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“Public Perception Of Government Priorities In The Recent Central Budget”

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ABSTRACT

The central budget plays a vital role in shaping a country's economic and social future, as it determines how resources are allocated across different sectors. How people perceive these decisions matters just as much as the policies themselves, as public opinion can influence political and economic stability. This study explores how the recent central budget has been received by the public, focusing on key areas like economic growth, social welfare, infrastructure, taxation, and job creation.

By analyzing media reports, expert opinions, and public feedback, this paper examines whether the budget meets people's expectations and addresses their concerns. It also looks at how different groups such as businesses, the middle class, and lower-income communities view the government's priorities.

The findings show that while the budget reflects the government's long-term vision, public response depends on factors like awareness, media influence, and personal financial impact. The study highlights the gap between policy intentions and public expectations, offering insights on how budgeting decisions can be made more transparent and people-centric.

Keywords: Central budget, public perception, government priorities, economic growth, social welfare, infrastructure development, taxation policies, job creation, fiscal policy, budget allocation, public opinion, media influence, political trust, policy credibility, India.

1. INTRODUCTION

A government's budget is more than just a financial statement; it reflects the economic vision, developmental priorities, and strategic policy decisions aimed at fostering national growth. The central budget plays a crucial role in determining how resources are allocated to different sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, education, healthcare, and industry. As the government outlines its financial strategy, public perception becomes a key factor in evaluating the effectiveness and acceptance of these policies.

The Union Budget for 2025-26, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, emphasizes economic acceleration, inclusive development, private sector investment, and strengthening household financial confidence. It aligns with the larger goal of building a 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India) by focusing on comprehensive growth and regional balance. While the budget has been designed to maintain India's trajectory as the fastest-growing economy, it has also been shaped by global geopolitical and economic uncertainties, which have created challenges for sustained growth.

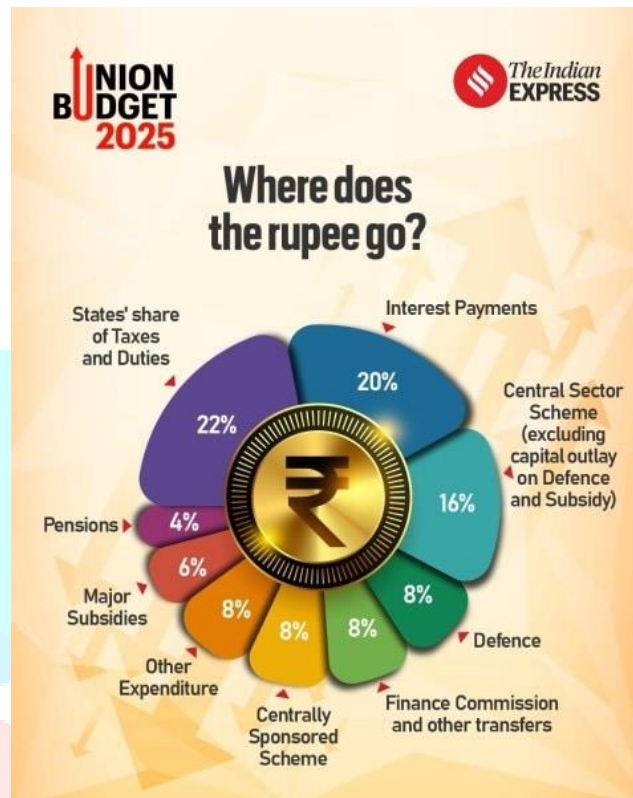
One of the major themes of the budget revolves around the four key engines driving the economy: Agriculture, MSMEs, Investment, and Exports, with Reforms as the fuel and Inclusivity as the guiding spirit. The government aims to integrate structural changes across six key domains: taxation, power sector, urban development, mining, financial sector, and regulatory frameworks. Each of these aspects contributes to ensuring long-term economic stability and equitable distribution of resources.

Public perception of the budget is influenced by multiple factors, including media coverage, political narratives, economic conditions, and direct personal impact. Different sections of society, such as farmers, business owners, salaried employees, and marginalized communities, have varying perspectives on the budget's effectiveness in addressing their needs. The emphasis on agriculture through initiatives like the Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana and enhanced credit for farmers under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme is aimed at improving rural prosperity. However, urban centers also find significance in initiatives like the Urban Challenge Fund and Power Sector Reforms, which seek to enhance infrastructure and governance.

Additionally, the focus on employment-led development, education, and healthcare is evident through programs like Atal Tinkering Labs in schools, expansion of medical education, and Day Care Cancer Centers in district hospitals. These initiatives reflect an attempt to address long-term societal concerns regarding skill development and healthcare accessibility.

Despite these ambitious plans, public concerns exist over taxation policies, fiscal deficits, and sectoral allocations. The government's commitment to fiscal consolidation and the roadmap for deficit reduction are key elements in ensuring economic sustainability. While tax reforms, including changes in income tax slabs and TDS rationalization, aim to provide relief, their actual impact on the middle class and businesses will be closely scrutinized.

This study explores public perception of the government's priorities in the recent budget, analyzing how different sectors and demographics view these policy decisions. By evaluating expert opinions, media narratives, and statistical data, this research seeks to understand whether the budgetary allocations align with the expectations and needs of the people. Ultimately, the success of the budget will depend not only on policy execution but also on public acceptance and confidence in the government's economic vision.



1.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Recent Studies on Public Perception of Government Budgets (2025-2023)

A recent analysis by Economic Survey of India (2025) highlights that public sentiment towards the Union Budget is significantly influenced by media narratives, economic conditions, and policy communication. The survey found that while economic growth remains a key priority, public demand for welfare schemes and employment generation has increased. Similarly, Kumar & Sharma (2024) conducted a study on budget transparency and concluded that public confidence improves when government policies are clearly articulated and well-executed.

2. Budget Impact and Economic Reforms (2022-2021)

A study by NITI Aayog (2022) examined how tax reforms, including the introduction of the simplified tax regime, affected middle-class savings. The research found that while lower tax rates benefited salaried individuals, small businesses had mixed reactions due to indirect tax compliance burdens. Gupta & Verma (2021) investigated the impact of increased capital expenditure on infrastructure and concluded that while long-term benefits are expected, short-term public perception varies based on immediate employment opportunities created.

3. Fiscal Policies and Public Opinion (2020-2018)

The Reserve Bank of India (2020) published a report analyzing the correlation between fiscal policies and consumer confidence. The findings indicated that government initiatives like direct benefit transfers improved public trust in budget allocations. In contrast, a study by Rao et al. (2019) found that urban and rural populations perceive budget priorities differently, with rural citizens favoring agricultural subsidies and urban citizens emphasizing industrial growth.

4. Historical Perspectives on Budget Perception (2017-2015)

Shah & Mehta (2017) analyzed the effectiveness of government communication strategies in shaping public perception. Their study suggested that budgets with a strong welfare component tend to receive higher public approval. Meanwhile, Mukherjee (2016) examined the role of social media in budget perception and found that digital platforms increasingly influence public sentiment and policy discussions.

