 29% of Sri Lankans believe that there is nothing they can do about it while 32.2% disagreed with this view. The belief that they can do nothing about it is held by 62.5% from the Up Country Tamil community and 50.5% from the Tamil community (Refer Graph 2.12).

**Graph 2.12: If an unjust law was passed by the Government I could do nothing about it**
3
THE GOVERNMENT

Summary

• From a list of key institutions that affect how the country is run, citizens place the most amount of trust in the Army, Civil service and the Central National Government.

• 33.7% of respondents stated that they have a great deal of trust in the Army while 47.8% said that they have some trust.

• Sri Lankans trust political parties the least with 37.8% stating that they have no trust and only 3.1% said that they have a great deal of trust.

• Around 25% of Sri Lankans also have no trust in the Police and the Parliament.

• 41.3% of Sinhalese say that they have a great deal of trust in the Army while only 9.4% of Tamil, 5.1% of Up Country Tamil and 13.7% of Muslim communities express the same.

• The institution that the Sinhalese community trusts the most is the Army (41.3%), while it is the Courts for the Tamil (35.7%), Up Country Tamil (36.3%) and Muslim (26.9%) communities.

• The institutions that all 4 have the least amount of trust are Political parties - Sinhala community (37.2%), Tamil community (47.2%), Up Country Tamil community (43.6%) and Muslim community (28.6%).

• 44.3% of Sri Lankans think that the Constitution should limit a President to serving a maximum of two terms while 27.6% say that there should be no limit.

• From the four communities, it is mainly the Muslim community (69.7%) who believe that there should be limit of two terms while 59.5% from the Up Country Tamil community, 57.3% from Tamil and 38.4% of Sinhalese say the same.

• 79% of Sri Lankans said that they agree with the idea of allocating a fixed quota for women candidacies for each district at the election, with close to 50% saying they strongly agree.

• From the 4 communities, it is mainly the Up Country Tamil community who is the most supportive on allocating a fixed quota with 87.2% saying that they strongly agree. 92% from the Tamil community also agree, with 67% saying they strongly agree.

• Support for allocating a fixed quota for women is lowest in the Muslim community with 50.8% saying they disagree with the idea, with 43.4% saying they strongly disagree.
**Trust in Institutions**

From a list of key institutions that affect how the country is run, citizens place the most amount of trust in the Army, Civil service and the Central National Government. 33.7% of respondents stated that they have a great deal of trust in the Army while 47.8% said that they have some trust. Sri Lankans trust political parties the least with 37.8% stating that they have no trust and only 3.1% said that they have a great deal of trust. Around 25% of Sri Lankans also have no trust in the Police and the Parliament (Refer Graph 3.1).

From an ethnic perspective, the 4 main communities are divided in opinion when it comes to trust in the Army. 41.3% of Sinhalese say that they have a great deal of trust in the Army while only 9.4% of Tamil, 5.1% of Up Country Tamil and 13.7% of Muslim communities express the same. 40% from the Tamil community and 35.9% from the Up Country Tamil community say that they have no trust in the Army while 60.6% from the Muslim community said they have some trust.

The institution that the Sinhalese community trusts the most is the Army (41.3%), while it is the Courts for the Tamil (35.7%), Up Country Tamil (36.3%) and Muslim (26.9%) communities. The institutions that all 4 have the least amount of trust are Political parties - Sinhala community (37.2%), Tamil community (47.2%), Up Country Tamil community (43.6%) and Muslim community (28.6%). (Refer Graph 3.2 - 3.5)


**Graph 3.1: How much trust do you have in the following institutions? (National)**
Graph 3.2: How much trust do you have in the following institutions? (Sinhala)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Great deal of trust</th>
<th>Some trust</th>
<th>No trust</th>
<th>Don't know/ Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>11.4</td>
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<td>Provincial Government</td>
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<td>60.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Government</td>
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<td>58.1</td>
<td>22.7</td>
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<td>Civil Service</td>
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<td>64.3</td>
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<td>4.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courts</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliament</td>
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<td>26.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political parties</td>
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<tr>
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<td>NGOs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

