



The State of Bangladesh's Political Governance, Development and Society: According to Its Citizens

A Survey of the Bangladeshi People

The Asia Foundation
BRAC Institute of Governance & Development

OVERVIEW



The State of Bangladesh's Political Governance, Development, and Society: According to Its Citizens is a longitudinal study conducted by The Asia Foundation since 2015.

Supported by the European Union, The Asia Foundation launches its sixth iteration of the survey. It aims to examine citizens' perceptions of political governance, democracy, citizenship, media trends, and a range of other relevant topics.

BIGD, BRAC University has been partnering with The Asia Foundation since 2019.

Methodology



6,510

Survey Respondents



50-50

Adult Male to Female ratio



Fieldwork carried out from
February 10 to March 6, 2024

Divisionally representative
and surveyed in all **64**
districts



64.7% Rural and
35.3% Urban
population

Presentation outline

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Unpacking the mood swings

Economic, Political, and Overall Direction of the Country

2

Perceptions of Democracy and State-Citizen Relationship

Understanding Democracy, relation with Government, Perceptions about MP

3

News and Media Trends

Access to internet, News consumption and media freedom, online safety

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Contemporary issues

Unemployment, Rohingya Crisis, Climate Change

Unpacking the Mood Swings



Overall optimism about the country's direction has been declining since 2017.

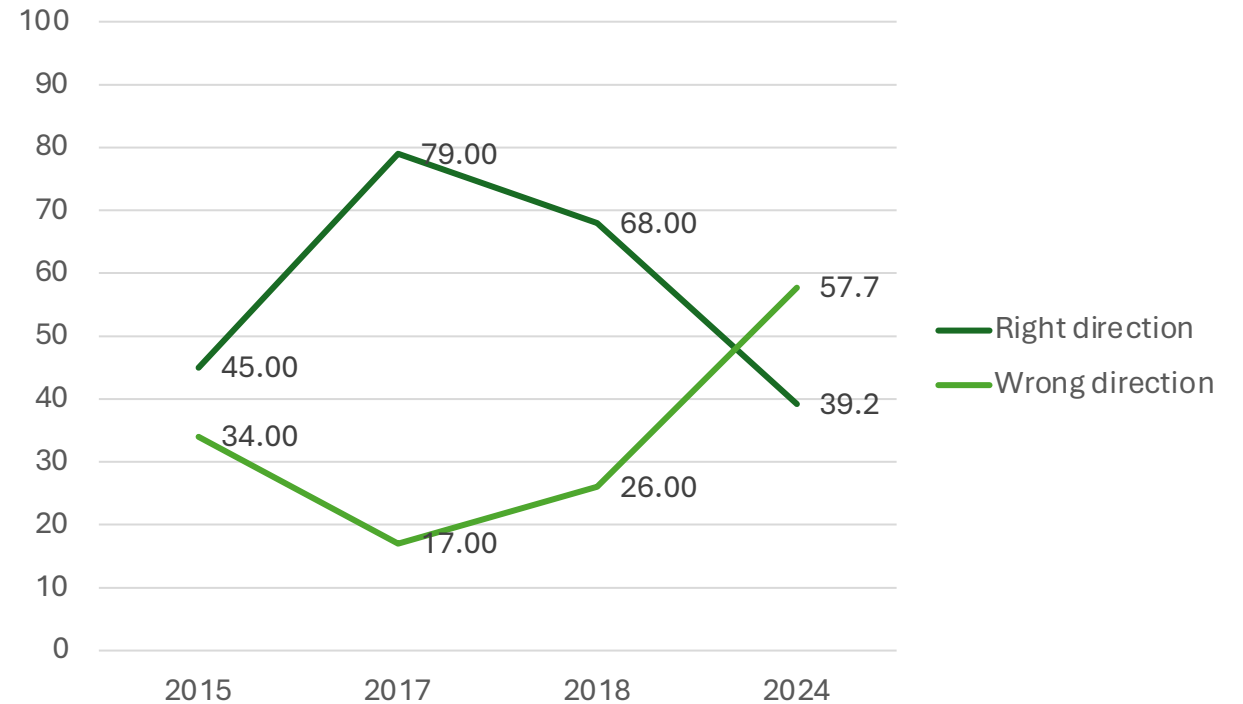
Economic hardships are the major determinants of people's negative perceptions.

Price hike is the most pressing problem in the country.

The decline in optimism regarding the economy is mostly reflected in the views of the lowest-income group.

General direction of the country

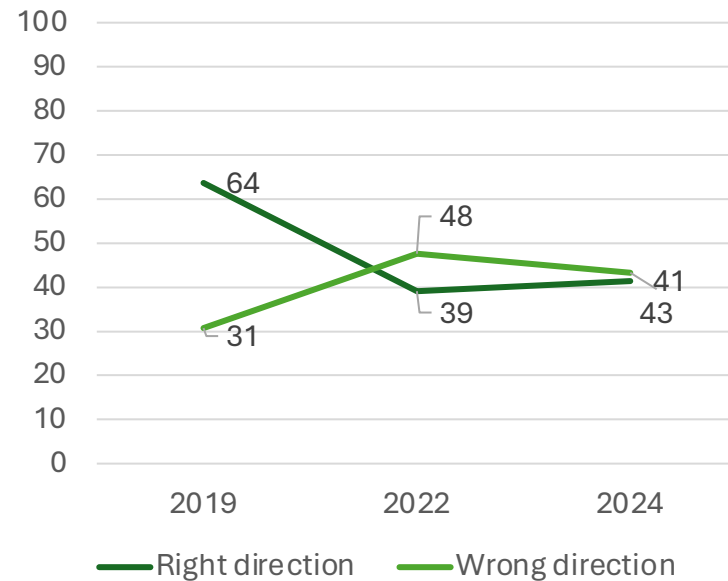
- In 2024, **39%** said the country is heading in the **right direction**, while **58%** said it's heading in the **wrong direction**.
- Since 2017, respondents who say the country is heading in the **wrong direction** increased from **17% to 58%** in 2024.



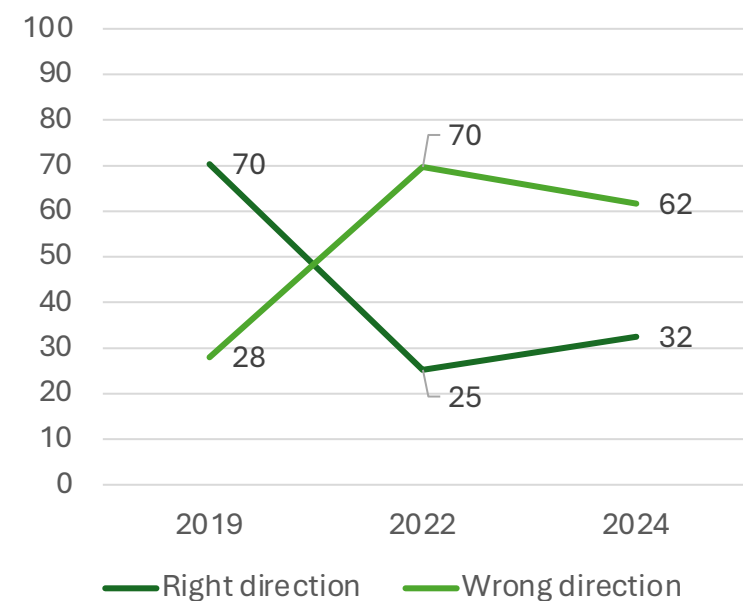
Political and economic direction of the country

- Respondents saying that the country is headed in the right direction decreased significantly in 2022 for both political and economic directions.
- Slight improvement is seen between 2022 and 2024.