5. Foundational Studies on Budget and Public Response (2014 & Earlier)

Early research by Singh (2014) provided insights into how economic literacy affects public reaction to budget announcements. The study emphasized the need for greater financial education to help citizens better understand government policies. Additionally, a World Bank Report (2012) explored the impact of budget allocations on poverty alleviation, highlighting that increased spending on social welfare programs directly improves public confidence in government decisions.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess public opinion on the government's key budget priorities.
- To examine the alignment between government priorities and public expectations.
- To identify challenges and areas of concern in public perception.
- To provide insights for better communication and policy making.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This research encompasses public perception analysis across major urban centers and select rural areas in India following the announcement of the 2025 Central Budget. The study examines responses from diverse socioeconomic groups including professionals, business owners, farmers, students, and public sector employees. The temporal scope covers the three-month period following budget presentation, capturing initial reactions and perception evolution after implementation announcements. The research focuses on perception regarding major budget components including taxation, subsidies, infrastructure investment, welfare schemes, and sectoral allocations. While primarily concerned with domestic perception, the study also considers perspectives of international analysts and non-resident Indians where relevant to understanding broader reception patterns.

1.5 LIMITATIONS

- Public perception is subjective and influenced by personal, political, and economic biases.
- The study relies on available media reports, expert opinions, and survey data, which may not fully represent all viewpoints.
- Regional differences in budget impact may not be comprehensively covered due to data constraints.
- Short-term reactions may differ from long-term economic effects, limiting the scope of immediate analysis.
- Government data and budget documents may not provide real-time insights into actual policy implementation.
- External factors such as global economic conditions and geopolitical issues may influence public opinion beyond budget allocations.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-method approach to analyze public perception of the government's priorities in the recent central budget. It relies on both qualitative and quantitative research methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

Primary data:

Primary data is collected through surveys and interviews with different demographic groups, including salaried employees, business owners, students, and rural communities, to gauge their reactions to the budget. Additionally, social media analysis is conducted to examine discussions, trends, and sentiments expressed on various digital platforms.

Secondary data:

Secondary data sources include government budget documents, economic reports, media articles, and expert commentaries that provide insights into the budget's priorities and expected impact. Data from sources like the Economic Survey of India, NITI Aayog reports, and RBI bulletins are used to analyze the economic implications of budgetary allocations.

1.7 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The central budget serves as a crucial policy instrument that reflects the government's economic vision and priorities. However, public perception of the budget often varies based on factors such as economic conditions, media influence, political alignment, and personal financial impact. While the government aims to promote growth, inclusivity, and fiscal stability, the extent to which these priorities align with public expectations remains uncertain.

A key issue is whether the budget effectively addresses pressing concerns such as inflation, employment generation, social welfare, and tax reforms. Different sections of society businesses, middle-class citizens,

rural communities, and marginalized groups may perceive the budget's impact differently, leading to varying levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Moreover, misinformation, lack of awareness, or misinterpretation of budget provisions can further shape public opinion.

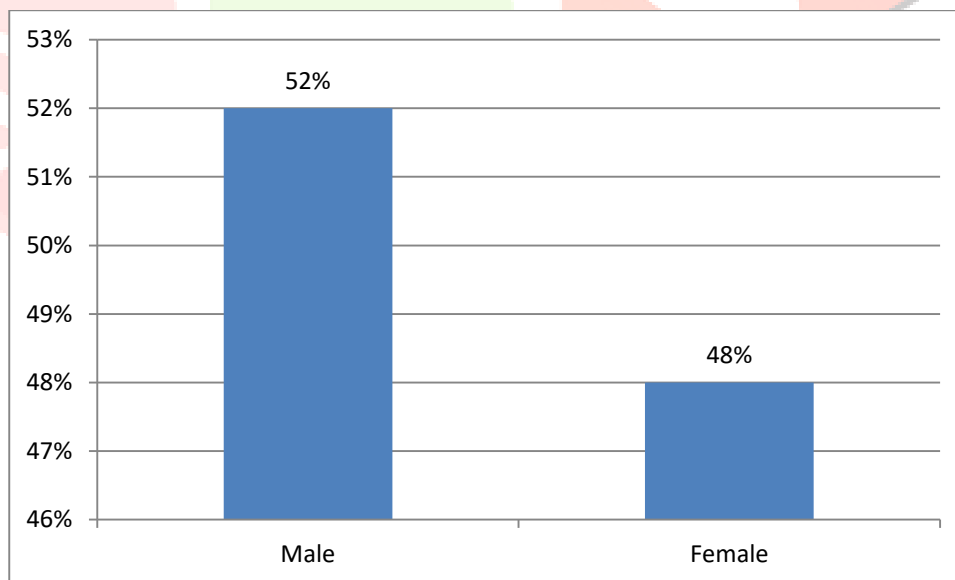
This study seeks to examine how people perceive the government's budget priorities, what factors influence their opinions, and whether the budget aligns with their expectations. It also aims to identify the gaps between policy intentions and public sentiment, providing insights into how the government can enhance transparency, communication, and public engagement in the budgeting process.

1.8 STATISTICS

Table no. 1. Gender of the respondents

Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Male	52	52%
Female	48	48%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 1.

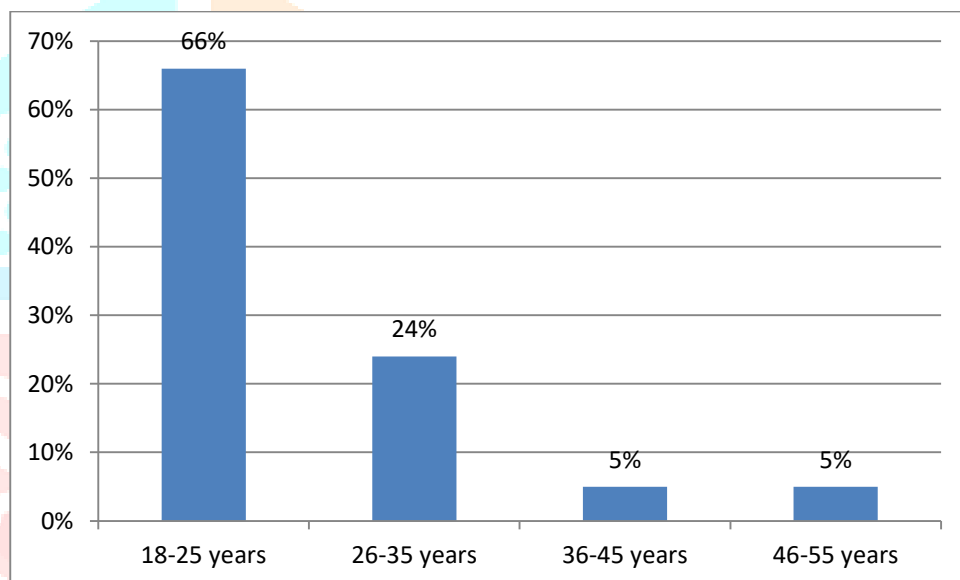


Interpretation:

From the above graph it was found that out of 100 respondents 52% were male and 48% were female.

