

# IDS

## EVIDENCE REPORT

No 29

Policy Anticipation, Response and Evaluation

## Indian Public Opinion Monitor: Baseline Survey Results

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September 2013

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**AG Level 2 Output ID: 276**

## INDIAN PUBLIC OPINION MONITOR: BASELINE SURVEY RESULTS

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First published by the Institute of Development Studies in September 2013  
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# 1 Scope and aims of the Indian Public Opinion Monitor

The Indian Public Opinion Monitor (IPOM) is a longitudinal panel of 3,022 opinion leaders from across India that aims to provide an ongoing monitor of opinions and perspectives on the economic and social development of India, and on India's place in the wider world. A particular sub-theme is India's relations with other emerging and developing economies in South Asia and globally.

Reflecting the logistical difficulties and costs associated with surveys involving a representative sample of the Indian population, the IPOM specifically focuses on opinion leaders. Here, opinion leaders are defined as individuals who are engaged actively in economic and/or political issues in India and who are willing to participate in an ongoing panel, meaning that they will be asked to respond to questions on an ongoing basis. A further rationale for the focus on opinion leaders is that they both provide an effective 'pulse' on opinions on economic and social issues in India, and are also key drivers of these opinions.

The IPOM is an internet-based survey platform through which members are presented with short questionnaires every two months. Members were recruited by a professional survey organisation using a short telephone survey. Potential panel members were asked if they had an interest and were engaged in economic and/or political issues in India, and would be able and willing to complete short internet-based surveys on an ongoing basis. Demographic information on each panel member was collected.

Members of the IPOM are sent an email inviting them to participate in each survey, which contains a link to the survey. After a period of seven days, members who have not responded are sent a reminder.

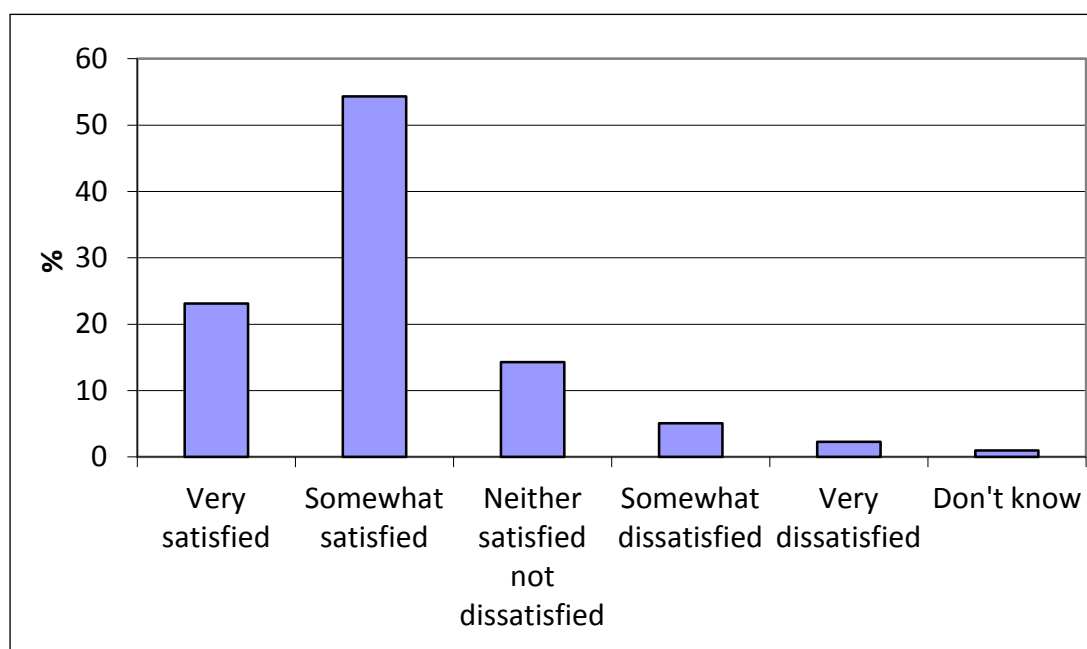
The current survey was undertaken in July 2013. Of the 3,022 members of the panel, 2,789 returned the fully completed questionnaire. A summary of the results is provided below.