Political Direction



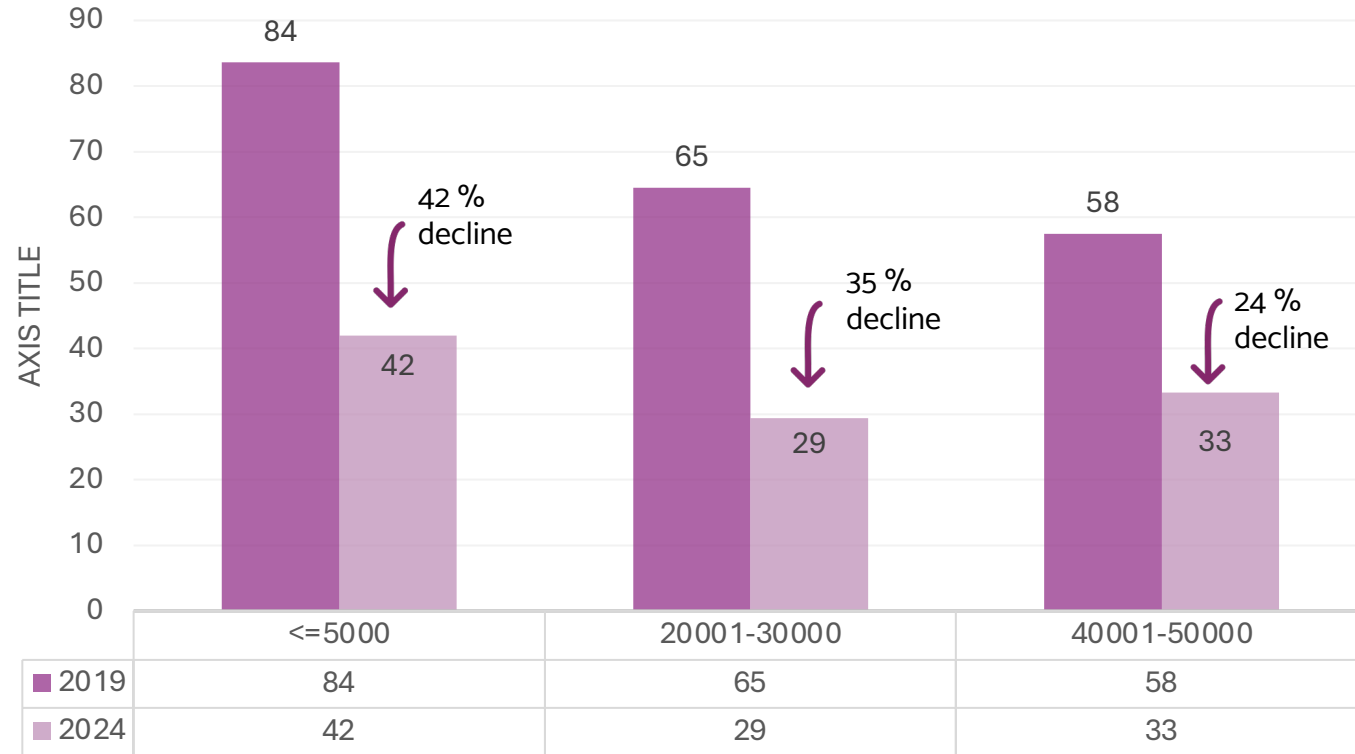
Economic Direction



Decreasing positive perception of the economy among different income groups

Respondents who earn below 5,000 Taka had the highest decline in positive response between 2019 and 2024. As income increases, the gap decreases.

Which direction is the economy headed – change in ‘right direction’ responses between 2019 and 2024



Reasons behind positive/negative perceptions towards political/economic direction

Reasons for the right direction **politically** –

- 49% – Development of the country
- 20% – Political stability
- 8% – Decreased political violence

Reasons for the wrong direction **politically** –

- 34% – Over-dominance of one political party
- 19% – Political unrest
- 18% – Corruption
- 10% – Rigged elections

Reasons for the right direction **economically** –

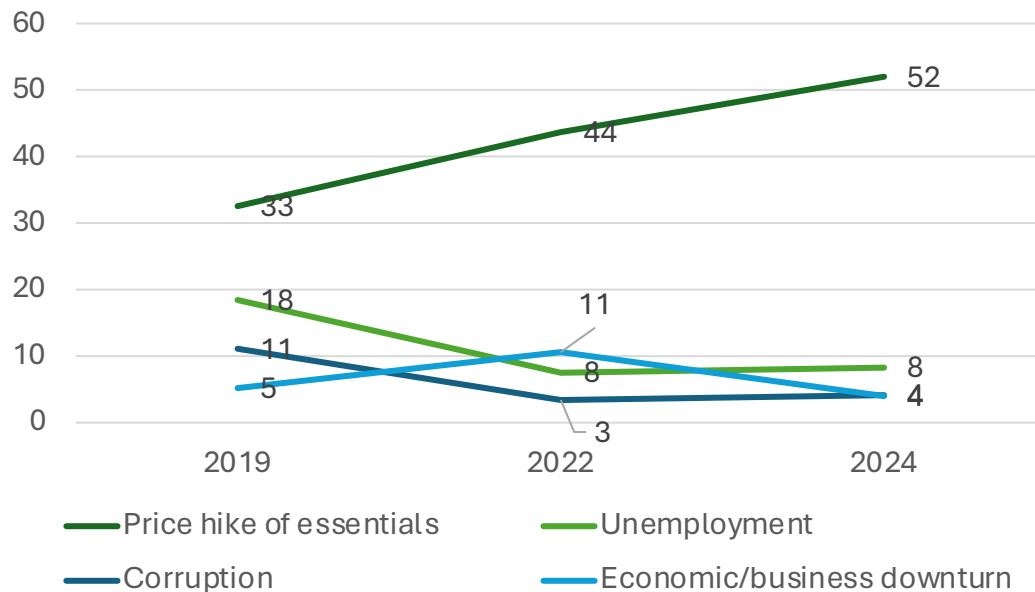
- 39% – Better infrastructure
- 13% – Overall development
- 12% – Economic development

Reasons for the wrong direction **economically** –

- 62% – Increased price of commodities
- 14% – Lack of employment decent/any employment opportunities
- 7% – Deterioration of economic conditions
- 4% – Increasing scarcity

What are the country's biggest problems?