Table no. 2. Age of the respondents

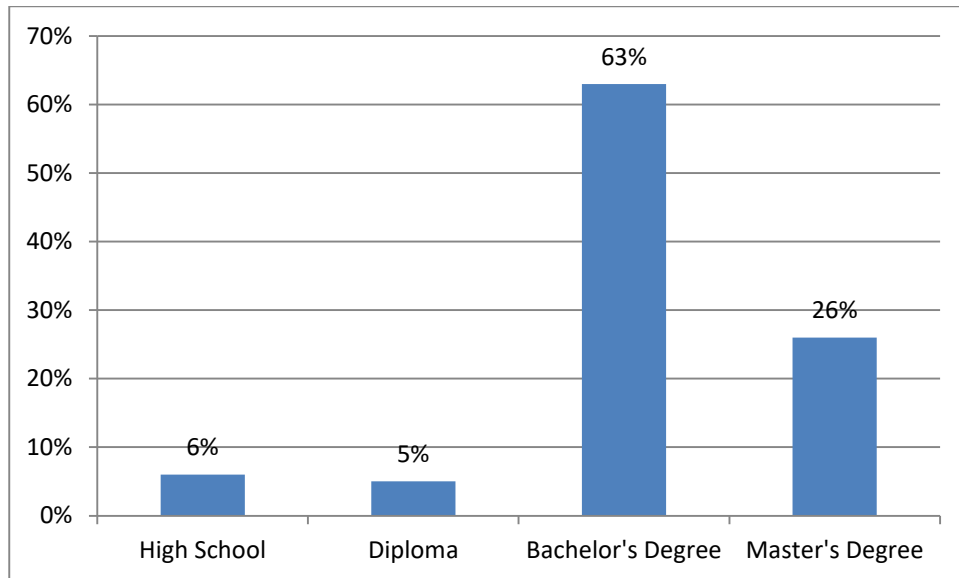
Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
18-25 years	66	66%
26-35 years	24	24%
36-45 years	5	5%
46-55 years	5	5%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 2.**Interpretation:**

From the above graph it was found that out of 100 respondents 66% of the respondents belongs to the age group of 18-25 years, 24% belongs to 26-35 years, 5% belongs to 36-46 years and 5% belongs to 46-55 years of age.

Table no. 3. Highest level of education of the respondents

Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
High School	6	6%
Diploma	5	5%
Bachelor's Degree	63	63%
Master's Degree	26	26%
Total	100	100%

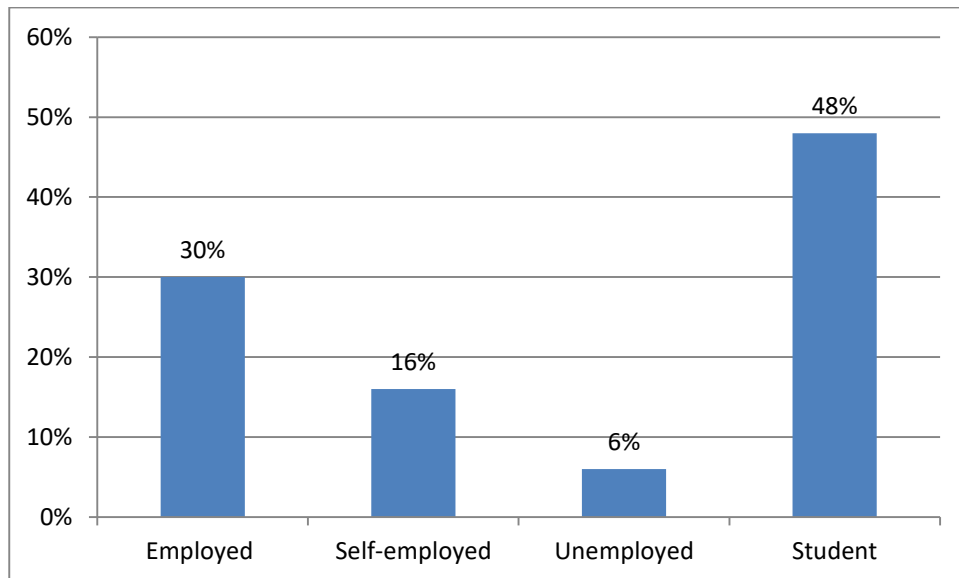
Graph no. 3.**Interpretation:**

From the above graph it was found that out of 100 respondents 6% belongs to high school, 5% belongs to diploma, 63% belongs to bachelor's degree and 26% belongs to masters degree.

Table no. 4. Employment status of the respondents

Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Employed	30	30%
Self-employed	16	16%
Unemployed	6	6%
Student	48	48%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 4.

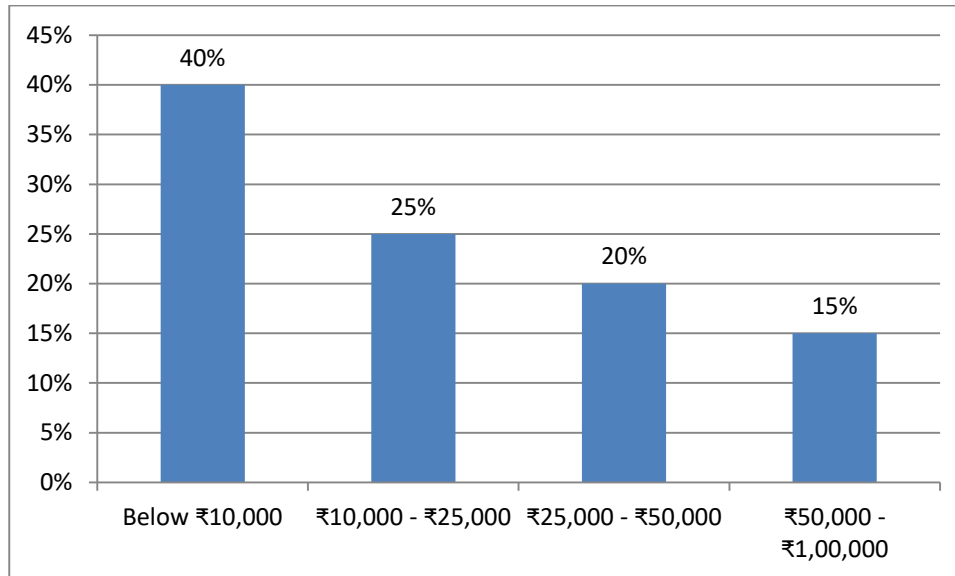
**Interpretation:**

From the above graph it was found that out of 100 respondents 30% were employed, 16% were self-employed, 6% were unemployed and 48% were students.

Table no. 5. Monthly income range of the respondents

Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Below ₹10,000	40	40%
₹10,000 - ₹25,000	25	25%
₹25,000 - ₹50,000	20	20%
₹50,000 - ₹1,00,000	15	15%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 5.

