

## Press Release

10/06/2024

### **Decreasing public optimism about the country's economy and politics Finds a new citizens' perception survey**

A Citizens' Perception Survey 2024 on governance, development, and society, was conducted jointly by The Asia Foundation and the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) of Brac University. A total of 6,510 adult men and women, representing all 64 districts, were surveyed between February and March 2024 for a report titled "The State of Bangladesh's Political Governance, Development and Society: According to Its Citizens", where they shared their perceptions on the country's social, economic, and political atmosphere. Of the respondents surveyed, 65% were part of the rural population while 35% were of the urban population. For data collection, 106 respondents were selected from each district. Similar surveys were also conducted in 2022, 2019, 2018, 2017, and 2015.

The 2024 survey finds a decreasing positive perception of the economy among different income groups. Respondents who earn below BDT 5,000 had the highest decline in positive response. In 2019, 84% of the respondents earning below BDT 5,000 felt that the country was in the right direction in terms of the economy. This fell to 42% in 2024. Similarly, the positive response rating fell from 65% in 2019 to 29% in 2024 for respondents earning between BDT 20,000-30,000, and from 58% in 2019 to 33% in 2024 for those earning between BDT 40,000-50,000.

Additionally, 58% of the respondents believe that the country is headed in the wrong direction in terms of politics, society, and economy. Overall, optimism on the country's direction has been on the decline since 2017 onwards as respondents who say the country is heading in the wrong direction increased from 17% to 58% in 2024. 52% of the respondents cite price hike of essential commodities as the most important problem in the country. Issues such as unemployment (8%), corruption (4%), and economic/business downturn (4%) were also cited as significantly important. Of those surveyed, 95% say they were impacted by the price hikes.

When asked about their understanding of democracy, the dominant response was 'do not know' (33% of the respondents), which was consistent with the last round survey findings. On the other hand, 20% of the respondents associate equal rights/justice for all and 11% associate freedom of people with democracy. The survey also reflects that higher percentage of respondents disagreed with the statement that 'MPs care about general citizens'. The share of disagreement increased from 35% in 2019 to 47% in 2024.



When asked about their relationship with the government of Bangladesh, 40% said that they view their relationship with the government as a prime minister–citizen relationship while 29% said that they view the government as their benevolent patron and protector. Respondents who feel they have no relationship with the government have increased from 9% in 2022 to 14% in 2024. Locally, people deem UP as the most important organization (67%) and UP chairperson/mayor as the most powerful (34%) person.

The survey also revealed perceptions of news and media. News consumption from internet-based platforms like Facebook and YouTube has increased. However, the most popular source of news is private television channels. When asked about the freedom of television, print, and media industries, less than half of the respondents believed that those media are mostly or completely free.

*The detailed report will be published by July 2024 and will be available on The Asia Foundation's website.*

**For any queries contact:**

Email: [rafsanul.hoque@bracu.ac.bd](mailto:rafsanul.hoque@bracu.ac.bd)

The Asia Foundation website: <https://asiafoundation.org/>

BIGD website: <https://bigd.bracu.ac.bd/>

