


# Wave 3

24-26 March, 2004



## THE SRI LANKAN VOTER AND THE APRIL 2004 ELECTIONS

SOCIAL INDICATOR- CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES  
MARCH 2004



## **Introduction**

Social Indicator (SI), the polling Unit of the Center for Policy Alternatives (CPA) designed a pre-election public opinion poll to capture public opinion in the wake of dissolution of Parliament. Furthermore, SI believes that this study will empower the citizen of Sri Lanka, enabling them to focus the political debate on issues and policies of public concern rather than on rhetoric.

This report presents the basic findings of the third and final wave of a three-wave study that is being conducted throughout March 2004.

SI appreciates the technical assistance of Professor William Mishler of the University of Arizona, USA and Professor Steven Finkel of the University of Virginia, USA in designing the survey tool and the financial support of the Academy for Educational Development.



## Methodology

This study is carried out in three waves using a structured questionnaire. It is administered through face-to face interviews across a countrywide sample of 1800 respondents. The sample includes respondents from 22 districts, excluding the areas of Amparai, Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Jaffna, which are not under Government control. A multi stage stratified sampling technique is adopted to select the Grama Niladari divisions (GNDs) and systematic random sampling procedures are followed to select the Household. The KISH grid is used to randomly choose the respondent from the selected household. Both men and women over the age of 18 are eligible respondents for this study.

A team of 50 experienced and qualified SI field enumerators are being used for data collection and are provided with intensive training on how to accurately execute the questionnaire. The briefing for the 1<sup>st</sup> wave questionnaire was conducted on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2004 and fieldwork carried out from 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> March. The briefing for the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave occurred on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2004 and fieldwork was carried out from 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> March. The briefing of the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave occurred on 23<sup>rd</sup> March and fieldwork carried out on 24<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> March. 5% of the interviews are back-checked in addition to accompanied visits and spot checks to ensure the quality of the data collection. As a company policy, only the enumerators from the same community are used to interview respondents from respective communities.

Data set is weighted to reflect the actual ethno-geographical composition of the country before data analysis. Data Analysis is done using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Weighted nation-wide results are subject to a margin of error of +/-3%.

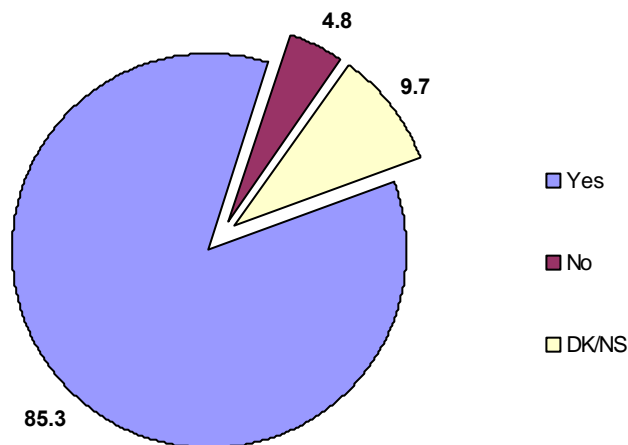


## Executive Summary

In the final wave of the three wave pre election poll, Social Indicator (SI) attempts to capture public opinion with regard to negotiations with the LTTE, special arrangements made for voters in LTTE controlled areas, the party best suited to handle national issues and voter behaviour.

