



THE DAILY STAR-Nielsen Election Opinion Poll 2008 reveals there is every possibility that about 37 percent of the voters will swing, with 14 percent already determined that they will not vote for the party they chose in last election and 23 percent have not decided which party to vote for, meaning they could go either way. Among the swing voters, 17 percent of the males and 11 percent of the females intend to swing. And 26 percent of females and 20 percent of males are undecided.

Failure of the party to perform in the past is one big reason why they have made their mind to vote for a different party this time.

However, the parties have 40 percent of the voters as their solid support base who said they would vote for the same party as in last election. In Khulna where over 51 percent said they will vote for the same party followed by 41 percent in Rajshahi. In Sylhet, only 28 percent said they would vote for the same party.

Again, there will be more swing votes in urban areas -- almost 40 percent -- than in rural areas -- 36 percent. While 16 percent of urban voters have already decided to change party, only 13 percent rural voters are so decisive.

The survey revealed that voters will be very choosy about who to vote for. Of these who are thinking of changing their votes, the largest segment of the survey -- about 51 percent -- wants to make the voting decision by knowing their candidates' profile. They want to be sure if the candidates are capable of leading them and having positive traits. Next on the list of reasons why voters want to swing is poor performance (31 percent) of the party in the past, perception that the party of choice worked for development (22 percent), and that commodity prices were less before (18 percent).

Confidence in December Election

A large number of respondents -- 81 percent -- said they have full confidence that the upcoming elections will be free and fair. And another 16

percent said they are fairly confident of a good election. And only 2 percent said they have no confidence. The confidence level is higher outside Dhaka division where voters had a recent experience of voting in Mayoral elections in city corporations and Pourashavas. And 83 percent of males are confident compared with 79 percent females; 84 percent rural people are confident about free and fair polls against 75 percent of urban dwellers.

Expected Traits of MPs

A look at the performance of the MPs showed that about 36 percent of the respondents were not happy with the way their representatives worked in the past. Interestingly, the swing voter percentage tallies highly with the percentage of voters who are not satisfied with the performance of their MPs.

Females were more satisfied with MP performance -- 67 percent -- than the males -- 57 percent. Barisal people are the least satisfied (52 percent). Sylhet respondents were the most satisfied (71 percent).

The mostly quoted traits the respondents want to see in their MPs are honesty, ability to get things done and education. However, honesty element surpasses other traits by a large gap as 55 percent of respondents opted for it. About 21 percent viewed 'ability to get things done' as the important trait and 17 percent chose education.

According to the survey, 18 percent of the rural respondents quoted education as a trait while 15 percent urban respondents picked this trait. As many as 16 percent females voted for education while 17 percent males picked it.

Need for Political Reform

A very large percentage of respondents -- 87 percent -- feel that politics has to be reformed. Only 5 percent believes that the current political reform is on the right track. Among the six divisions, highest 98 percent respondents of Barisal expressed the need for political reforms

followed by Sylhet (95 percent). In the poll, 88 percent rural respondents and 86 percent urban respondents felt the need for reforms.

Governance System

Asked what kind of governance system they would like to see in Bangladesh, over 81 percent said they want democratic parliamentary system. Males and rural respondents scored higher than females and urban respondents.

Only 7 percent respondents said they want the country to be governed by Islamic laws. Only a few favoured the presidential form of government or military rule.

Why Democracy Failed to Deliver Sufficiently

The first three most important reasons that the respondents think why democracy failed to sufficiently deliver in the past are corrupt leaders, cronyism and increase in terrorism. However, corruption perception is much larger than the other two factors with 37 percent believing that it had weakened democracy. Among the six divisions, this perception is higher in . Males felt stronger about corruption than women.

About 22 percent believe cronyism and 9 percent think an increase in terrorism has weakened democracy. of terrorism is much higher (20 percent) as the deterrent to democracy in Barisal than in any other divisions followed by Chittagong (12 percent).