These results, and those of the surveys through the remainder of 2013, aim to provide a baseline on opinions and perspectives on the economic and social development of India, and on India's place in the wider world. Surveys in future months and years will enable changes in opinions relative to this baseline to be tracked. More importantly, the longitudinal nature of the panel makes it possible to identify who has changed their opinions and to pinpoint the key factors driving such changes.

## 2 Broad sentiment on life in India today and into the future

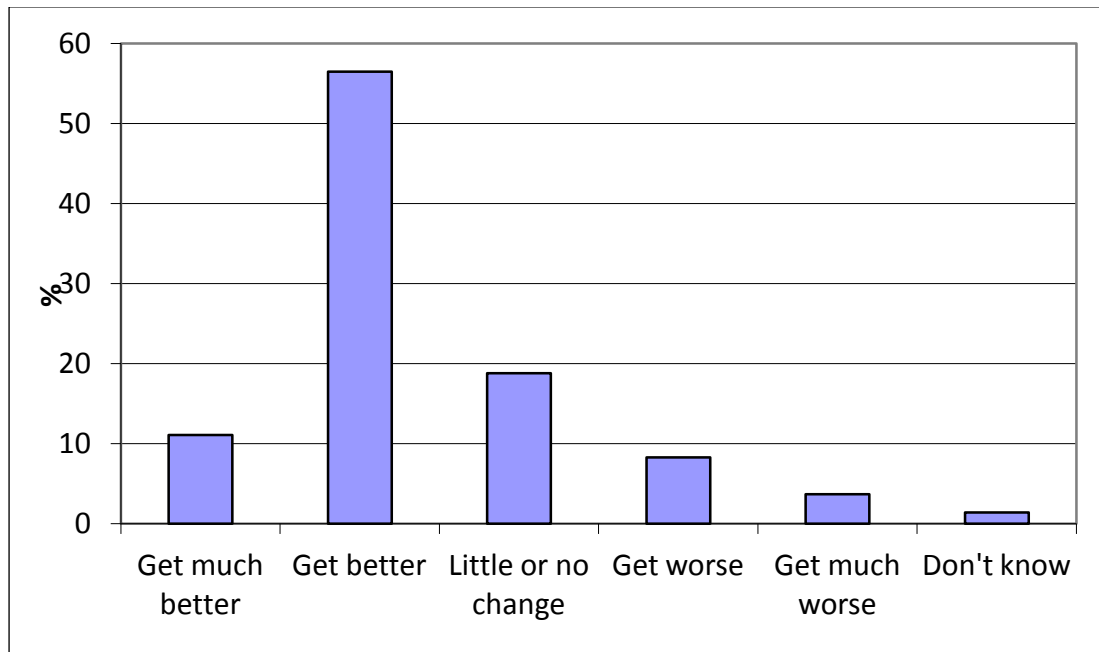
To obtain a broad measure of the sentiment of public opinion leaders in India, panel members were asked how satisfied they were with their own life in India today. With over 54 per cent of panel members indicating that they were satisfied with their life today and a further 23 per cent being very satisfied (Figure 1), there is evidence of a high degree of satisfaction. Furthermore, panel members appear to have a rather optimistic view of their life looking to the future, with 57 per cent expecting their life to change for the better in the next five to ten years (Figure 2) and a further 11 per cent expecting their life to get much better.

