



Citizen Perspectives on the First Three Months of the Balen Shah Government

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Executive Summary

The Purak Asia Perception Survey 2026 provides a detailed examination of public sentiment in Nepal following the first three months of the Balen Shah led government. The data reveals a significant divide between high institutional approval and widespread economic anxiety, with citizens praising anti-corruption efforts while struggling with rising living costs. While nearly three-quarters of respondents' express satisfaction with the government's overall direction and public service efficiency, there is notable disgruntlement regarding government's efforts on inflation management and their handling of squatter evictions. The survey findings reveal that the Nepali public remain deeply optimistic about long-term governance reform but still have concerns over immediate job opportunities and increasing cost of living.

Regarding democratic accountability, the public expects a vigorous oversight role from Gen Z youth leaders, civil society and parliament. When evaluating overall democratic values, the public is largely confident that the government has adhered to democratic principles, with a significant portion of citizens seeing no impending threat to the nation's democratic practices under the current leadership. Despite this trust in the government, a notable share of the respondents maintains a cautious "wait-and-see" approach or sees potential threats to democratic practices, further underscoring the necessity for robust, active monitoring by these civic and legislative bodies.

The findings suggest that the government's political capital is currently sustained by its perceived integrity, which serves to shield it from intense dissatisfaction over household financial pressures. Maintaining this trust in the coming days will depend on how the leadership navigates immediate economic relief while satisfying a vigilant public that looks to civil society, parliament, and Gen Z watchdogs to actively monitor and safeguard democratic practices.



Methodology

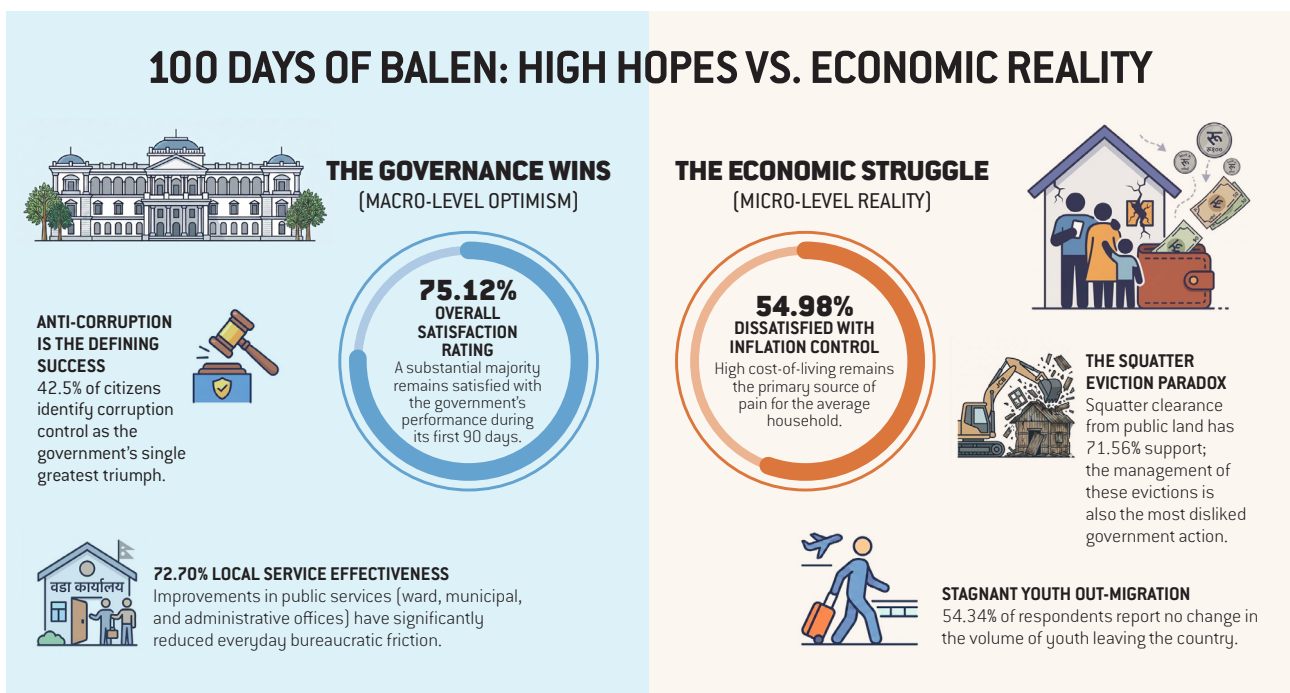
The survey was conducted across Madhesh, Gandaki, and Lumbini Provinces, as well as the Kathmandu Valley covering a total of fifteen districts: Kaski, Kathmandu, Dang, Bardiya, Dhanusha, Parsa, Tanahun, Saptari, Rautahat, Nawalparasi East, Syangja, Bhaktapur, Lalitpur, Gulmi, and Nawalparasi West.

The sampling frame for this study was built upon the foundational database established during the 2025 Purak Asia Perception Survey on Governance and Economic Opportunity. During that initial phase, a rigorous multi-stage sampling design was employed across various local levels, utilizing systematic random sampling for household selection and the Kish grid method to select one respondent aged 18 or older per household. The telephone numbers voluntarily provided by these respondents during the 2025 fieldwork were then used to create the primary, pre-verified contact list for this current iteration of the phone survey.

Building upon this established database, the research team used simple random sampling from the contact list to execute the current study with a total of 784 respondents. The sample design has a margin of error or 3.5% and a 95 % confidence interval.

Among the total of 784 respondents, 32.02 percent were from the Gandaki Province, 23.85 from the Kathmandu Valley, 23.34 from the Madhesh Province and 20.79 from the Lumbini Province. The survey participants included 56.51 percent male and 43.49 percent female participants. The largest respondent group belonged to the ages 30 to 45 (millennials), accounting for 32.9 percent of the total sample. Other age groups were represented as follows: 32.1 percent were aged 46 to 61 (Gen X), 18.6 percent were aged 18-29 (Gen Z) and 16.3 were aged 62 and above (Boomers). Given the rise in the use of Gen Z in recent times, the age brackets have been chosen according to generation cohorts.

In terms of educational attainment, the survey participants included 8.04 percent illiterate, 44.9 percent below SEE, and 26.4 percent who had completed higher secondary school (+2). Those with a bachelor's degree and above accounted for 20.66 percent of the survey sample.



Highlights and Key Findings

Major Highlights

- **High Approval Ratings:** A substantial 75.12% of respondents are satisfied with the Balen-led government's first three months. Optimism is still high, with 89.28% optimistic about future current government activities.
- **Anti-Corruption is the Defining Success:** Anti-corruption efforts are viewed as the greatest success by 42.5% of respondents, with 72.45% noting a positive reduction in corruption.

Major Contradictions

- **The Sukumbasi Polarization:** While many see squatter removal from public lands as necessary rule-of-law enforcement (71.56% support), the management of sukumbasi evictions are simultaneously ranked as the single most dissatisfying action of the government (21.94%).
- **Macro-Economic Optimism vs. Micro-Economic Skepticism:** A massive 85.71% are optimistic that the country's economic condition will improve under this government, but a significant 54.98% are dissatisfied with current inflation and price control, showing a severe gap between national hope and present family struggles.



Major Connections

- **Household Worries Dictate Political Demands:** Personal family priorities are dominated by jobs and income opportunities (28.57%) and cost of living and inflation management (25.89%). This is reflected in the major citizen demands from the main parliamentary opposition (19.77 % for raising issues on inflation and 17.35 % on raising debates on macroeconomy) and what they want as the government's highest priority for its first year, which is Job Creation (26.5%).

Macro vs. Micro Perspectives

Nationally, people care about fighting corruption and institutional pride, but at home, they worry deeply about daily costs, medical bills, and jobs.

