

**Assessing Local Governance in the
Northern Province:
A Report by Home for Human Rights**

September 2013

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7 Introduction

Sri Lanka's modern-day local governance roots can be traced directly to the Indo-Lankan Accord.

In 1987, the 13th Amendment established the Provincial Council System in the country's constitution – with the aim of devolving power to the provinces.

The Ministry of Local Government Services of the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) has planning and decision-making power for local government bodies. It is the Provincial Councils (PCs) which are tasked with implementing such decisions.

The President of Sri Lanka appoints a Governor and a Chief Secretary in each of the nation's nine provinces. It is the Governors who head their respective Provincial Councils.¹ Their term of service is five years. The Sri Lankan Institute of Local Governance trains the staff in management and professional development.²

There are three types of local government bodies: Municipal Councils, Urban Councils and Pradeshiya Sabhas. The differentiation is based on the population, size and development of an area. In practice Municipal Councils are for cities and large towns. Urban Councils correspond to less urbanized areas and Pradeshiya Sabhas to rural areas. However this is not a universal rule; some Pradeshiya Sabhas are more urbanized than some Urban Councils³.

All five districts in the Northern Province⁴ have been severely affected by the country's longstanding ethnic conflict.⁵ Post-war, the government has focused on economic development and the rebuilding of physical infrastructure in the North. Additionally, some Internally Displaced People (IDPs) have returned to their homes. Nonetheless, for many community members, protracted displacement has been exacerbated by the fact that many displaced people have lost their land, livelihood and/or relatives.

The GoSL and other organizations are working hard to improve the socioeconomic situation of the people in the conflict-affected North and East – with the hope that some sense of normalcy may return to these war-weary regions.

¹ Each Provincial Council should consist of a Chief Minister and four other Ministers.

² This happens according to Act Number 31 of 1999.

³ http://fslga.lk/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Chapter_2.pdf

⁴ The Northern Province is comprised on Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Kilinochchi Districts.

⁵ Sri Lanka's civil war ended in May 2009. Sri Lankan government forces defeated the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Across the five districts, a total of 33 local government bodies fall under the penumbra of the Northern Provincial Council – which is responsible for development in the Northern Province.

Jaffna District has 1 Municipal Council, 3 Urban Councils, and 13 Pradeshiya Sabhas for a total of 17 local government bodies. Kilinochchi District has 3 Pradeshiya Sabhas, Mullaitivu District has 4 Pradeshiya Sabhas, Vavuniya District has 1 Municipal Council and 4 Pradeshiya Sabhas (5 local government bodies), and Mannar District has a Municipal Council and 3 Pradeshiya Sabhas (4 local government bodies).

Of the 33 local government bodies, 30 held elections in 2011.⁶

Importantly, 11 local government bodies were not under the control of the GoSL until 2009.⁷

⁶ The three local government bodies that did not hold elections were Maritimappattu PS, the Oddisuddan PS, and the Puthukudiyiruppu PS.

⁷ This includes: Karaichchi PS, Poonagary PS and Patchchilai Palli PS in Kilinochchi District; Maritimappattu PS, Oddisuddan PS, Puthukudiyiruppu PS, Thunnukai PS, and Manthai East PS in Mullaitivu District; Vavuniya North PS in Vavuniya District; and Manthai West PS and Madhu PS in Mannar District.

2 The Survey

Home for Human Rights (HHR) undertook a sampling survey (perceptions survey) in April 2013 in the Northern Province.

The purpose of the exercise is to poll the opinions that the people have about the performance of their local government bodies and local elected officials. The survey looked at a range of topics including public services, projects, development and public participation. Sixteen local government bodies were randomly selected to participate in this survey.

In addition, the survey is also an avenue to inform the public of their rights and to educate people about the role and function of their local government bodies. The survey was also designed to encourage public participation in local government processes. The questions focused on how well local government services reached the people and how diligent and competent the elected officials were in carrying out their duties.

The questionnaire was prepared specifically for each type of local government body, based on the powers and responsibilities prescribed in Sri Lanka's constitution and the relevant acts, such as:

1. Municipal Council Ordinance No.29 of 1947
2. Urban Council Ordinance No. 61 of 1939
3. Pradeshiya Sabha Act No. 15 of 1987

A total of 2,051 households from 48 Grama Sevaka (GS) divisions in the Northern Province were randomly selected to participate in this survey. Additionally, 59 data collectors were selected to conduct the survey based on their relevant educational qualification and field experience.

The data collected from the survey was then entered into a database. The data was categorized and analyzed; this report has been written to show the results. Care was taken to collect and analyze the information in an impartial fashion, and to represent the opinions of the people without favoring a particular political party.

HHR's comprehensive governance report is divided into several parts. HHR's report focuses on local government bodies as a whole.

3 Methodology

3.1 Background Discussions, Survey Approval and Consultation

On March 21, 2013 Home for Human Rights (HHR) staff met with the Governor of the Northern province at his office in Jaffna; this was a follow-up to two previous meetings with the Governor held with the senior management of the organization earlier that month.⁸ During the March 21 meeting, HHR representatives delivered a PowerPoint presentation and explained the project on governance and citizenship in detail – especially the survey which the organization hoped to implement throughout the Northern Province. In late June, HHR invited several dozen local elected officials in the Northern province to participate in a governance consultation in Colombo. Members of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and the United People’s Freedom Alliance (UPFA) were both asked to participate. This two-day event was held in Colombo; a diverse range of governance issues and trends were discussed during that time.

3.2 The Selection of Local Government Bodies in the Northern Province

On March 21, 2013, in the presence of the Governor, the Chief Secretary of the Northern Provincial Council, Department Representatives and the HHR team, out of thirty-six local government bodies, the Governor randomly selected eighteen to participate in the survey. (These bodies are responsible for governance and/or public sector service delivery in 58 villages throughout Sri Lanka’s Northern Province).⁹

⁸During those previous meetings, the Governor had requested that HHR give a presentation to his team about the proposed project.

⁹For additional information on the villages selected, please refer to Annex I.

3.2.1 The Details of the Randomly Selected Local Government Bodies

Se. No	District	Local Government Body
1	Mullaitivu	Manthai East PS
2		Thunukkai PS
3	Mannar	Manthai West PS
4		Mannar UC
5	Vavuniya	Vavuniya UC
6		Vavuniya South Tamil PS
7	Kilinochchi	Karaichchi PS
8		Pachchilaippalli PS
9	Jaffna	Chavakachcheri UC
10		Valikamam East PS
11		Valikamam North PS
12		Kayts PS
13		Vadamarachchi South West PS
14		Chavakachcheri PS
15		Point Pedro PS
16		Valveddiththurai UC

Sinhala-speaking Local Government Bodies

Se. No	District	Local Government Body
1	Mullaitivu	Maritimepattu PS (Welioya)
2	Vavuniya	Vavuniya South Sinhala PS

3.2.2 The Survey Sample from Selected Villages¹⁰

Out of the total number of families in each survey village, approximately 10% of those families were selected to be included in the survey.¹¹

3.2.3 Training for the Data Collectors

¹⁰HHR field officers contacted the Maruthankerny DS's office to get the details of families pertaining to the Point Pedro Pradeshiya Sabha. Nonetheless, as of the writing of this report, the DS's office in Maruthankerny still had not responded to HHR's request.

¹¹ For additional information on the survey sample, please refer to Annex I.

A day-long training program for data collectors was conducted on April 7, 2013 in Jaffna. Participants were selected from Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar and Vavuniya districts – based upon their educational qualifications, previous data collection experience and their willingness to learn. During this training, detailed explanations about the survey questionnaire, proper conduct when collecting information, communication skills and troubleshooting were given to all participants. During that time, all sixty-four trainees/data collectors were given identity cards.

3.2.4 Details on the Data Collectors

Description of the Data Collectors	Male	Female	Total
Rural Development Society Members	5	-	5
Women’s Rural Development Society Members	NA	20	20
Community-Based Organization Members	4	15	19
University and Technical College Students	7	8	15
Sub Total	16	43	59
Supervisors	5	-	5
Grand Total	21	43	64

3.3 Survey Implementation and Data Collection

Fifty-nine (out of sixty-four) people successfully completed the training and subsequently engaged in data collection.

- 1.) Data collectors went to the respective survey villages and contacted the Grama Sevaka (GS), community leaders or another community member. Respondents were selected using random sampling. Data collectors then visited the houses of those selected to carry out the survey. (If a data collector was unable to identify a particular household, the houses were identified by the GS, community leaders or other community members).
- 2.) If respondents agreed to participate in the survey, data collectors proceeded to fill out questionnaires according to the respondents’ answers.
- 3.) If the randomly selected respondents did not agree to participate in the survey, data collectors used the Kish Selection Method¹² to find another respondent in that village.
- 4.) If the randomly selected respondents were not present, data collectors used the Kish Selection Method to find another respondent in that village.

¹² Commonly used in survey research, the Kish Selection Method uses a table to randomly select potential interviewees of a household to be interviewed.

5.) When the data collectors visited a particular village, they used a village map and marked the respondents' houses on the map. (This was preparatory work – in case a booster sample was needed).

6.) After the survey in a particular village was finished, the supervisor checked the village map and s/he decided whether or not to take a booster sample.

3.3.1 Booster Sample

As noted, HHR used random sampling to conduct its survey. Sometimes, the sample which had been taken was not representative of the entire village. If that was the case, additional samples were taken using the Kish Selection Method – to ensure that HHR's survey was representative.

More specific information on the survey is provided below.

3.3.2 Summary of Survey Details of Tamil-Speaking Local Government Bodies

No	District	# Data Collectors	# GN Division	Total Allocated	Booster Sample	Total	Survey Dates
1	Jaffna	21	25	740	5	745	10.04.2013 to 26.04.2013
2	Kilinochchi	7	9	343	14	357	15.04.2013 to 27.04.2013
3	Mullaitivu	10	6	104	5	109	16.04.2013 to 25.04.2013
4	Vavuniya	9	6	483	2	485	16.04.2013 to 27.04.2013
5	Mannar	10	6	173	16	189	19.04.2013 to 29.04.2013
Total		57	52	1843	42	1885	

3.4 Challenges

As HHR and its partners were collecting data, the organization faced several challenges; a few of those are recounted below.

1. On occasion, pertinent details about community members were not current – as a result of community members having moved elsewhere, for example. This created minor problems for a survey which intended to be representative, as some families may have been counted twice.
2. Relatedly, certain families (registered in a particular village) may have temporarily moved to another village – for work, school or other reasons. Yet those families may have been included in the survey population of a village in which they are not currently living. This was very prevalent in Mannar.
3. On certain occasions, community members were unwilling to fully engage with the survey and/or give accurate information to the data collectors, even after having agreed to participate in the survey. For example, those individuals might have simply responded “No” to an inordinate number of questions.

4 The Survey Results

4.1 The Responsibilities of Local Government Bodies

As noted, Pradeshiya Sabhas, Municipal Councils and Urban Councils are governing Sri Lankan communities under their vested power and authority. The responsibilities of local government bodies are diverse, but generally are related to environmental management, social services, roads, public health activities, water development and social welfare.

As noted, HHR has conducted a survey which assesses peoples' perceptions about local government bodies and their local elected officials. The organization believes that the results are illustrative and that the statistical data emanating from this report can be used to foster meaningful debate about how best to improve local governance in the Northern Province.

4.2 Roads and Infrastructure

4.2.1 Roads

Local government bodies are responsible for monitoring a range of issues related to roads, including road development, repair and other aspects of transportation. The majority of the roads in the road network of Sri Lanka come under the category of rural roads, which amount to over 65,000 km. The responsible authority for these roads is the local authority- the Pradeshiya Sabha (PS).

Road Ownership in Sri Lanka¹³

Road Development Authority (A&B)	11,671 Km
Provincial Council (C&D)	15,532 Km
Local Authority- MCs UCs and PSs (E & Other minor roads)	64,659 Km
Others: Irrigation Department, Mahaweli, Agriculture Department and Plantation sector and other	24,000 Km
Total	115,862 Km

More specifically, the naming of roads and streets and the numbering of houses, businesses and property (both private and public) falls under the purview of local government authorities.¹⁴

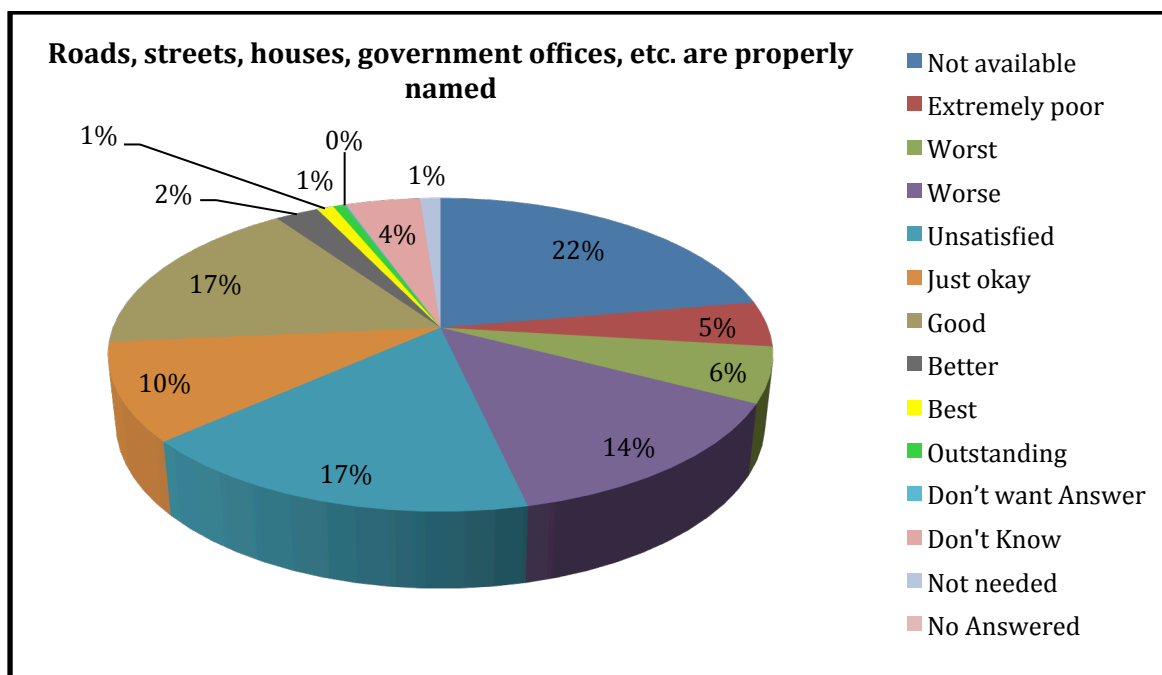
¹³http://www.rda.gov.lk/supported/noticeboard/publications/nrmp_executiveSummary.pdf

¹⁴Please refer to Question #1 in the survey.