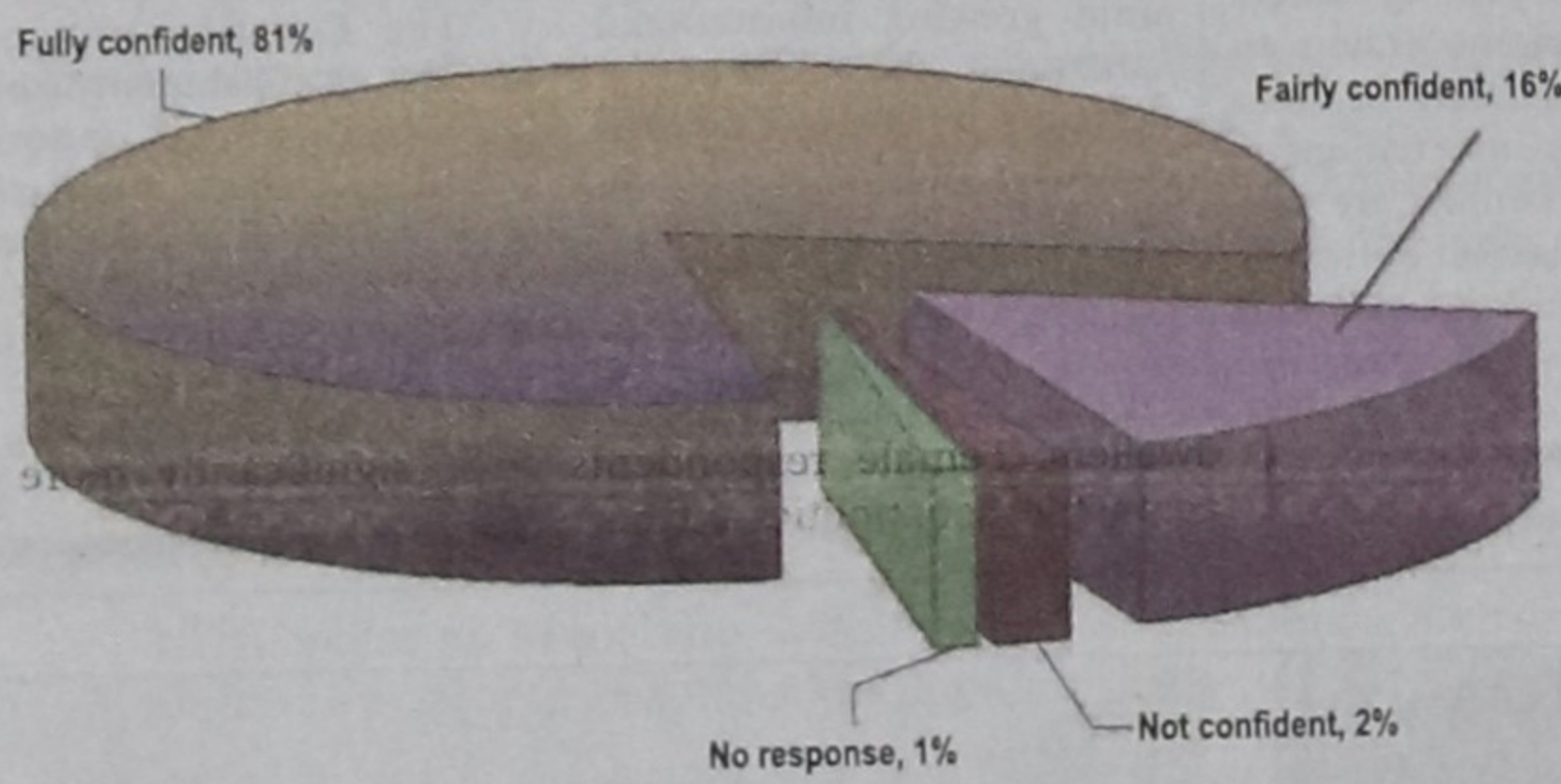
Responding to the question of what could be done to strengthen democracy, the highest of 13 percent said law and order situation have to be improved. Among them, the Barisal people give the highest 18 percent priority to the issue. Urban people think it is more important an issue than the rural people. Male respondents twice more than the women think it is a vital issue.

Removing corruption was next on the list with 10 percent respondents feeling that it must be tackled to improve democracy. Here, division topped the rank with 21 percent making it the number one issue. Women and rural people