**Figure 1 Overall, how satisfied are you with life in India today?**

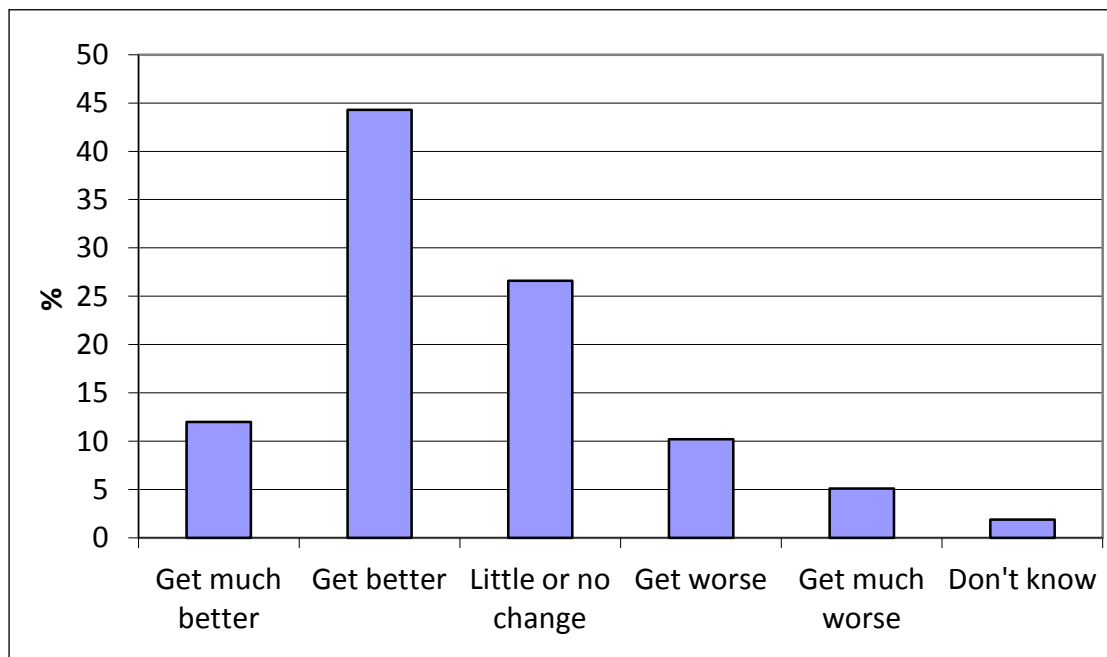


The rather optimistic view of public opinion leaders with respect to their own life extends also to their expectations as to how the life of poor people will change in India over the next five to ten years. Thus, 56 per cent were of the view that the life of the poor will improve (Figure 3), whilst only 15 per cent considered that the life of the poor will get worse.