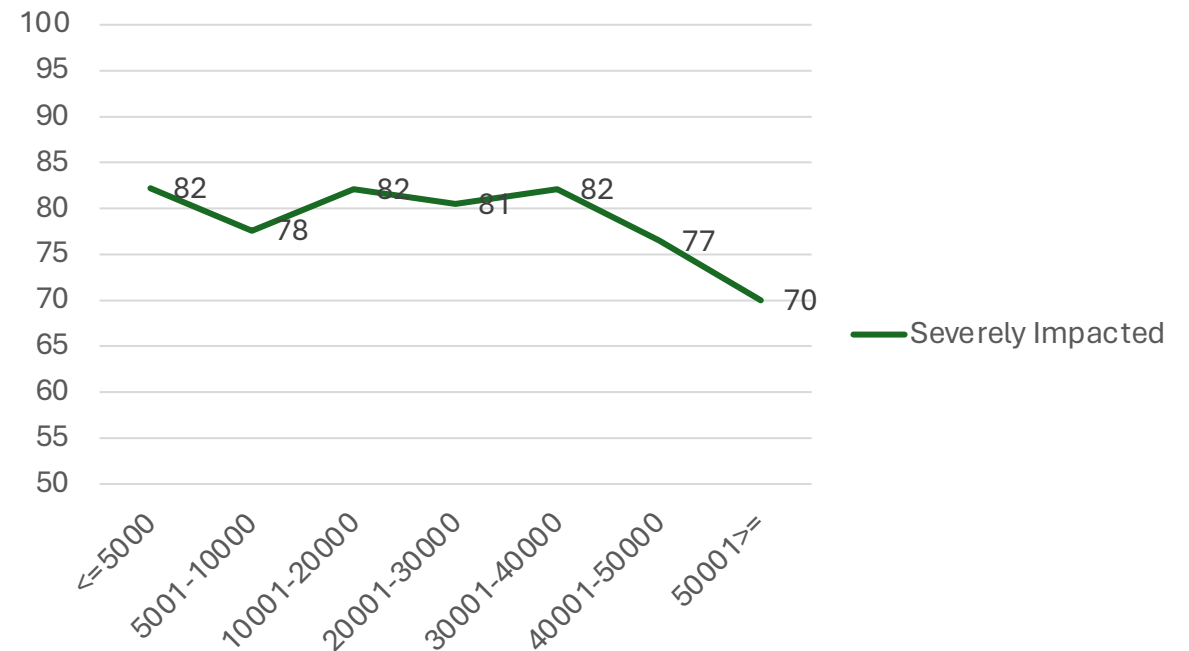
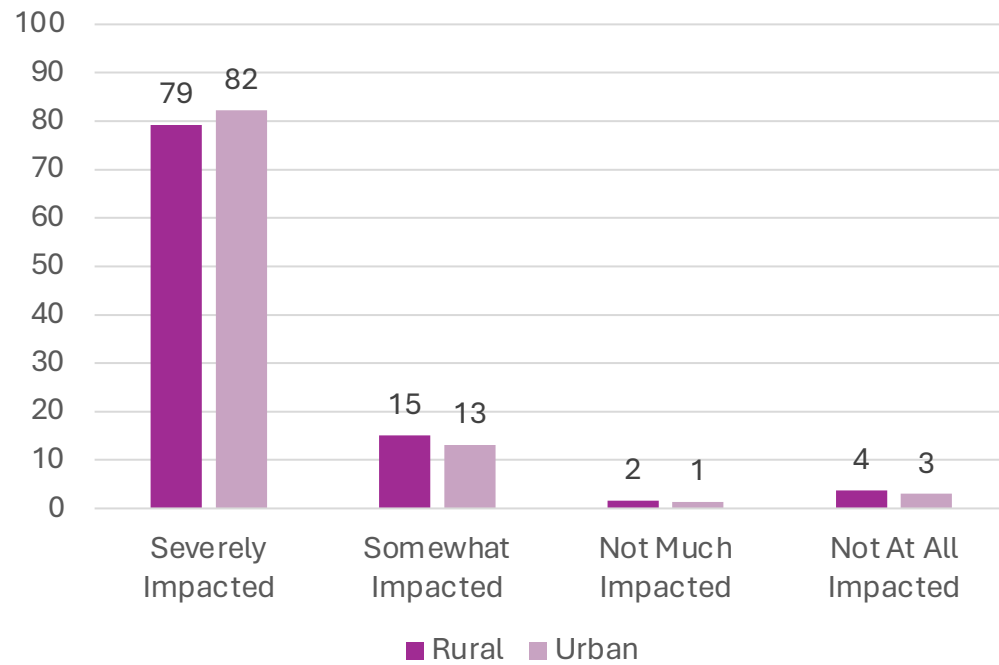
- Price hike of essential commodities has always been the most important problem in the country, according to respondents.
- Respondents generally mention economic issues as the biggest problems.



Biggest problems in 2024 First response (N= 6,510)	
Price hike of essentials	52%
Unemployment	8%
Corruption	4%
Economic/business downturn	4%
Political unrest and intolerance	4%
Poverty	3%
No problem	3%

Impact of the price hike

How has the recent price hike in essential commodities impacted your life? (By rural-urban and income)
Overall, 95% say they were severely/somewhat impacted by the price hikes.



Perceptions of Democracy and State-Citizen Relationship



One-third of the respondents were unable to define the concept of democracy.

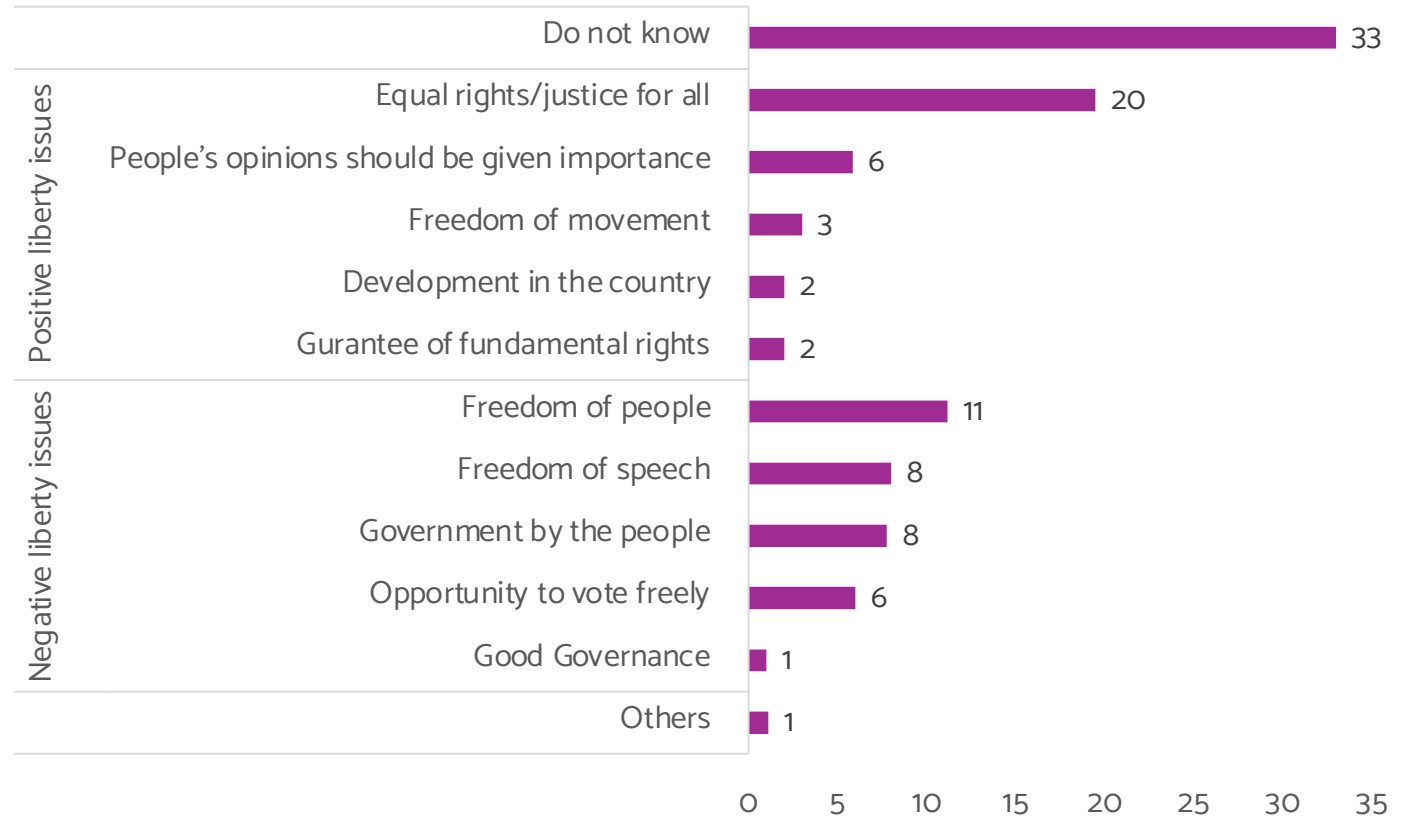
In citizens' view, the state-citizen relationship is mostly defined as a Prime minister–citizen relationship. Many also perceive the state as their benevolent patron.

MPs' connection to their constituency seems to be declining, and so is their performance rating.

Union Parishad (UP) is highlighted as the most important organization and the Chairperson as the most powerful.