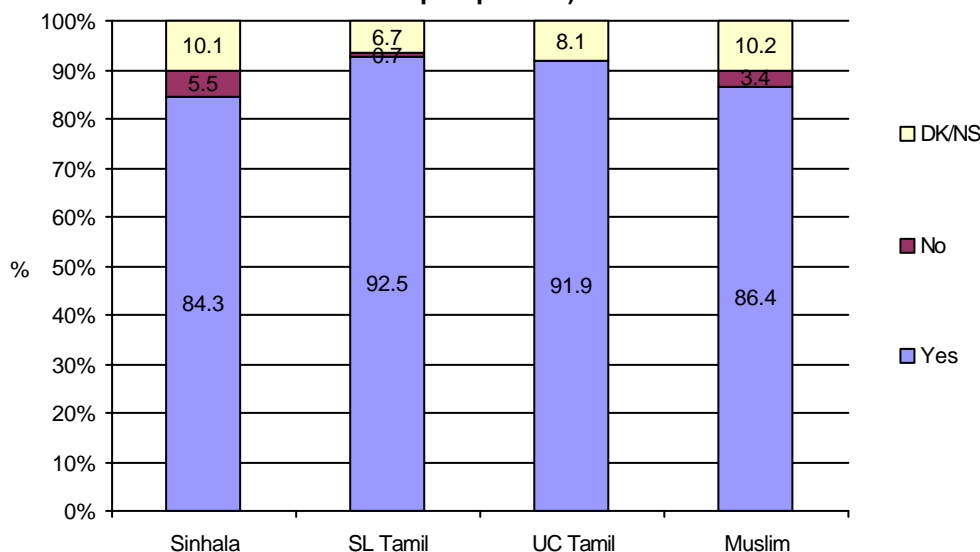
### NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE LTTE

**Figure 1: Should the Government of Sri Lanka restart negotiations with LTTE after the elections?**



An overwhelming majority (85.3%) believes that the government of Sri Lanka should restart negotiations with the LTTE after the elections. Only 4.8% believe the contrary

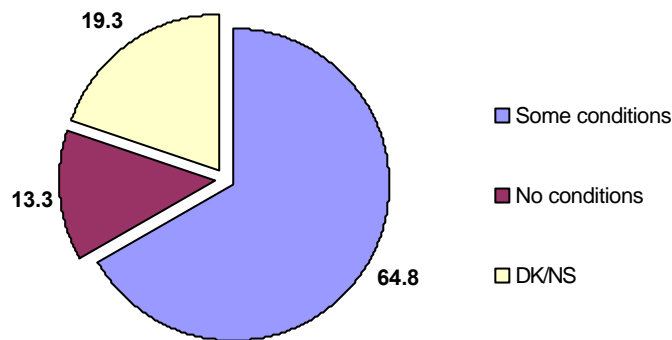
**Figure 2: Should the Government of Sri Lanka restart negotiations with the LTTE after the elections? (Ethnic perspective)**



Furthermore, the study shows that regardless of ethnic origin, a significant majority share the view that negotiations with the LTTE should recommence after the elections.



