

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2005
THE ANALYSIS REPORT ON THE PRINTED MEDIA
07.10.2005 – 28.10.2005

1. INTRODUCTION

This report analyses the behaviour of the printed media during the period under consideration. The behaviour of the printed media which among the various media has a decisive influence in a modern society in creating public opinion and interpreting current political trends, during the pre-election period, has been closely observed.

The objectives of the analysis are to

1.1. ascertain whether the printed media shows a bias towards particular political parties and if so the extent to which it happens.

1.2. determine whether incidents of public importance within the country are interpreted in a way beneficial to some political parties and damaging to others and if so the extent to which it occurs.

1.3. develop standards and norms necessary to evolve sound and independent media practices.

2. SELECTION OF PRINTED MEDIA

Printed media is defined here to include only news papers which are published once during a fixed period. The New papers of political parties, news papers which cater to a section of the population or a particular area, and tabloid size new news papers have been excluded. Accordingly, newspapers published have been categorized as follows to facilitate analysis and to ensure accuracy.

2.1. Daily newspapers – 11 papers covered – Sinhala medium newspapers such as Dinamina, Lankadipa, Divaina and Lakkima, Tamil medium newspapers such as Thinakaran, Weerakesari, Tinnakural, Sudaroli and English medium Newspapers such as Daily news, Daily mirror and the Island.

2.2. Weekend Newspapers – 11 papers covered – Sinhala medium newspapers such as Silumina, Sunday Lankadipa, Sunday Divaina and Sunday Lakkima, Tamil medium newspapers such Thinakaran, Veerakesari, Thinakural and Sudaroli and English medium newspapers such as Sunday observer, Sunday times, and Sunday Island.

2.3. Weekend newspapers which are not extensions of Daily news papers; Ravaya, Lanka, Sathdina, Irudina in the Sinhala medium and Morning leader and Sunday leader in the English medium.

3. SELECTION OF NEWS ITEMS FOR ANALYSIS

News items were classified under four categories and analyzed.

3.1. First Page

- Main heading and related news
- Main photographs
- Other headings and related news

3.2. Inside Pages

3.3. Political Articles

3.4. Editorial

In terms of guidelines issued by the South Asia Media Association - SAFMA Cartoons, Political columns, even though they contain political signals are excluded in the analysis treating them as works of creative literary value.

4. METHODS OF ANALYSIS

The factors taken into consideration are space allotted to the heading, the way the news related to the heading is presented, its content and the size, the page in which the news items are included, the way in which they are included in the page, the column in which the news item is published, other news items and photographs surrounding the column and related factors. Thereafter, comprising three members possessing adequate skills in analyzing news have been assigned to analyze each and every news item. Definite conclusions regarding the political bias of a particular news item majority will be arrived at by majority view or consensus of all members.

Observations on the political bias of respective newspapers.

- The political bias shown or being shown by a particular news paper is indicated comparatively relative to political parties. (Shown in Annex No I and in Annex No III)
- Annex No IV indicates the political bias of newspapers shown directly.
- Annex No II given an analysis of the way in which the state and private media display their political bias.
- Annex No III gives a review of relative contradictions.

Annex I

Presidential Election - 2005					
Observation on Printed Media During the Period 07.10.2005 - 28.10.2005					
Nature of Reporting about Presidential Candidates by Print Media					
No	Name of the Newspaper	News bias towards UPFA Candidate	News bias towards UNP Candidate	News bias towards other Candidate	Current news of Political Importance
1	Lake house newspapers	853	175	12	102
		74.7%	15.32%	1.05%	8.93%
2	Vijaya Newspapers	204	245	5	175
		32.43%	38.95%	0.8%	27.82%
3	Upali Newspapers	250	112	11	166
		46.38%	20.78%	2.04%	30.8%
4	Irudina	31	136	2	3
	Sunday Leader	18.02%	79.06%	1.16%	1.74%
	Morning Leader				
5	Lakbima	148	155	8	84
	Irida Lakbima	37.5%	39.24%	2.0%	21.3%
6	Sathdina	10	17		9
		27.8%	47.22%		25%
7	Irida Lanka	48	2	1	1
		92%	4%	2%	2%
8	Ravaya	12	17		14
		28%	39.50%		32.50%
9	Sudar Oli	57	131	16	18
		26%	59%	7%	8%
10	Veerakesari	100	162	6	34
		33%	54%	2%	11%

11	Thinakural	90	114	1	27
		39%	49%	0.43%	11.6%
	Total	1803	1266	62	633

Presidential Election - 2005**Observations on printed media during the period
07.10.2005 - 28.10.2005****State Media and Private Media**

	State Media	Private Media	
News bias towards UPFA Candidate	853 -75%	950	- 52.68%
News bias towards UNP Candidate	175 - 15%	1091	- 86.17%
News bias towards Others	12 - 1%	50	- 80.64%
Current News of Political importance	102 - 9%	531	- 83.88%
Total	1142	2622	

The above chart gives an analysis of the way in which State and Private media have published news items biased towards the two main political party candidates. Accordingly, the state media has published 853 news items out of 1,142 bias towards percentage of 72.84%.

The private media has published 746 news items biased towards the UNP candidate representing a percentage of 38.93%

Presidential Election - 2005

**Observations on printed media during the period
07.10.2005 - 28.10.2005**

Name of Media Institution	Bias towards whom	Percentage
Lake house newspapers (Dinamina, Silumina, Daily News, Sunday Observer, Thinakaran)	UPFA Candidate	59.37%
Vijaya newspapers (Lankadeepa, Irida Lankadeepa Daily Mirror, Sunday Times)	UNP Candidate	6.52%
Upali Newspapers (Divayina, Irida Divayina, The Island, Sunday Island)	UPFA Candidate	25.6%
Sumathi Newspaers (Lakbima, Irida Lakbima)	UNP Candidate	1.74%
Sunday Leader, Morning Leader Irudina	UNP Candidate	61.04%
Lanka	UPFA Candidate	88%
Sathdina	UNP Candidate	19.42%
Ravaya	UNP Candidate	11.5%
Sudar Oli	UNP Candidate	33%
Veerakesari	UNP Candidate	21%
Thinakural	UNP Candidate	9.87%

Indicate the percentage of news with a bias towards the two candidates treated as the two main candidates expressed on a percentage of all political news. Accordingly, among the national newspapers, news papers of the Lake House group and the "Lanka" newspaper which does not belong to the category have published. The highest number of news items showing a bias towards the UPFA candidate as shown by the highest percentages recorded. National newspapers of the Vijaya newspapers Ltd. and "Sathdina" newspapers which does not belong to that category have published more news items bias towards the UNP candidate.

**Political bias in reporting news
All printed media**

News bias towards UPFA Candidate	-	1803	-	47.9%
News bias towards UNP Candidate	-	1266	-	33.63%
News bias towards other Candidate	-	62	-	1.65%
Current news of Political Importance	-	633	-	16.82%
Total	-	3764	-	100%

(Accordingly to the above chart 47.9% of all news published during the period show a bias towards the UPFA Candidate. The differences in the number of news items published in favour of the two main candidates is 537 or 14.27%. Accordingly in this is a greater bias towards the UPFA Candidate in the entire printed media.)