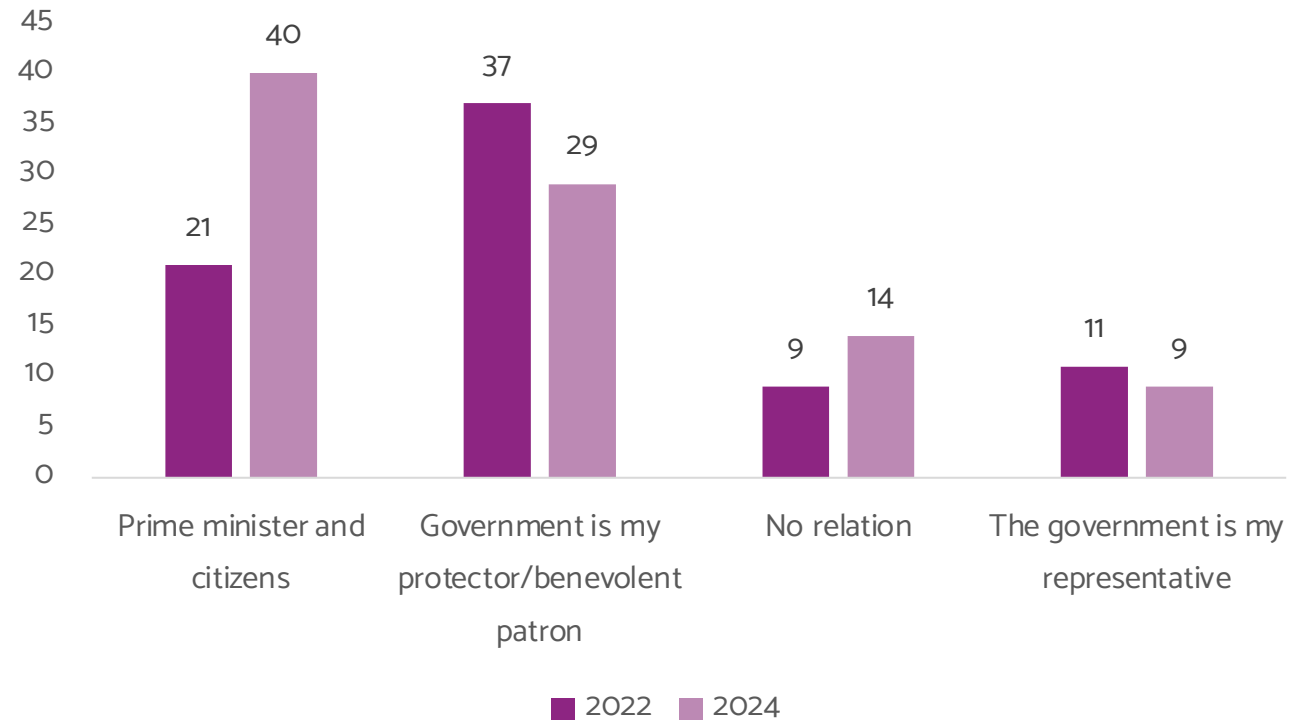
Citizens' understanding of democracy

- Share of 'don't know' is the dominant response.
- Responses are consistent with the last round's findings.
- Both positive and negative liberty issues were reported by respondents.



As a citizen of Bangladesh, what is your relationship with the government of Bangladesh?

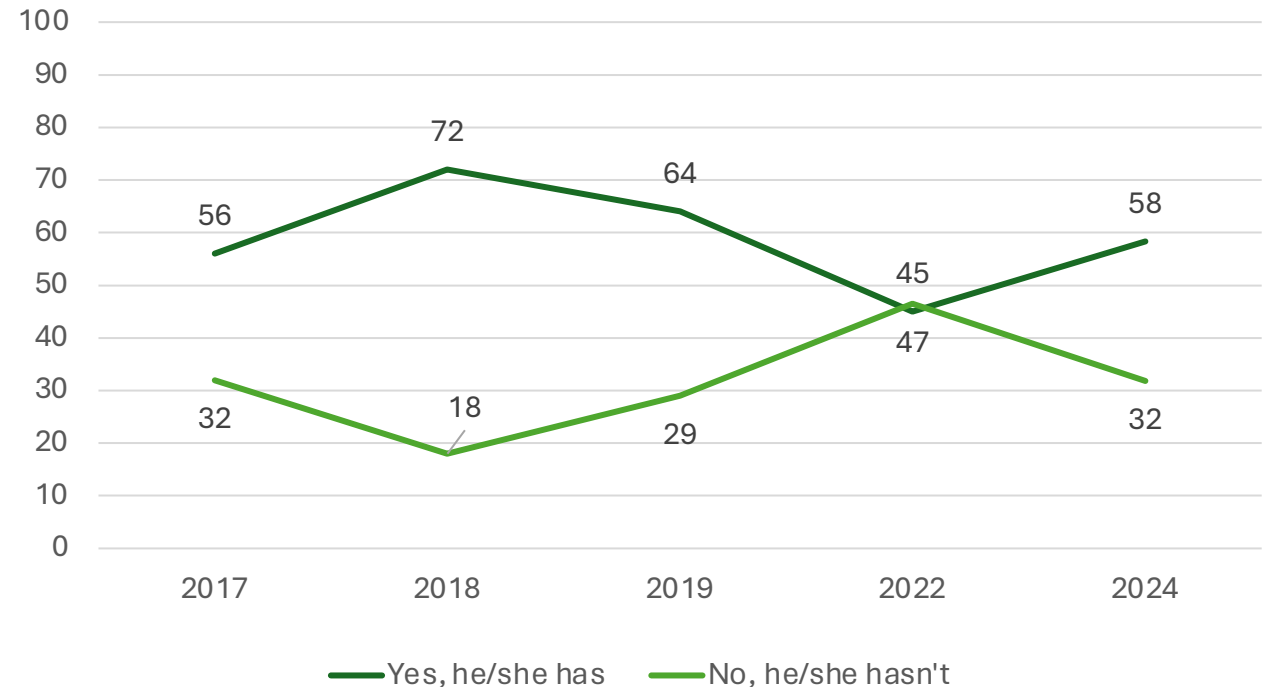
- 40% view their relationship with the government as a Prime minister–citizen relationship. 29% view the government as their benevolent patron or protector.
- Respondents who feel they have no relationship with the government have increased from 9% to 14%.



Has your Member of Parliament visited your community in the last one year? (by year)

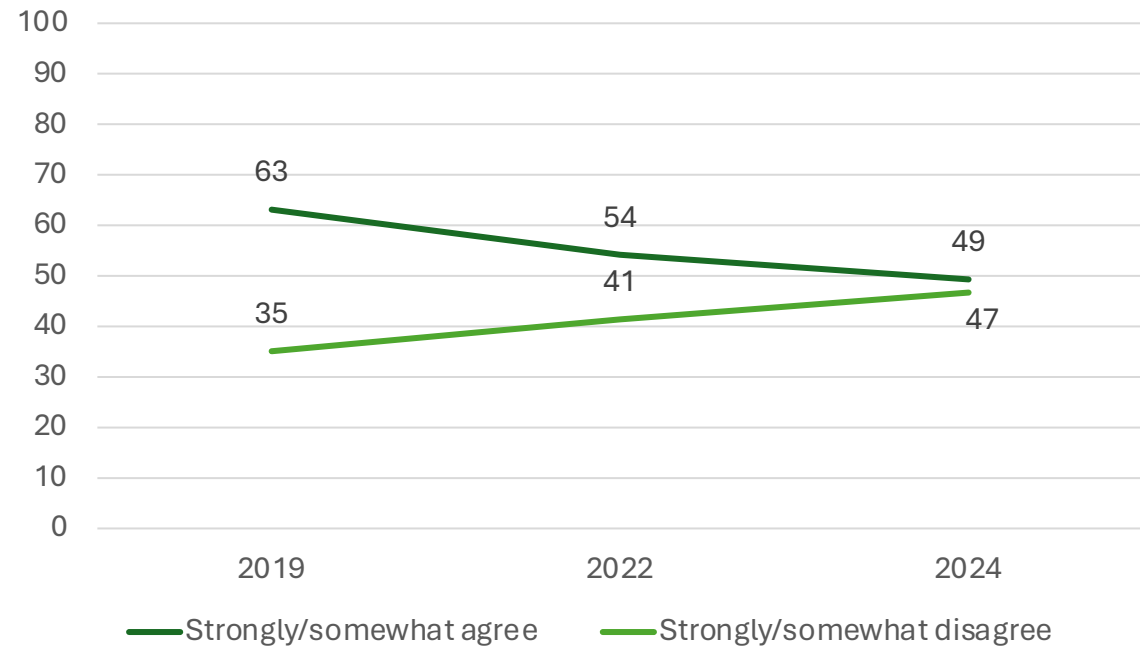


MPs' visit generally shows a downward trend. However, in 2024, it shows an increase of 13 percentage points, probably owing to the national election.