It appears that many community members are disappointed with the local government’s performance in this area. Out of 1,843 people, 419 respondents said that no such service had ever been provided in their area. 88 rated their local government’s performance as “extremely poor” and 320 people said it was unsatisfactory. While 190 people said that local government actors were doing a job that was “just okay,” 316 respondents claimed that local government actors were doing a “good” job. Yet only 12 respondents said “outstanding.”

Just 22 survey respondents said that these services were not needed in their area. There appears to be little doubt that this is an important aspect of the work of local government authorities and that efforts should be made in the short-term to improve local government performance.

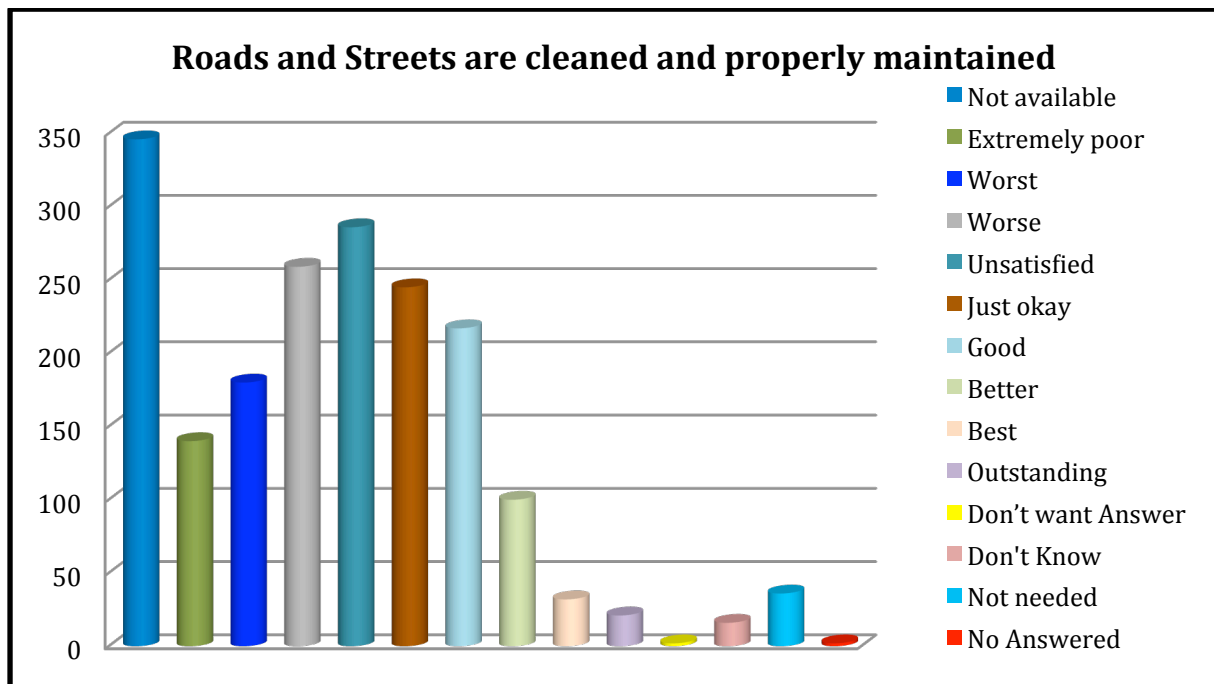
Figure 1: Roads, Streets, houses, government offices, etc. are properly named



Relatedly, it is important that roads and streets be properly cleaned to help enable the free, unrestricted movement of goods and people.¹⁵ Community members also recognize the importance of this service because, upon being asked, only 36 survey respondents said that those services were not needed in their area. Yet, unfortunately, 346 respondents said that no such service had ever been provided in their area. 140 respondents described the service as “extremely poor.” While there were hundreds of other negative responses, 245 respondents said that local government actors were doing a job that was “just okay.” 217 respondents said “good” and 21 even said that the performance of local government actors was “outstanding.”

¹⁵ Please refer to Question #10 in the survey.

Figure 2: Roads and Streets are cleaned and properly maintained



4.2.2 Electricity

Though presently executed by other institutions, the supply of electricity is traditionally a utility service rendered by Local Authorities. The powers in this regard have been vested in the Local Authorities by Section 272 (28) of the M.C, Ordinance, Section 129 of the U.C. Ordinance and Section 108 (b) & (c) of the Pradeshiya Sabha Act. Two functions were performed under this.

- (1) Supply of electricity, to consumers.
- (2) Lighting of streets and public buildings

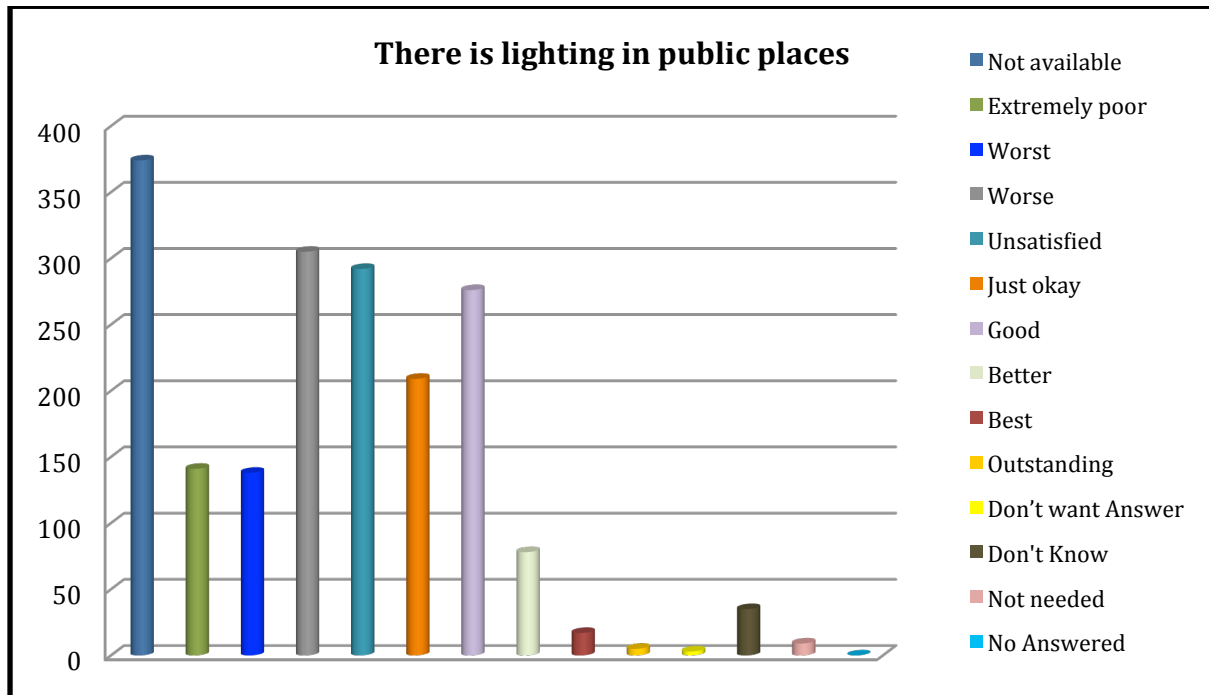
Thus the entire burden of electricity has fallen upon the Ceylon Electricity Board and Lanka Electricity Company, while the Local Authorities are left with the lighting of streets and buildings. Even this activity is expected to be carried out according to an agreement entered into with the Authorities referred to above. The maintenance costs of street lamps that were there at the time of entering into the agreement are met by the General Treasury while the electricity fees for new lamps have to be paid by the Local Authorities. The approval of these institutions will be required for fixing lamps and this responsibility falls under the scope of the responsibilities of local government authorities.¹⁶ Only 9 survey respondents said that such a service was not needed in their area, yet 374 survey respondents said that no such service had ever been provided in their area.¹⁷ 141 people rated the government's performance as "extremely poor." 292

¹⁶ Please refer to Question #2 in the survey.

¹⁷ Many rural communities in Mannar, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu still do not have access to electricity.

respondents said that the performance of the local government was not satisfactory and 209 people said it was “just okay.” Encouragingly, 276 respondents asserted that the government was doing a “good job” and 5 respondents said that local government performance was “outstanding.”

Figure 3: There is lighting in public places



4.2.3 Compensation for the Lands and Buildings along the Roadside

Local government authorities are supposed to negotiate with land and business owners prior to taking property for road development purposes.¹⁸ Survey respondents were asked if local government authorities were “signing proper agreements with land and building owners before taking them over for road and other development.” This question elicited a range of responses.

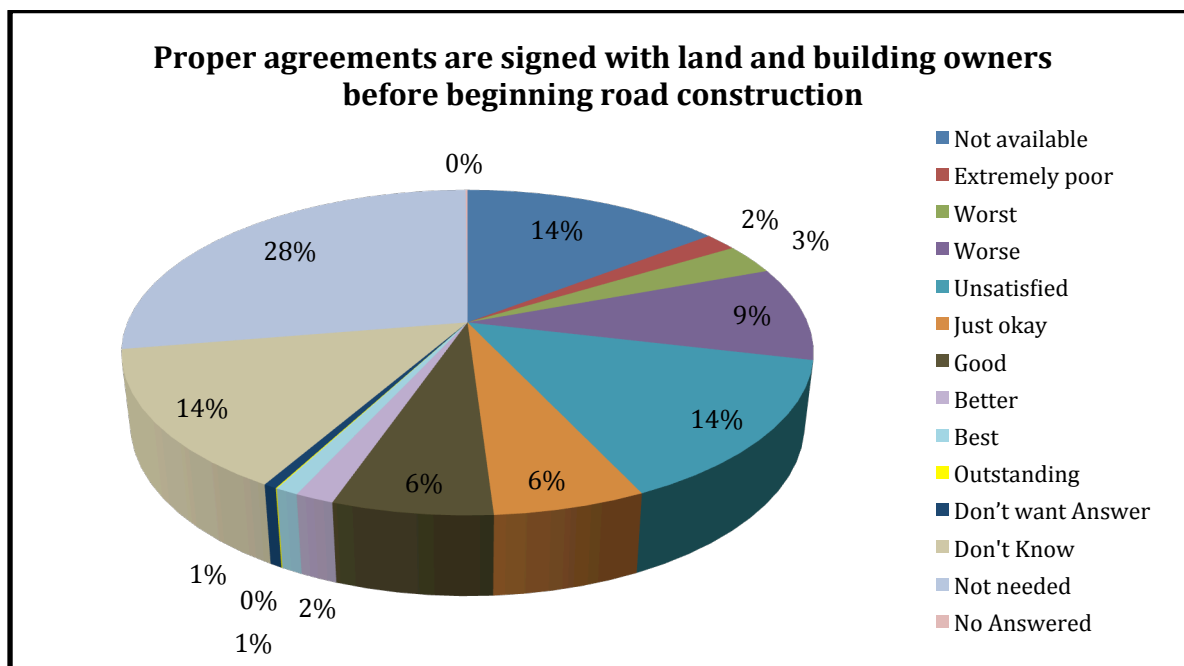
273 respondents noted that no such service had ever existed in their area. While only 34 respondents said that their local government authorities were doing an “extremely poor” job, only 119 said that their local authorities were doing a good job. 113 respondents said that that local authorities were doing a job that was “just okay” and 269 said that local government performance was not satisfactory. Revealingly, only one survey respondent said that local government performance was “outstanding.”

264 respondents did not know how to answer the question.¹⁹

¹⁸ Please refer to Question #6 in the survey.

¹⁹ 518 survey respondents noted that these services were not needed in their community.

Figure 4: Proper agreements are signed with land and building owners before beginning road construction



When private land or buildings are damaged during road construction, it is the responsibility of the local government authorities to compensate community members.²⁰ This does appear to be happening to a certain degree, though— based on survey results – the process is far from systematic.²¹

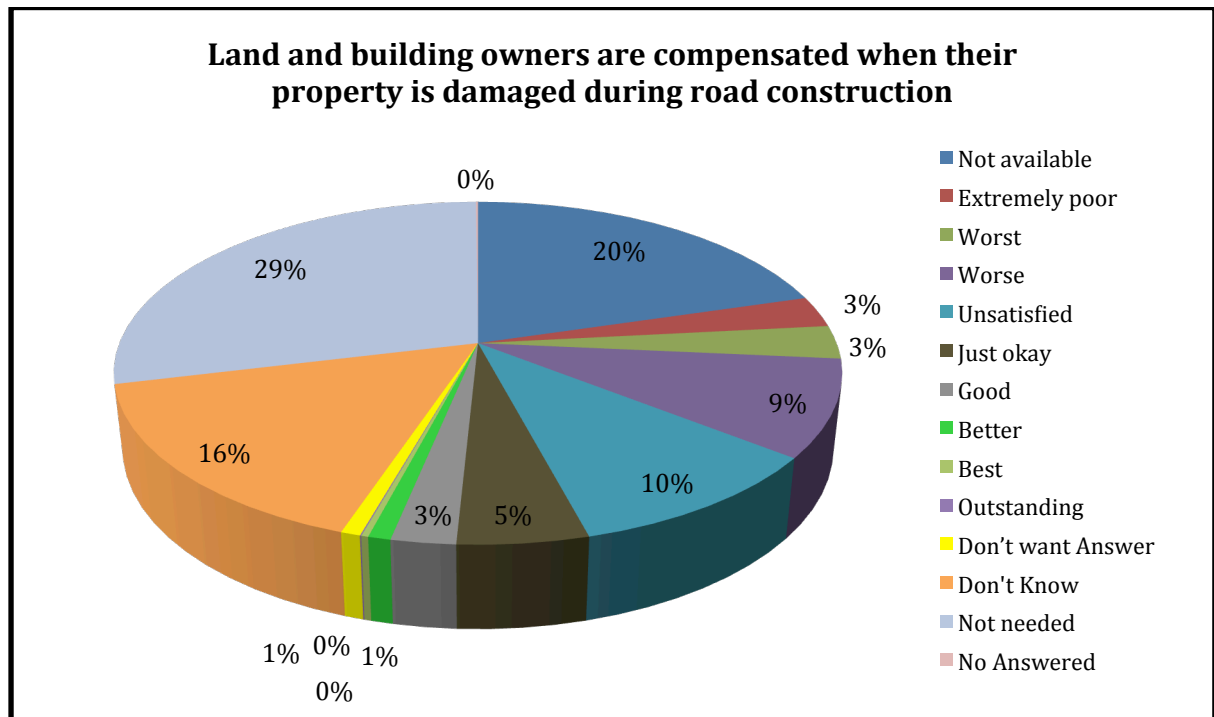
384 respondents asserted that not such services existed in their area.