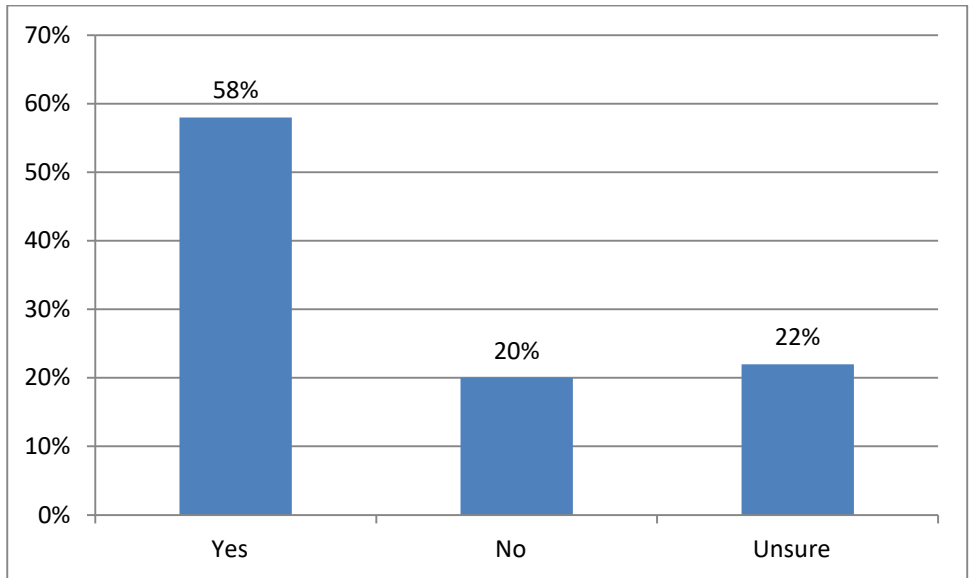
**Interpretation:**

From the above graph it was found that out of 100 respondents 40% of the respondents monthly income range is below 10000, 25% is between 10000-25000, 20% is between 25000 to 50000 and 15% income range is between 50000 to 100000.

Table no. 6. In your opinion, does the budget adequately address the environmental concerns of the country

Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	58	58%
No	20	20%
Unsure	22	22%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 6.



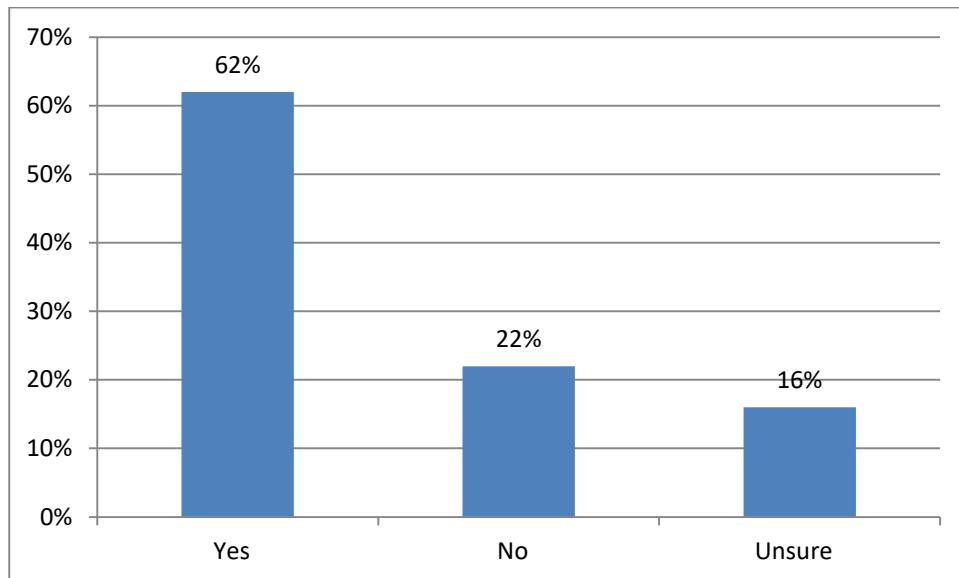
Interpretation:

From the above graph it was found that out of 100 respondents 58% of the respondents answered yes the budget adequately address the environmental concerns of the country, 20% answered no and 22% answered unsure.

Table no. 7. Do you think the budget will help in improving employment opportunities in the long run

Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	62	62%
No	22	22%
Unsure	16	16%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 7.

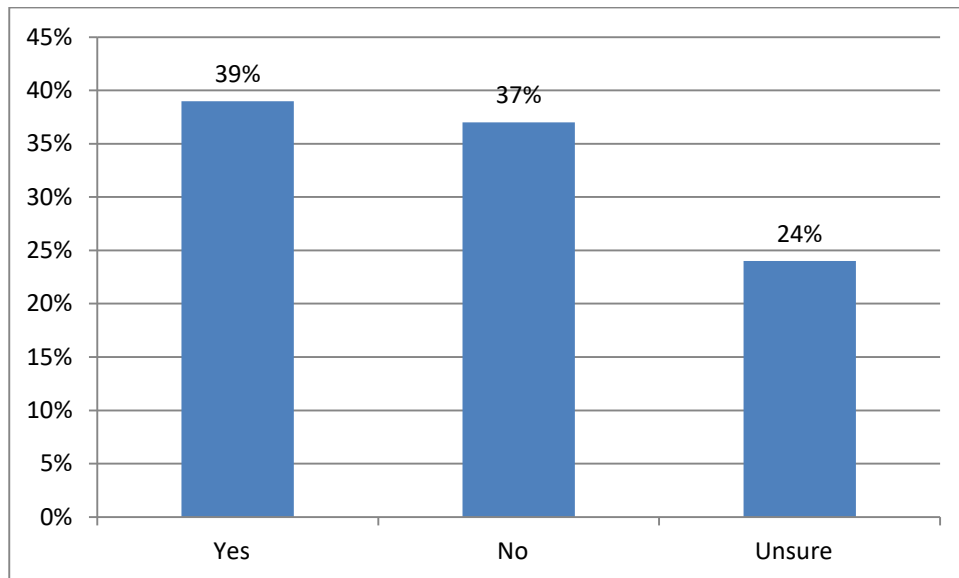
**Interpretation:**

From the above graph it was found that out of 100 respondents 62% of the respondents answered yes the budget will help in improving employment opportunities in the long run, 22% answered no and 16% answered unsure.

Table no. 8. Do you believe the government's spending priorities align with your personal needs and concerns

Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	39	39%
No	37	37%
Unsure	24	24%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 8.