Citizens' perceptions on Members of Parliament

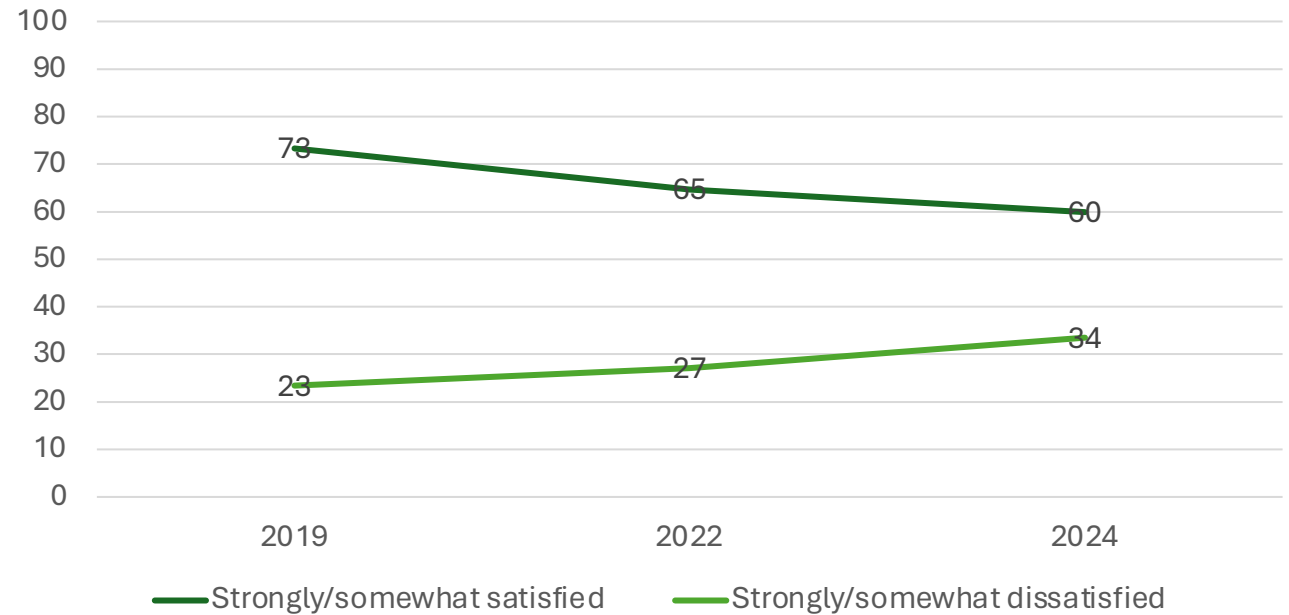
Almost half (49%) of the respondents agree (strongly or somewhat) with the following statement: “Members of Parliament care about the common people.”



Satisfaction with national representatives

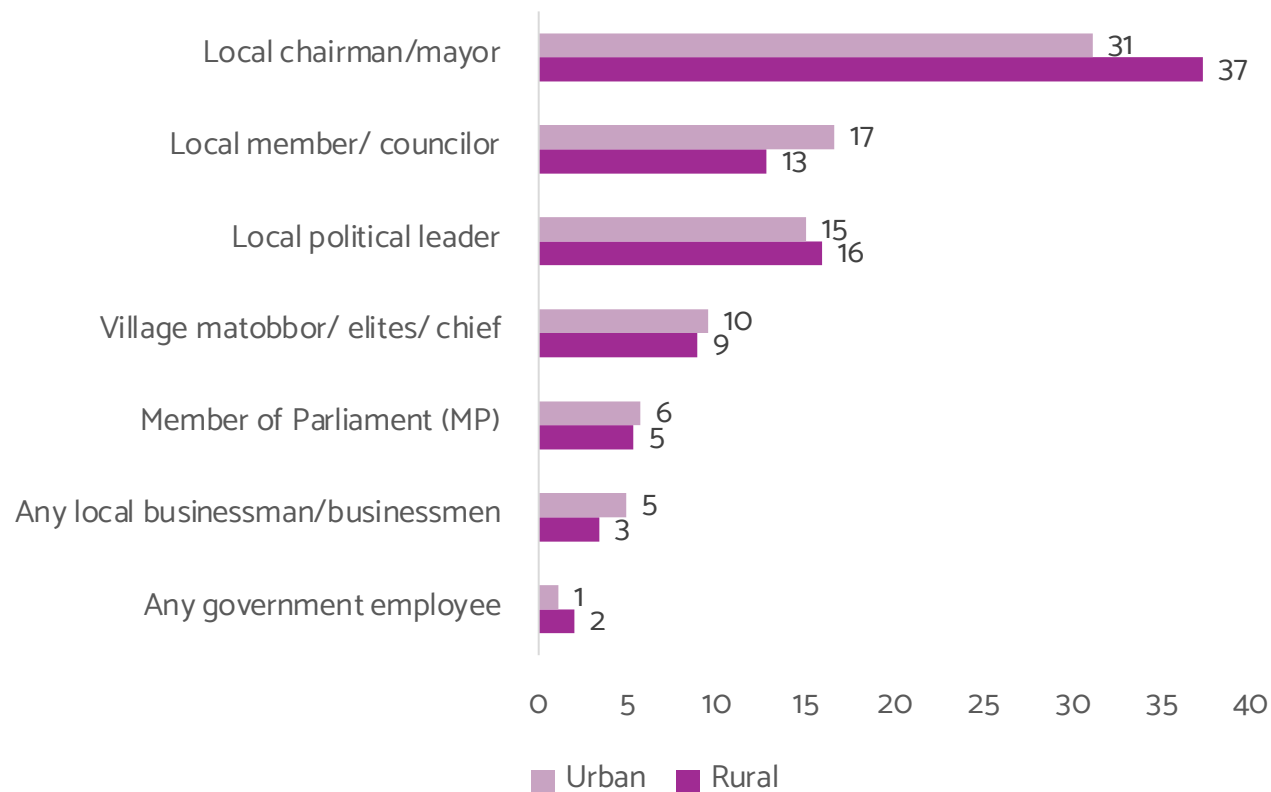
Satisfaction regarding the work of MPs (60%) has been decreasing.

How satisfied are you with the MP's work?