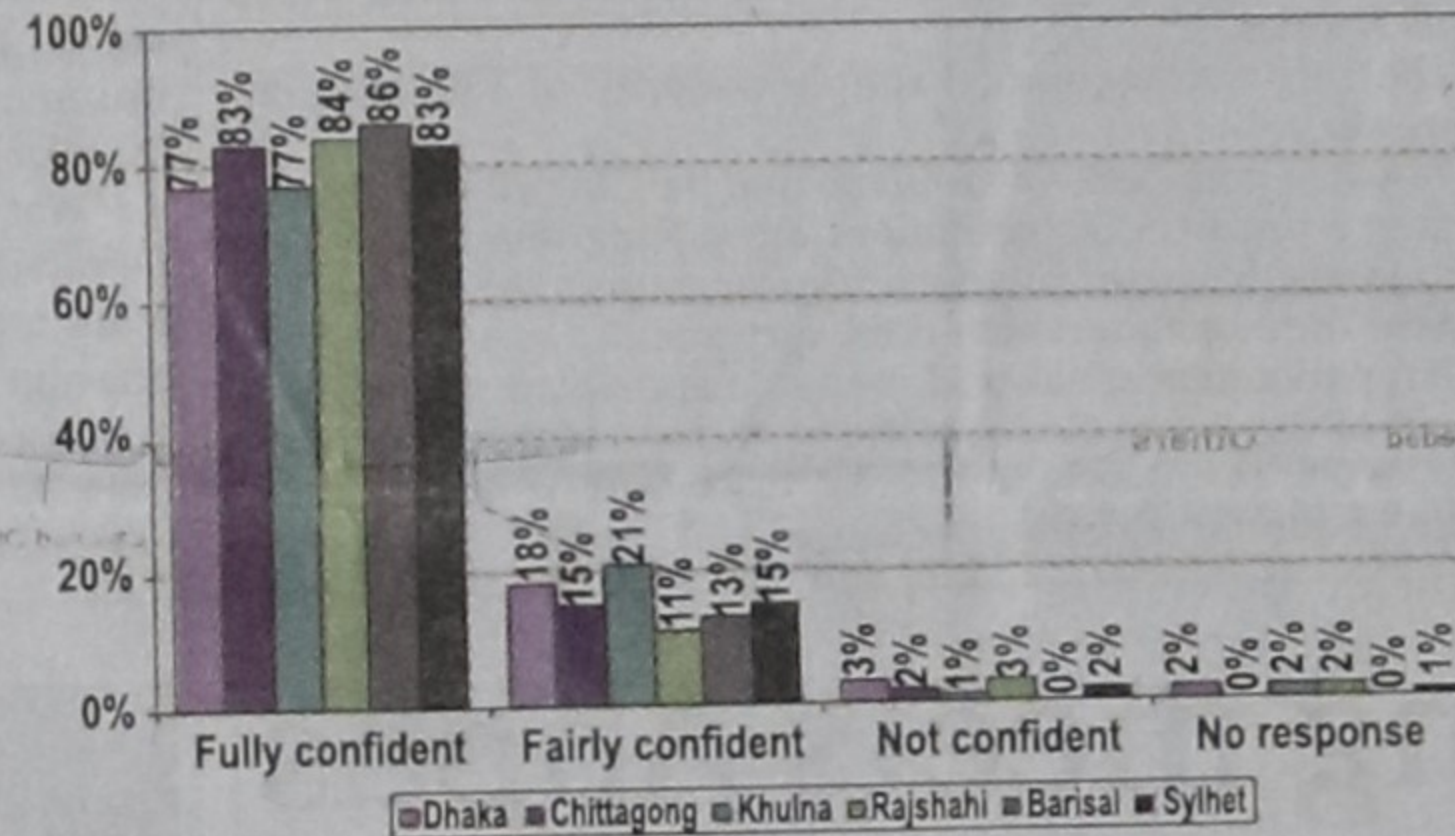


SEE PAGE 9

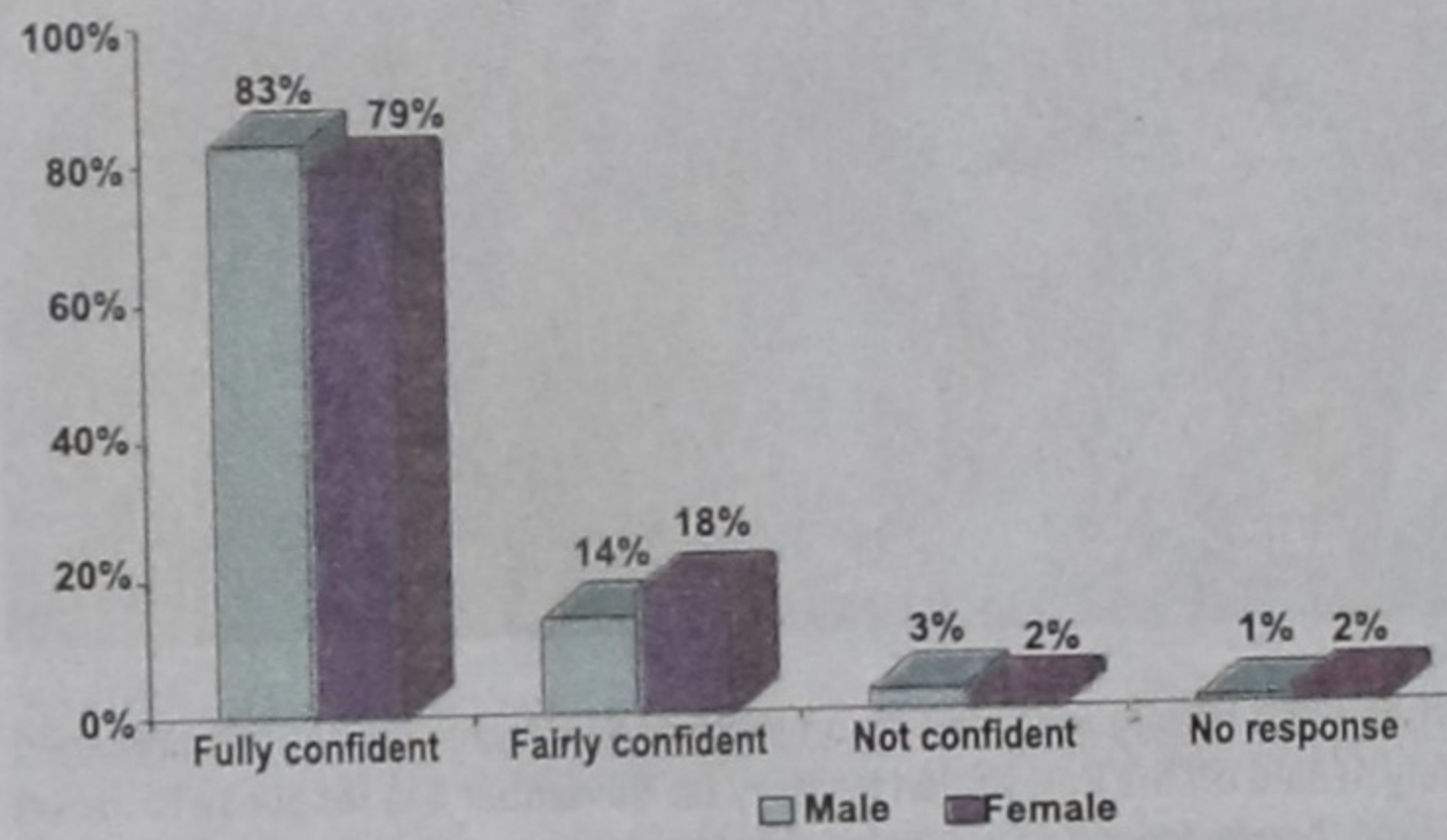
How confident are you about next poll being free and fair?