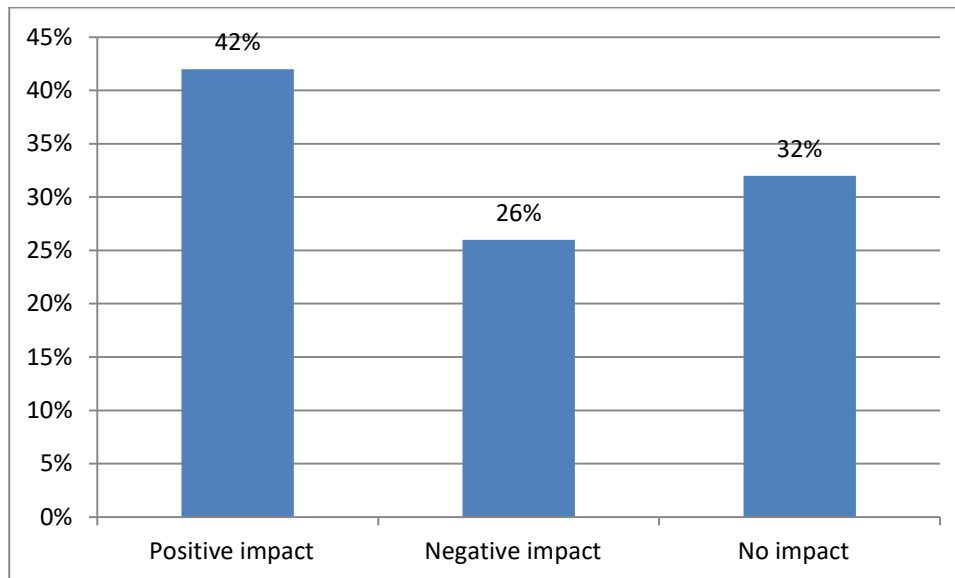
**Interpretation:**

From the above graph it was found that out of 100 respondents 39% of the respondents answered yes they believe the government's spending priorities align with your personal needs and concerns, 37% answered no and 24% answered unsure.

Table no. 9. How do you think the recent budget will affect your personal finances

Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Positive impact	42	42%
Negative impact	26	26%
No impact	32	32%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 9.

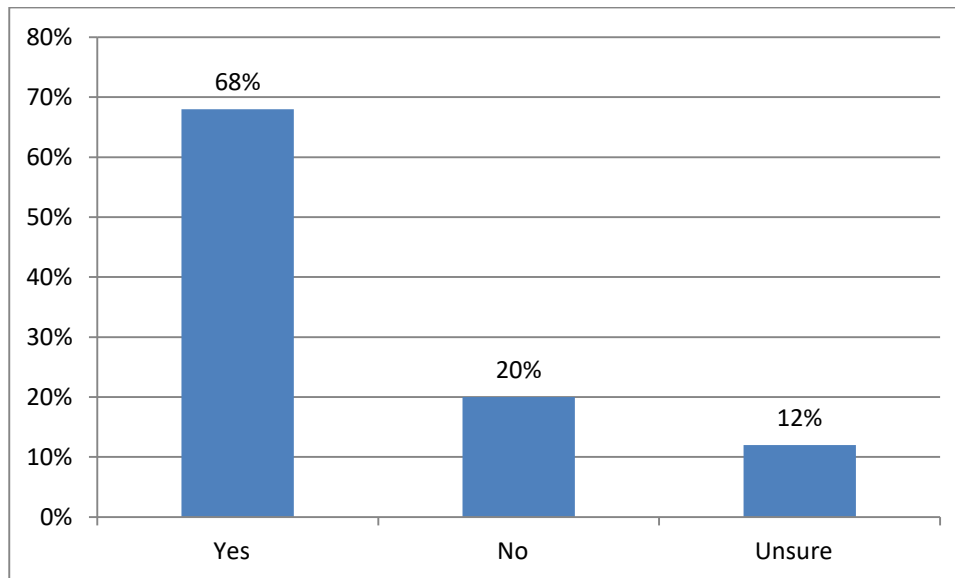
**Interpretation:**

From the above graph it was found that out of 100 respondents 42% of the respondents think the recent budget will affect their personal finances as a positive impact, 26% think negative impact and 32% think no impact.

Table no. 10. Do you think the government should have focused more on economic recovery post-COVID-19

Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	68	68%
No	20	20%
Unsure	12	12%
Total	100	100%

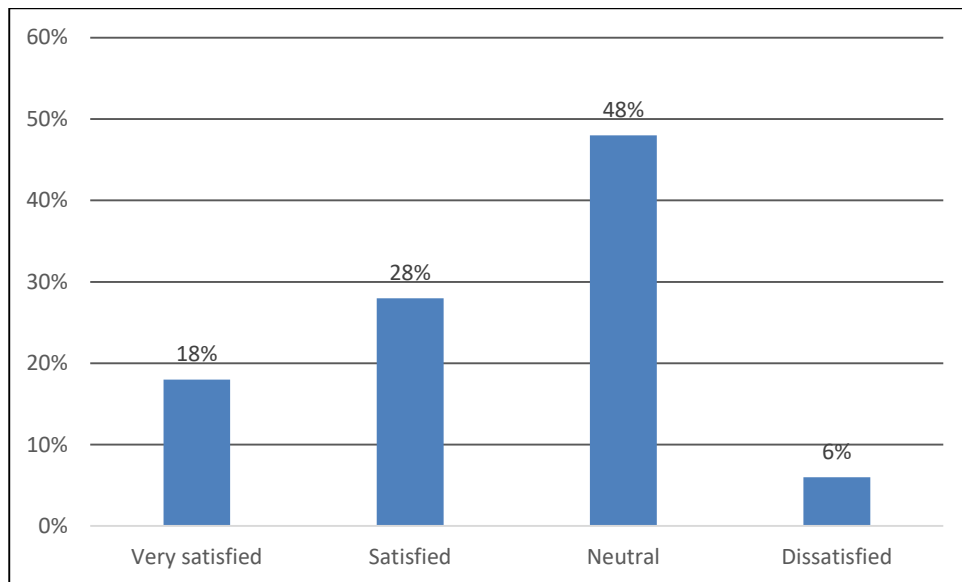
Graph no. 10.

**Interpretation:**

From the above graph it was found that out of 100 respondents 68% answered yes the government should have focused more on economic recovery post-COVID-19, 20% answered no and 12% answered unsure.

Table no. 11. How satisfied are you with the allocation for small businesses and startups in this year's budget?

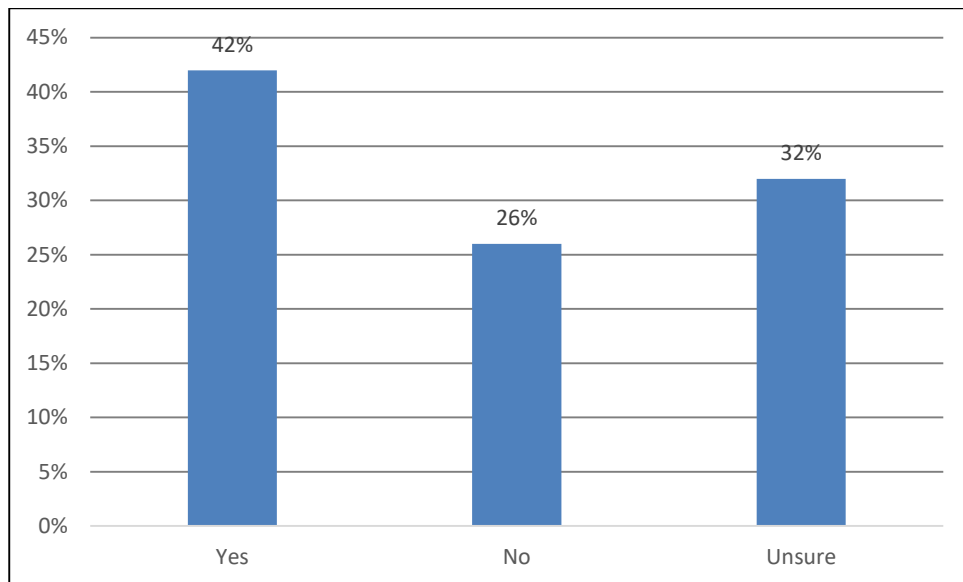
Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Very satisfied	18	18%
Satisfied	28	28%
Neutral	48	48%
Dissatisfied	6	6%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 10.**Interpretation:**

From the above graph, it was found that out of 100 respondents, 18% answered very satisfied with the allocation for small businesses and startups in this year's budget, 28% answered satisfied, 48% answered neutral, and 6% answered dissatisfied.