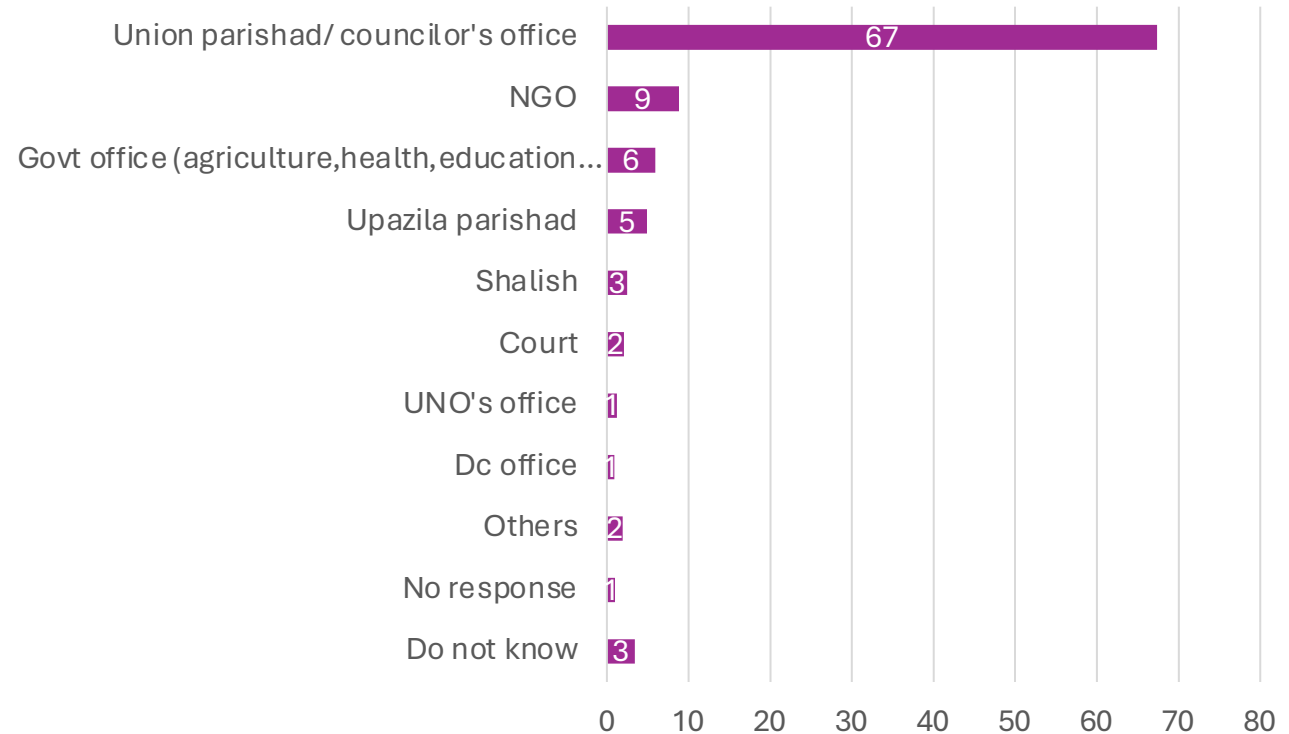
The most powerful person in the locality

- The chairperson in the locality is perceived as the most influential (34%), more so in the rural areas (37%).
- Local political leaders and UP members are also mentioned by the respondents (16%).



Which organization has the most importance in your everyday life?

- Union parishad is the most important organization in the locality(67%), followed by NGO (9%).
- When asked what respondents understand by NGOs, the overwhelming majority (83%) identified microfinance institutions as a first response, and very few (5%) said health and education service providers.



News and Media Trends



The larger proportion of internet users are higher educated and upper-income groups.

Accessing news from internet-based sources is gaining popularity.

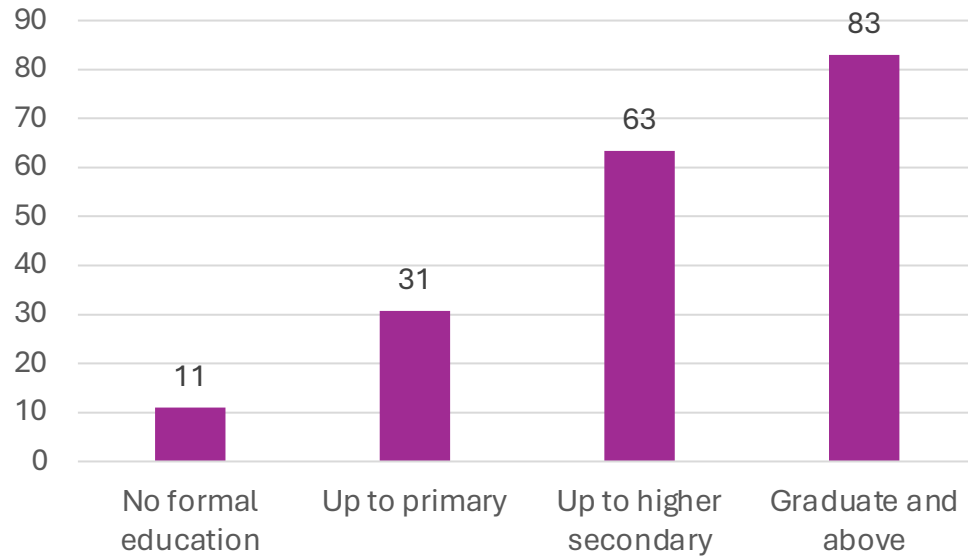
Popular media sources are perceived to have little to no freedom.

The majority do not feel safe to share their opinions on social and political issues online.

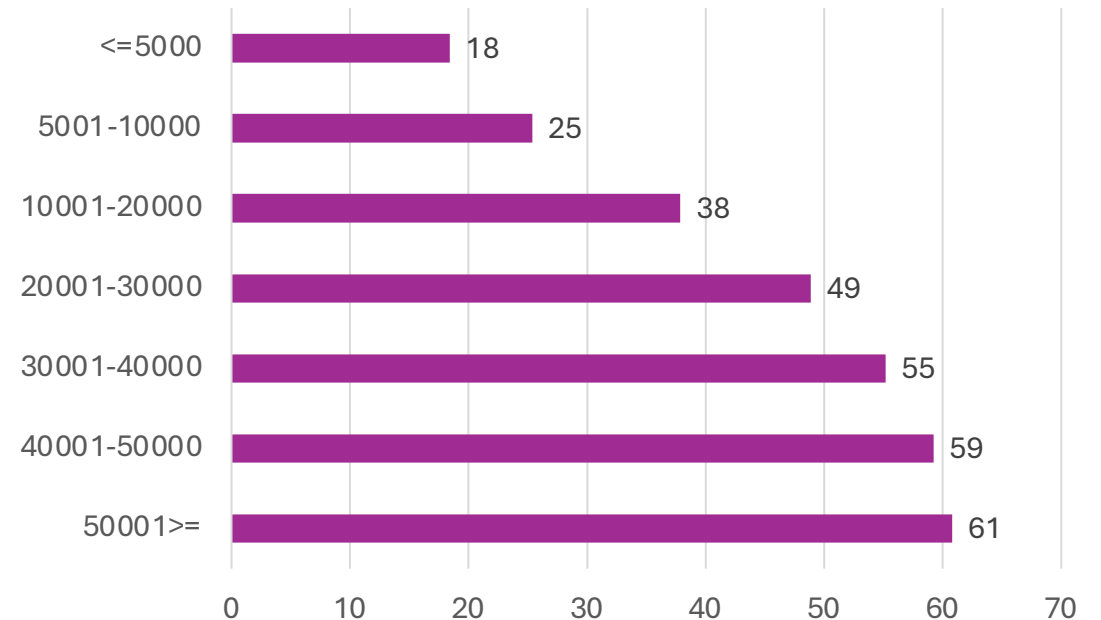
Use of internet by education and income

Use of internet increases with higher education and income.