**Figure 3: Should negotiations be done with some conditions or none at all?**

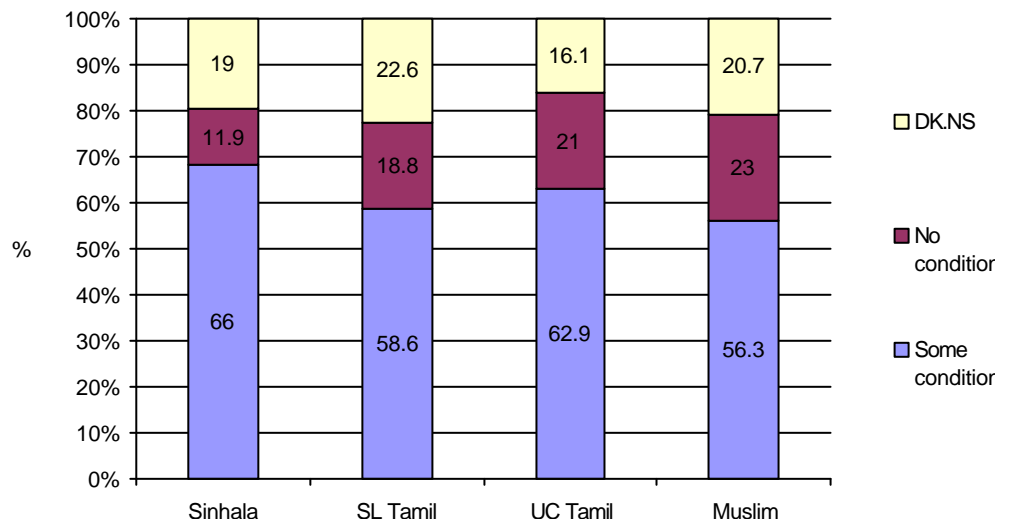


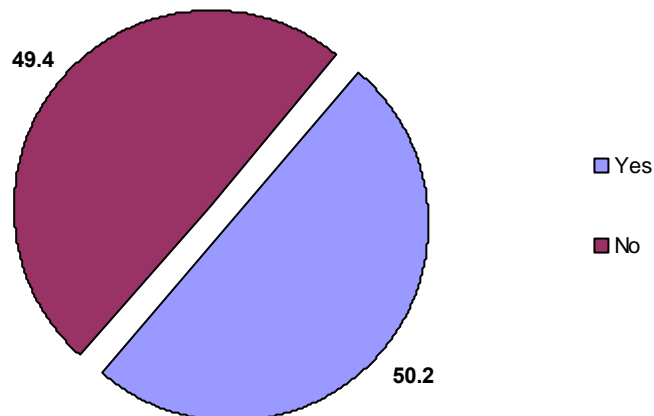
Of the people who think that the government should restart the negotiations with the LTTE after the elections, 64.8% says the negotiations should be carried out with some conditions. However, 13.3% believe that negotiations should be done without any conditions, while 19.3% remain undecided.

When looking at ethnic perspectives, the majority from each community feel that negotiations should be carried out with some conditions, with the majority amongst the Sinhala community being the highest (66%). 23% of the Muslim, 21% of the Up-country Tamil and 18.8% of the Sri Lankan Tamil

communities respectively believe that the negotiations should be carried out with no conditions, while only 11.9% of the Sinhala community share this belief.

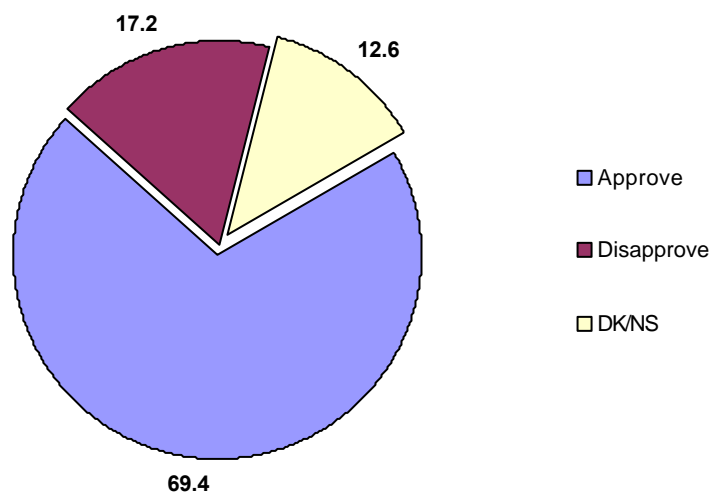
**Figure 4: Should negotiations be done with some conditions or no conditions at all? (Ethnic perspective)**



**SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR VOTERS IN LTTE CONTROLLED AREAS****Figure 5: Are you aware of the special arrangements made for the voters in the LTTE controlled areas?**