**Figure 2** Over the next five to ten years, how do you see life changing for people like you in India?



**Figure 3** Over the next five to ten years, how do you see life changing for poor people in India?

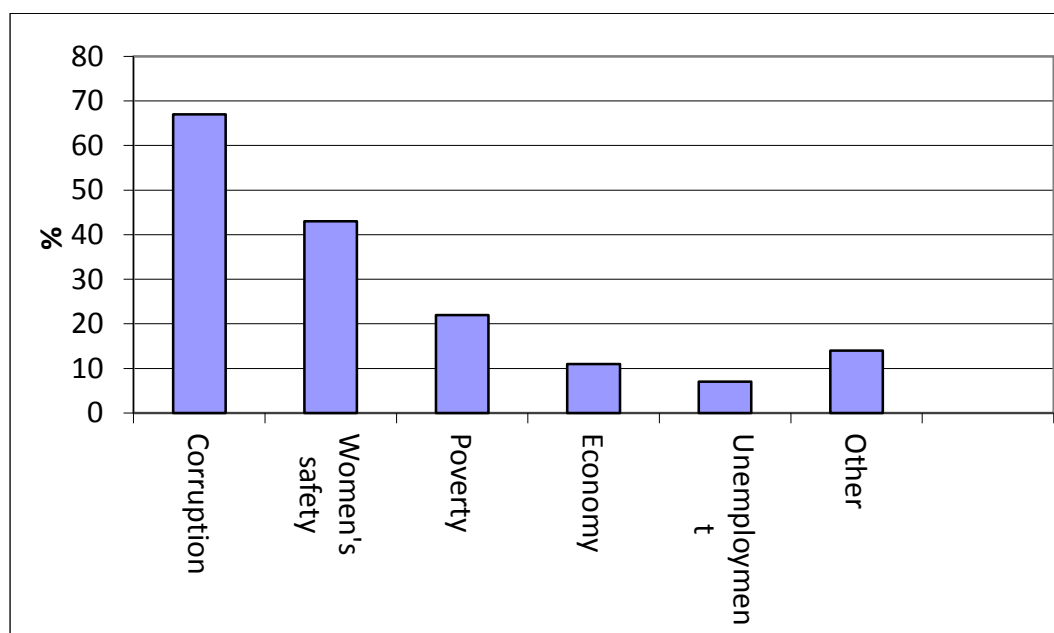


### 3 Major challenges facing India today

Respondents to the survey were asked what they considered to be the number one challenge facing India today. The aim here, by not providing any prompts, was to elicit the challenges that were at the forefront of respondents' concerns. In practice, because respondents were allowed to use their own words in describing these challenges, their responses included multiple issues.

By far the most frequently cited challenge was corruption, being mentioned by 67 per cent of respondents (Figure 4). Women's safety was considered a major challenge for India by 43 per cent of respondents. All other issues, including poverty, economy and unemployment, were noted by far fewer numbers of respondents to the survey.

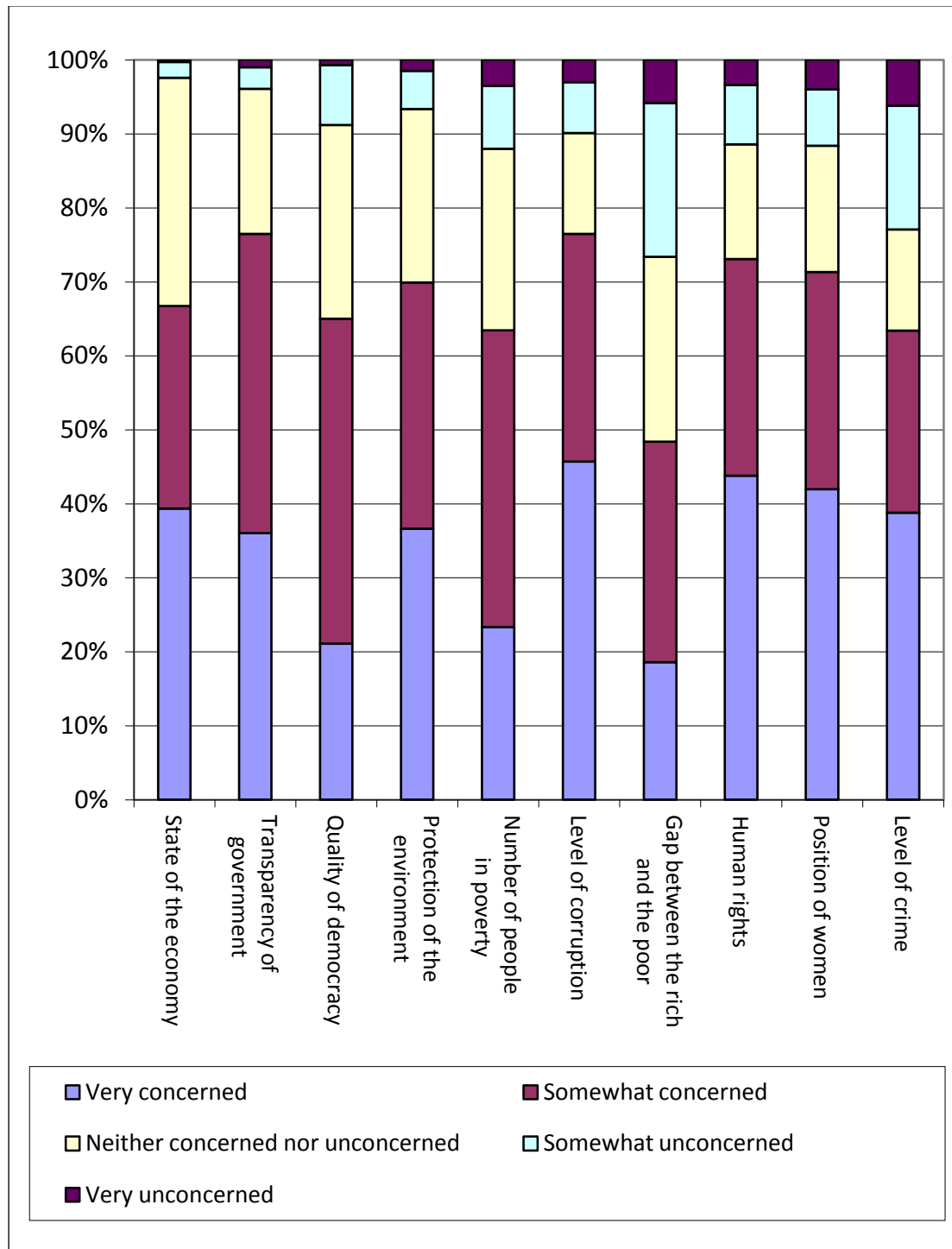
**Figure 4 What do you see as the number one challenge facing India today?**