Table no. 12. Do you think the budget supports the rural economy sufficiently?

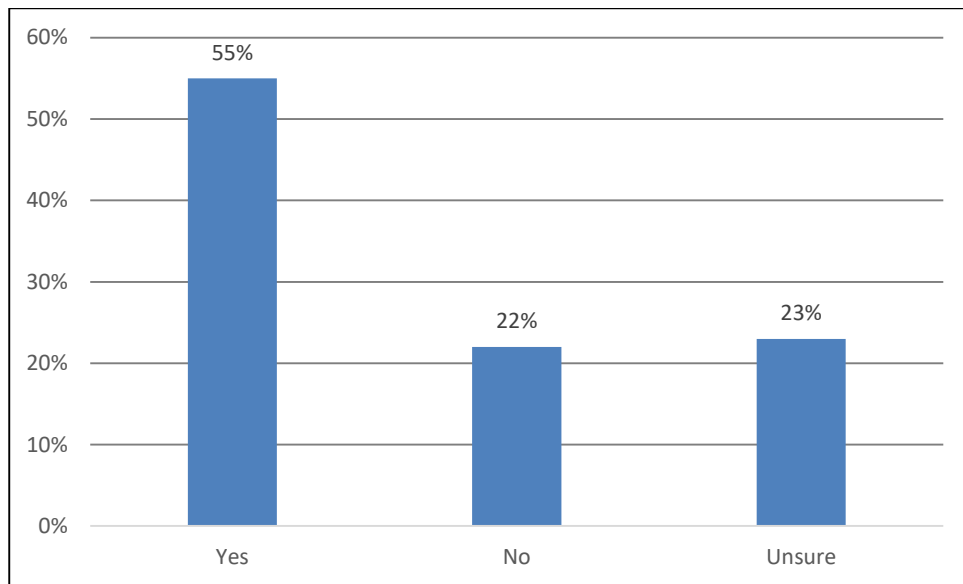
Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	42	42%
No	26	26%
Unsure	32	32%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 10.**Interpretation:**

From the above graph, it was found that out of 100 respondents, 42% answered yes, indicating that they believe in the given statement, 26% answered no, showing disagreement, and 32% answered unsure, reflecting uncertainty regarding the matter.

Table no. 13. Do you think the budget's focus on public sector companies is beneficial for the economy?

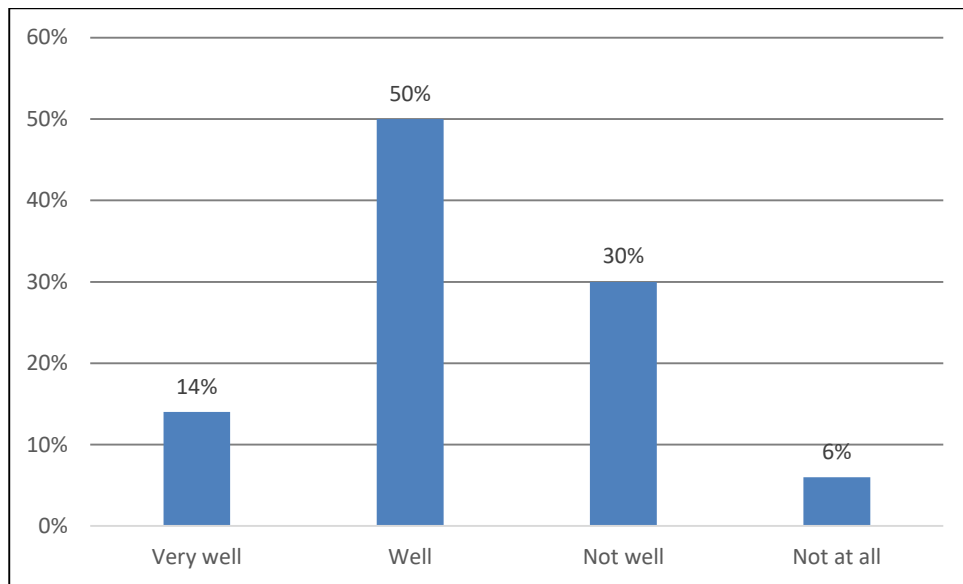
Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	55	55%
No	22	22%
Unsure	23	23%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 10.**Interpretation:**

From the above graph, it was found that out of 100 respondents, 55% answered yes, indicating their agreement with the statement, 22% answered no, showing disagreement, and 23% answered unsure, reflecting uncertainty regarding the matter.

Table no. 14. How well do you think the government's budget addresses social inequality and poverty?

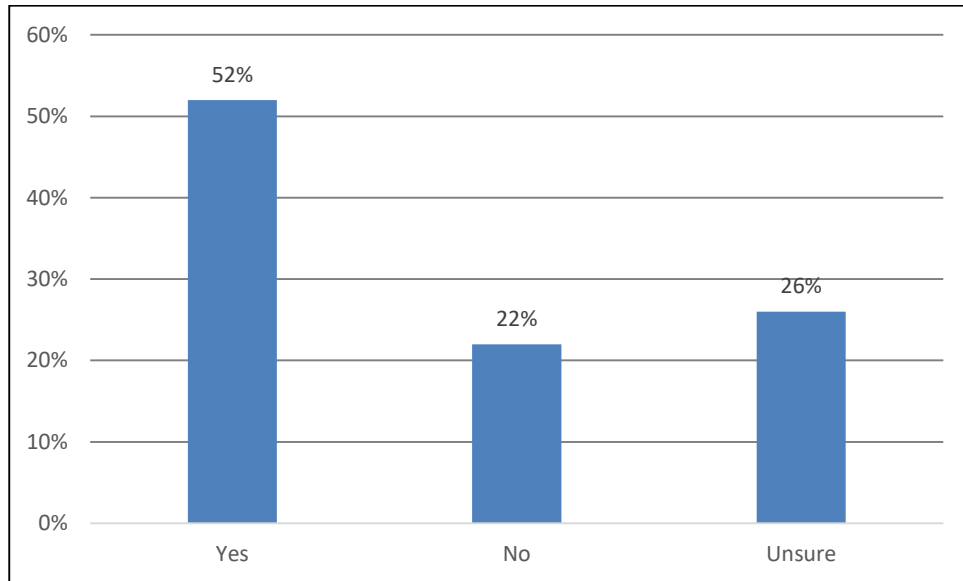
Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Very well	14	14%
Well	50	50%
Not well	30	30%
Not at all	6	6%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 10.**Interpretation:**

From the above graph, it was found that out of 100 respondents, 14% answered very well, indicating that they believe the government's budget effectively addresses social inequality and poverty, 50% answered well, 30% answered not well and 6% answered not at all, indicating strong dissatisfaction with the budget's approach to social inequality and poverty.