Only 55 respondents claimed that local government authorities were doing an “extremely poor” job, although just 46 respondents rated local government performance as “good.” 193 respondents said that that local government performance was not satisfactory. 302 respondents said that they did not know the answer to the question.

²⁰ Please refer to Question #7 in the survey.

²¹ 540 respondents noted that these services were not needed in their community.

Figure 5: Land and building owners are compensated when their property is damaged during road construction



These disappointing statistics may be related to reports of increased centralization or the inability of the ruling local authority to negotiate with the Centre, as it relates to the provision of government services.

4.3 General Health

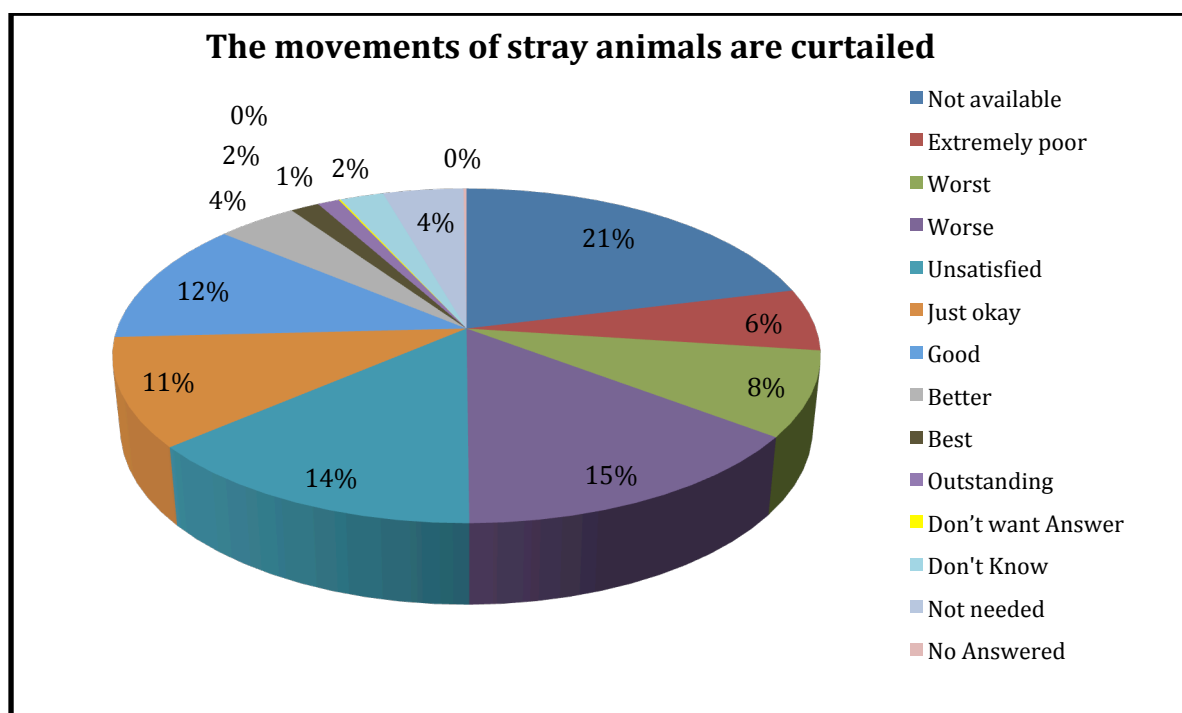
4.3.1 Environmental Health

The interference of stray animals– such as dogs, cows and goats– can be an issue for community members residing in the Northern Province. According to the National Environmental Act, it is the responsibility of local government authorities to restrict the movements of (and eventually remove) these animals from public premises.²²

Only 128 survey respondents said that these services were not needed in their area.

However, 254 survey respondents said that no such service had ever existed in their area. 260 respondents rated the government’s performance as “extremely poor” and 229 said that it was “not satisfactory.” More positively, 219 people said that the government’s performance was “just okay” and 191 people even said that it was “good.” 9 survey respondents even said that the government’s performance had been “outstanding.”

Figure 6: The movements of stray animals are curtailed



Related to survey question #10 (cited above), it is also important that streets and roads not be sullied with stagnant and/or muddy water, and that potholes are filled as soon as possible. Doing all of this helps to ensure safety.²³

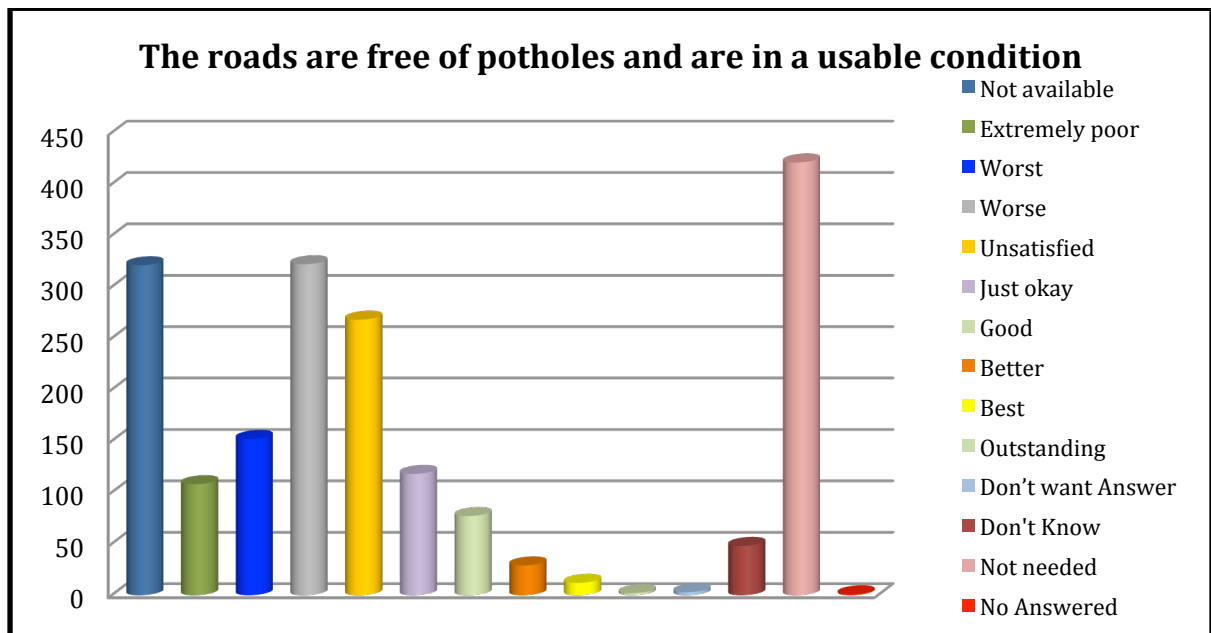
²² Please refer to Question #14 in the survey.

²³ Please refer to Question #17 in the survey.

Nonetheless, 321 survey respondents said that no such service had ever existed in their area and 108 said that local government actors were doing an “extremely poor” job of dealing with this. 268 said that the government’s performance was not satisfactory while 118 said that it was “just okay.” More positively, 79 respondents said that the government was doing a “good” job.

While there appear to be a few encouraging figures, there is much room for improvement in this area.

Figure 7: The roads are free of potholes and are in a usable condition

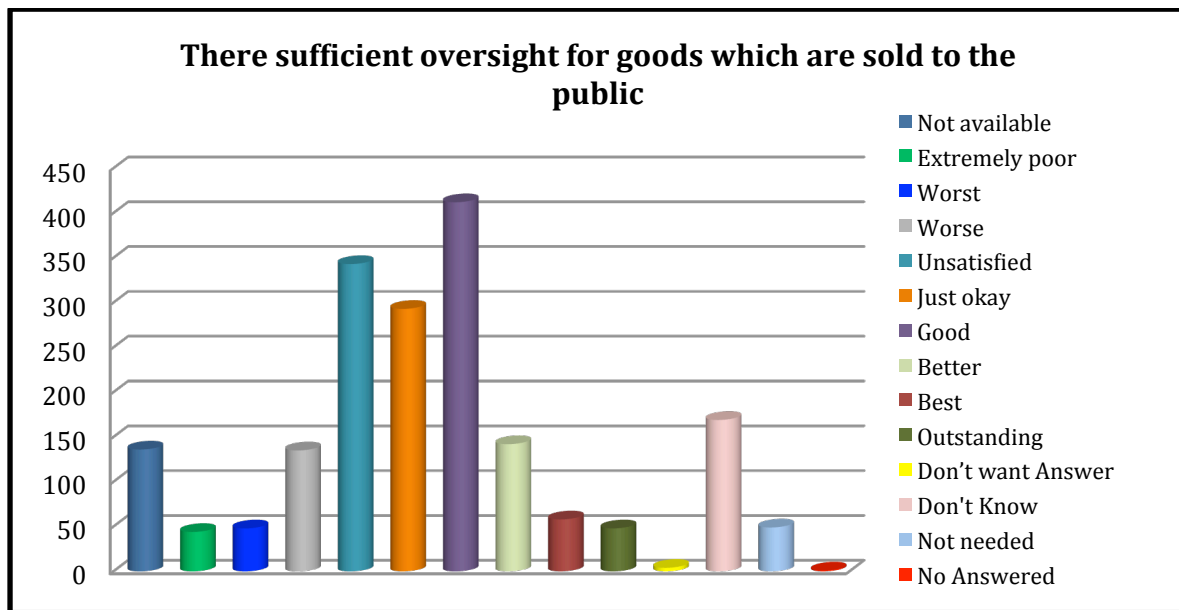


4.3.2 Food Security and Health

Public Health is one of the primary concerns of Local Authorities, as a result they are responsible for supervising the sale of goods in their respective communities. Through its survey, HHR asked community members if local authorities were “supervising on a daily basis and preventing the sale of goods those are not fit for consumption, that their sales are prevented by law, and their specified duration of use have expired.”²⁴

²⁴ Please refer to Question #12 in the survey.

Figure 8: There sufficient oversight for goods which are sold to the public



Comparatively speaking, this is an area where local government authorities are performing well. Only 136 survey respondents asserted that no such service has ever existed in their area; only 44 respondents said local government performance was “extremely poor.” Even though 343 people rated local government performance as not satisfactory, 293 said it was “just okay.” Moreover, 412 people responded with “good” and 48 people said that local government performance was outstanding.

These results are mildly encouraging, not least because it is a highly relevant topic. (Only 49 survey respondents said that such services were not needed in their area).

Figure 9: Ensuring that business owners keep restaurants, markets and shops in a sanitary condition

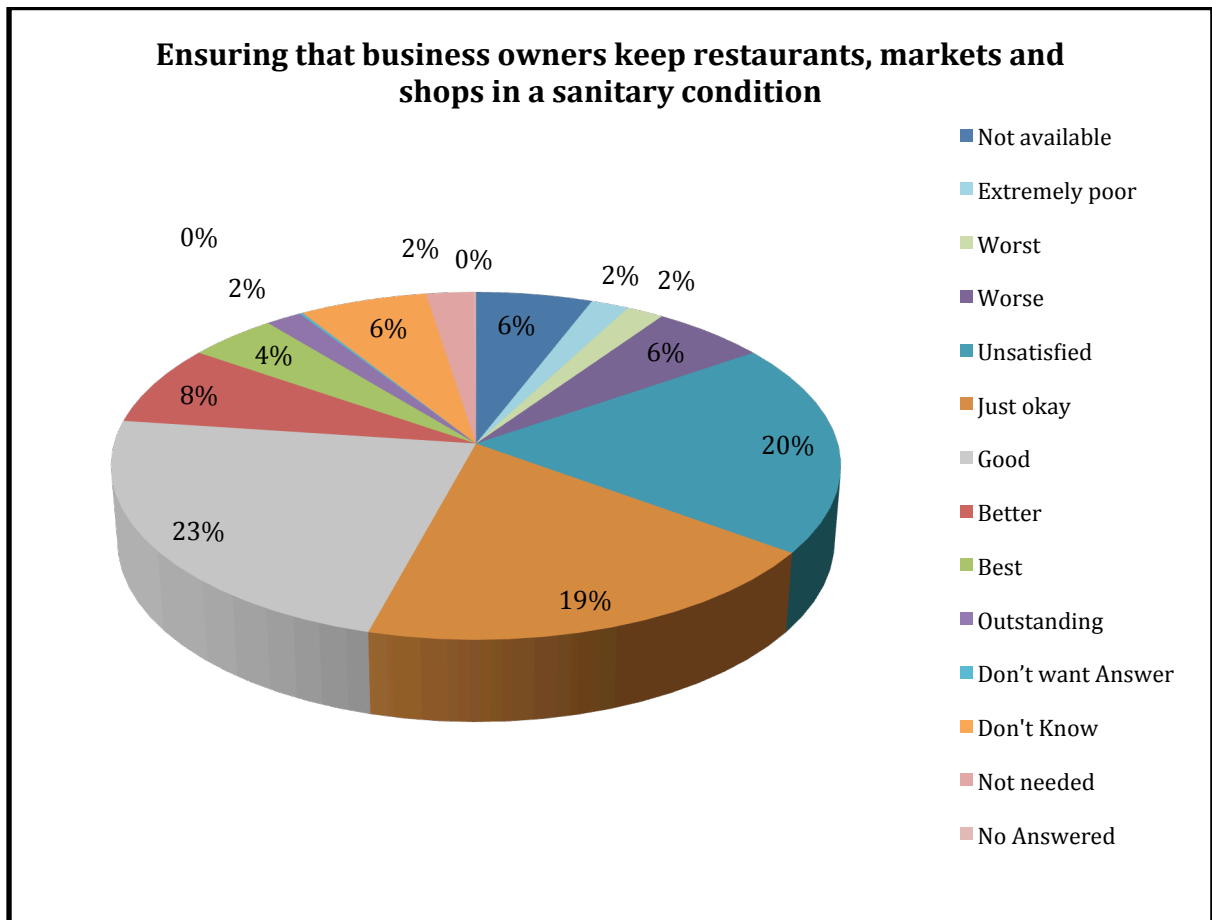


Figure 10: Removing or collecting garbage from public places, private areas and businesses in a timely fashion