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<tr>
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<td>51.6</td>
<td>24.4</td>
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<td>Civil Service</td>
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<td>Police</td>
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<td>Courts</td>
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<td>18.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Graph 3.4: How much trust do you have in the following institutions? (Up Country Tamil)

Graph 3.5: How much trust do you have in the following institutions? (Muslim)
18th Amendment

The 18th Amendment to the Constitution, which was passed on the 8th of September 2010, introduced several key changes to Sri Lanka’s governance system, one of which included the removal of the term limit that restricted any Sri Lankan President from serving more than two terms. On the question of whether the Constitution should limit the President to serving a maximum of two terms in office, 44.3% of Sri Lankans think that it should be limited to two terms while 27.6% say that there should be no limit. From the four communities, it is mainly the Muslim community (69.7%) who believe that there should be limit of two terms while 59.5% from the Up Country Tamil community, 57.3% from Tamil and 38.4% of Sinhalese say the same (Refer Graph 3.6).

Looking at 2013 data, support for a maximum of two terms has increased from 39.3% in 2013 to 44.3% in 2014. This shift is mainly in the Tamil (51.9% in 2013), Up Country Tamil (32.6% in 2013) and Muslim communities (41.8% in 2013).

Graph 3.6: Tell me which statement is the most agreeable to you -

a) The Constitution should limit a President to serving a maximum of two terms in office irrespective of how popular he or she is
b) There should be no Constitutional limit on how many terms a President can serve in order to allow strong Presidents to serve the country

Quota for women

When asked what they think of the idea of allocating a fixed quota for women candidacies for each district at the election, 79% of Sri Lankans said that they agree with the idea, with close to 50% saying they strongly agree. From the four communities, it is mainly the Up Country Tamil community who is the most supportive on allocating a fixed quota with 87.2% saying that they strongly agree. 92% from the Tamil community also agree, with 67% saying they strongly agree. Support for allocating a fixed quota for women is lowest in the Muslim community with 50.8% saying they disagree with the idea, with 43.4% saying they strongly disagree (Refer Graph 3.7).
Opinion on the question of quota has shifted in the Up Country Tamil and Muslim communities since 2013. 77.3% in the Up Country Tamil community strongly approved of this and approval has increased to 87.2% in 2014. However in the Muslim community approval has decreased with less people stating their strong approval (28.9% said strongly approve in 2013) and more people stating their strong disapproval (30.5% said strongly disapprove in 2013).

**Graph 3.7: What do you think of the idea of allocating a fixed quota for women candidacies for each district at the elections?**
4

MEDIA IN SRI LANKA

Summary

• 30% of Sri Lankans said that they somewhat agree that the media in Sri Lanka is completely free to criticise the government as they wish.

• 40.5% of Sri Lankans believe that the media should have a right to publish any views and ideas without Government control while another 34% of Sri Lankans believe that the Government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it considers harmful to society.

• 61.8% from the Tamil community and 64.4% from the Muslim community believe that the media should have a right to publish any views and ideas while a lesser amount those from the Sinhalese (34.4%) and Up Country Tamil (40.5%) believe the same.

• Most Sinhalese (39.5%) believe that the Government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it considers harmful to society. 71.2% of Sri Lankans believe that the news media should constantly investigate and report on corruption and the mistakes made by the Government, while only 6.3% of Sri Lankans said that too much reporting on negative events, like corruption, only harms the country.

• Almost 50% of Sri Lankans do not think that state media in Sri Lanka gives fair coverage to the views of the opposition political parties.

• When it comes to the private media, almost 43% of Sri Lankans say that the private media in Sri Lanka gives fair coverage to the views of opposition political parties.
Media freedom

When asked about to what degree they agree with the statement - “Some people say that the media in Sri Lanka is completely free to criticise the government as they wish”, almost 30% of Sri Lankans said that they somewhat agree, 16.9% somewhat disagreed while 24.4% said that they were not sure. In the Sinhalese community, 29.1% said that they somewhat agreed with the statement, while 18.1% said somewhat disagree and 26.3% said they were not sure. 22.2% from the Tamil community somewhat agreed while 19.3% said they strongly disagree. 26.9% from the Up Country Tamil community strongly agreed with the statement and another 25.6% said they somewhat agree. In the Muslim community, almost 50% said that they somewhat agree while 21.6% stated that they were not sure (Refer Graph 4.1).