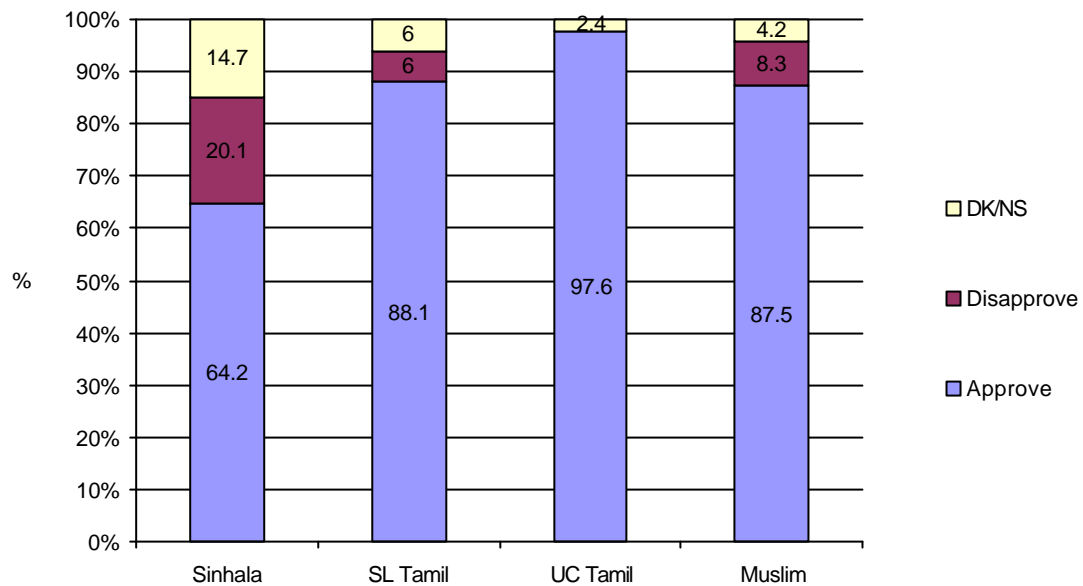
Only 50.2% of Sri Lankans are aware that special arrangements have been made for voters in LTTE controlled areas to cast their vote.

Of those who are aware of the special arrangements made for voters in LTTE controlled areas, the majority (69.4%) approve of these special arrangements, while 17.2% disapprove, and 12.6% express their uncertainty.

**Figure 6: Do you approve or disapprove of these arrangements?**



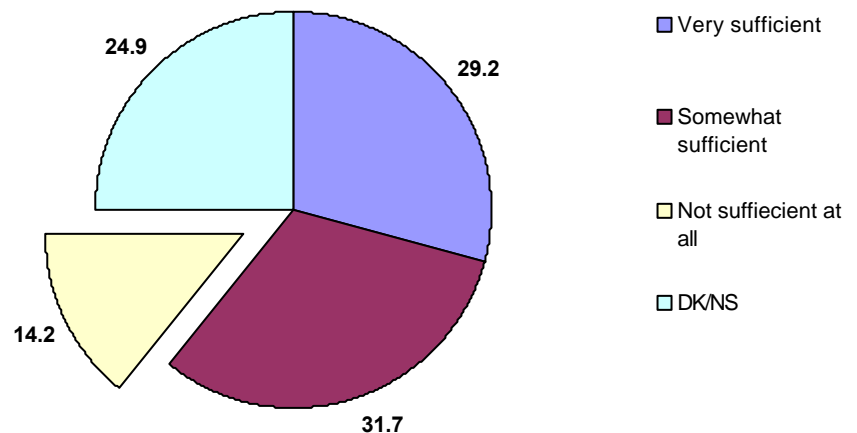
**Figure 7: Do you approve or disapprove of these arrangements?  
(Ethnic perspective)**



When assessing the opinions of individual ethnic groups regarding the special arrangements for the voters in LTTE controlled areas, a remarkable 97.6% of Up-country Tamils approve of these arrangements with only 2.4% who state that they are unsure. A considerable majority of the Sri Lankan Tamil (88.1%) and Muslim (87.5%) community also approve. A lesser majority (64.2%) of the Sinhala community approve. The results show that the disapproval mainly stems from the Sinhala community (20.1%).