A parallel question presented a series of issues facing India today, and asked respondents to indicate how important they considered them to be on a scale from 'very concerned' to 'very unconcerned'. The aim here was to get an indication of the relative importance of a consistent and fairly comprehensive set of issues.

Again, corruption emerged as the predominant issue facing India, with almost 44 per cent of respondents indicating that they were 'very concerned' and a further 29 per cent being 'somewhat concerned' (Figure 5). The closely related issue, the transparency of government, was also of great concern. Human rights and the position of women were also revealed as important issues, with 44 per cent and 42 per cent of respondents respectively being 'very concerned'.

**Figure 5 Overall, how concerned are you about the following issues in India today?**



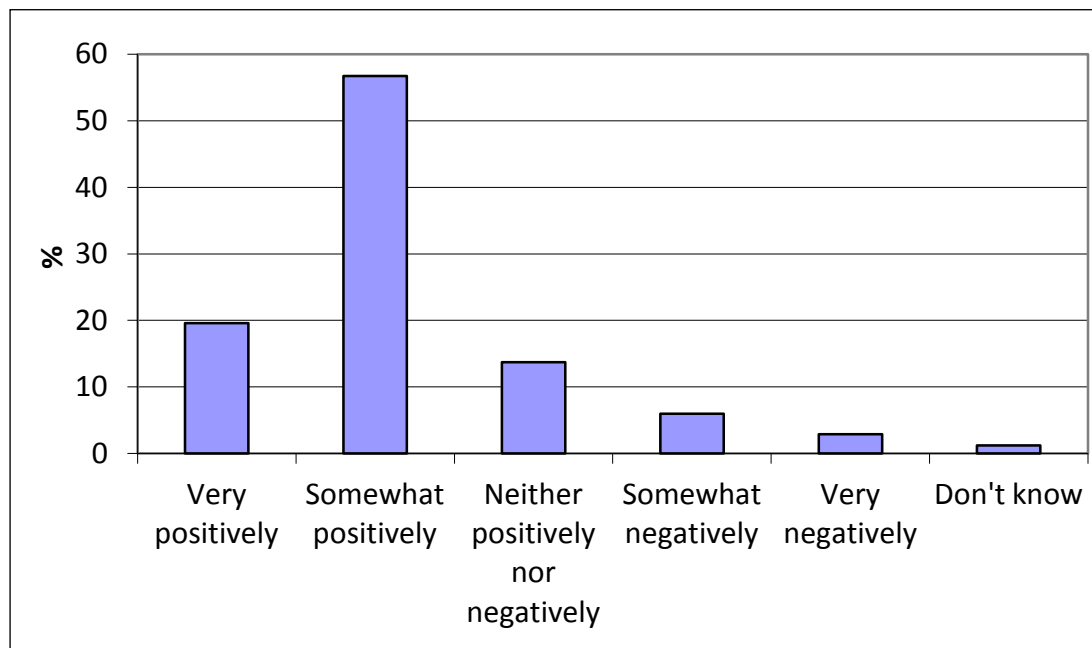
Conversely, the level of poverty and inequality in India were revealed to be of least concern to respondents. Thus, only 19 per cent of respondents were ‘very concerned’ about the gap between the rich and the poor in India (Figure 5), with a further 30 per cent being ‘somewhat concerned’. Only 23 per cent were ‘very concerned’ about the number of people in poverty in India, with a further 40 per cent being ‘somewhat concerned’.