Use of internet by education

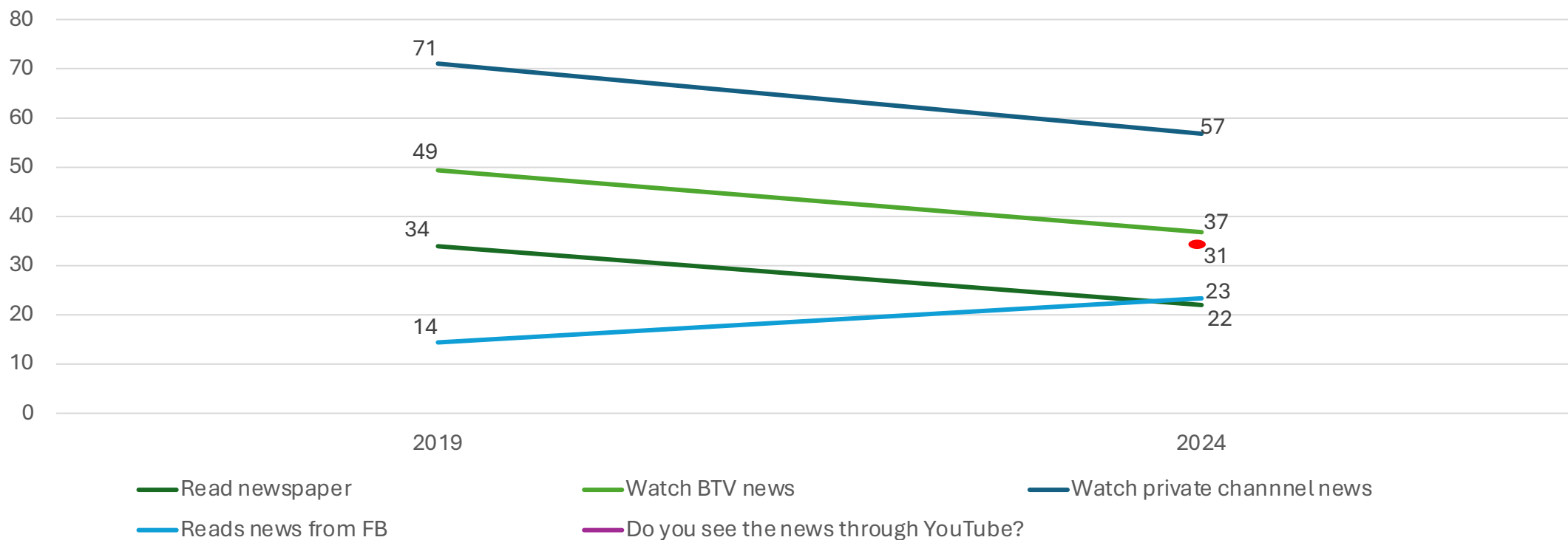


Use of internet by income



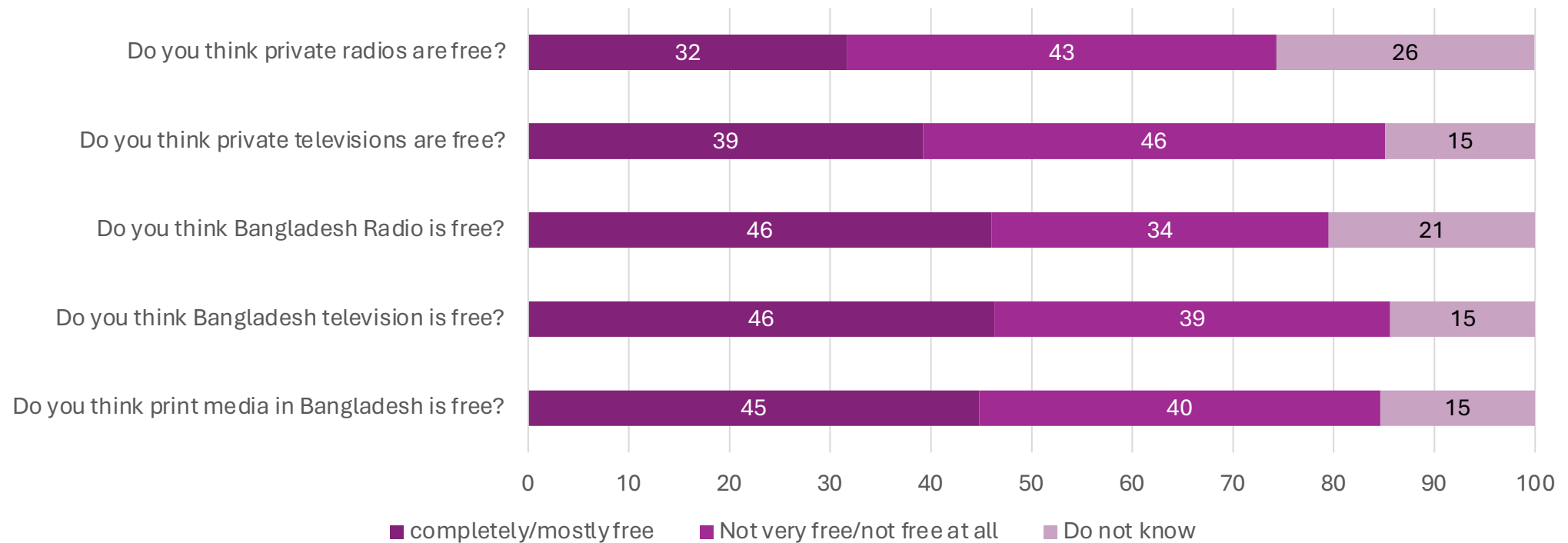
News Media Sources

- News consumption from internet-based platforms have been on the rise.
- 23% said they see news via Facebook, while 31% said they see news through YouTube.



Freedom of Media

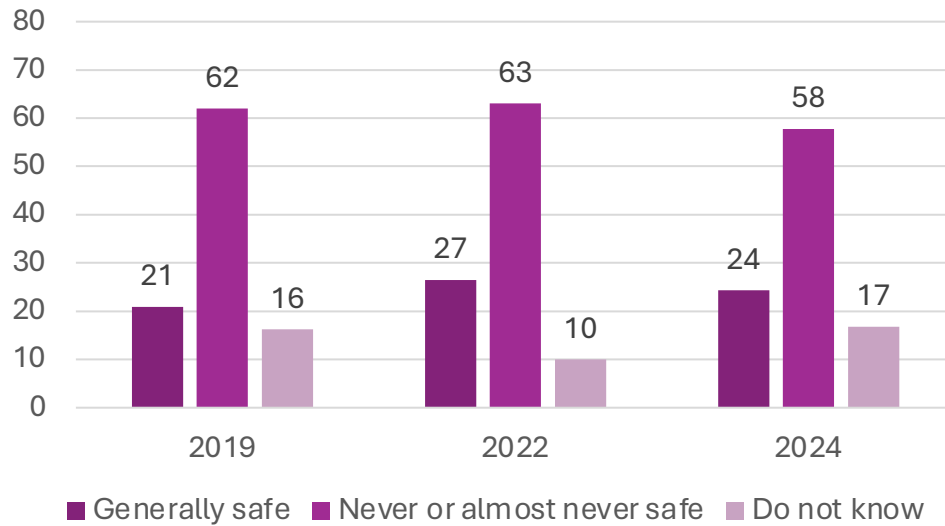
In all cases of public and private television, print, and media industries, less than half of the respondents believe that those media are completely/mostly free.



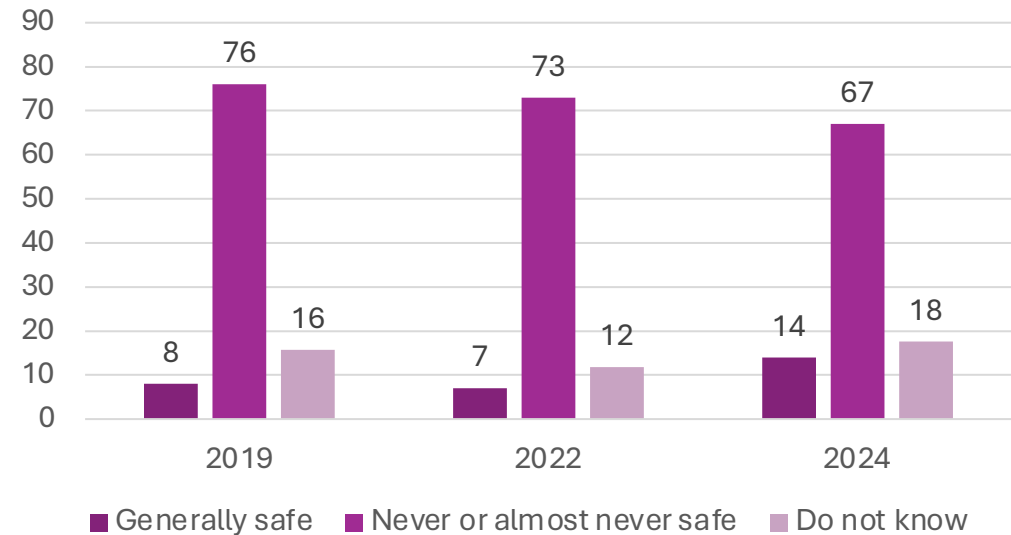
Feeling regarding expressing opinions online

Majority of respondents feel that it is generally unsafe to share social or political views on social media.