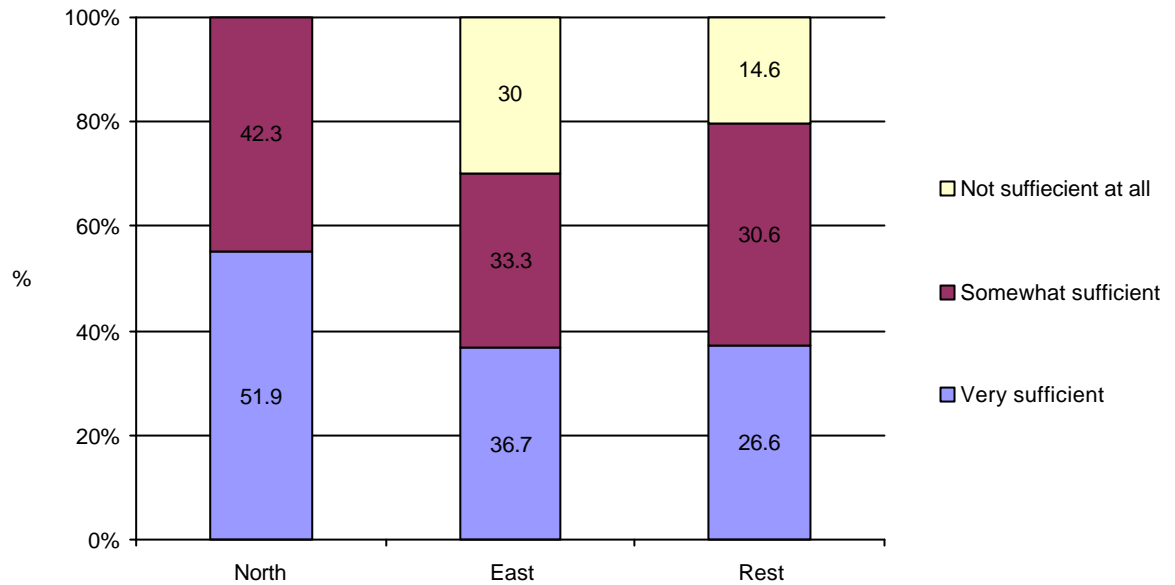
60.9% of those who approve of the special arrangements made for the voters in the LTTE controlled areas are of the opinion that these arrangements are sufficient. While 14.2% feel these arrangements are insufficient, 24.9% are not sure about the sufficiency of the arrangements.

**Figure 8: If you approve of the special arrangements, how sufficient do you think they are?**





**Figure 9: If you approve of the special arrangements, how sufficient do you think they are? (Regional perspective)**



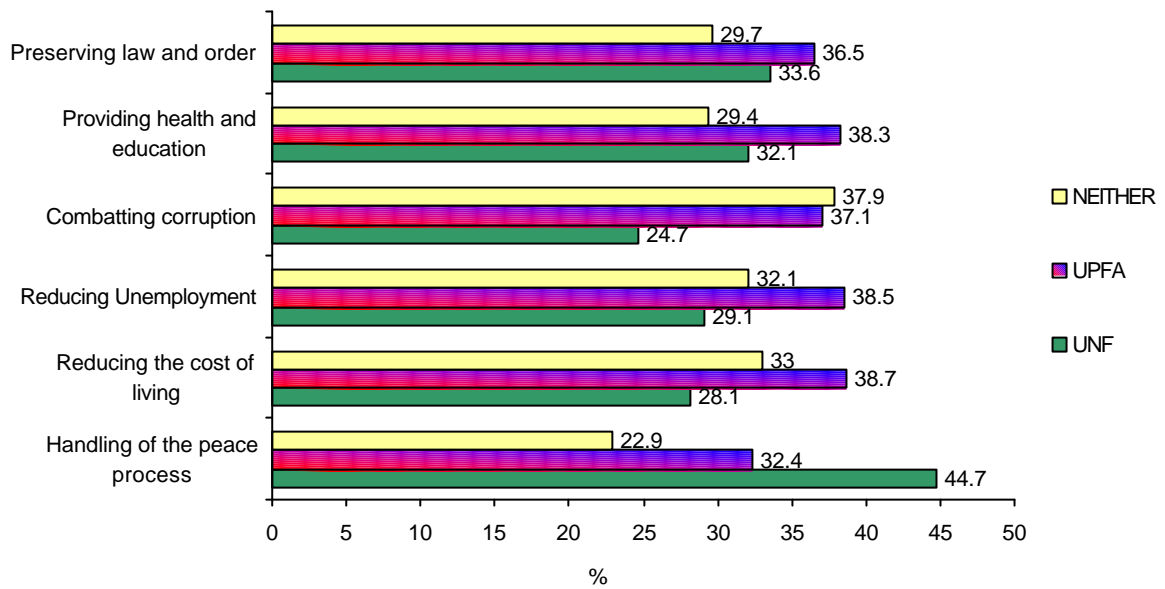
The results of the opinion poll show that people in the North are satisfied with the arrangements that have been made for voters in the LTTE controlled areas. Contrary to the northern region, 30% of those in the Eastern Province believe that the arrangements that have been made are not sufficient at all. *However, it should be noted that variations in the results are high in the Northern and Eastern Province due to the small sample size.*