Table 1: Depiction of Macro and Micro-Level Thinking

Conflict between macro perspectives and micro perspectives		
Analytical Dimension	 Macro-Level Thinking	 Micro-Level Thinking
Primary Evaluation Metric	Institutional integrity, rule of law, systematic anti-corruption	Daily cost of living, household medical bills, youth employment
Dominant Emotional State	Highly Optimistic (89.28%)	Anxiety over family expenses and employment (54.5%)
Perception of Reform	Perceptions shaped by expectations of structural reform and long-term solutions	Perceptions shaped by everyday experiences and the realities of daily life
View of Controversial Action	Support for enforcing the law despite difficult consequences (71.56%).	Concern over the humanitarian impact and the government's management of squatter evictions, ranking among its most criticized actions (21.94%).
Accountability Expectations	The public expects Gen Z activists to act as watchdogs of democracy, alongside civil society (19.64%) and Parliament (18.37%) in holding the government accountable	Accountability is judged through the quality of local public services, with ward and municipal offices receiving high approval (72.70%).

Findings

1. Government Performance

People are highly satisfied with the government’s performance and remain very optimistic about the direction of the country.

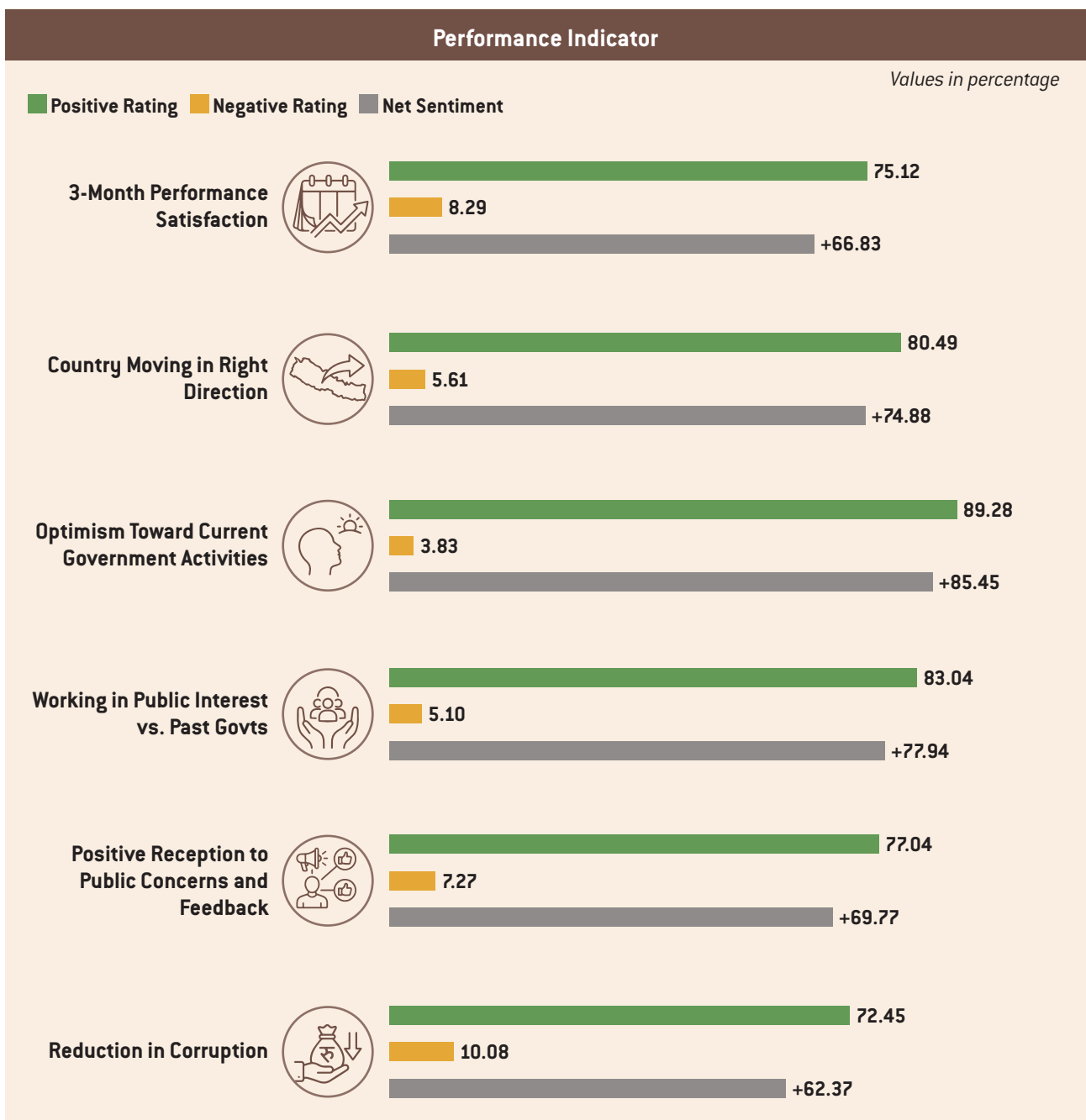


Figure 1: Approval Ratings on Performance Indices

2. Government Efforts on Economy

While citizens are somewhat satisfied with job creation, the majority are very unhappy with how the government is managing inflation and rising prices.





Government Efforts				
	 Satisfied [%]	 Neutral [%]	 Dissatisfied [%]	 Don't know/ Can't Say [%]
Domestic Job Creation	47.57	21.94	25.13	5.36
Inflation and Price Control	22.58	19.01	54.98	3.44

Figure 2: Satisfaction with Economic Indicators

3. Individual and Family Priorities

Jobs, income, and managing daily living costs are the top worries for families right now.