Do you think it is safe to share your opinion regarding social issue of Bangladesh online?



Do you think it is safe to share your opinion regarding political issues of Bangladesh online?



Contemporary issues



People view the lack of job opportunities in the market and corruption as the biggest reasons behind unemployment.

The overwhelming majority of respondents generally do not have positive perceptions about the Rohingyas.

People are largely unfamiliar with the concept of climate change. However, those who are aware feel that it is a major threat to be dealt with immediately.

Reasons for youth unemployment

The most frequently cited barriers to youth employment are lack of job opportunities in the market (43%), followed by corruption (36%), lack of training or vocational education (7%), and high competition (3%) (first responses).

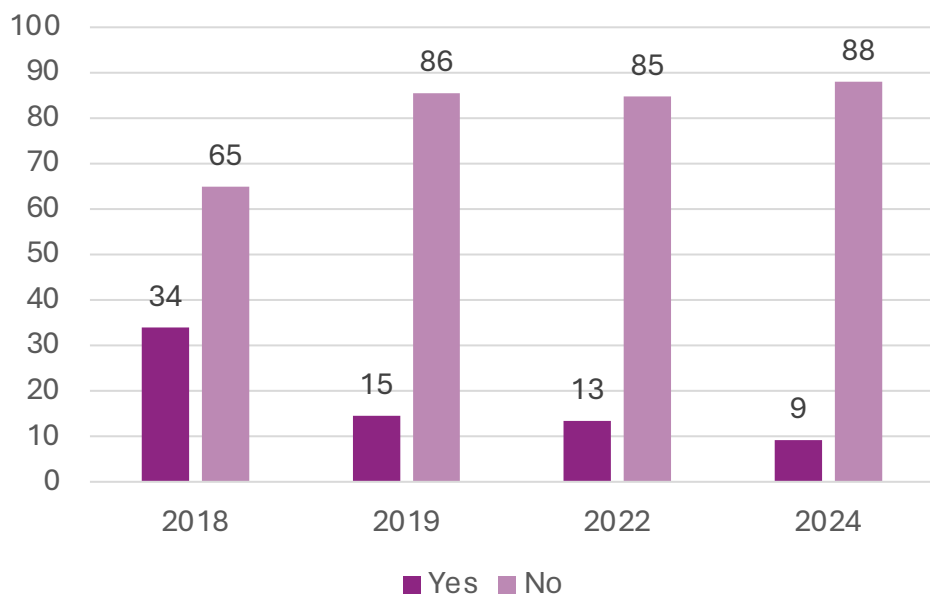


Reasons for youth unemployment	1st reason (N=4606)
Lack of job opportunities	43
Corruption/nepotism	36
Lack of proper training /vocational education	7
Lack of qualification or skills	3
Too much competition	3
Lack of interest in working among young people	2
Other	2
Do not know	5

Rohingya Crisis

Support towards the Rohingya seems to be declining.

Would you welcome Rohingya refugees living in your community?



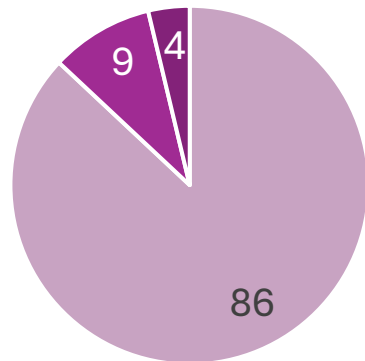
In your opinion how long Rohingya refugees can be allowed to stay in Bangladesh?

How long should the Rohingya refugees can be allowed to stay in Bangladesh?	2019	2022	2024
They should leave Bangladesh now	69	66	57
Until it is safe to return	20	14	33
Until they cannot go to any other country	4	2	4
Indefinitely	2	5	1
Do not know	5	12	5
No answer	0	1	1

Climate Change

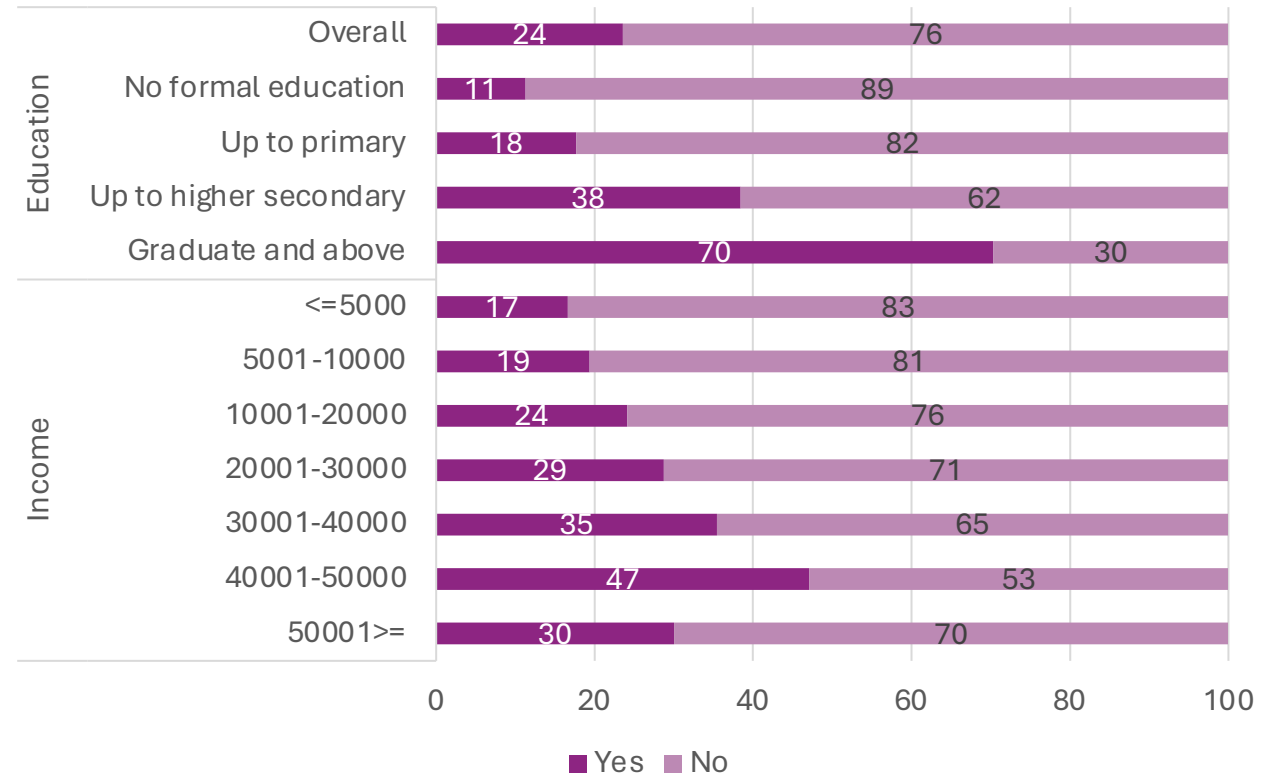
- Majority of respondents (86%) are not familiar with the concept of climate change and global warming.
- Those who are aware perceive it as a major threat.

Knows about Climate Change/Global Warming



■ Major threat
 ■ Minor threat
 ■ Not a threat

Do you think global climate change is a big threat to our country, a small threat, or not a threat at all?



Thank You