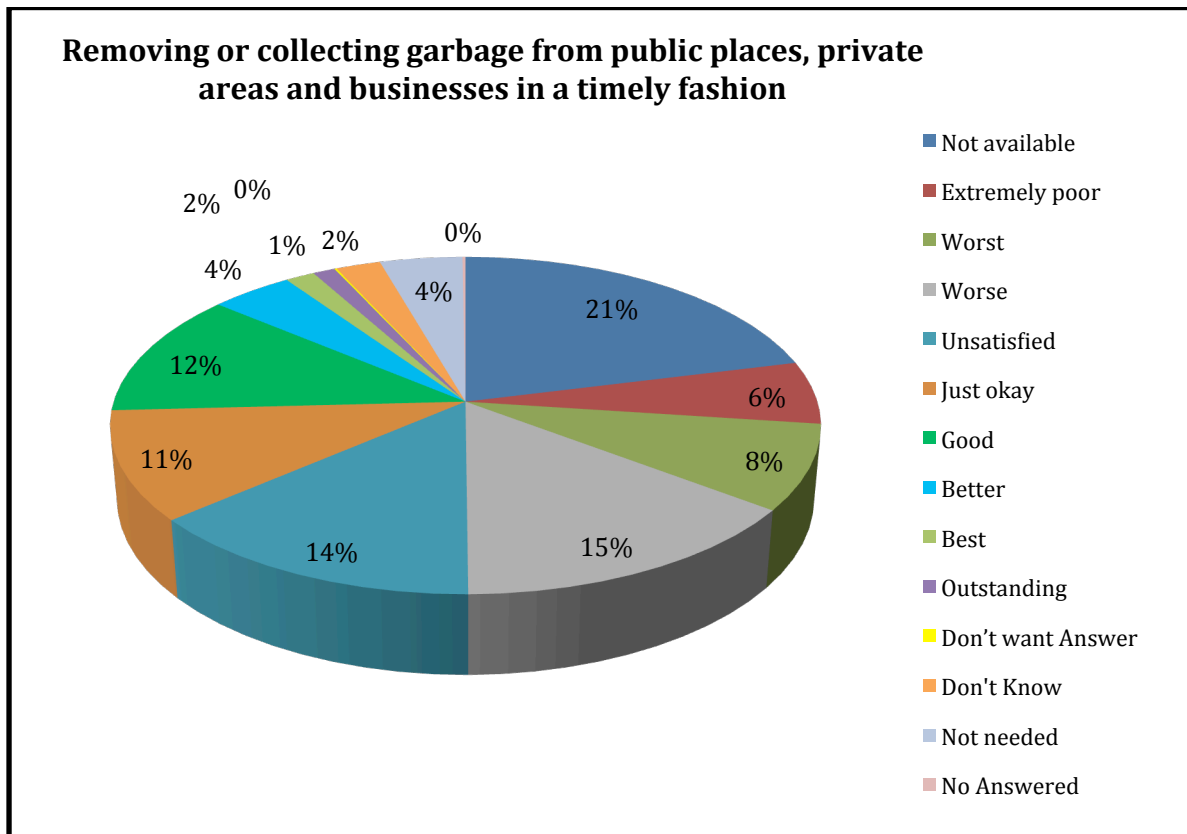
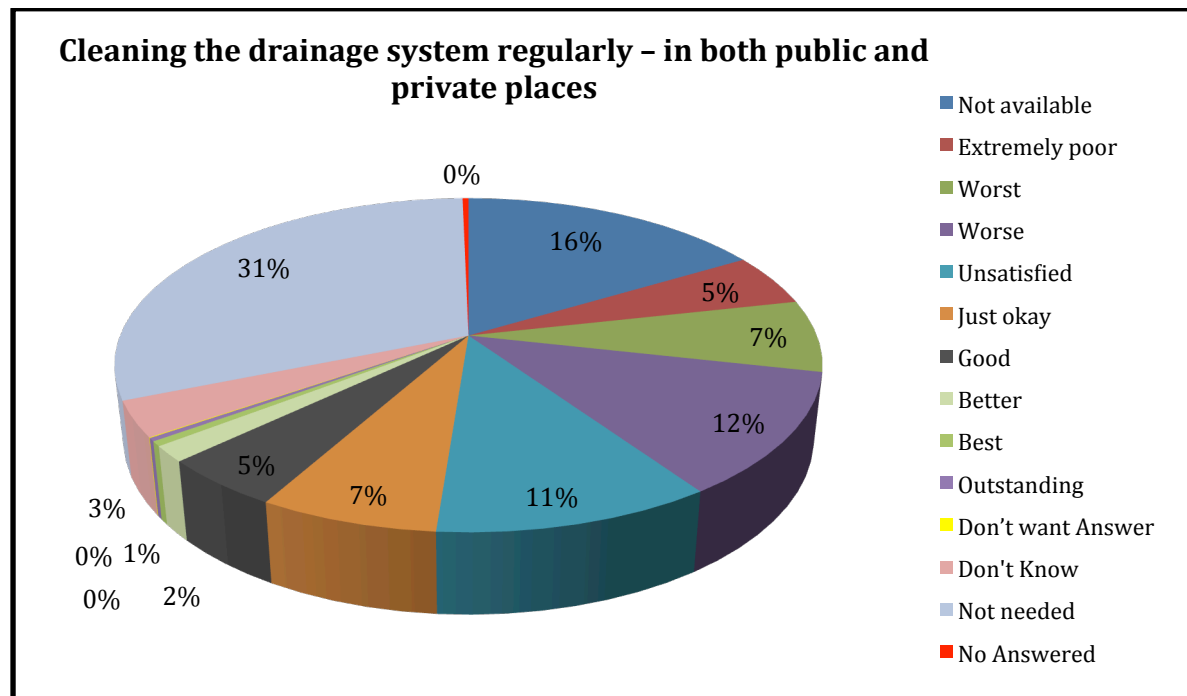


Figure 11: Cleaning the drainage system regularly - in both public and private places

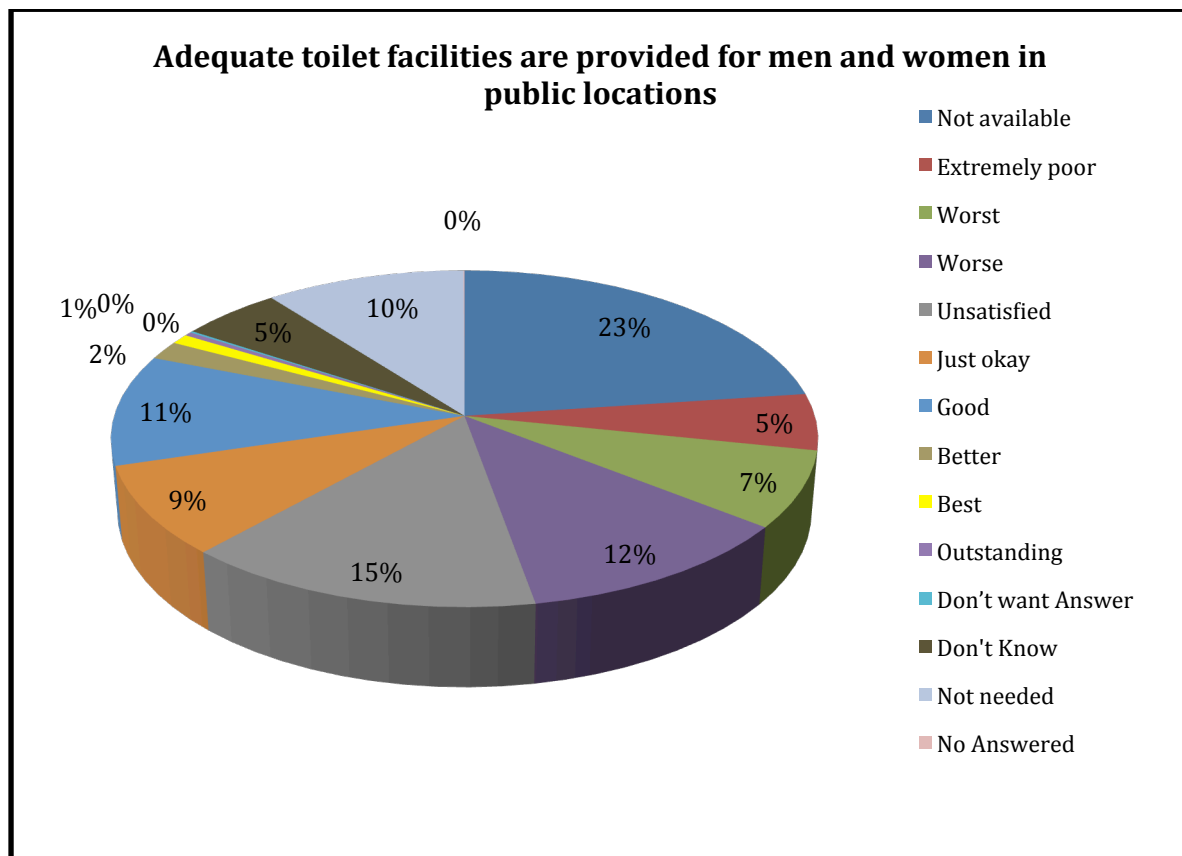


4.3.3 Public Health

Local government authorities are responsible for providing separate toilet facilities for men and women in public places. They are also responsible for ensuring that both public and private washroom facilities maintain certain health standards, yet HHR’s survey results show that there is much room for improvement in this area.²⁵

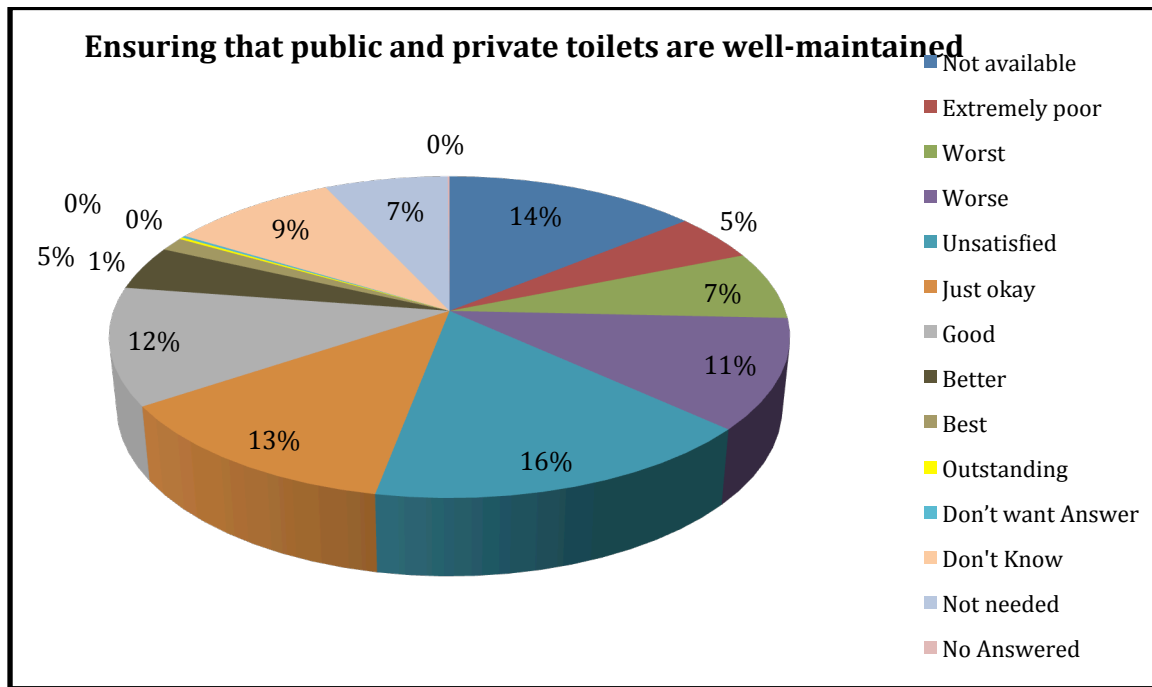
More specifically, 430 respondents noted that no such service had ever been provided in their area. 102 respondents rated the government’s performance as “extremely poor” while 273 said it was not satisfactory. 162 respondents said that their local government actors were doing a job that was “just okay.” On a more positive note, 201 respondents said that the government was doing a “good” job and 7 respondents answered “outstanding.” 99 respondents said they did not know the answer to this question and 196 respondents said that these services were not needed in their area.

Figure 12: Adequate toilet facilities are provided for men and women in public locations



²⁵ Please refer to Question #18 in the survey.

Figure 13: Ensuring that public and private toilets are well-maintained

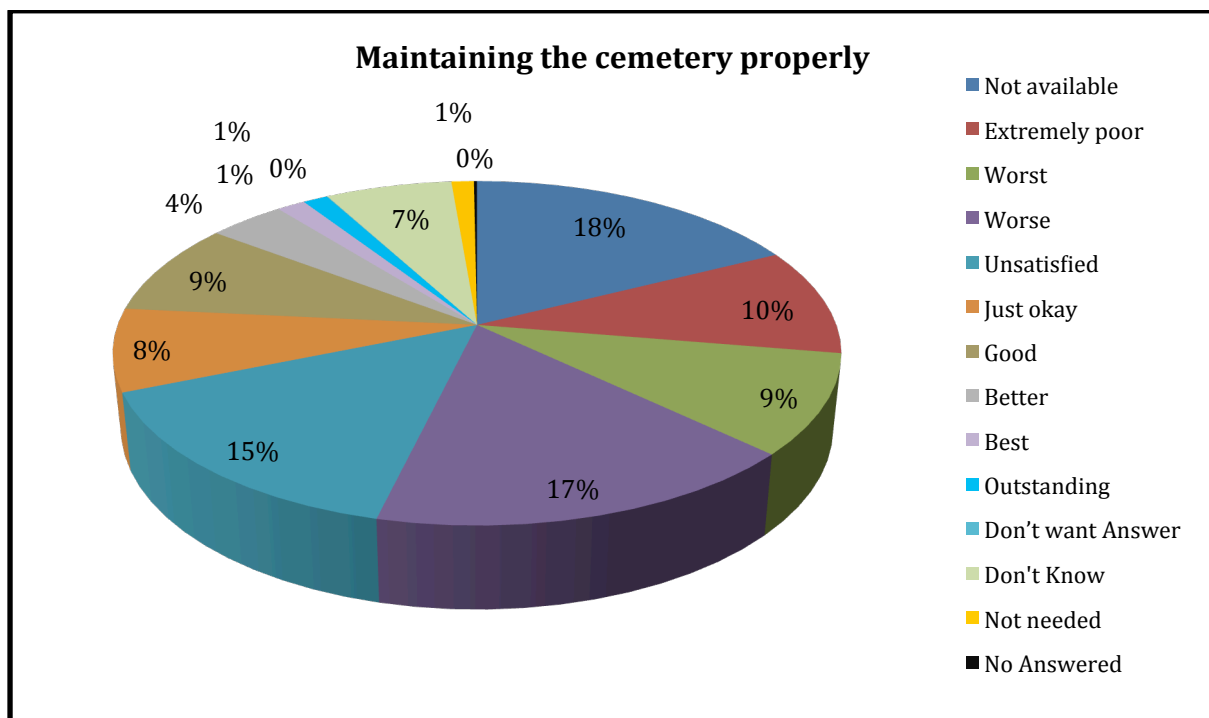


4.4 General Issues

4.4.1 The Cemetery

It is very clear that cemeteries in the Northern Province are not well-maintained, though this is a responsibility that should be handled by local government bodies. Local government authorities should also ensure that there is adequate space available for cremation. When asked, nearly 350 survey respondents indicated that no such service exists in their area. In addition, 189 survey respondents indicated that the performance of the local government body in their area was “extremely poor.” More than 700 other community members also provided negative responses to this question. Tellingly, only 164 community members responded “good.” 24 respondents said that the work their local government body was doing in this area is “outstanding.” 124 survey respondents did not know the answer to this question. Only 23 respondents said that these services were not needed in their area.