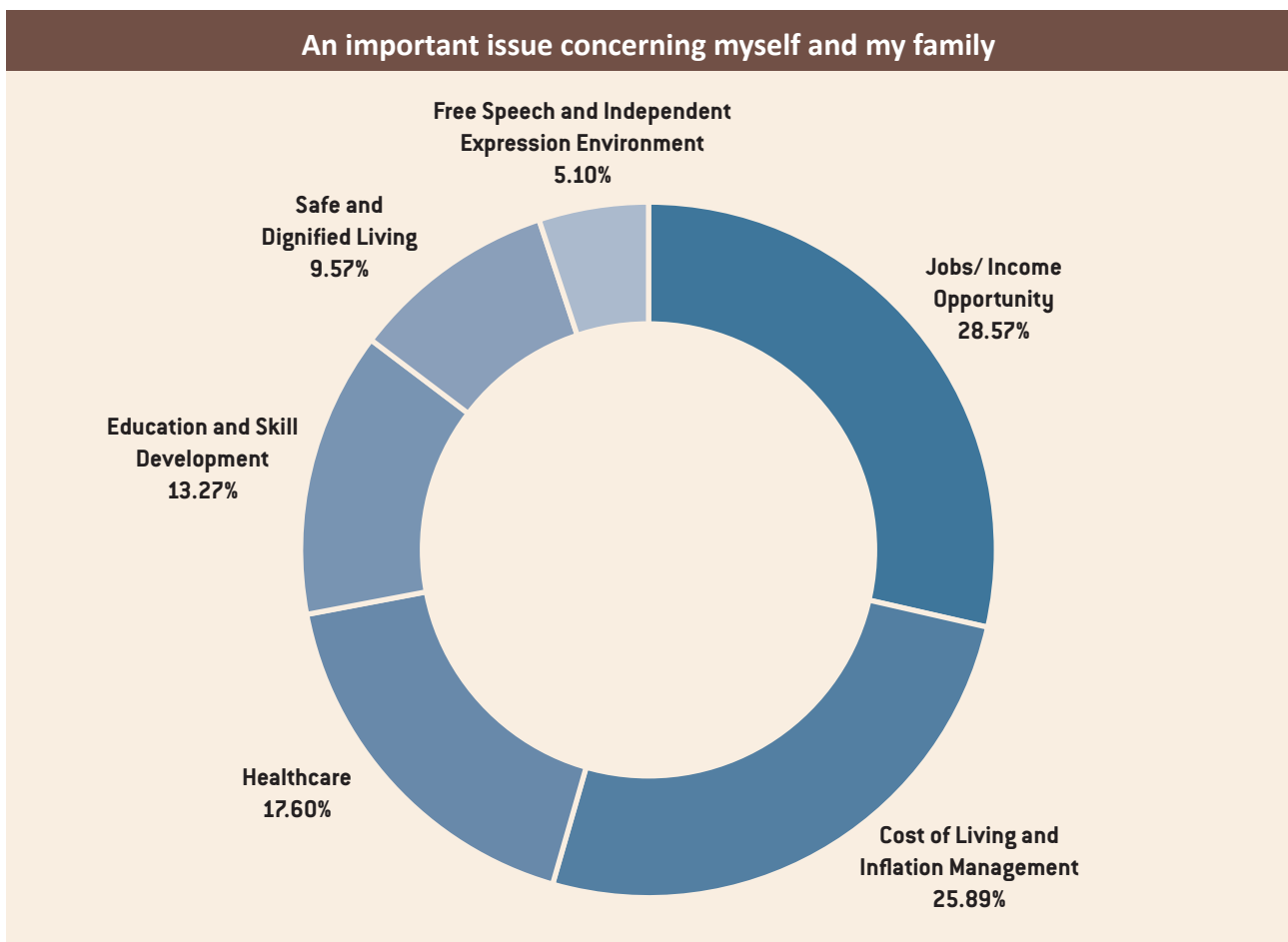


Figure 3: Priority Issues for the Respondents and Their Families

4. Major Government Successes and Areas of Dissatisfaction

While the fight against corruption is deemed as the government’s crowning achievement so far, respondents were dissatisfied with the way government handled the squatter evictions.

Table 2: Major Successes and Primary Areas of Dissatisfaction

Greatest Success So Far (%)	Primary Area of Dissatisfaction (%)
Corruption Control (42.5%)	Management of <i>Sukumbasi</i> Evictions (21.94%)
Don't know/Won't Say (15.1%)	Lack of Job Creation (17.86%)
Public Service Delivery (14.03%)	Miscellaneous Complaints (14.92%)
Service Quality Reform (9.6%)	Don't Know / Won't Say (11.73%)
Social Justice / Equality (4.59%)	Gen-Z Martyr/Victim Justice (11.10%)
Economic Reform (2.68%)	Ineffective Service Delivery (4.46%)
Employment Generation (1.02%)	Democratic Ethics (2%)

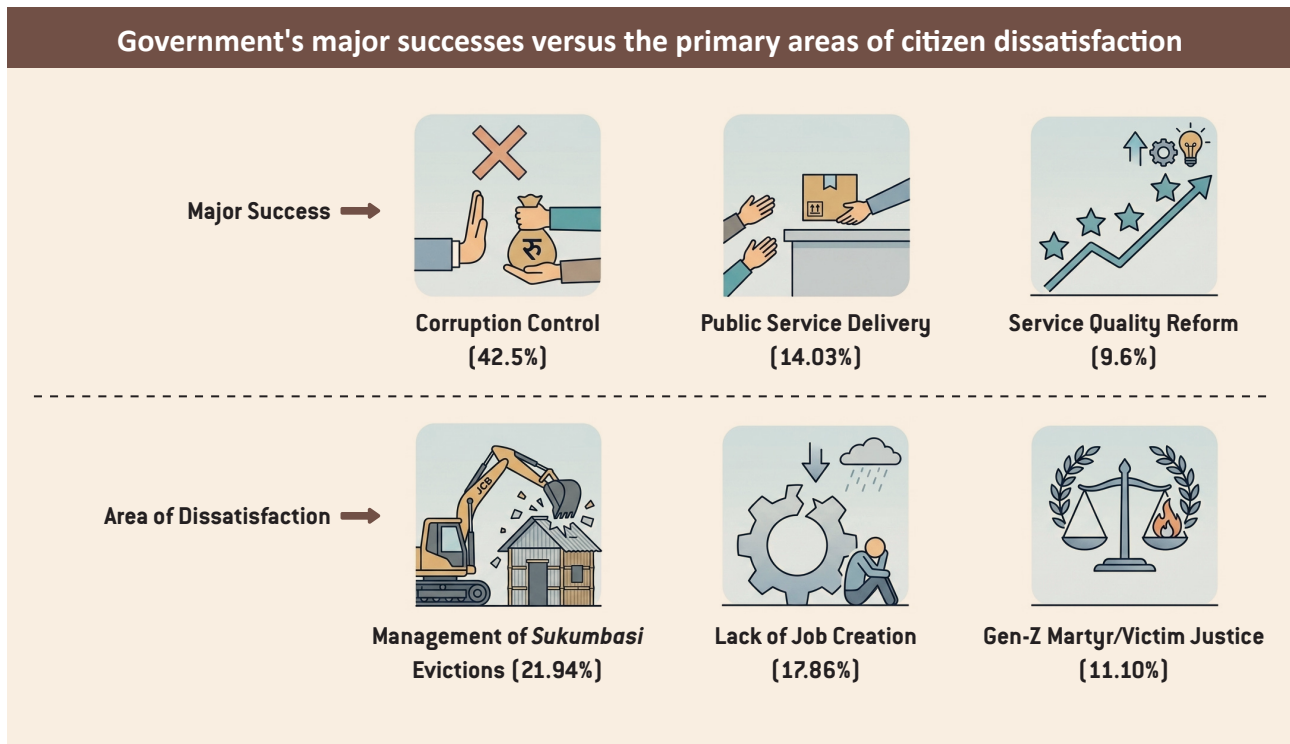


Figure 4: Major Successes and Primary Areas of Dissatisfaction

5. Government Adopting Democratic Values

A strong portion of the respondents believe the government is following and adopting democratic values.