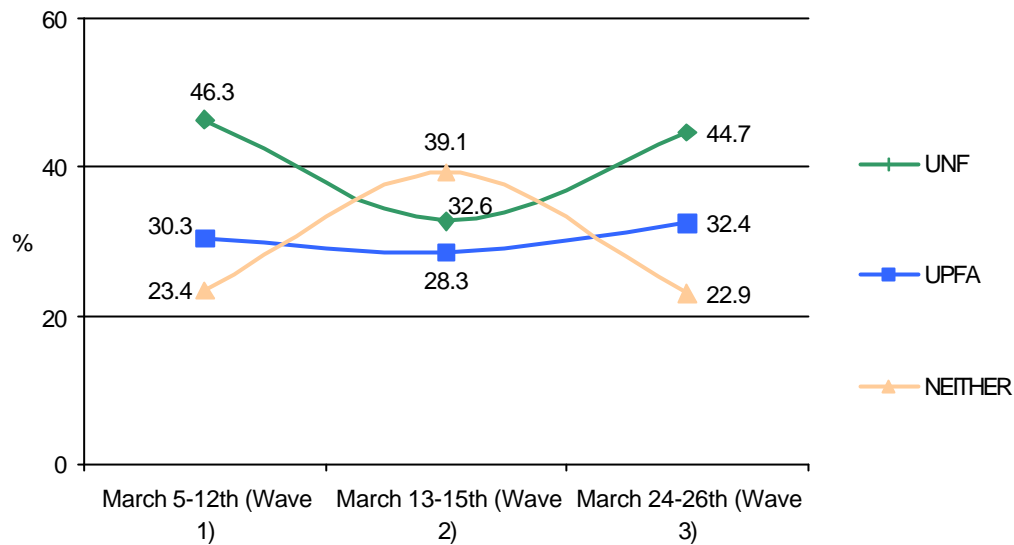


## UNF Vs. UPFA

**Figure 10: Which party do you feel is most capable of handling the following issues?**

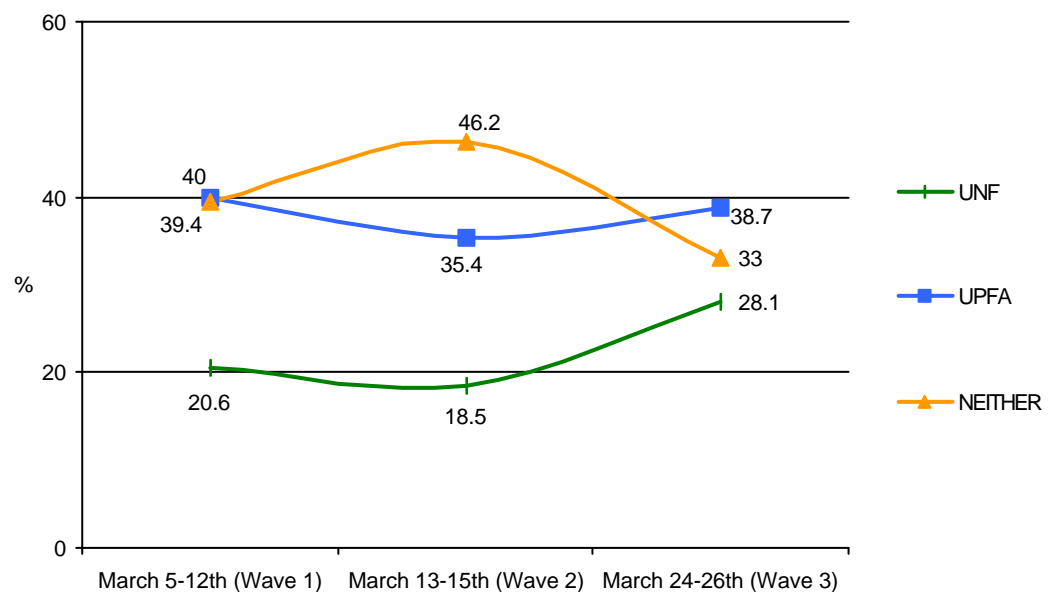


The third wave of this study reveals that that people clearly believe that UNF is the best party to handle the peace process (44.7%), while 32.4% feel that it is the UPFA. With regard to reducing the cost of living, reducing unemployment, providing health and education and preserving law and order, the belief is that UPFA is more capable of handling these issues than UNF. When it comes to combating corruption, only 24.7% believe that the UNF is best suited to tackle this issue while 37.1% feel the UPFA is best suited. However a marginally higher percentage (37.9%) believe that neither party is capable of combating corruption.

**Figure 11: Best party to handle the peace process**

When comparing all three waves with regards to people's opinions on which party is best suited to handle the peace process, majority express that UNF is best suited to handle the peace process. The trend