## 4 India and the wider world

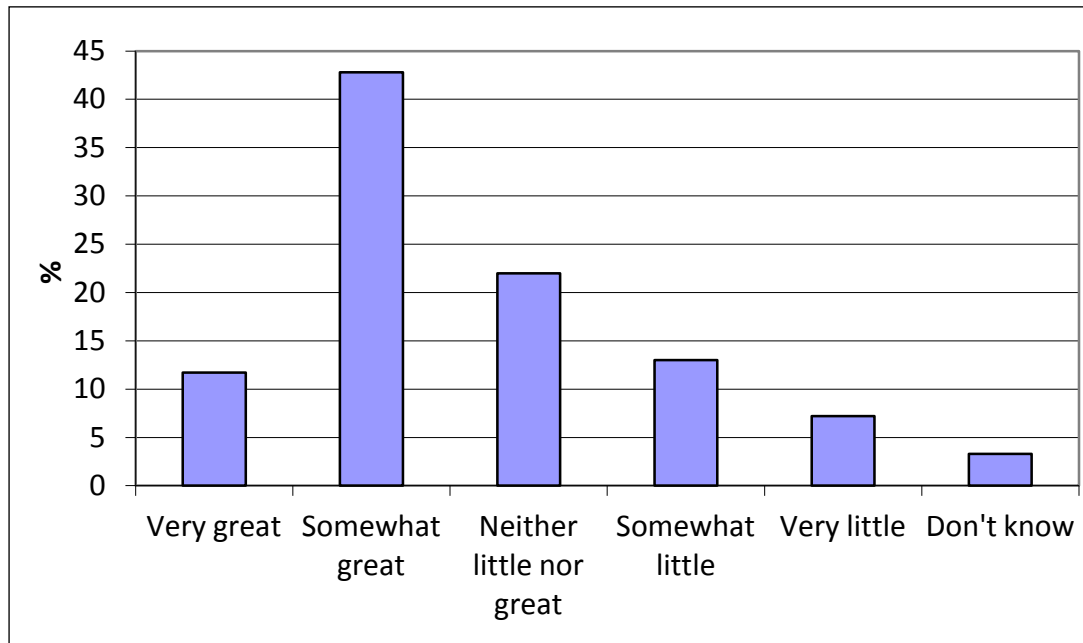
In order to get a perspective on India's place in the wider world, panel members were first asked how they thought the rest of the world sees India. The results suggest that opinion leaders generally believe that India is seen positively in the wider world. Thus, over 76 per cent of respondents were of the view that India is viewed positively, and almost 20 per cent thought it was seen 'very positively' (Figure 6). Conversely, less than 9 per cent thought it was seen negatively.