Opinion has not changed significantly since 2013, except in the Up Country Tamil and Muslim community agreement. In 2013, 16.7% of Up Country Tamil community said that they strongly agreed and 43.8% said that they somewhat disagreed. In the Muslim community, 27.9% said that they somewhat agreed which has increased 47.7% in 2014.

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

On the topic of media freedom, 40.5% of Sri Lankans believe that the media should have a right to publish any views and ideas without Government control while another 34% of Sri Lankans believe that the Government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it considers harmful to society. 16.5% said that they have no opinion on this. From an ethnic perspective, 61.8% from the Tamil community and 64.4% from the Muslim community believe that the media should have a right to publish any views and ideas while a lesser amount those from the Sinhalese (34.4%) and Up Country Tamil (40.5%) believe the same. Most Sinhalese (39.5%) believe that the Government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things it considers harmful to society while 17% from the Tamil, 29.1% from the Up Country Tamil and 10.9% from the Muslim community stated the same.
As asked to select between two statements - “The news media should constantly investigate and report on corruption and the mistakes made by the Government” and “Too much reporting on negative events, like corruption, only harms the country” - 71.2% of Sri Lankans agreed with the first statement, that the news media should constantly investigate and report, while only 6.3% of Sri Lankans said that too much reporting on negative events, like corruption, only harms the country.

**Media coverage**

Almost 50% of Sri Lankans do not think that state media in Sri Lanka gives fair coverage to the views of the opposition political parties. This view is shared by 48.7% of Sinhalese, 52.1% of Tamil, 41.8% of Up Country Tamil and 46.3% of Muslim communities. Compared to the data from 2011 and 2013, this is an increase as in 2011 and 2013, around 40% of Sri Lankans said that the state media does not give fair coverage.

When it comes to the private media, almost 43% of Sri Lankans say that the private media in Sri Lanka gives fair coverage to the views of opposition political parties. This is a slight decrease in opinion compared to the 2013 data where 48.6% of Sri Lankans said that the private media gives fair coverage.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know/ Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>48.6</td>
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<td>Sinhala</td>
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<td>Up Country Tamil</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>40</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know/ Not sure</th>
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<td>Muslim</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5
ROLE OF RELIGION AND ETHNICITY IN POLITICS

Summary

• To 42.7% of Sri Lankans, it is important that public officials\(^3\) represent their ethnicity or religion while for 24.5% it is not important.

• Around 51% from the Up Country Tamil and Muslim communities and around 42% from the Sinhala and Tamil communities said that it is important that public officials represent their ethnicity or religion.

• Majority of Sri Lankans (70.3%) agreed that the ethnicity or religion of public officials should have no relevance to their powers and duties.

• Almost half of the Sri Lankans (49.2%) say it is problematic for a country like Sri Lanka to have ethnicity or religion based political parties.

• 50% from the Sinhala and Tamil communities think it is problematic while 54.4% from the Up Country Tamil community say the same. 28% from the Muslim community do not think its problematic.

• Close to 40% of Sri Lankans also think that it is unavoidable for a country like Sri Lanka to have ethnicity or religion based political parties.

• More than half of Sri Lankans (53.9%) do not think that religious leaders/priests should be represented in Parliament and other legislative bodies.

• When asked for their opinion on the role of Buddhism in Sri Lankan politics, 37.9% of Sri Lankans said that it is the right amount while 37.8% of Sri Lankans said that the role is too much.

• The view that the role of Buddhism in Sri Lankan politics is too much is felt by majority of the Tamil (79.3%), Up Country Tamil (91.1%) and Muslim (83.4%) communities while only 23.1% from the Sinhalese community felt the same. Close to 50% of Sinhalese believe that it is the right amount.

• 59.2% of Sri Lankans think that Sri Lankan’s Constitution should recognise ethnicity while 15.6% say that the Constitution should have no reference to ethnicity.

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\(^3\) Public officials include all elected officials (UC/MC/PS/Parliament), politicians and unelected officials.
**Public officials**

To 42.7% of Sri Lankans, it is important that public officials represent their ethnicity or religion while for 24.5% it is not important. Around 51% from the Up Country Tamil and Muslim communities and around 42% from the Sinhala and Tamil communities said that it is important that public officials represent their ethnicity or religion (Refer Graph 5.1).