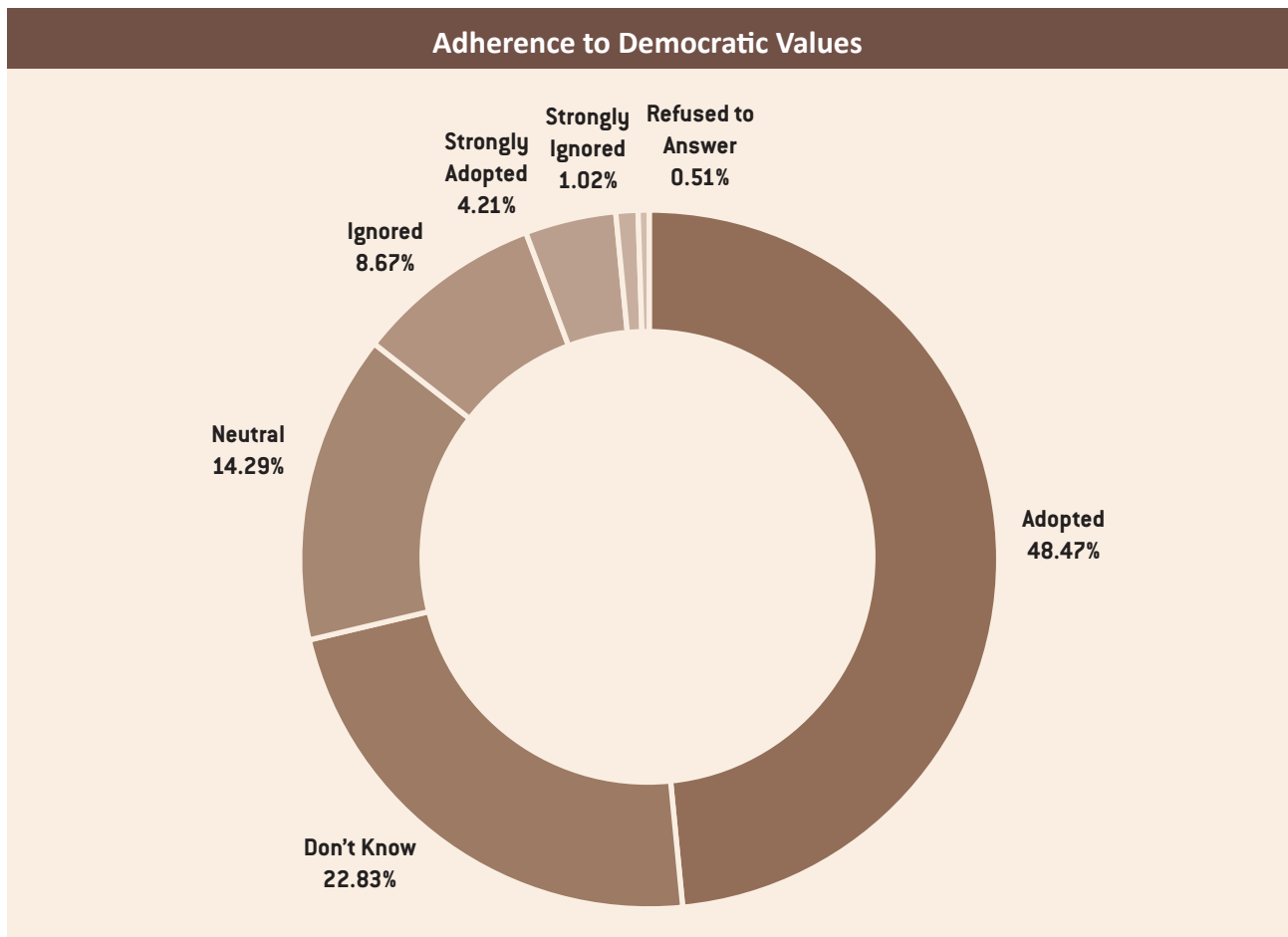


Figure 5a: Public Perception of Government's Adherence to Democratic Values

Majority of respondents feel there is no threat to democracy from this government, though a critical share has concerns.

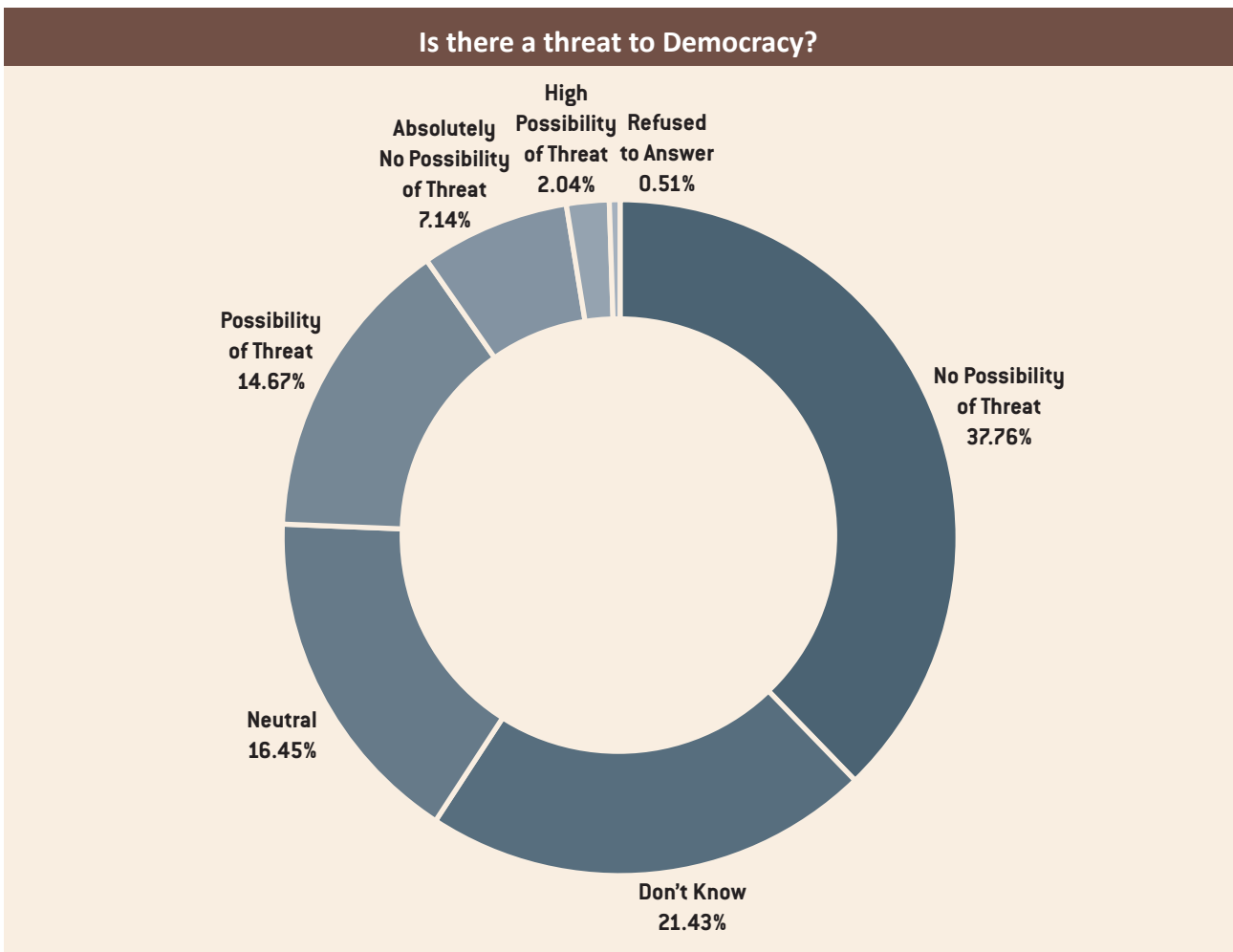


Figure 5b: Perceived Threat to Democratic Practices

6. Gen-Z Role and Public Expectations

The public wants Gen Z and youth leaders to keep a close, continuous watch on the government.