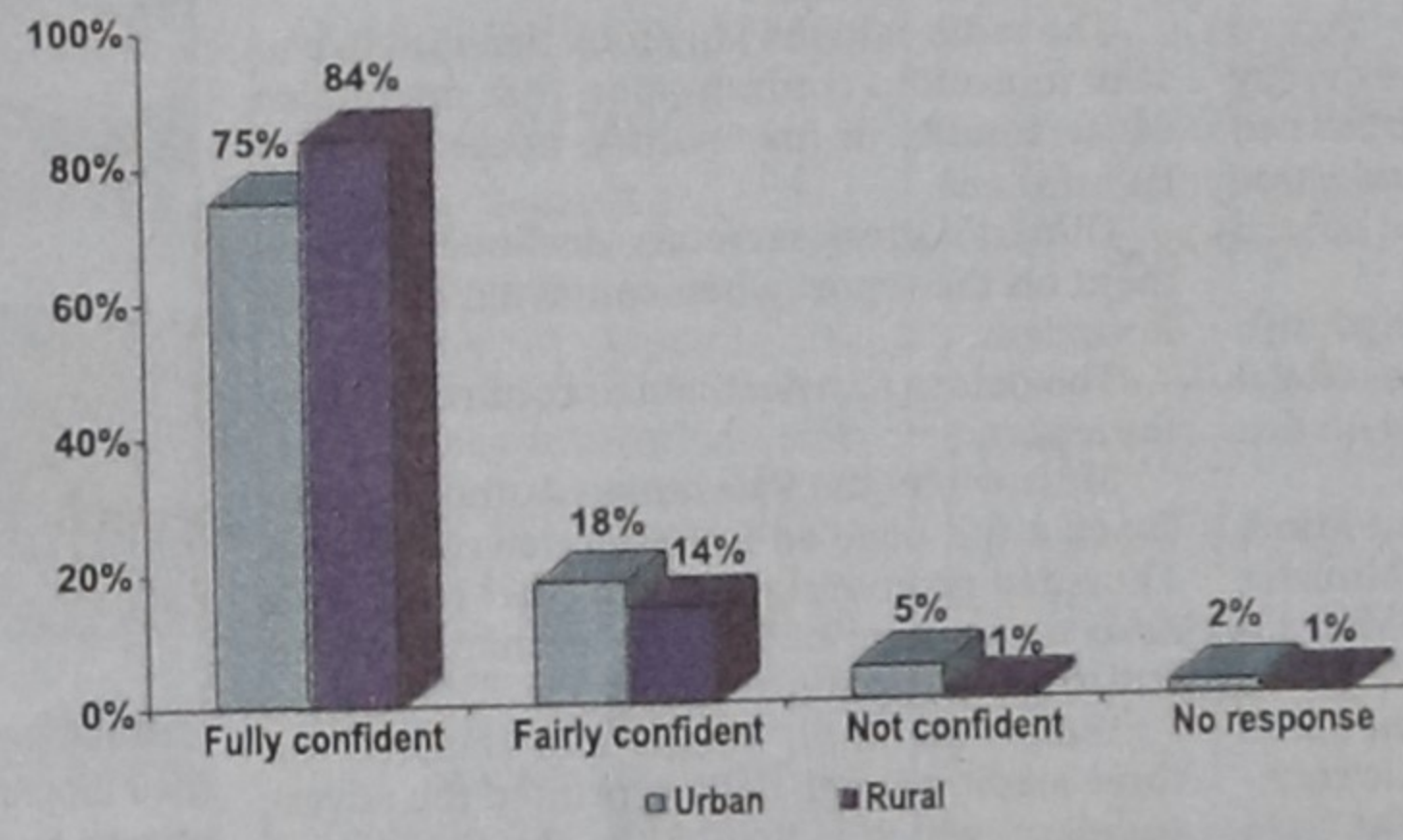
How confident are you about next poll being free and fair (division)?



How confident are you about next poll being free and fair?



How confident are you about next poll being free and fair?



Survey Methodology

The objective of the Daily Star-Nielsen Election Opinion Poll 2008 was carried out to assess the voters' views, concerns and priorities in the coming election and related issues. The study explored the general perception on political situation according to gender, age group, urban-rural and different constitutional setting, socio-economic and geographic divisions.