Figure 14: Maintaining the cemetery properly



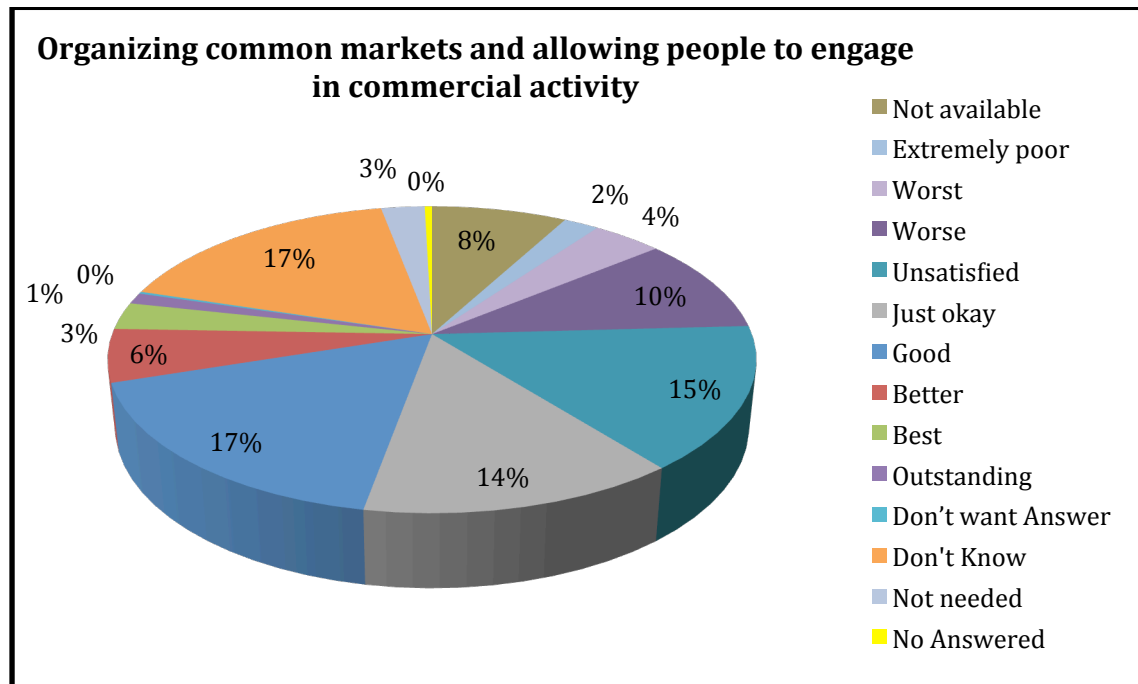
Irrespective of political party affiliation, local government bodies have are not taking up this responsibility in a meaningful way.

4.4.2 Economic Development

Local government bodies should help to organize markets and ensure that community members (who wish to do so) have access to participate in this type of economic activity. According to HHR's survey findings, this is an area where local government bodies have had some success.

When asked, over 300 survey respondents indicated that local government bodies were doing a “Good” job of providing this service. While other respondents were not as generous with their praise, few community members gave low marks for these questions. This should be viewed as a moderately positive development and is undoubtedly something that local government bodies could continue to work on.

Figure 15: Organizing common markets and allowing people to engage in commercial activity



4.4.3 Water Management and Drinking Water Distribution

For all of Sri Lanka’s citizens, access to potable water is of paramount importance. Yet, it is not clear that local government bodies and local elected officials are doing a good job of meeting this need in the Northern Province. When asked how local government actors were doing when it comes to “constructing or reconstructing common regular wells and/or tube wells in order to meet the needs of the public,” 301 respondents said that no such service had ever been provided in their area. Among other negative responses, 89 people responded with “extremely poor.” 274 people said that local government bodies were doing “just okay.” 262 respondents claimed that local government bodies were doing a “good” job, although only 18 people rated the government’s performance as outstanding. Clearly, there is room for local government officials to improve in this area.

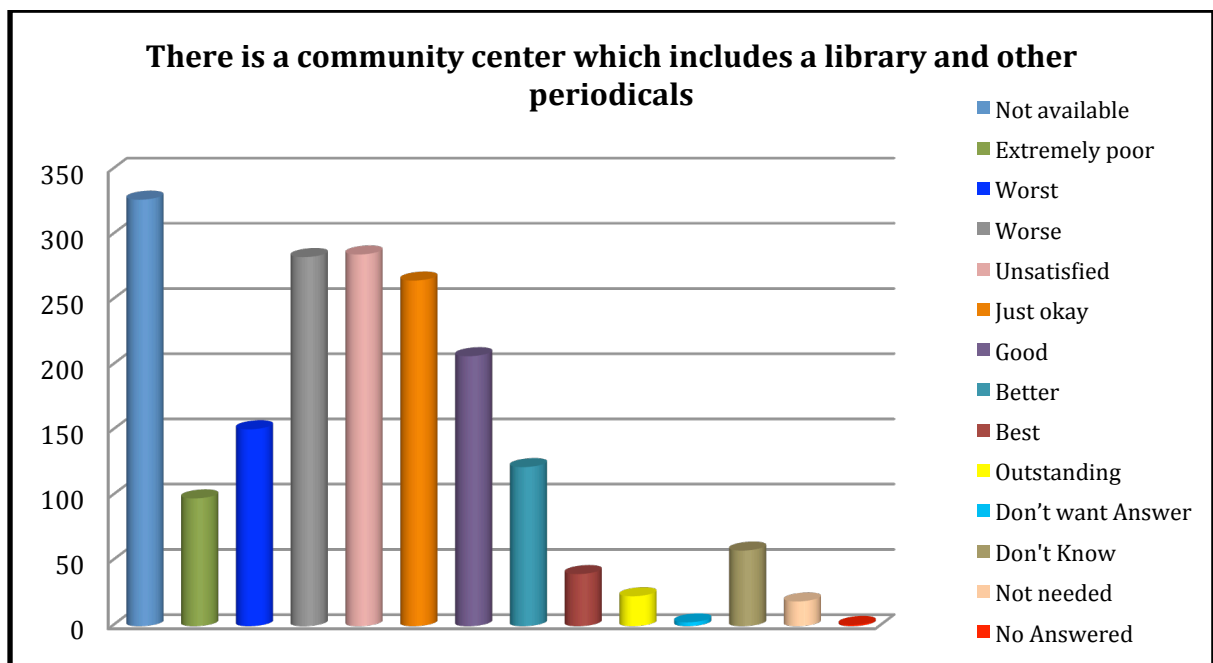
4.4.4 Recreation

Community members in the Northern Province want and need to remain informed about current events. Libraries and community centers have a crucial role to play in this regard, yet it appears that that – when it comes to the performance of local government

bodies – there is significant space for improvement.²⁶ Regarding this particular issue, 327 respondents asserted that no such service had ever been provided in their area. 98 people rated their local government’s performance as “extremely poor.” Among other negative marks, 285 people said that the performance of their local government body was “not satisfactory.” Encouragingly, 207 respondents said that local government was doing a “good” job of providing this service. 23 people said that it was “outstanding.”

Interestingly, only 19 survey respondents said that these services were not needed in their community; this illustrates how significant this issue is. And it sends a clear, resounding signal to local government authorities. For most people, this topic is important and they would like their local elected officials to show more leadership in this regard.

Figure 16: Community center which includes a library and other periodicals



In post-war Sri Lanka, the establishment of parks and playgrounds for the public is an issue that matters to conflict-affected people. Relatedly, these public areas should be kept in a good, clean condition.²⁷

Amongst survey respondents, there seems to be some confusion as to what local government bodies are doing to manage the previously mentioned issue and whether or not these services are even needed in the Northern Province.

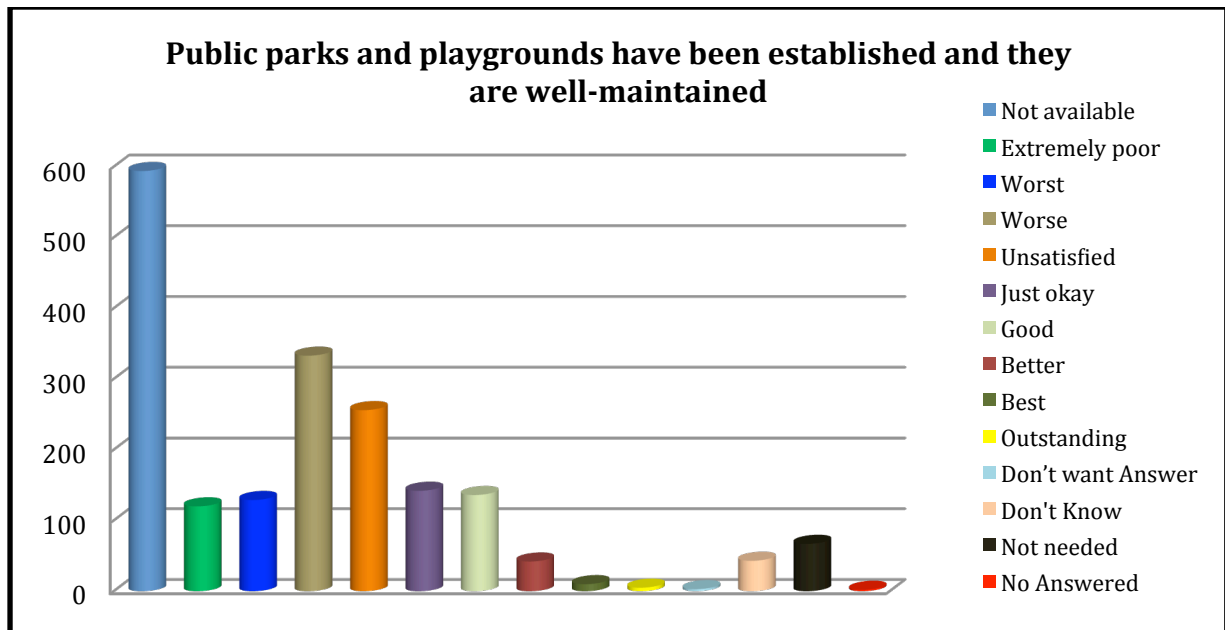
A total of 420 survey respondents mention that these services were not needed in their area. 504 community members were not sure of what local government bodies were

²⁶ Please refer to Question #32 in the survey.

²⁷ Please refer to Question #33 in the survey.

doing. 243 people said that no such service had been provided in their area. 173 respondents mentioned that the performance of local government bodies was “not satisfactory.” Only 110 people said that local government bodies were doing a “good” job. Only 3 respondents said that that their performance was “outstanding.” On this question, survey results point to a need for a broader debate about what local government bodies are doing and how the performance of these respective bodies can be improved.

Figure 17: Public parks and playgrounds have been established and they are well-maintained



4.4.5 Land Acquisition

Survey question #35 asked if local government bodies were “Preventing government lands owned by the local government body to be taken into possession by private individuals or by private groups, and seizing of such lands from them...”

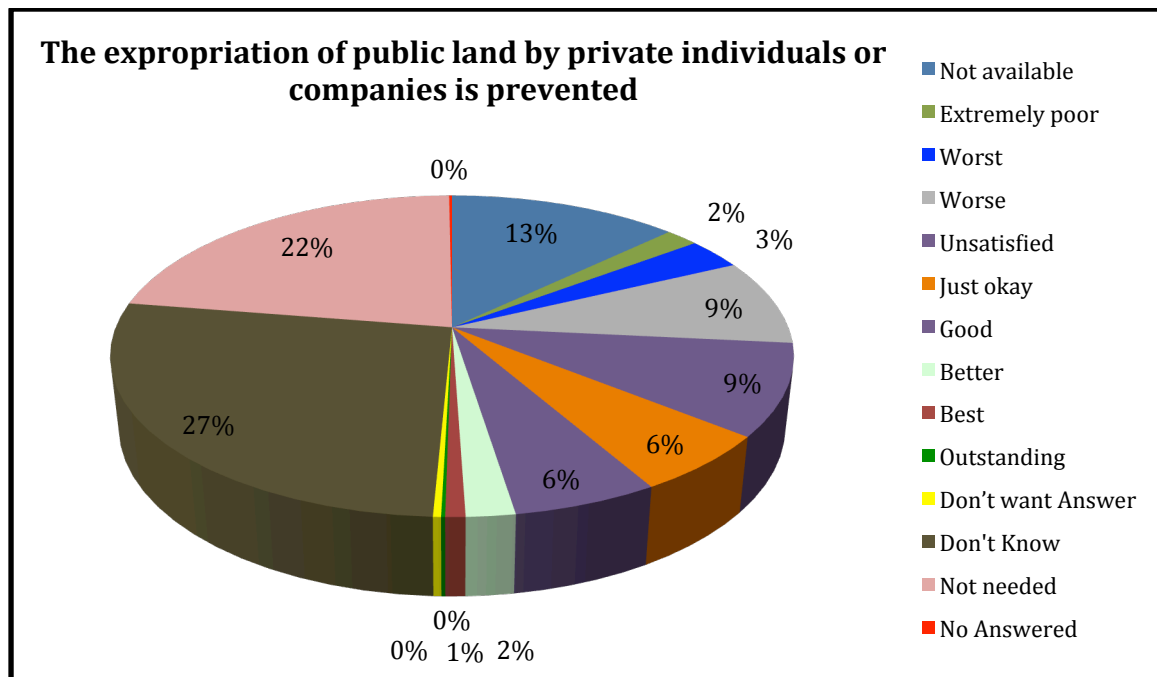
It should come as no surprise that questions pertaining to land and land rights are among the most pressing issues in the eyes of community members residing in the Northern Province.