graph shows that both the UNF and UPFA's lost support in their ability to handle the peace process from the first wave (5-12<sup>th</sup> March) to the second wave (13-15<sup>th</sup> March) while conversely, the opinion that neither party is best suited to handle the peace process increased from the first wave to the second wave. However, the graph depicts that support for UNF as well as UPFA increases again in the third wave (24-26<sup>th</sup> March) from the second wave, with the increase in UNF support being slightly higher than the increase in UPFA support.

According to the trend, Both the UNF and UPFA lost support in their ability to reduce the cost of living during the second wave, while the belief that neither party is best suited to reduce the cost of living increased during the second wave. However in the third wave, UPFA is selected by the majority as the most capable party to reduce the cost of living even though there is an increase in UNF support in the third wave.

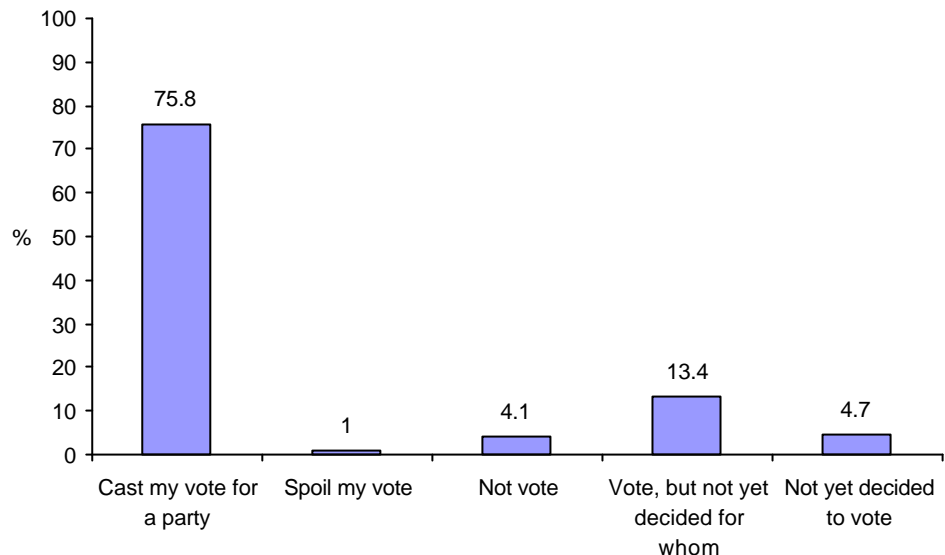
**Figure 12: Best party to reduce cost of living**