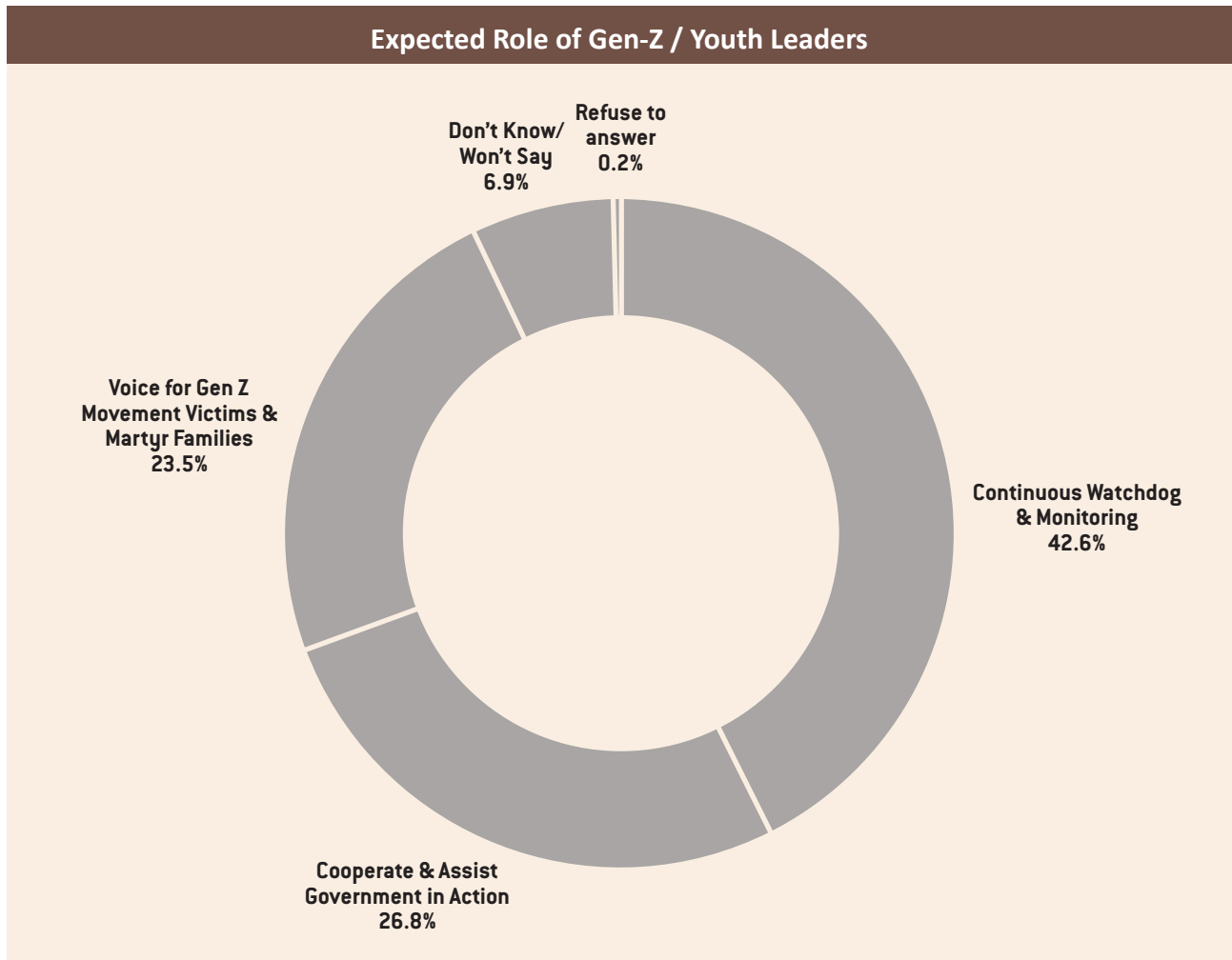


Figure 6: Perceived Role of Gen Z Youth Leaders

7. Civil Society Role

Citizens are split on civil society's role, expecting them to either partner with the government or monitor its actions.

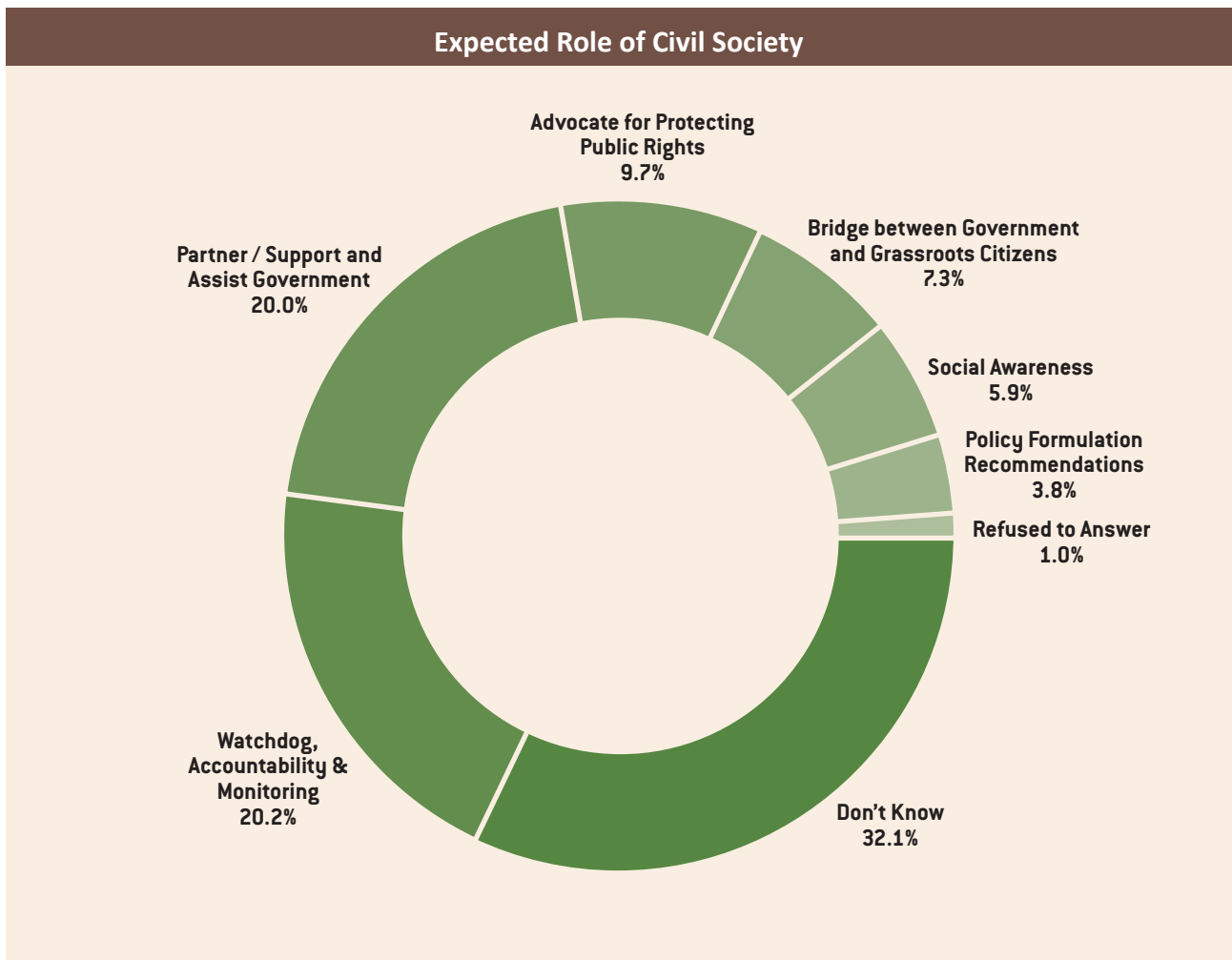


Figure 7: Perceived Role of Civil Society

8. Role of Primary Opposition

The primary opposition party (Nepali Congress) is expected to cooperate for stability and speak up on inflation and job opportunities.