Based on HHR’s survey results, there seems to be a lot of confusion about land and the responsibilities of local government bodies as it relates to land. When asked the above question, survey respondents provided mixed – though somewhat discouraging – results.

Regrettably, 243 survey respondents said that no such service existed in their area. 173 people said that the performance of local government bodies was “not satisfactory.” While 11 people said they thought that local government bodies were doing a “good” job, only 3 people said that the government’s performance was “outstanding.”

Perhaps most disconcerting is the fact that an incredible 504 people “don’t know” how local government bodies are performing vis-à-vis this vital issue. This is clearly is an area of importance for community members and something that should be looked at in detail by the relevant local government authorities.

Figure 18: The expropriation of public land by private individuals or companies is prevented

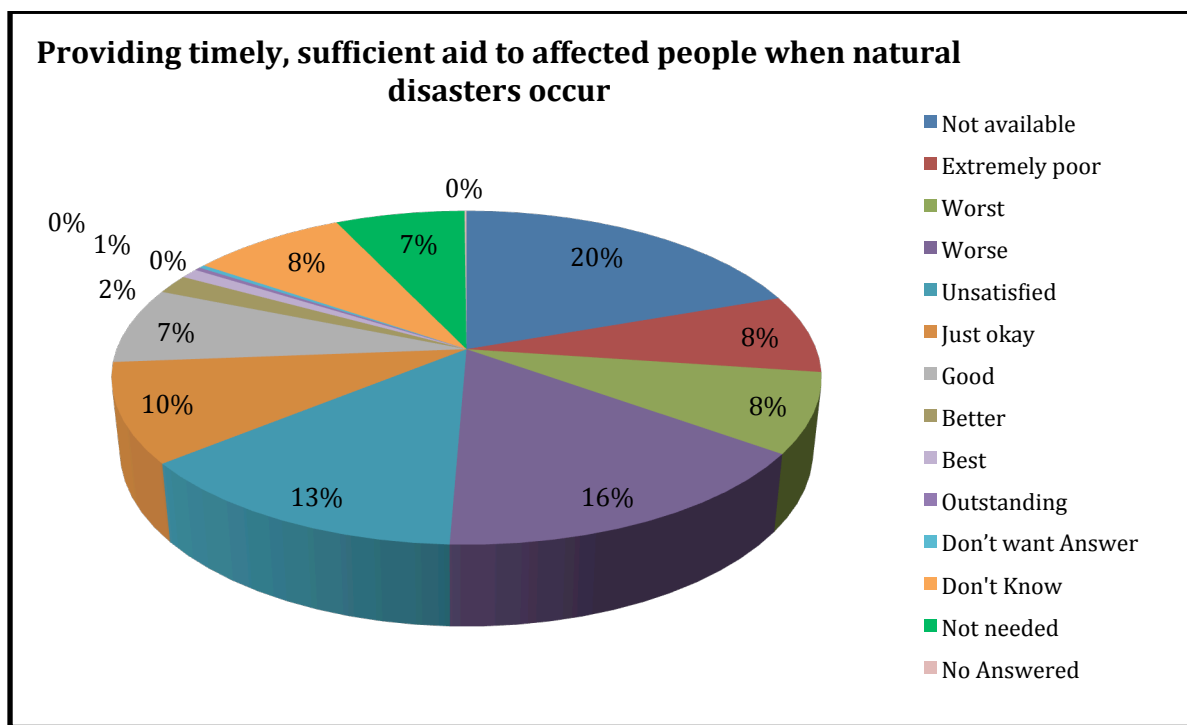


4.4.6 Disaster Management

Sri Lanka is a country that has suffered from numerous natural disasters. Few would forget the devastating 2004 tsunami. With that in mind, it is imperative that government authorities respond in times of crisis and/or natural disasters. Given the importance of this issue, it is disappointing to note that local government bodies scored poorly in this area.²⁸ When asked, more than 350 survey respondents mentioned that no such service existed in their respective communities. The majority of others who responded gave local government bodies overwhelmingly negative remarks.

Out of all survey respondents, only 139 said that local government bodies were doing a “Good” job of providing this service. More positive responses than that were almost nonexistent. Only 6 survey respondents said that local government bodies were doing an “outstanding” job.

Figure 19: Providing timely, sufficient aid to affected people when natural disasters occur



4.4.7 Child Protection and Education

Education is a big part of the advancement and development of any society. While Sri Lanka does boast a very high literacy rate, it appears that many community members in the Northern Province are unsatisfied with the way their local government officials are

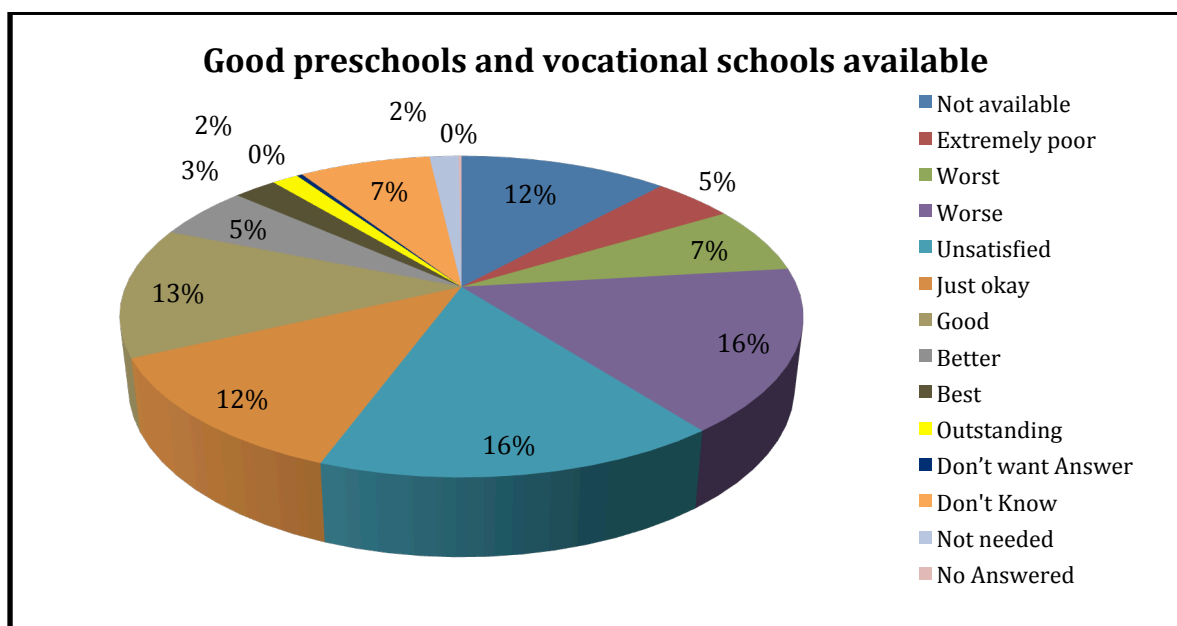
²⁸Survey question #36 asked if local government bodies were “Providing timed aids and fulfilling fundamental needs effectively to those affected during the time of sudden crisis caused by natural disasters...”

managing this issue. When asked if local government bodies were building preschools, vocational facilities and providing the proper teachers/trainers and/or curricula, the results among survey respondents were quite mixed.²⁹

Unfortunately, 222 survey respondents noted that not such service had ever been provided in their area. Most respondents gave local government bodies negative marks – including “extremely poor,” “worst,” “worse,” and “unsatisfactory.” Even though 140 respondents didn’t know how local government bodies were performing (in this particular area), only 28 respondents said that the performance of local government bodies was “outstanding.”

The future development of the country lies in the hands of its youth; this is an area where local government bodies should seek to improve in the near-term.

Figure 20: Good preschools and vocational schools available



4.4.8 Public Participation

Public participation, an essential element of sound local governance, should seek to promote transparency, accountability and inclusion. It should foster a meaningful, ongoing dialogue between community members and local government bodies.

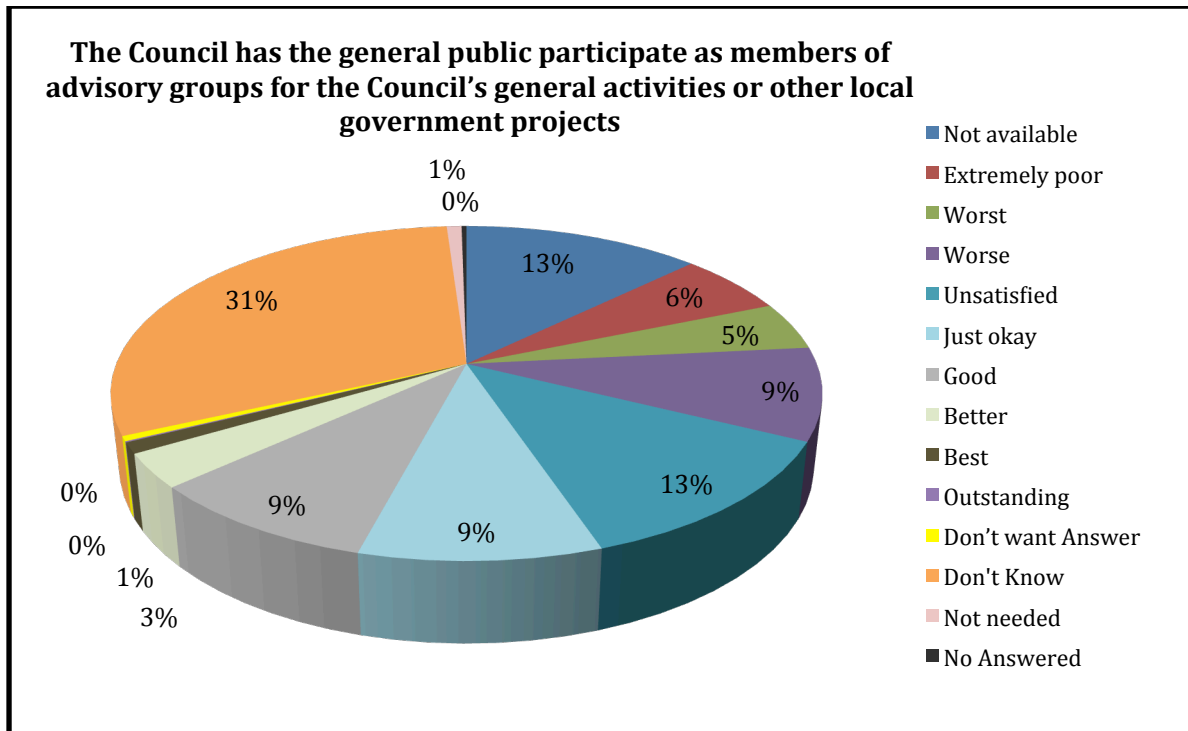
When asked about whether the general public participated in advisory groups related to the Council or the development projects that local government bodies undertake,³⁰ 241 respondents stated that no such service had ever been provided in their area. 112 responded with “extremely poor” while 168 people said “worse.” Only 172 people said “good” and, out of all respondents, 2 answered “outstanding.”

²⁹ Please refer to Question #37 in the survey.

³⁰ Please refer to Question #55 in the survey.

Perhaps most tellingly, an alarming 578 people said they did not know. This statistic would suggest that large swathes of community members are both uninvolved and uninformed as it relates to the previously mentioned matter.

Figure 21: The Council has the general public participate as members of advisory groups for the Council’s general activities or other local government projects



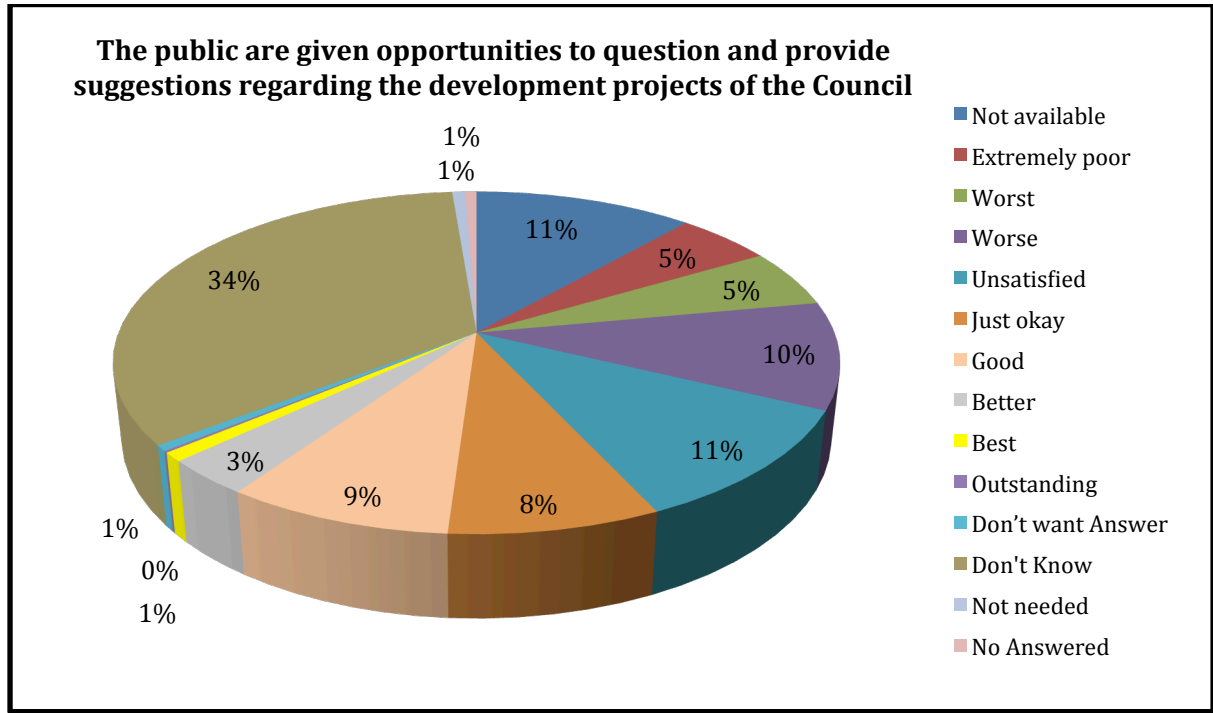
When asked if local elected officials were, “giving opportunities to the public to question and give suggestions in the discussion on the development projects of the Council,”³¹ 217 people said that no such service had ever been provided in their area.³² Negative responses range from “extremely poor” to unsatisfactory and include nearly 600 respondents. 162 people responded “good” and 16 people said “best.” Only 3 people said outstanding.