To ensure that the sample properly represents all possible categories, respondents were selected from the following groups:

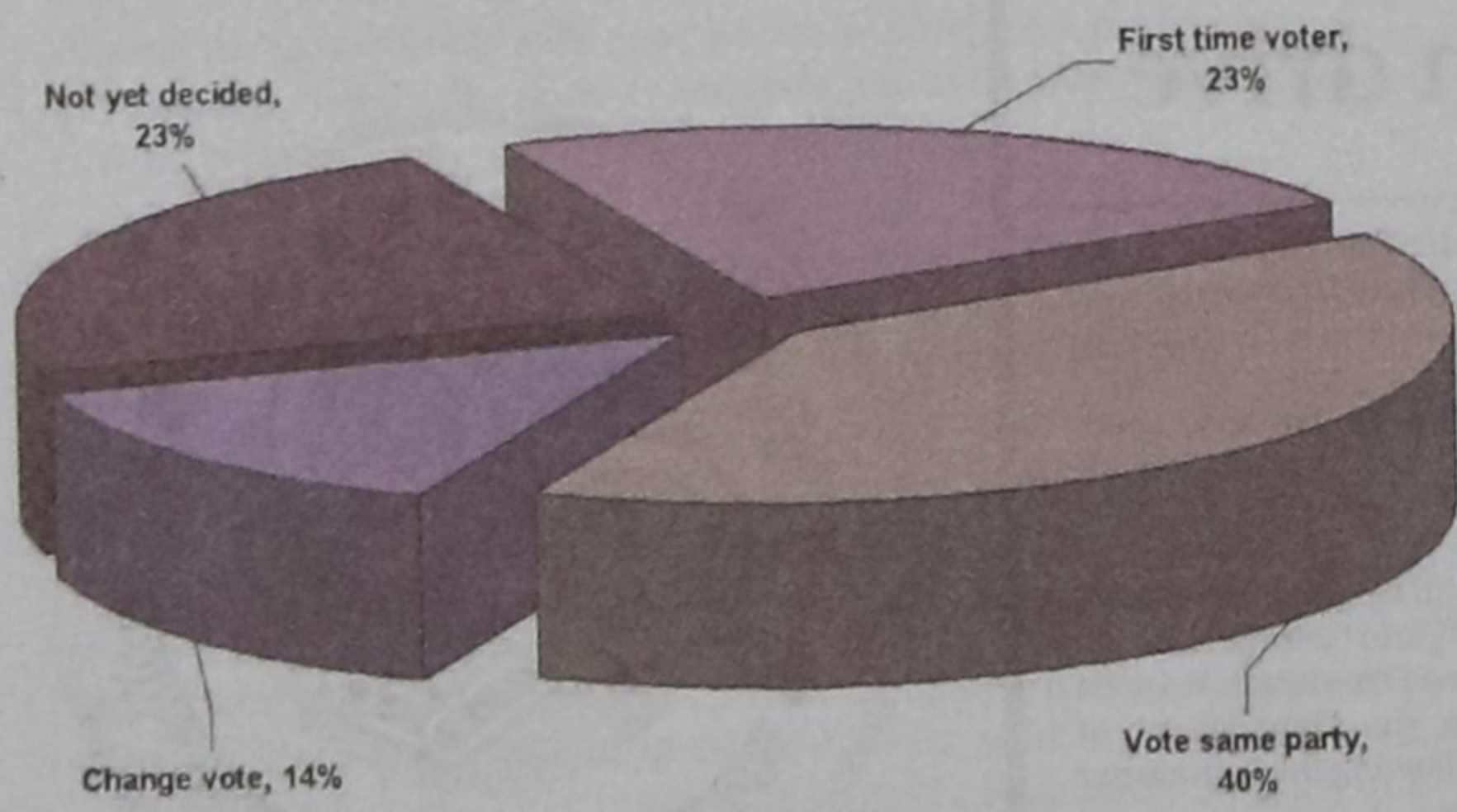
Urban and rural areas
Male and female population
Age 18 years and above
Study Design: The sample for the poll covered the entire population residing in private dwellings units in the country. Administratively, Bangladesh is divided into six divisions. In turn, each division is divided into districts, and each district into upazila. Each urban area in the municipality is divided into wards, and into mahallah within the ward. Each rural area in the upazila is divided into union parishad (UP) and into mouzas within UPs. Therefore, Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) were mouza in the rural areas and mohallah in the urban areas. From each PSU, required number of households and respondents were selected randomly. The list of mouzas and mohallahs were procured from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Therefore, to capture overall picture of Bangladesh, the poll was carried out in 44 districts, covering all the 6 administrative divisions across Bangladesh.

A target number of completed interviews with eligible adult population were set at 5,040 based on standard statistical formula, both from rural and urban areas. The urban-rural distribution of sample reflects the national pattern of population distribution. The survey was quantitative in nature, interviewed at household level and the survey period was November 4-12, 2008. In this quantitative approach, face-to-face interviews were conducted using semi-structured questionnaires. The interviews were done on 168 spots or PSUs covering 44 districts in 90 electoral constituencies. Thirty individuals were interviewed at each spot. The PSUs were chosen using probability random sampling. The 30 eligible respondents were chosen randomly in selected areas with equal ratio of males and females.