Table no. 15. Do you think the government should have done more to address the concerns of marginalized communities in the budget?

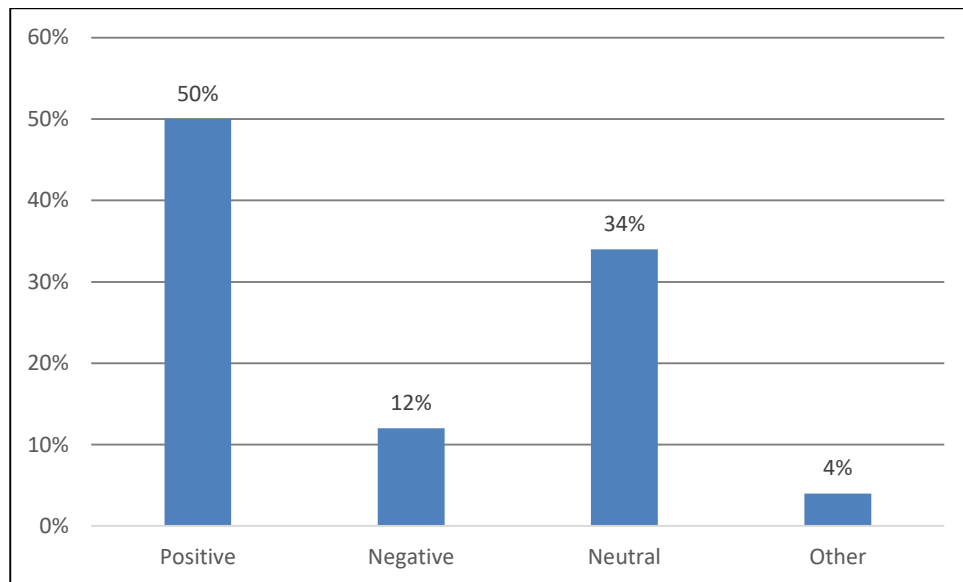
Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	52	52%
No	22	22%
Unsure	26	26%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 10.**Interpretation:**

From the above graph, it was found that out of 100 respondents, 52% answered yes, indicating their belief that the government has addressed the issue effectively, 22% answered no, expressing disagreement, and 26% answered unsure, reflecting uncertainty regarding the matter.

Table no. 16. How do you feel about the government's focus on women's empowerment in the budget?

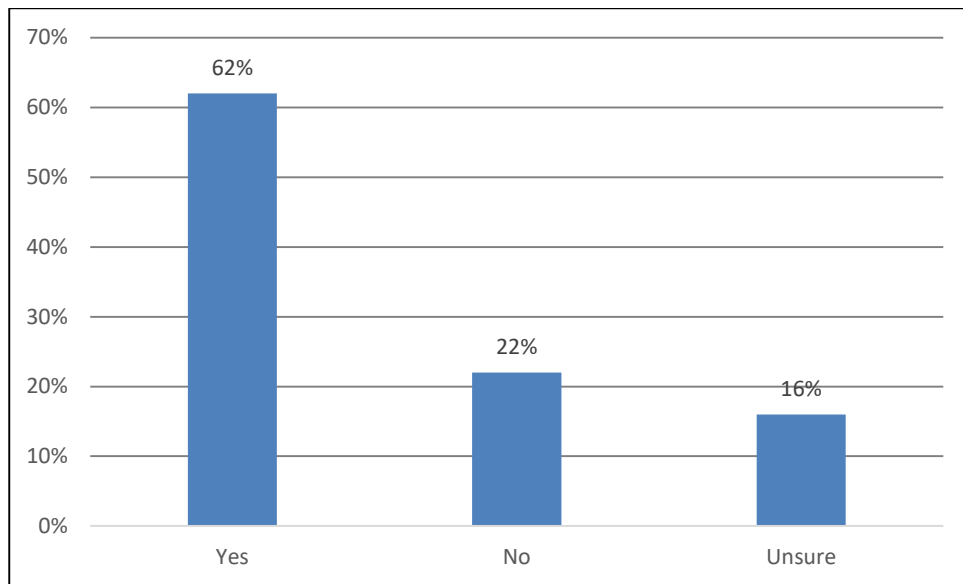
Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Positive	50	50%
Negative	12	12%
Neutral	34	34%
Other	4	4%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 10.**Interpretation:**

From the above graph, it was found that out of 100 respondents, 50% answered positive, indicating a favorable view of the government's focus on women's empowerment in the budget, 12% answered negative, expressing dissatisfaction, 34% answered neutral, showing no strong opinion, and 4% selected other, representing alternative perspectives.

Table no. 17. Do you think the allocation for healthcare will help reduce healthcare costs for the average citizen?

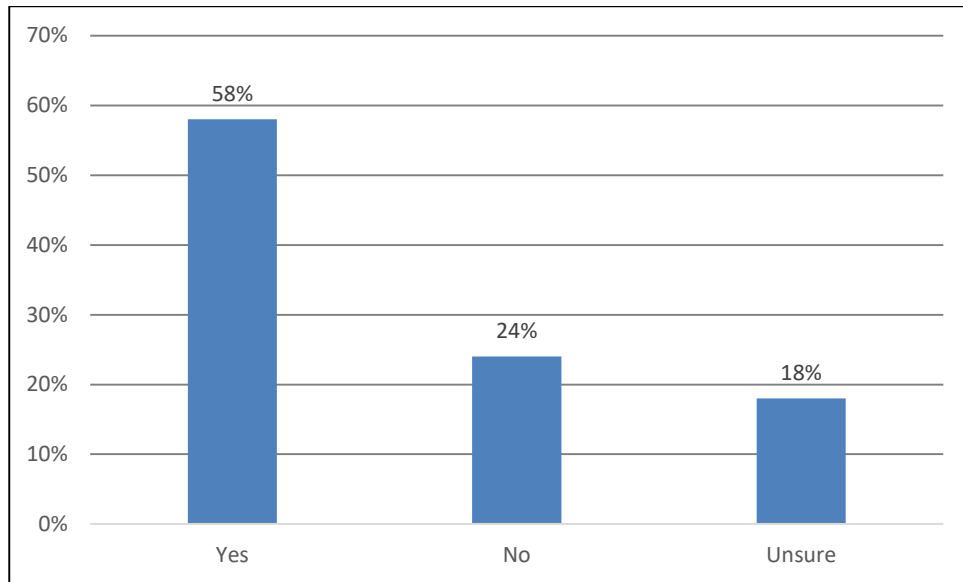
Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	62	62%
No	22	22%
Unsure	16	16%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 10.**Interpretation:**

From the above graph, it was found that out of 100 respondents, 62% answered yes, indicating their belief that the allocation for healthcare will help reduce healthcare costs for the average citizen, 22% answered no, showing disagreement, and 16% answered unsure, reflecting uncertainty regarding the matter.