On the statement “the ethnicity or religion of public officials should have no relevance to their powers and duties”, majority of Sri Lankans (70.3%) agreed with this statement. This was echoed by majority from the Sinhala (71.7%), Tamil (77.5%) and Up Country Tamil (64.6%) communities while in the Muslim community 52.3% said that they agreed while 24.4% disagreed (Refer Graph 5.2).

**Graph 5.1: It is important to me that public officials represent my ethnicity/religion**

**Graph 5.2: The ethnicity or religion of public officials should have no relevance to their powers and duties**

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4 Public officials include all elected officials (UC/MC/PS/Parliament), politicians and unelected officials
Political parties

Almost half of the Sri Lankans (49.2%) say it is problematic for a country like Sri Lanka to have ethnicity or religion based political parties while 21.3% said they are not sure of their opinion. 50% from the Sinhala and Tamil communities think it is problematic while 54.4% from the Up Country Tamil community say the same. 28% from the Muslim community do not think its problematic (Refer Graph 5.3). Compared to 2013 data, there is around a 5% - 8% increase in the national opinion as well as across the communities of those who think it is problematic.

However, close to 40% of Sri Lankans also think that it is unavoidable for a country like Sri Lanka to have ethnicity or religion based political parties. 25.5% stated that they were unsure of their opinion on this. The 4 communities are also split on this issue with around 41% from the Sinhala, Tamil and Up Country Tamil communities and 32.4% from the Muslim community saying that it is unavoidable (Refer Graph 5.4).

Graph 5.3: I think it is problematic for a country like Sri Lanka to have ethnicity-religion based political parties

Graph 5.4: I think it is unavoidable for a country like Sri Lanka to have ethnicity-religion based political parties
Religious leaders

35.2% of Sri Lankans say that religious leaders/priests should influence opinion by expressing their views on moral/social/policy/political matters while 23% say they should not. The communities are also divided on this question with 36.3% of Sinhalese, 32.4% of Tamil, 31.6% of Up Country Tamil and 30.7% of Muslim communities stating that religious leaders/priests should influence opinion while around 34% from the Tamil, Up Country Tamil and Muslim communities stated that they should not influence opinion (Refer Graph 5.5).

38.2% of Sri Lankans believe that religious leaders/priests should have an official role in making Government policy while 25.3% said that they should not have an official role. It is mainly the Sinhalese community (42.8%) from the 4 communities that support the idea of an official role while 46.5% of Tamil, 43.8% of Up Country Tamil and 38.6% of Muslim communities saying that religious leaders/priests should not have an official role in making Government policy (Refer Graph 5.6). Compared to 2013 data, less people in the Up Country Tamil think that religious leaders/priests should not have a role (in 2013, 59.8% said they should not have a role compared to 43.8% in 2014) while those who disapprove of an official role has increased in the Muslim community (25% in 2013 to 34.7% in 2014)

More than half of Sri Lankans (53.9%) do not think that religious leaders/priests should be represented in Parliament and other legislative bodies. Only 13.3% of Sri Lankans think they should be represented. 56.3% of Sinhalese, 52.6% of Tamil, 46.3% of Up Country tamil and 39.2% of Muslim communities do not think that religious leaders/priests should be represented in Parliament and other legislative bodies (Refer Graph 5.7). The disapproval for representation in Parliament and other legislative bodies as notably increased since 2013. In 2013, 38.5% of Sinhalese, 47.2% of Tamil and 68.8% of Up Country Tamil and 22.8% of Muslim communities said that they should not be represented.

On the question of whether religious leaders/priests have no role in politics or governance, 33.7% of Sri Lankans think that they have no role while 26.5% think that religious leaders/priests have a role. 40% of Up Country Tamil and 36.9% of Muslim communities don’t think religious leaders/priests have a role while 41.6% from the Tamil community believe they have a role (Refer Graph 5.8).