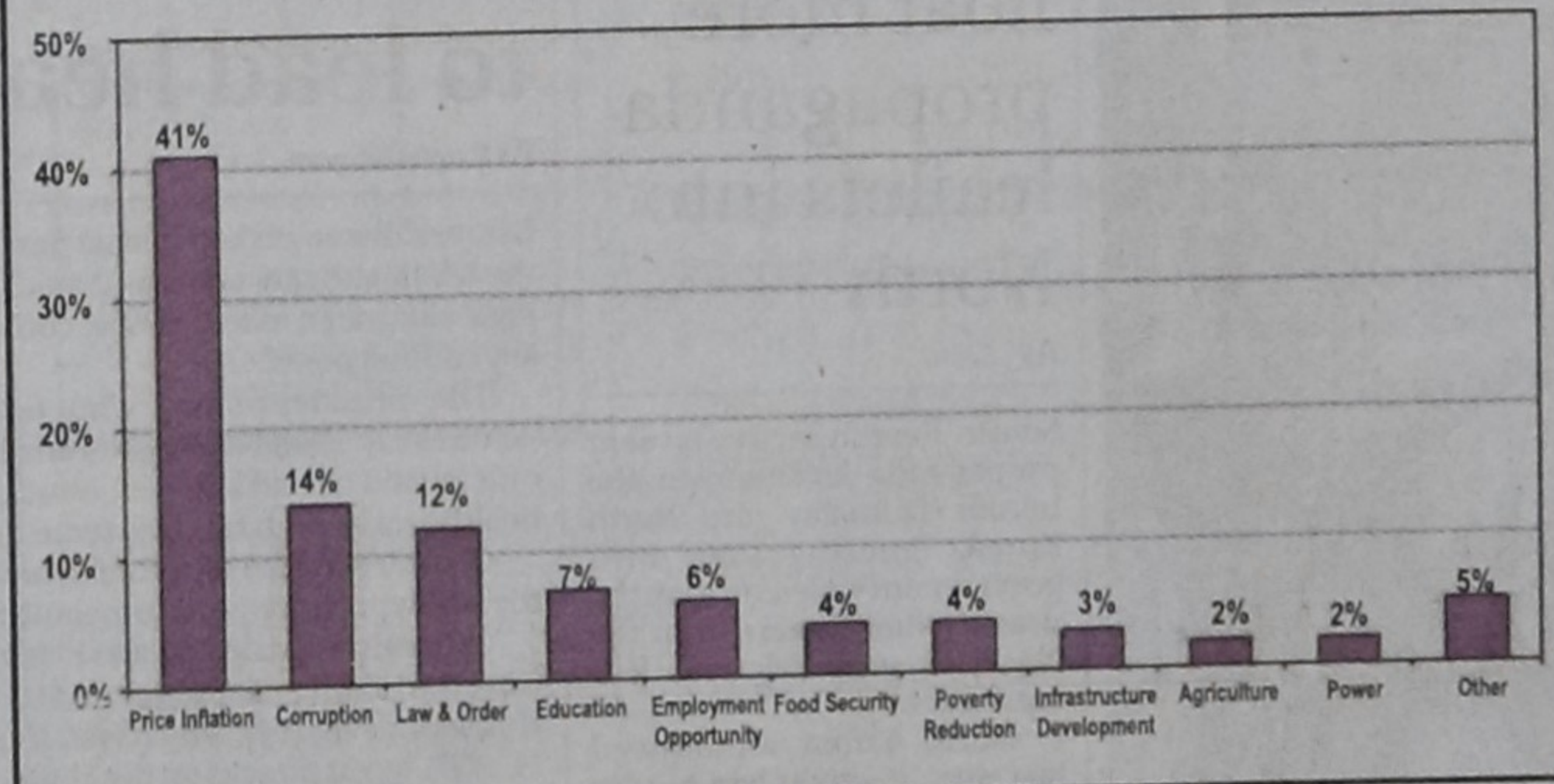
The opinion survey strictly adhered to the internationally laid down methodology and ethical standards as specified by ESINAR (European Society of Opinion and Marketing Research) and standards of NielsenWorldwide.

Average age of respondents: 36 years, ranging from 18 to 86 years.
Male-Female ratio: 50:50
Literacy range : 67 percent literate, 33 percent not literate, but many can sign names
Rural-urban ratio : 70:30