Yet, here again, hundreds of respondents simply did not know how to answer. 642 respondents said that that they “don’t know.”

³¹ Please refer to Question #56 in the survey.

³² Please refer to Question #56 in the survey.

Figure 22: The public are given opportunities to question and provide suggestions regarding the development projects of the Council



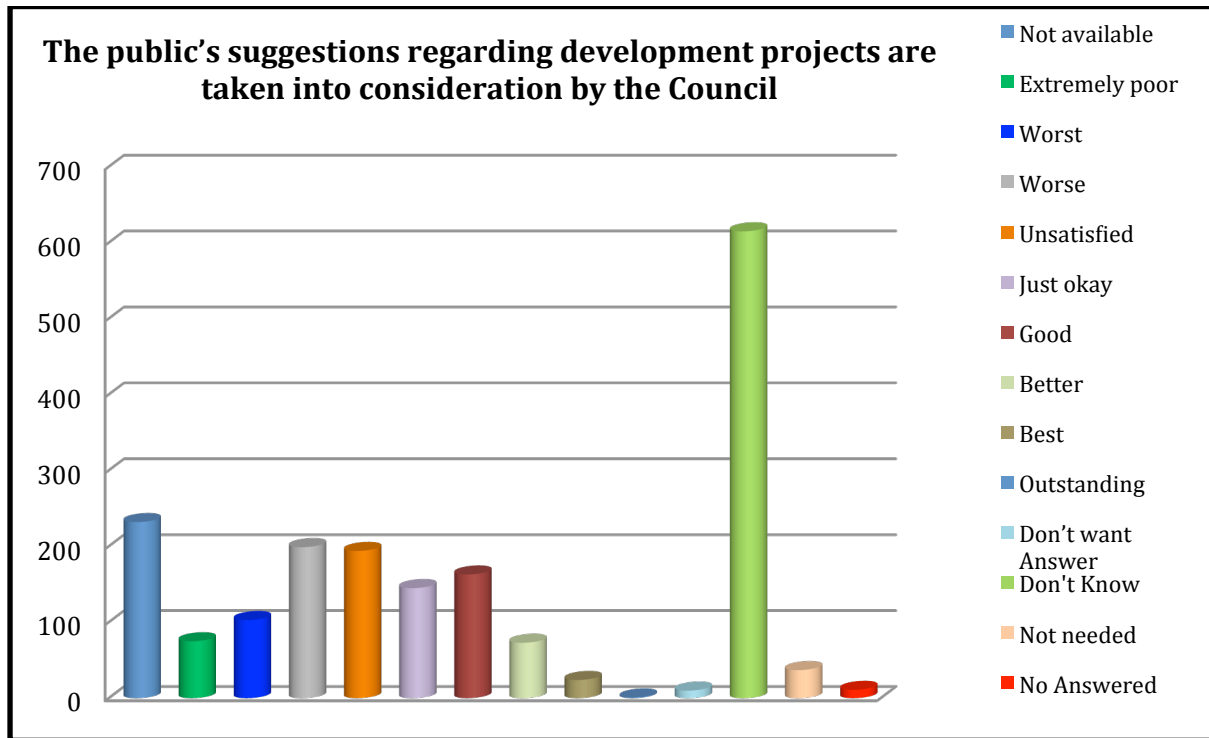
HHR’s survey also asked whether or not local government bodies were “Respecting the public’s constructive suggestion and taking them into consideration during the discussions on development projects and services of the Council...”³³

232 respondents stated that no such service had been rendered in their area. Again, nearly 600 other individuals provided negative responses; only 163 people said “good” while only 1 person said “outstanding.”

Significantly, 615 respondents said that they simply did not know.

³³ Please refer to Question #57 in the survey.

Figure 23: The public’s suggestions regarding development projects are taken into consideration by the Council



Relatedly, project and budgetary planning are other important aspects of inclusive, sustainable development.³⁴ How involved are community members in these processes?

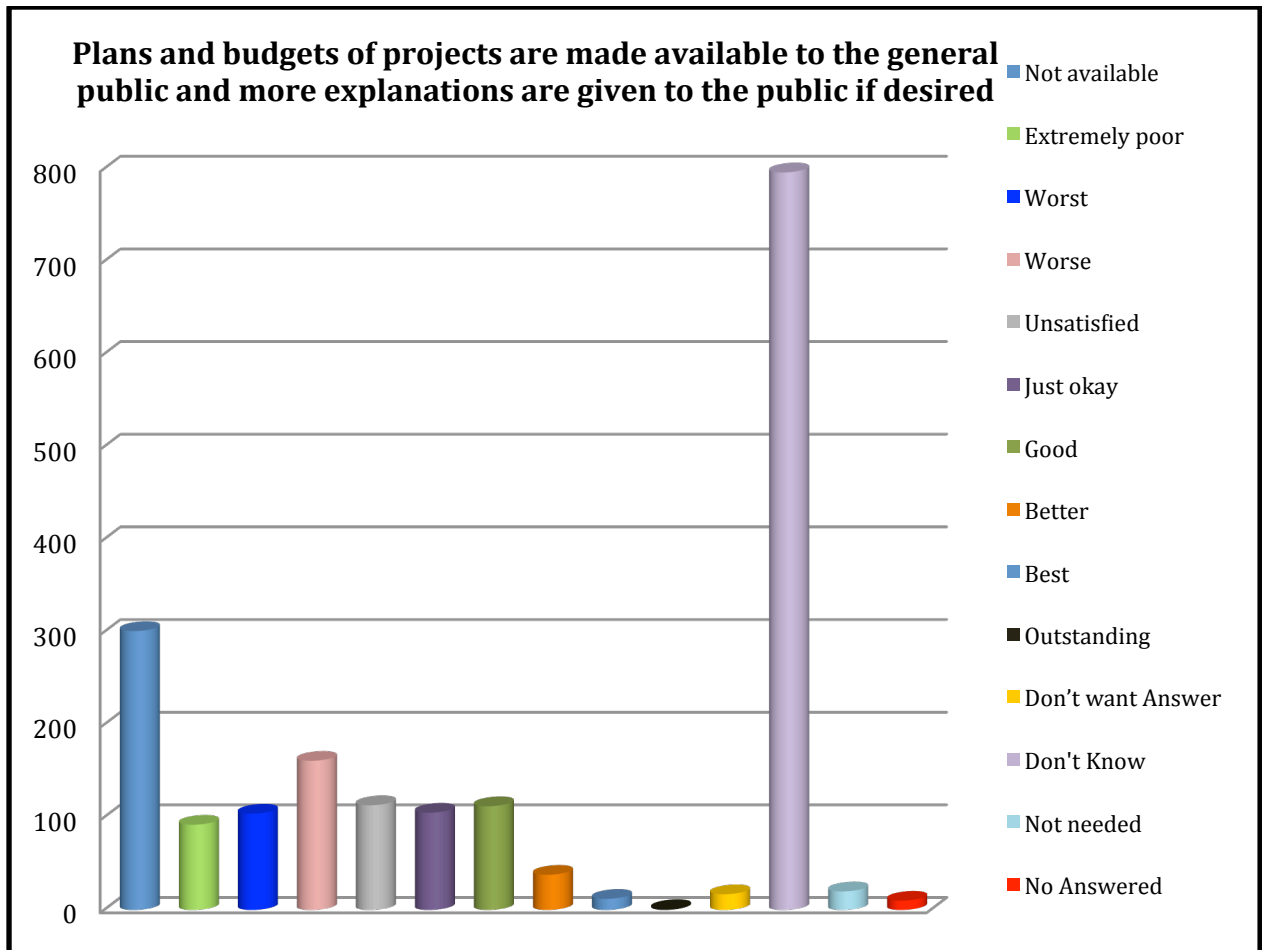
Not very, it seems.

301 respondents asserted that no such service had ever been provided in their area. 92 people responded with “extremely poor” and 104 said “worst.” Only one person said “outstanding.” Here again an incredibly high number of respondents – 796 – said that they just did not know.

Since the conclusion of war, there has been much talk – in both national and international forums – about accountability. However, the term is rarely used in the context of local government bodies and local elected officials.

³⁴ Please refer to Question #58 in the survey.

Figure 24: Plans and budgets of projects are made available to the general public and more explanations are given to the public if desired



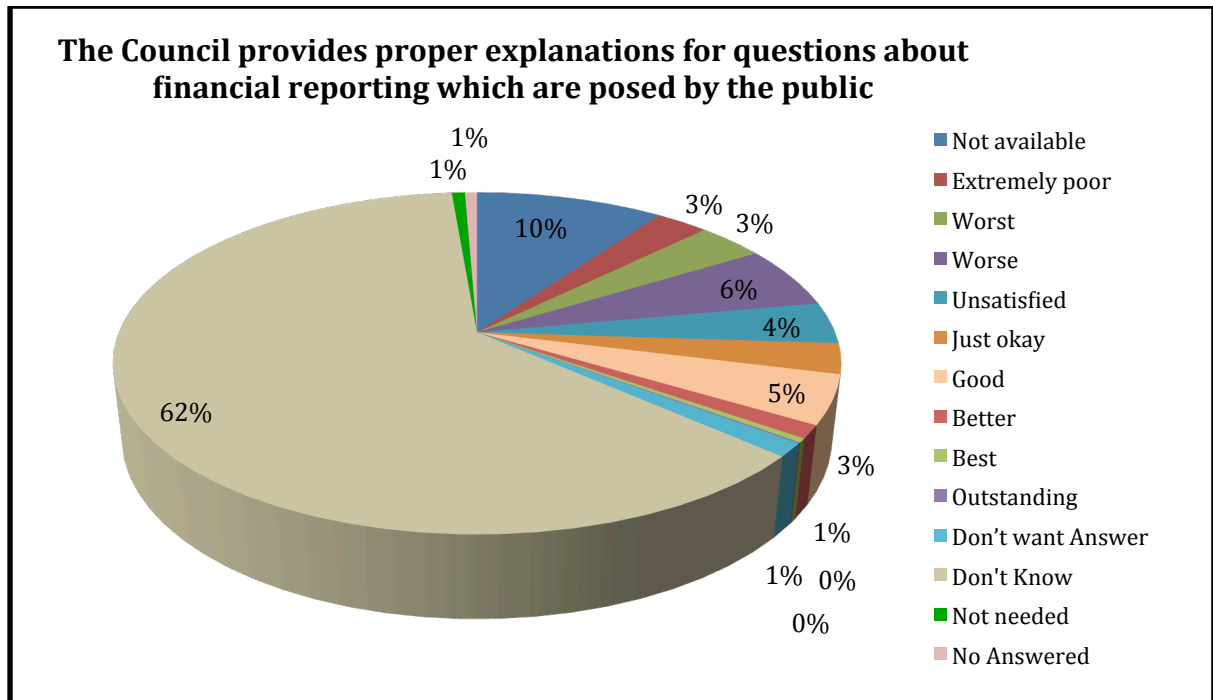
When survey respondents were asked whether local elected officials/local government bodies were “giving proper explanations for the questions posed by the public on accountability or truthfulness”³⁵ as it relates to financial expenditures and reporting, the answers were disappointing, though similar to other responses for this section. An astounding 1,170 people, more than half of all survey participants said that they did not know. Only two people said that local elected officials were doing an “outstanding” job and just 87 said that they were doing a “good” job.

74 respondents said that the government’s performance was not satisfactory and 52 said it was “extremely poor.” 187 people said that no such service had been provided to their area.

³⁵ Please refer to Question #61 in the survey.

The local government authorities must pay attention to these numbers

Figure 25: The Council provides proper explanations for questions about financial reporting which are posed by the public



4.4.9 The Performance of Local Elected Officials

Without question, many of the numbers from HHR's survey are concerning, though one clear established trend has already emerged. Community members residing in the Northern Province simply lack information about their local elected officials. Community members are not sure what their local elected officials are up to or what their respective strengths and weaknesses actually are.

Based on the survey results, it does not appear that local elected officials spend all that much time in their communities or talking to their constituents. The graphs below are illustrative.

Figure 26: The Chairperson-How often does this local elected official visit your area?

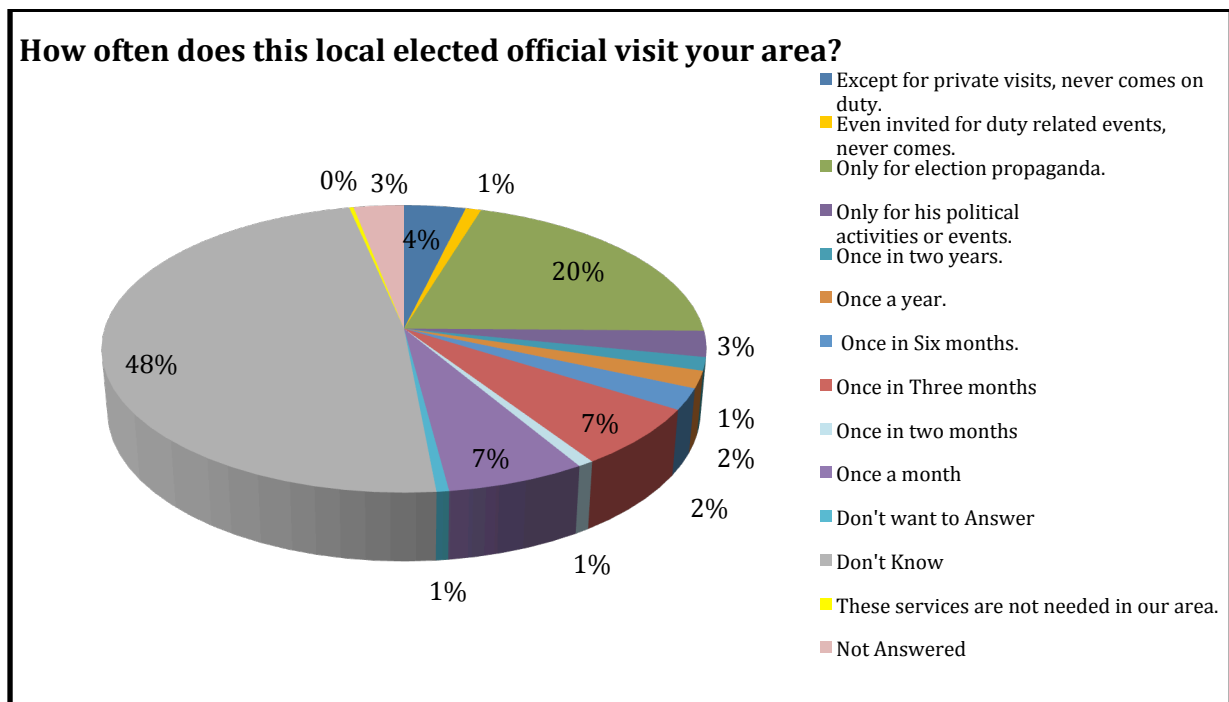


Figure 27: The Vice chairperson-How often does this local elected official visit your area?