Graph 5.5: Religious leaders/priests should influence opinion by expressing their views on moral/social/policy/political matters
**Graph 5.6:** Religious leaders/priests should have an official role in making government policy

**Graph 5.7:** Religious leaders/priests should be represented in parliament and other legislative bodies

**Graph 5.8:** Religious leaders/priests have no role in politics or governance
Role of Buddhism

When asked for their opinion on the role of Buddhism in Sri Lankan politics, 37.9% of Sri Lankans said that it is the right amount while 37.8% of Sri Lankans said that the role is too much. The view that the role of Buddhism in Sri Lankan politics is too much is felt by majority of the Tamil (79.3%), Up Country Tamil (91.1%) and Muslim (83.4%) communities while only 23.1% from the Sinhalese community felt the same. Close to 50% of Sinhalese believe that it is the right amount (Refer Graph 5.9).

There is an increase among those who think that they role of Buddhism is too much in the Up Country Tamil and Muslim communities. In 2013, 74.7% of Up Country Tamil and 70.4% of Muslim said that it is too much and this has increased to 91.1% and 83.4% respectively in 2014.

Graph 5.9: What is your opinion about the role of Buddhism in Sri Lankan politics?

The Constitution

59.2% of Sri Lankans think that our Constitution should recognise ethnicity while 15.6% say that our Constitution should have no reference to ethnicity. From the 4 communities, it is mainly the Sinhala community (62.9%) who believe that the Constitution should recognise ethnicity, compared to the Tamil (39.9%), Up Country Tamil (55.7%) and Muslim (54%) communities (Refer Graph 5.10).

There is a significant increase in the Tamil and Muslim communities of those who say that Sri Lanka’s Constitution should recognise ethnicity. In 2013, 66.2% of Tamil and 44% of Muslim communities said that the Constitution should recognise ethnicity.
Respondents were given 5 statements on religion and the Constitution and were asked to pick the one they agreed with the most. 40.6% of Sri Lankans believe that the Constitution of Sri Lanka should protect the freedom of religion as a Fundamental Right while 21.9% believes that Sri Lanka’s Constitution should have a reference to all major religions in the country.

Among the Sinhalese, most (45.5%) say that the Constitution should protect the freedom of religion as a Fundamental right. In the Tamil community 40.4% said that Sri Lanka’s Constitution should have a reference to all major religions in the country while 49.4% from the Up Country Tamil community agreed with the same. The Muslim community appears quite divided on this matter with 32.6% saying that only Buddhism should be given a special place in Sri Lanka’s Constitution, while assuring the freedom of religion to others, 29.1% say that the Constitution should protect the freedom of religion as a Fundamental right while 26.3% said that Sri Lanka’s Constitution should have no mention of religion, except to guarantee the freedom of religion to all (Refer Graph 5.11).

While there are some shifts in opinion when compared to 2013, the most significant shifts are in the Tamil and Muslim community opinion. In 2013, 28.9% in the Tamil community said that Sri Lanka’s Constitution should have reference to all major religions in the country and this has increased to 40.4% in 2014 and while also in 2013, 37.9% in the Tamil community said that Sri Lanka’s Constitution should have no mention of religion, except to guarantee the freedom of religion to all and this has dropped to 27.7% in 2014.

In the Muslim community in 2013, 29.1% said that Sri Lanka’s Constitution should have reference to all major religions in the country and this has dropped to 5.7% in 2014. In 2013 only 1.7% said that only Buddhism should be given a special place in Sri Lanka’s Constitution, while assuring the freedom of religion to all others whereas in 2014 this has significantly increased to 32.6%. 43.5% said that the
Constitution of Sri Lanka should protect the freedom of religion as a Fundamental Right in 2013 while in 2014 this has decreased to 29.1%

**Graph 5.11: Please tell me which statement you agree with the most** -

- **a)** Sri Lanka’s Constitution should have no mention of religion, except to guarantee the freedom of religion to all
- **b)** Sri Lanka’s Constitution should have reference to all major religions in the country
- **c)** Only Buddhism should be given a special place in Sri Lanka’s Constitution
- **d)** Only Buddhism should be given a special place in Sri Lanka’s Constitution, while assuring the freedom of religion to all others
- **e)** The Constitution of Sri Lanka should protect the freedom of religion as a Fundamental Right
- **f)** Don’t know/ Not sure

![Bar chart showing responses](chart.png)