Table no. 18. Are you satisfied with the government's initiatives to support education and skill development?

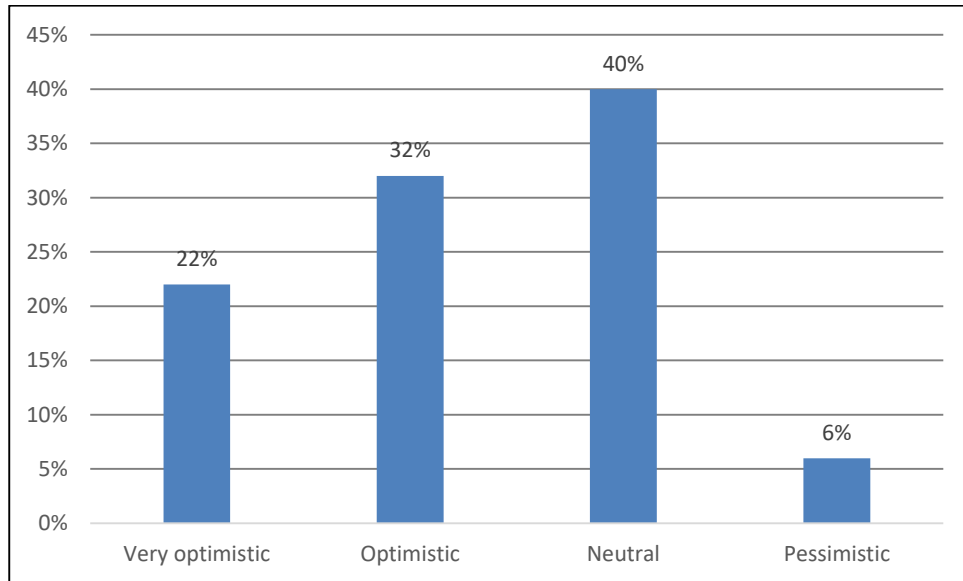
Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	58	58%
No	24	24%
Unsure	18	18%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 10.**Interpretation:**

From the above graph, it was found that out of 100 respondents, 58% answered yes, indicating their satisfaction with the government's initiatives to support education and skill development, 24% answered no, expressing dissatisfaction, and 18% answered unsure, reflecting uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Table no. 19. How optimistic are you about the economic growth resulting from this budget?

Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
Very optimistic	22	22%
Optimistic	32	32%
Neutral	40	40%
Pessimistic	6	6%
Total	100	100%

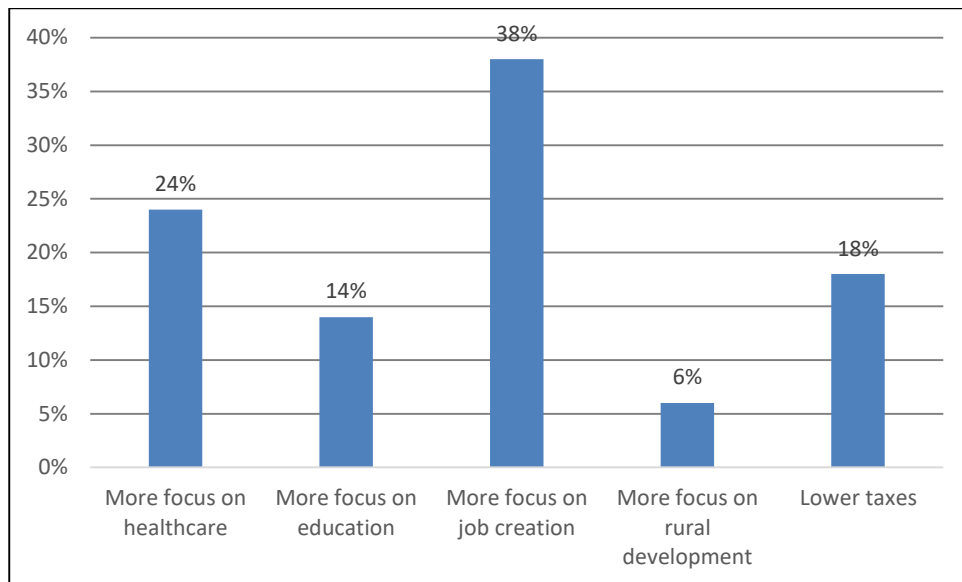
Graph no. 10.**Interpretation:**

From the above graph, it was found that out of 100 respondents, 22% answered very optimistic, indicating strong confidence in economic growth resulting from the budget, 32% answered optimistic, 40% answered neutral, and 6% answered pessimistic.

Table no. 20. What changes would you have liked to see in the current budget?

Option	No. of respondents	Percentage
More focus on healthcare	24	24%
More focus on education	14	14%
More focus on job creation	38	38%
More focus on rural development	6	6%
Lower taxes	18	18%
Total	100	100%

Graph no. 10.

**Interpretation:**

From the above graph, it was found that out of 100 respondents, 24% wanted more focus on healthcare, indicating a priority for better medical facilities and funding, 14% preferred more focus on education, 38% wanted more focus on job creation, 6% emphasized more focus on rural development and 18% preferred lower taxes.

2. CONCLUSION

The central budget plays a crucial role in shaping the nation's economic and social landscape, influencing various sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, healthcare, and education. This study examined public perception of the government's priorities in the recent budget, analyzing how different groups businesses, salaried employees, rural communities, and policy experts view the allocations and reforms.

Findings indicate that while the budget focuses on economic growth, fiscal stability, and employment generation, public opinion remains mixed. Tax reforms and increased infrastructure spending were widely appreciated, but concerns persist regarding inflation control, social welfare allocations, and the real impact of economic policies on middle- and lower-income groups. The government's commitment to fiscal consolidation and deficit reduction has been acknowledged, but there is skepticism about the long-term sustainability of certain policies.

In conclusion, the success of the budget depends not only on policy implementation but also on how well it aligns with public aspirations. Future budgets should focus on enhancing social security measures, improving accessibility to government benefits, and ensuring that economic growth translates into tangible benefits for all sections of society. Strengthening public trust through better awareness and engagement can lead to more informed perceptions and a stronger connection between fiscal policy and national development.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Simplify and communicate budgetary provisions effectively through digital platforms, regional languages, and interactive discussions.
- Allocate more funds to healthcare, education, and poverty alleviation programs for inclusive development.
- Focus on job creation in the MSME and startup sectors to ensure economic growth benefits job seekers.
- Implement stronger measures to control inflation and keep essential commodities affordable.
- Encourage feedback from stakeholders, including businesses, economists, and the general public.
- Ensure timely and efficient execution of announced policies to maximize their impact.
- Consider further tax relief measures and incentives to boost disposable income and economic confidence.
- Increase investment in rural infrastructure, agricultural reforms, and farmer support programs.
- Use AI-driven tools and digital outreach to educate citizens on budgetary policies and their benefits.
- Strengthen collaboration between the government and private sector to drive economic growth and infrastructure development.

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