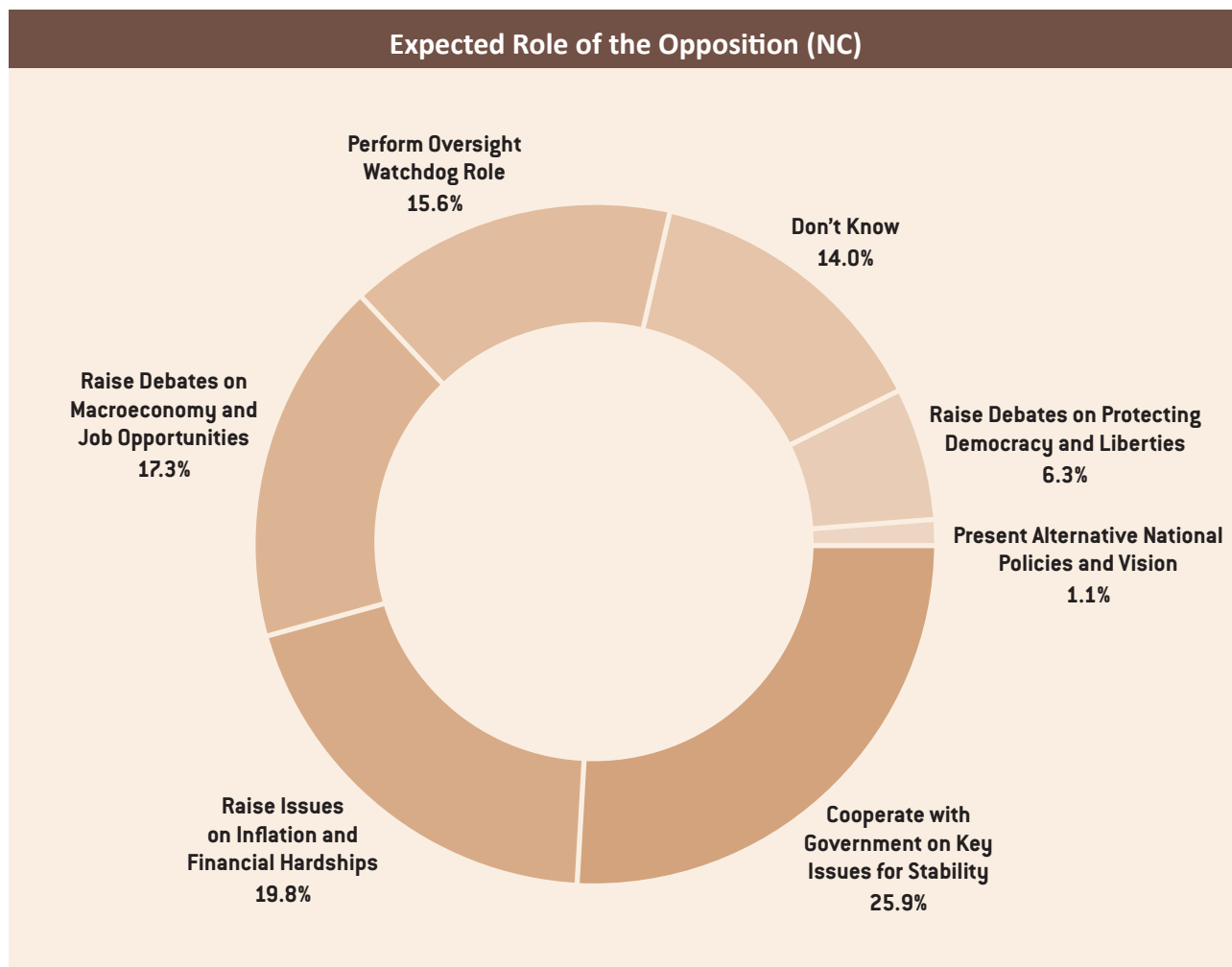


Figure 8: Expected Role from Primary Parliamentary Opposition

9. Who Can Hold the Government Accountable

Civil society and parliament are trusted the most to check the government's power.

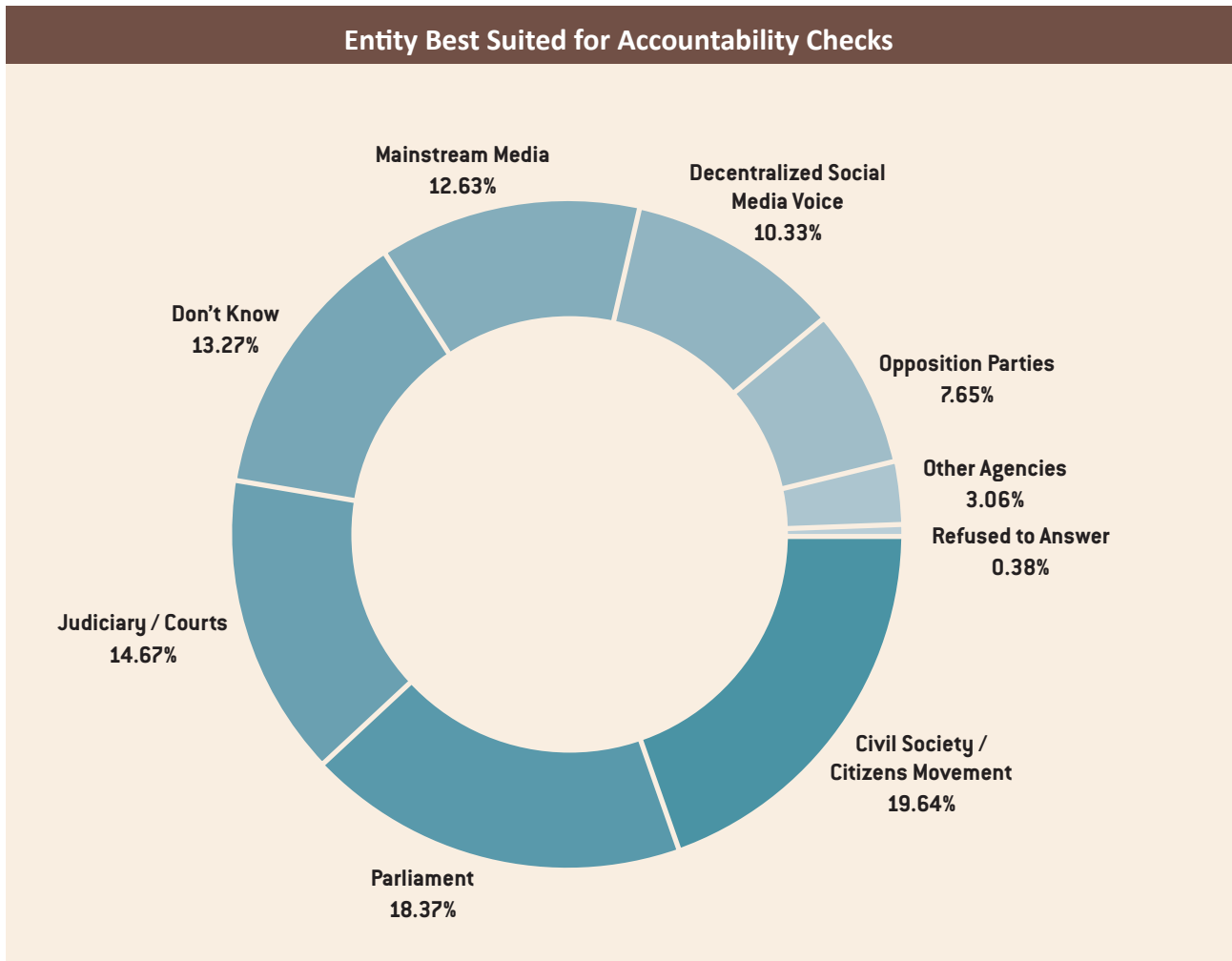


Figure 9: Public perception on who can hold the government accountable

10. Sector-Specific Service Delivery and Policy Effectiveness

Local government services and education are seen as effective, while welfare for marginalized communities needs improvement.