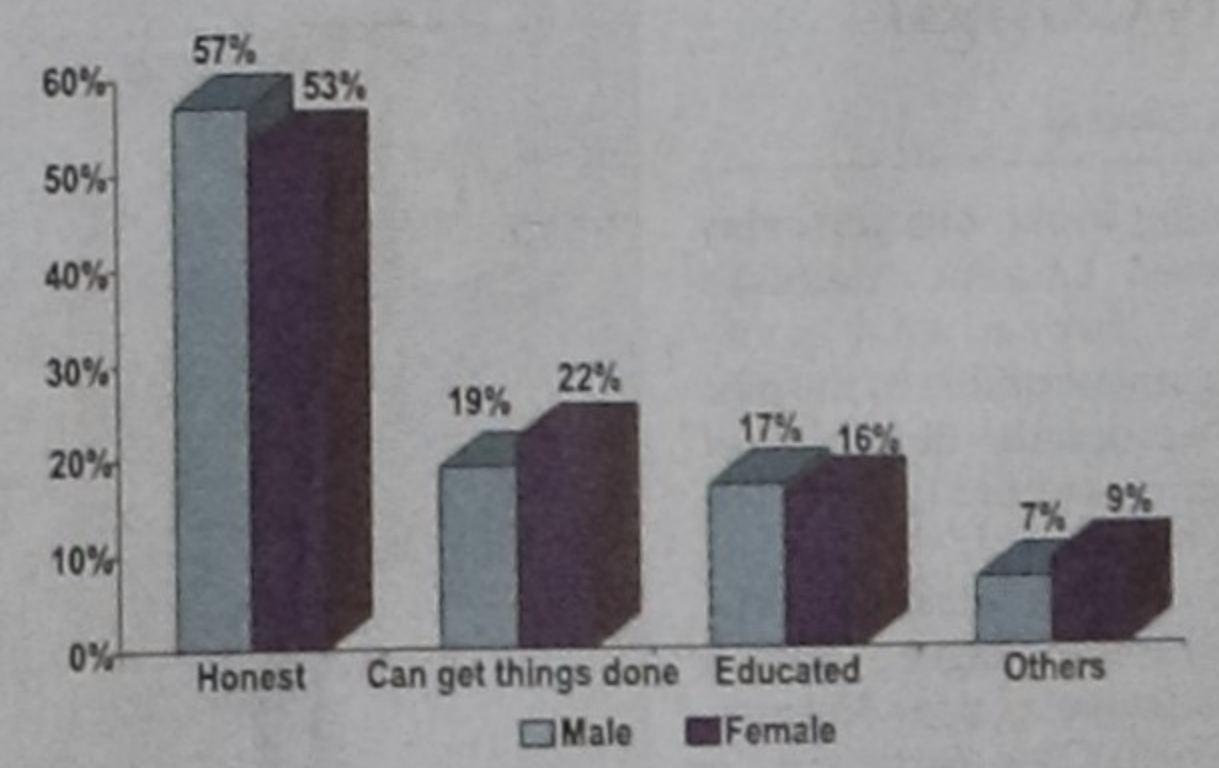
Will you vote for same party or change?