**Figure 6 Overall, how do you think the rest of the world sees India?**

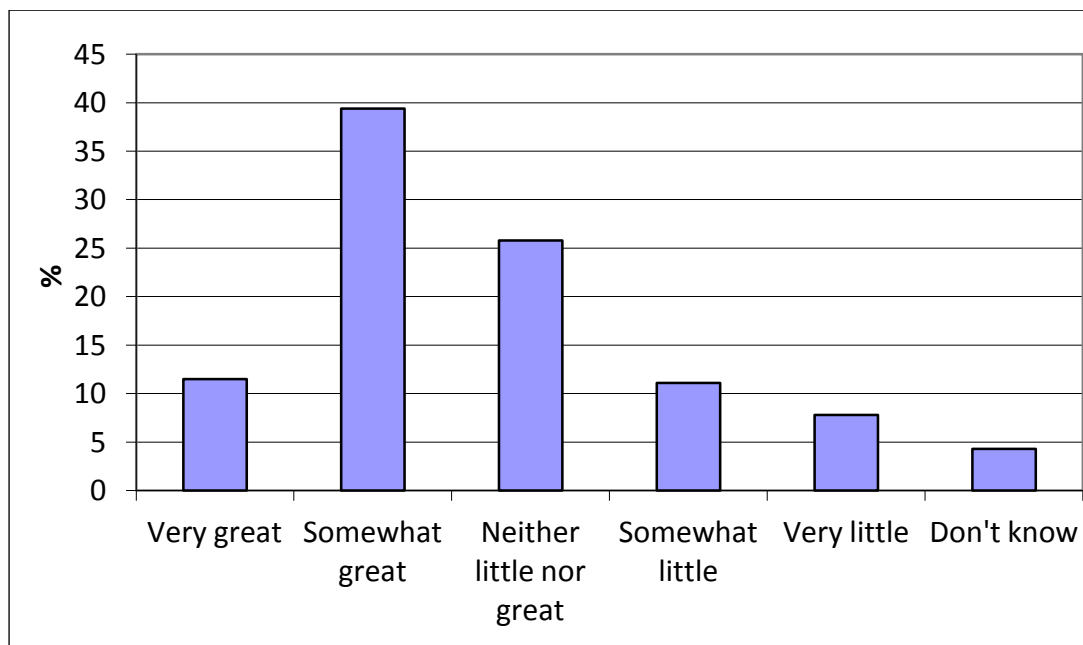


Opinions on India's political influence in the world today, however, were somewhat less favourable (Figure 7). Whilst 54 per cent of panel members thought that India has a great political influence in the world, less than 12 per cent considered this to be 'very great'. At the same time, over 20 per cent considered India's political influence to be minimal. Focusing on the South Asia region specifically, less than 51 per cent of opinion leaders considered India's political influence to be great, whilst only around 11 per cent considered this to be 'very great' (Figure 8). Almost 19 per cent were of the view that India's political influence in South Asia was slight.

**Figure 7 How much political influence do you think India has in the world today?**



**Figure 8 How much political influence do you think India has in South Asia today?**



Looking to the future, however, the majority (62 per cent ) of panel members were of the view that India has the capabilities needed to enhance its global political influence. Less than 24 per cent considered that India lacked these capabilities, whilst around 14 per cent did not know.