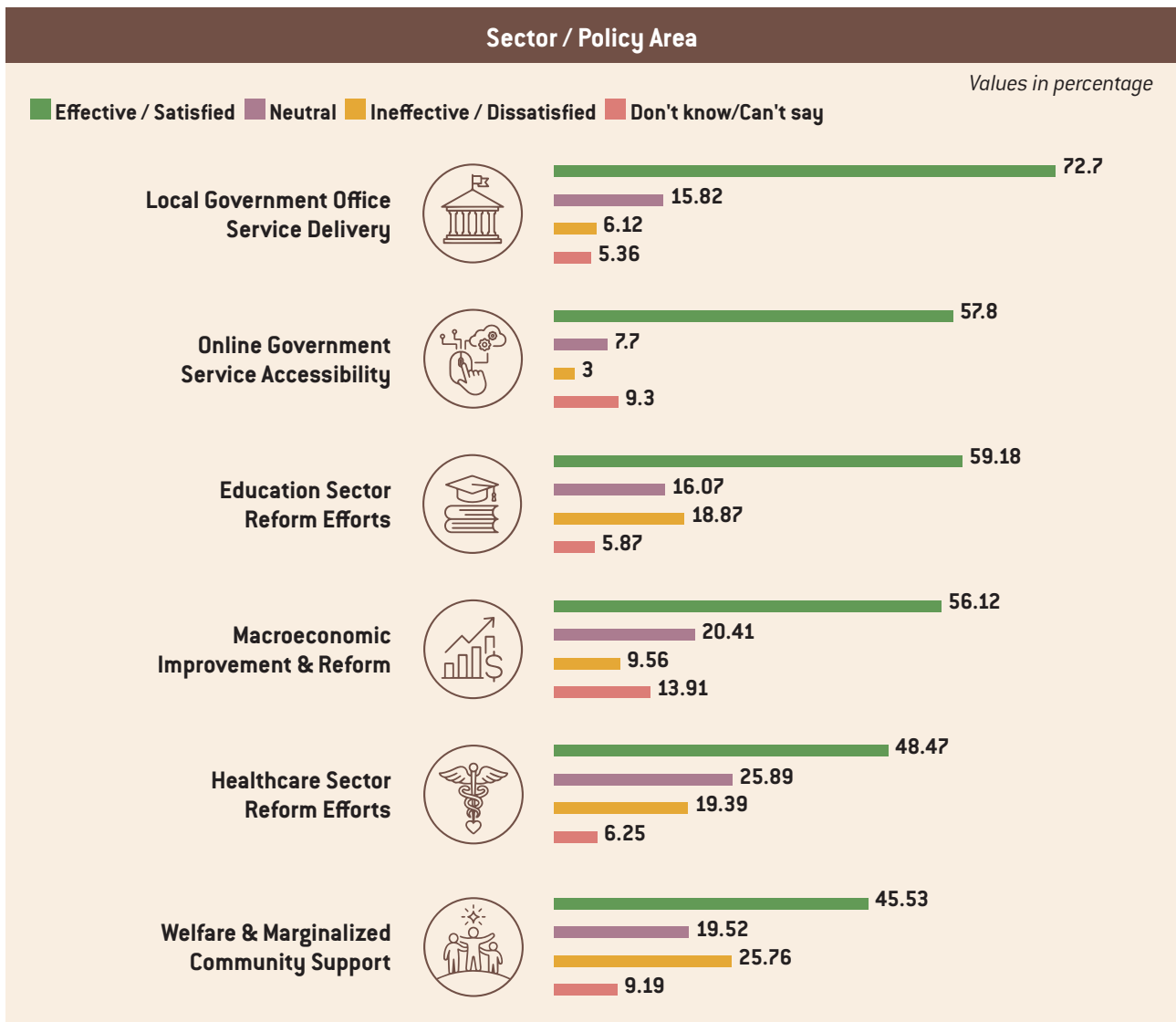


Figure 10: Public Satisfaction with Government Service Delivery and Sectoral Efforts

11. Youth Migration Trend

More than half of the respondents feel the volume of youth leaving the country has stayed the same.

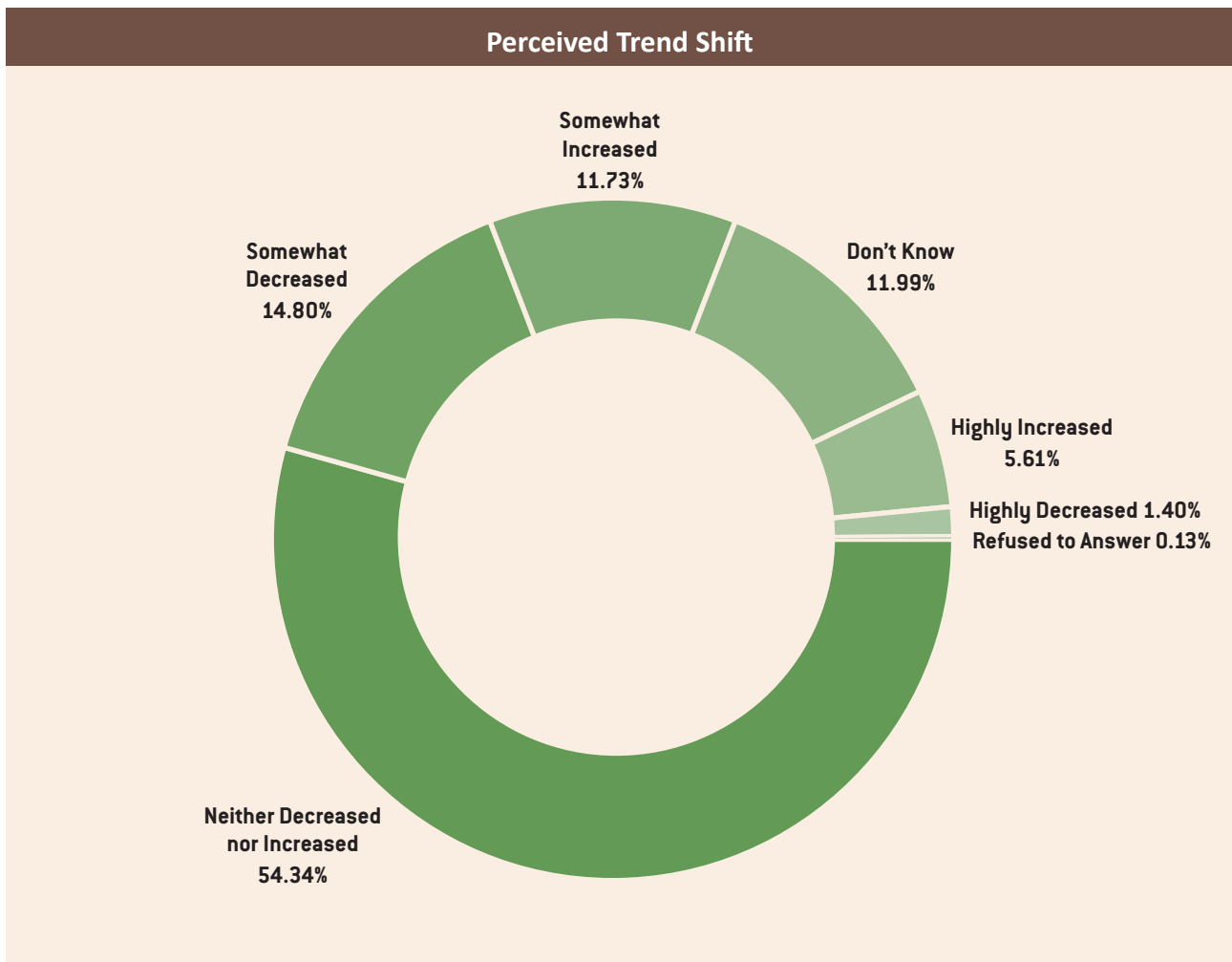


Figure 11: Perceived Shift in Youth Migration in the Last Three Months

12. Government Efforts to Reduce Youth Migration Trend

The public is evenly divided on whether the government's efforts to stop youth migration are working.