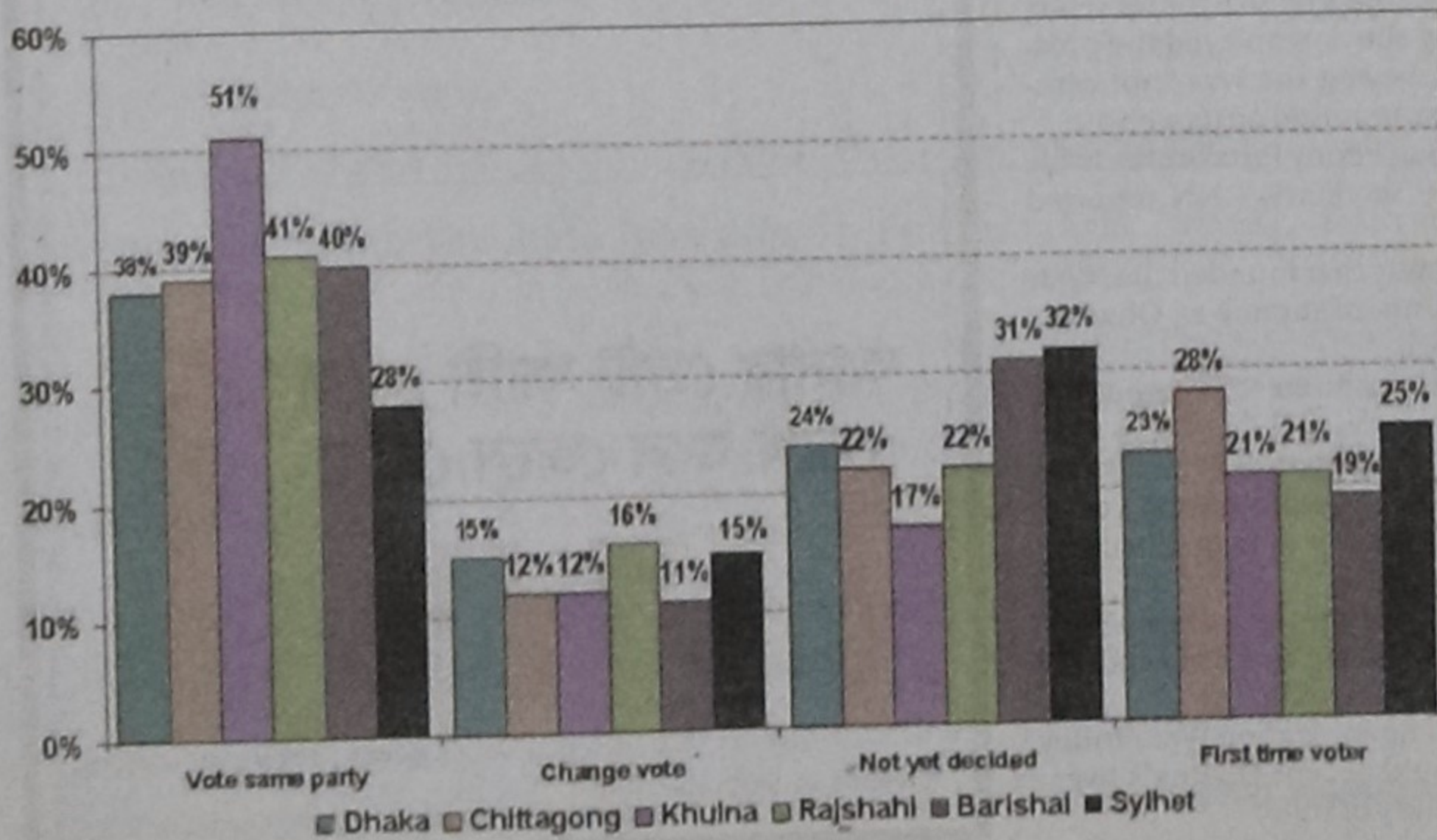
Major Issues for next government



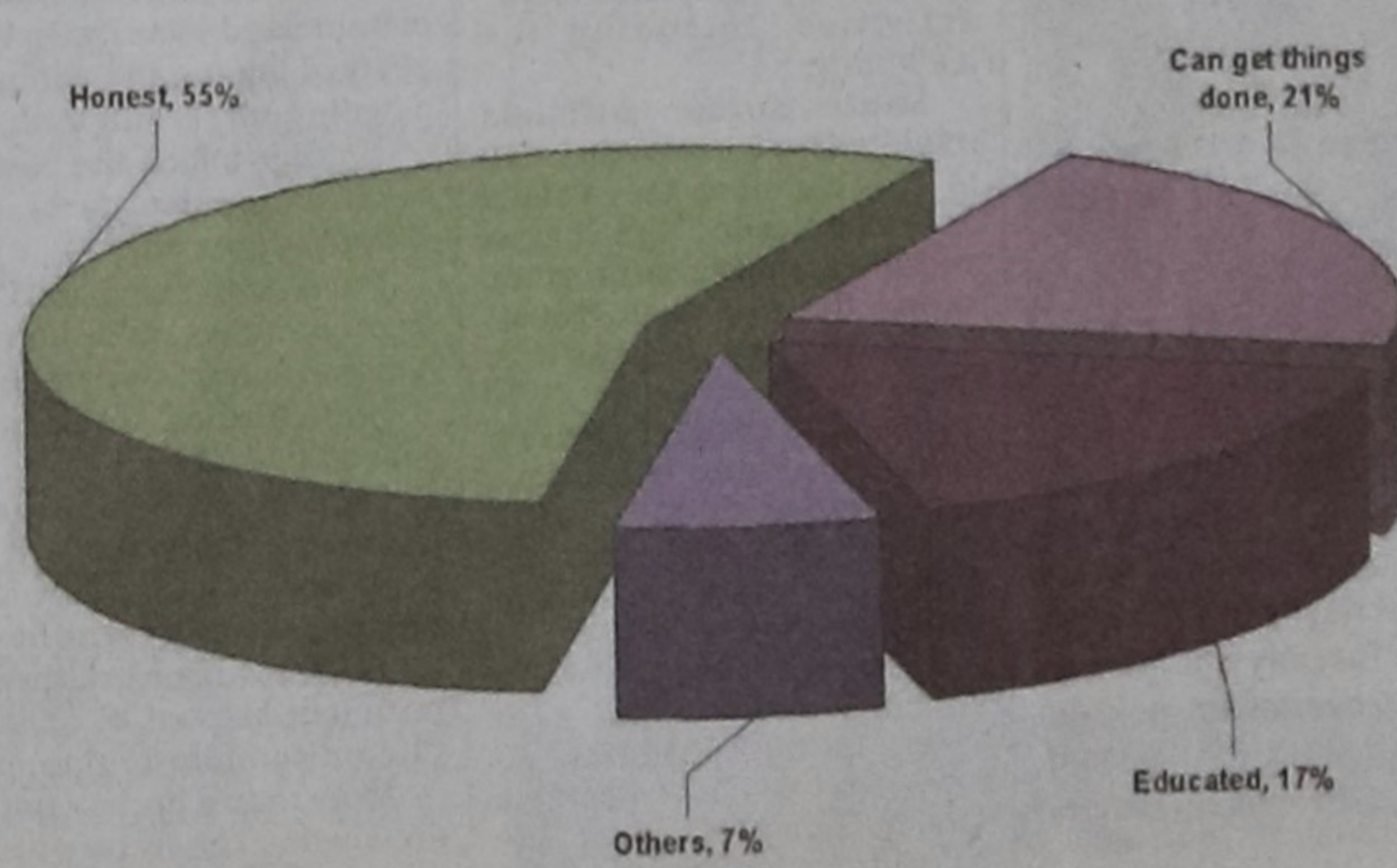
Expected traits of the MPs



Will you vote for same party or change (division)?



Expected traits of the MPs



Expected traits of the MPs