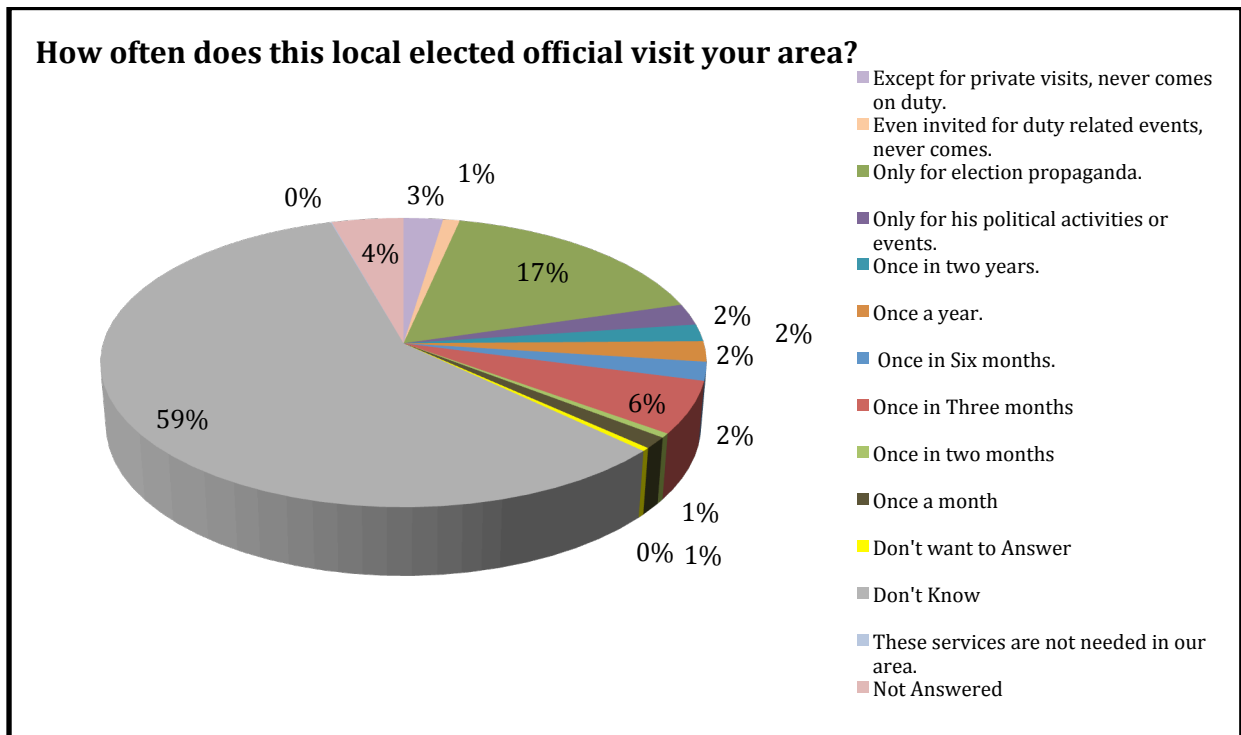
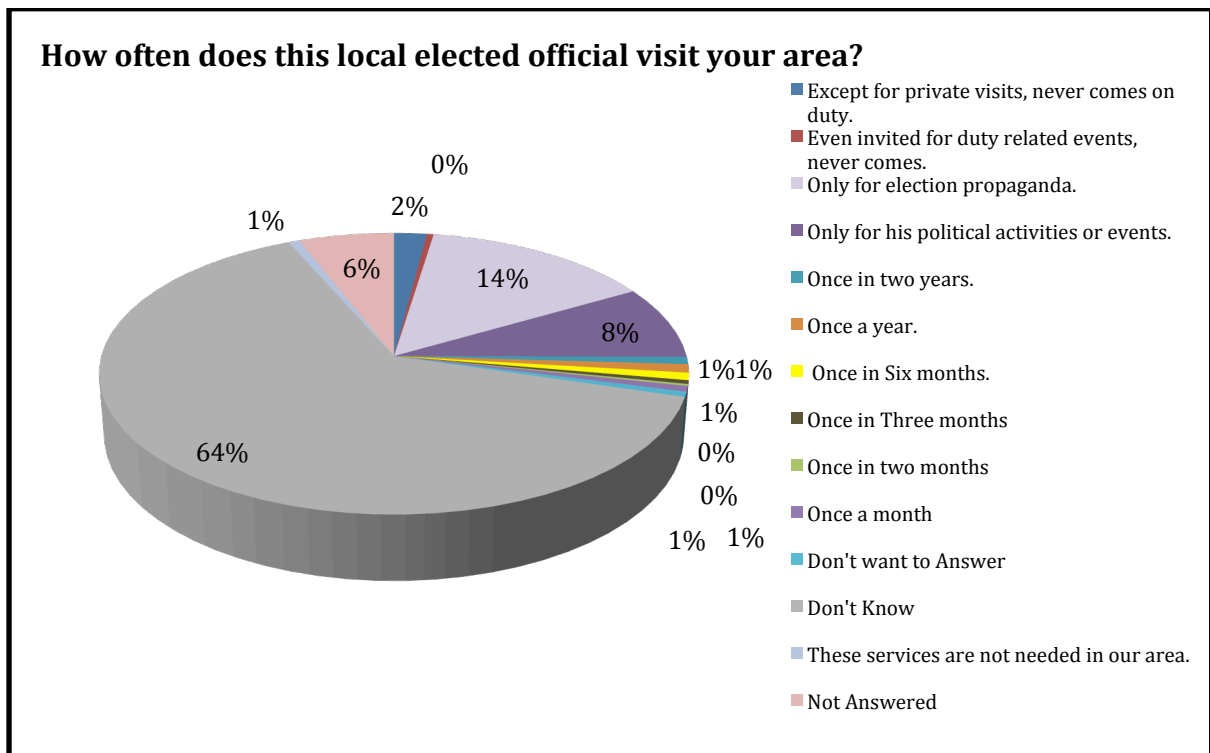


Figure 28: Leader of the Opposition-How often does this local elected official visit your area?



These are issues that the two most influential parties in the province – the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) and the Eelam People’s Democratic Party (EPDP) cannot ignore. Whether some of this underwhelming governance cannot only be blamed on increased centralization, it is imperative that local elected officials take it upon themselves to ameliorate the situation.

4.5 Analysis

While there are a few bright spots, HHR’s survey results have proven that local governance problems run deep and wide. Generally speaking, most local government bodies in the Northern Province are failing to perform their duties.³⁶

Amidst scores of charts, graphs and numbers, what comes out most clearly from this survey is the profound lack of public participation.

This is an issue that must be looked at carefully.

Public participation is a *sine qua non* of effective governance (on any level), but public participation at the local level is especially important to ensure proper, appropriate service delivery. That being said, local elected officials in the Northern Province are falling well short.

Generally speaking, survey results are unsatisfactory across the board. Nonetheless, it may be helpful for both state and non-state actors to focus on public participation in the near-term. When it comes to the performance of local elected officials, it would appear that the (very high) number of “don’t know” responses is directly related to many other negative local governance trends.

While the situation in the Northern Province may appear dire to some, there is reason for optimism. Through this perceptions survey, HHR and community members have identified key areas for proposed reform.

Meaningful local governance reform will not occur overnight, but incremental changes must commence in earnest. As noted, it may be prudent for local government officials to focus on increasing public participation. It is HHR’s contention that making local government more inclusive will produce positive results in other areas– including those related to public health.

³⁶ HHR intends to conduct a similar governance survey in the Eastern Province.

4.6 Conclusion

HHR's survey has allowed the organization to produce both qualitative and quantitative analysis. With a sample size exceeding 2,000, the results cannot be ignored.

More than four years after the conclusion of war, the stark reality is that local governance in the Northern province leaves much to be desired. That being said, there is plenty of room for optimism. HHR will continue to engage with all stakeholders – especially local elected officials and community members – to share experiences, encourage thoughtful debate and learn from past experiences. From Beijing to Delhi to Colombo and beyond, “all politics is local.” The data behind this report proves that is indeed the case.

These disappointing statistics may be related to reports of increased centralization or the inability of the ruling local authority to negotiate with the Centre, as it relates to the provision of government services.

Drastic changes will not occur quickly, but reforms and improvements should begin now. Local elected officials owe it to their constituents to rise to this challenge. Relatedly, community members must not forget that democratic processes cannot function well without an informed, engaged and enthusiastic citizenry.

HHR's survey and the other local governance activities which a number of institutions have led, prove that education and awareness-raising are essential components of any strategy to improve local governance. As the organization extends its assessment to local government bodies in the Eastern Province, it will keep this, and the previously mentioned lessons learned, in mind.

Figure 29 **Annex I: Additional Information on the Methodology**

The Breakdown of Villages for which Selected Local Government Bodies are Responsible

Se. No	District	Local Government Body	Village
1	Mullaitivu	Manthai East PS	Ponnagar
2			Palinagar
3			Karumulliyam
4		Thunukkai PS	Barathinagar
5			Uyilankulam
6			Ambalapperumalkulam
7		Maritimepattu PS (Weli Oya)	Kiripanthwewa
8			Nikkawewa Left
9			Janagpura
10	Mannar	Manthai West PS	Adamban
11			Kovilkulam
12			Palaiyadipputhukkulam
13		Mannar UC	Chinnakkadai
14			Pettah
15	Moor Street		
16	Vavuniya	Vavuniya UC	Vavuniya Town
17			Thandikkulam
18			Paddaisoor
19		Vavuniya South Tamil PS	Kanthapuram
20			Kallikkulam
21			Poovarasankulam
22		Vavuniya South Sinhala PS	Avaranthalawa
23			Eerapperiyakulama
24	Pavatkulam Unit-2		
25	Kilinochchi	Karaichchi PS	Mayavanoor
26			Kilinochchi Nagar
27			Vaddakkachchi
28			Uruthrapuram West
29			Akkarayankulam
30		Pachchilaippalli PS	Itthavil
31			Kachcharveli
32			Puloppalai
33			Palai Town
34	Jaffna	Chavakachcheri UC	Nunavil Center

Se. No	District	Local Government Body	Village
35			Chavakachcheri North
36			Sangaththanai
37		Valikamam East PS	Urumbirai East
38			Irupalai East
39			ThanmbalaiKathirippai
40		Valikamam North PS	Alaveddi Center
41			Mallakam North
42			Kollangaladdi
43		Kayts PS	Naranthanai South
44			Suruvil
45			Karambon South East
46		Vadamarachchi South West PS	Nelliyadi North
47			Kappoothu
48			Karaweddi West
49		Chavakachcheri PS	Madduvil Center
50			Idaikkurichchi
51			Kaithadi South West
52		Point Pedro PS	Manalkadhu
53			Vetrilaikkeni
54			Nagarkovil East
55			Aaliyawalai
56		Valveddiththurai UC	Kerudavil North
57			Thondamanaru North
58			Polikandi East

Details of the Survey Sample

Se. No	District	Local Government Body	Village	# of Families	Sample
1	Mullaitivu	Manthai East PS	Ponnagar	54	6
2			Palinagar	445	45
3			Karumulliyian	138	14
4		Thunukkai PS	Barathinagar	222	22
5			Uyilankulam	74	8
6			Ambalapperumalkulam	92	9
		Subtotal		1025	104
7	Mannar	Manthai West PS	Adamban	157	16

Se. No	District	Local Government Body	Village	# of Families	Sample	
8			Kovilkulam	104	10	
9			Palaiyadipputhukkulam	118	12	
10			Mannar UC	Chinnakkadai	321	32
11				Pettah	202	20
12				Moor Street	829	83
			Subtotal			1731
13	Vavuniya	Vavuniya UC	Vavuniya Town	922	92	
14			Thandikkulam	921	92	
15			Paddaisoor	1285	129	
16		Vavuniya South Tamil PS	Kanthapuram	917	92	
17			Kallikkulam	172	17	
18			Poovarasankulam	609	61	
		Subtotal			4826	483
19		Kilinochchi	Karaichchi PS	Mayavanoor	801	80
20	Kilinochchi Nagar			417	41	
21	Vaddakkachchi			470	47	
22	Uruthrapuram West			404	40	
23	Akkarayankulam			503	50	
24	Pachchilaippalli PS		Iththavil	93	9	
25			Kachcharveli	114	11	
26			Puloppalai	343	35	
27			Palai Town	298	30	
	Subtotal			3443	343	
28	Jaffna	Chavakachcheri UC	Nunavil Center	189	19	
29			Chavakachcheri North	218	22	
30			Sangaththanai	469	47	
31		Valikamam East PS	Urumbirai East	779	78	
32			Irupalai East	623	62	
33			ThanmbalaiKathirippai	600	60	
34		Valikamam North PS	Alaveddi Center	363	36	
35			Mallakam North	763	76	
36			Kollangaladdi	603	60	
37		Kayts PS	Naranthanai South	279	28	
38			Suruvil	70	7	
39			Karambon South East	48	5	
40		Vadamarachchi South West PS	Nelliyadi North	242	24	
41			Kappoothu	123	12	
42			Karaweddi West	143	14	
43		Chavakachcheri PS	Madduvil Center	294	30	

Se. No	District	Local Government Body	Village	# of Families	Sample	
44			Idaikkurichchi	357	36	
45			Kaithadi South West	183	18	
46			Point Pedro PS*	Manalkadhu		
47		Vettilaikkerni				
48		Nagarkovil East				
49		Aliawalai				
50		Valveddiththurai UC	Kerudavil North	176	18	
51			Thondamanaru North	183	18	
52			Polikandi East	695	70	
			Subtotal		7400	740
Total Selected Sample				18425	1843	

Sinhala-speaking selected villages³⁷

Se. No	District	Local Government Body	Village	# of Families	Sample
1	Mullaitivu	Maritimepattu PS (Weli Oya)	Kiripanthwewa	344	35
2			Nikkawewa Left	382	38
3			Janagpura	254	25
		Subtotal		980	98
4	Vavuniya	Vavuniya South Sinhala PS	Avaranthalawa	125	13
5			Eerapperiyakulama	804	80
6			Pavatkulam Unit-2	167	17
		Subtotal		1096	110
Total Selected Sample				2076	208

³⁷The survey in these locations has not yet been completed.