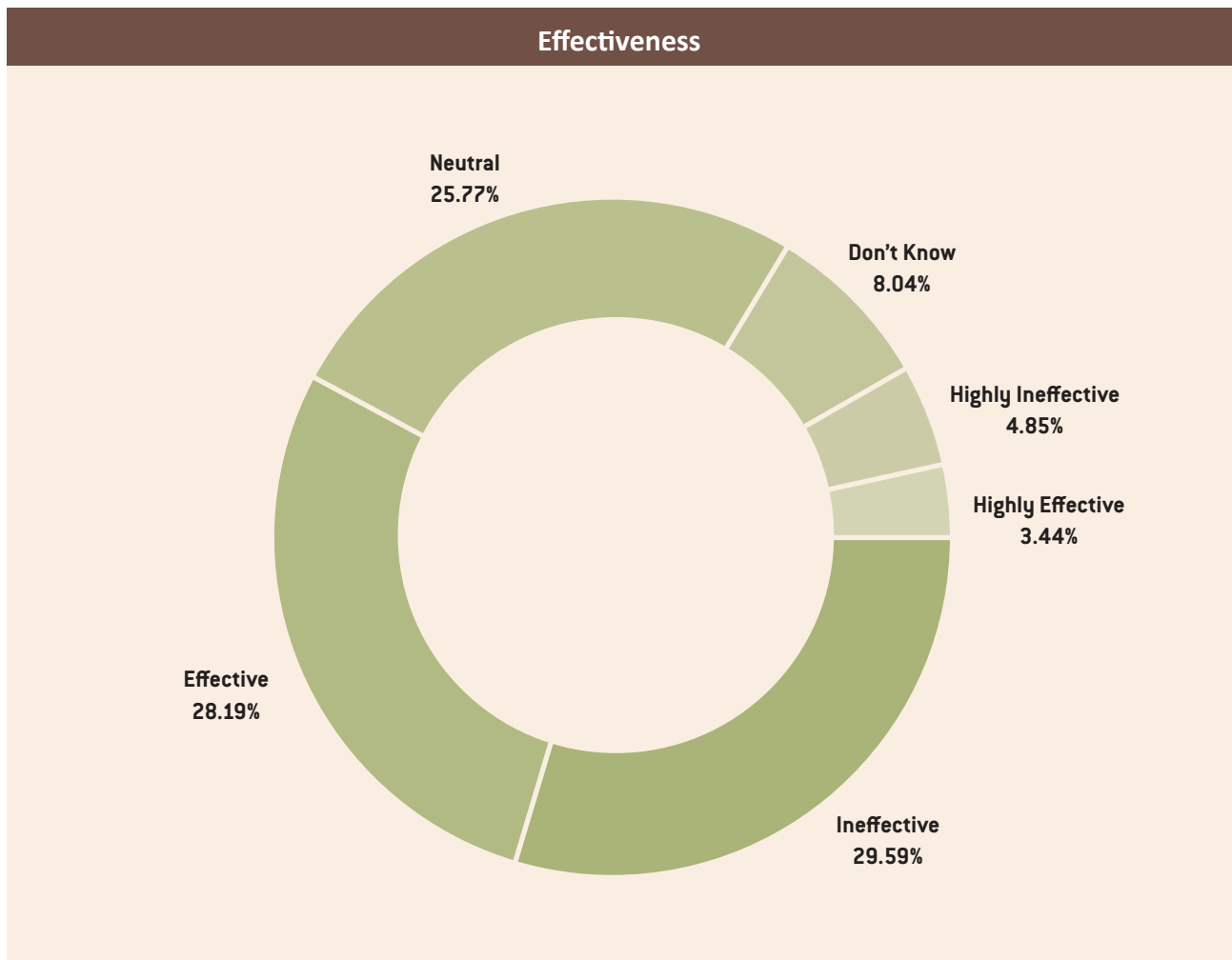


Figure 12: Perceived Effectiveness of Government Efforts to Reduce Youth Migration Trend

13. Top Priorities for the Government

Good governance, fighting corruption, and creating jobs should be the government’s absolute top priorities moving forward.

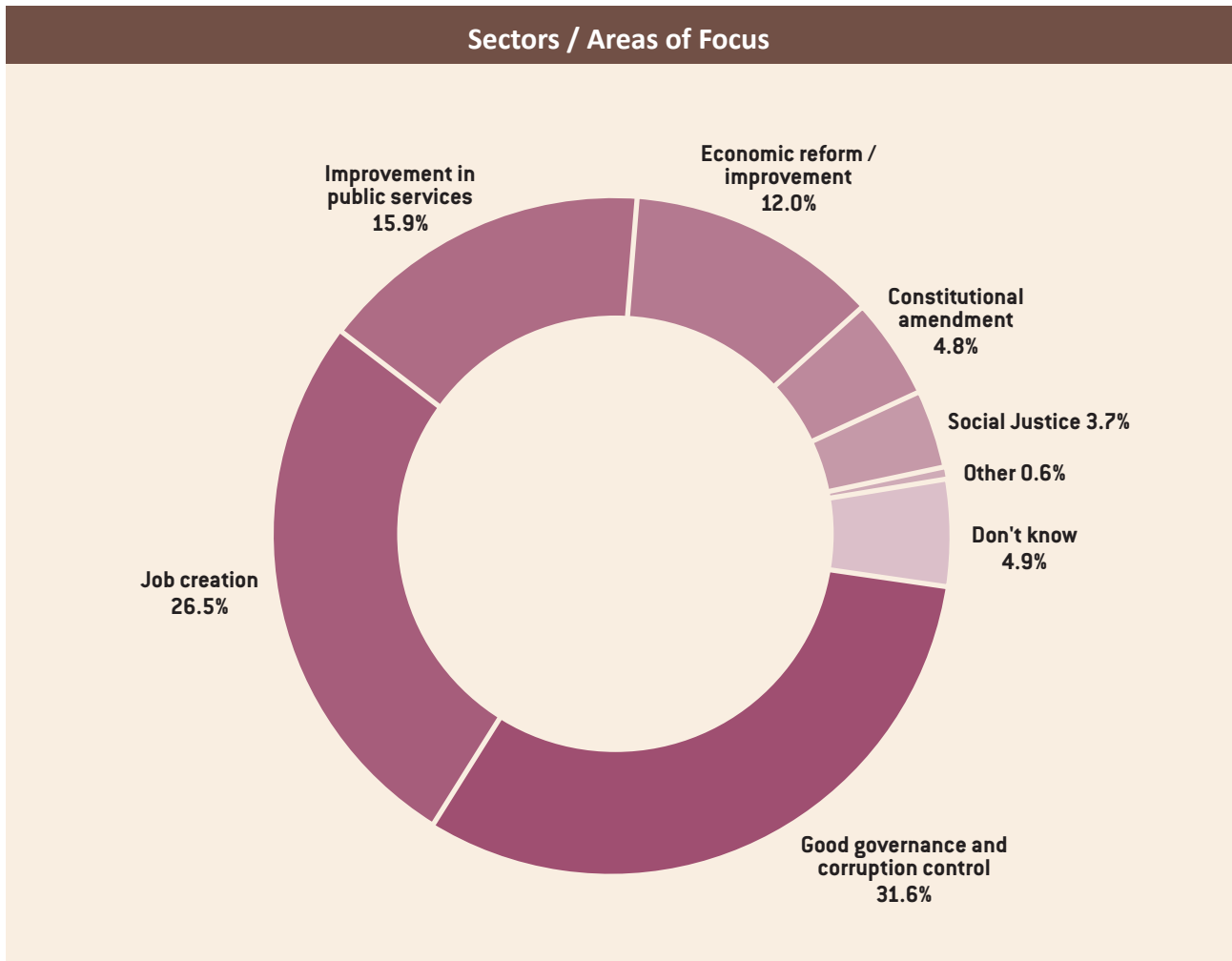


Figure 13: Public Views on Top Priorities for the Government for the First Year

Conclusion

The survey data indicates that the government is currently coasting on high political goodwill fueled by its stance on anti-corruption and strong local service delivery. However, this overwhelming optimism masks a deep, simmering frustration regarding micro-economic realities, as families struggle with high inflation, cost of living, and a stagnant job market. To maintain its high approval ratings moving forward, the government must transition its focus from purely structural cleanups to tangible economic relief, answering the public's direct call for job creation and price control while cooperating with a vigilant civil society and youth demographic.



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The views, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this report may not necessarily represent the institutional stance of Purak Asia.