## 5 India and aid

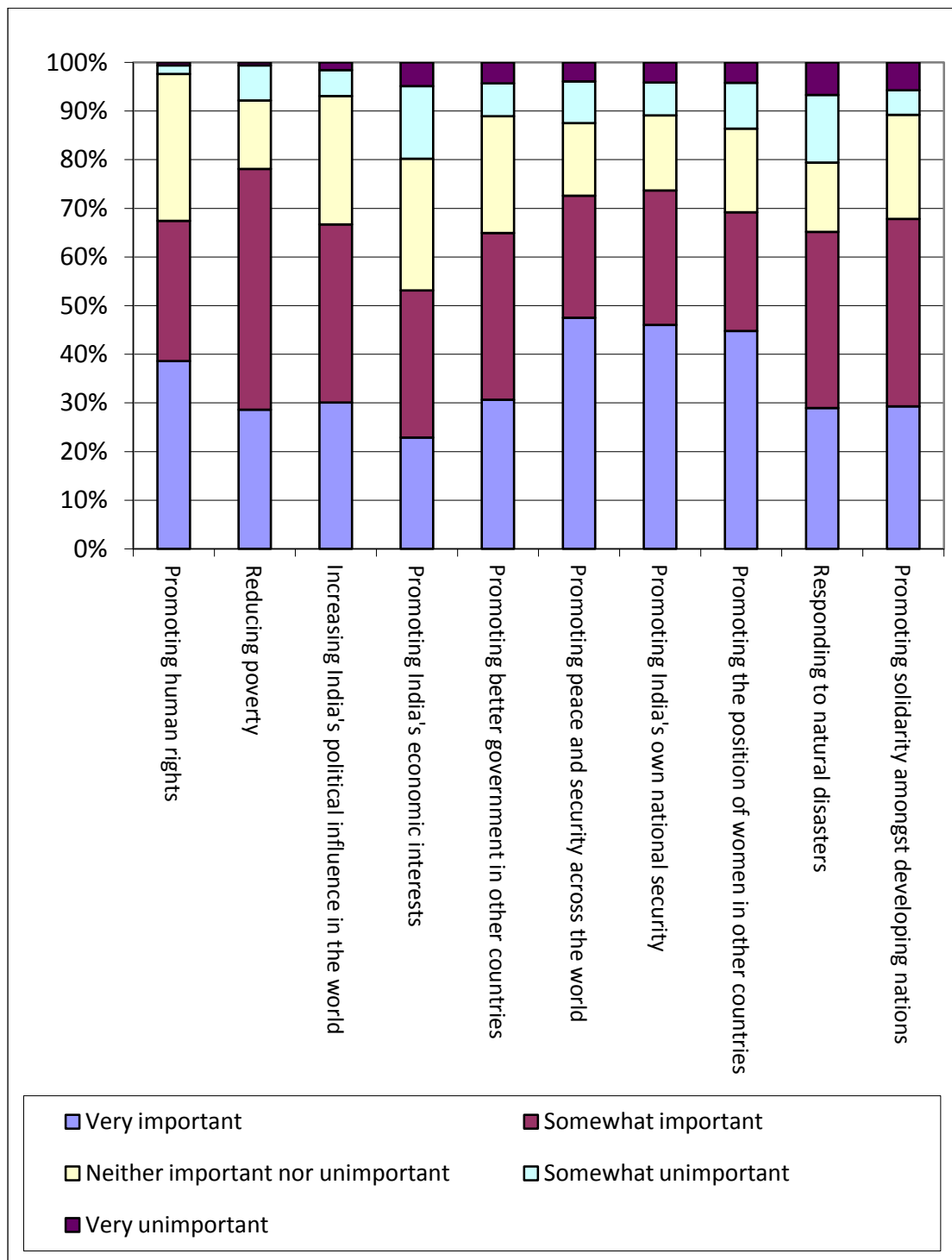
Finally, the first baseline survey explored the options and perspectives of opinion leaders on aid and its role in India's development, and India's role as a provider of aid to other developing countries.

Of panel members who responded to the survey, 45 per cent believed that India receives financial or other forms of assistance from other countries. Around 41 per cent were of the view that India does not receive aid and almost 14 per cent did not know. Of those recognising that India does indeed receive aid from other countries, the countries most frequently identified as providing such assistance were the United States (65 per cent), UK (34 per cent) and China (26 per cent). A far greater proportion (69 per cent) of panel members were of the view that India should receive financial or other forms of assistance from other countries. Indeed, less than 19 per cent considered that India should not receive aid, with a further 12 per cent not knowing.

Almost half the panel members (44 per cent) believed that India provides financial or other forms of assistance to other developing countries. Almost 44 per cent did not consider that India provides aid to other developing countries and 11 per cent did not know. Almost 63 per cent were of the view that India should provide aid to other developing countries, while only 28 per cent considered this not to be appropriate.

A number of factors might influence the financial and other assistance provided by India to other developing countries, including the choice of recipient countries, forms of aid provided, etc. Respondents were presented with a series of factors that might determine the aid given by India to other developing countries and were asked to indicate the importance of each (Figure 9). The factors that the greatest proportion of respondents considered important were reducing poverty (78 per cent), promoting India's own security (74 per cent) and promoting peace and security in the world (73 per cent). Conversely, only 53 per cent considered the promotion of India's own economic interests to be an important factor in determining the aid given by India to other developing countries, whilst 20 per cent considered this to be unimportant.

**Figure 9** How important should each of the following factors be in determining the financial and other assistance provided by India to other developing countries?



## **Further information**

If you would like any further information about the IPOM and/or additional results, please do not hesitate to contact Spencer Henson ([s.henson@ids.ac.uk](mailto:s.henson@ids.ac.uk)). In addition, information about the IPOM and similar panels in South Africa and Brazil is available at [www.ids.ac.uk/ipom](http://www.ids.ac.uk/ipom).



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