When asked about voters' intentions in terms of what they will do with their vote, the majority (75.8%) express that they will cast a vote for a party in the upcoming election on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2004.

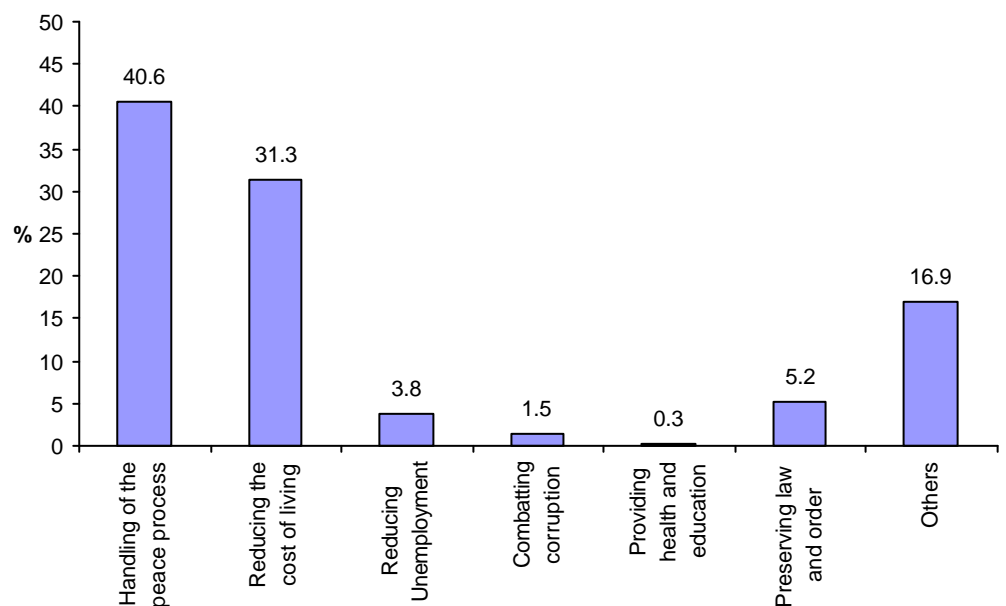
Interestingly, 13.4% of Sri Lankan voters remain undecided to the party they will vote for. While 4.1% says that they will not vote in this election, 4.7% have not yet decided on whether they will vote or not.

**Figure 13: What will the Sri Lankan voter do on 2nd April 2004?**



40.6% of Sri Lankans say that the issue that is most important for them when determining which party/alliance they will vote for is the ability of that party to handle the peace process. 31.3% say that reducing the cost of living is the determining factor of which party they will vote. However, 16.9% of Sri Lankans will vote for a particular party based on other issues.

**Figure 14: What issue is the most important to you when determining which party/alliance you will vote for?**



Social Indicator (SI) is an independent social research organisation, which conducts polls on socio-economic and political issues.

Operating under the Board of Directors of the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), SI was established in September 1999, and filled a longstanding vacuum for a permanent, professional and independent polling facility in Sri Lanka on social and political issues.

Polling is an instrument of empowerment, a means by which the silent majority of the public can express their opinions on issues affecting them. Our mission is to conduct surveys on key social issues, thereby providing a means through which public opinion can influence the public policy debate.



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