

சோதனா தேசர ரகைகலகலதே வகலகலகலகல
பொது வளங்களை பாதுகாப்பதற்கான திட்டம்
Programme for Protection of Public Resources



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TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

PROGRAMME FOR PROTECTION OF PUBLIC RESOURCES – 2015

Update -02: An observation of state media behaviour during presidential election

Introduction

The Programme for protection of public resources (PPPR) an initiative taken up by Transparency International of Sri Lanka (TISL) in order to combat corruption and for the protection of public resources, has commissioned a study of state media behaviour during presidential election campaigns.

This study is being conducted to ascertain whether the state – controlled print and electronic media, adhering to highest professional and globally accepted standards of accuracy and fairness, objectivity and balance, is fulfilling its obligation in providing voters with unbiased and non partisan coverage as well as a platform for public debate and discussion enabling them to make an informed decision. The research methodology, in keeping with prominent media monitoring practices, uses both quantitative and qualitative analysis of content and meaning. Observing of state media behaviour during elections conducted as part of the PPPR Programme will highlight the need for adherence, respect for code of ethics and elements of journalism and available spaces for public participation.

Given below is an analysis of the spaces, provided for candidates of the presidential election in the front page, and in the news continued in an inner page printed and published by Associated Newspapers of Ceylon (ANCL) in Sinhala, Tamil and English from the 20th to 26th December 2014. A qualitative analysis developed based on the guidelines issued by the Commissioner of Elections for print and electronic media related to the presidential election and the quantitative research data gathered, adhering to accepted professional standards is also included.

Regular updates will be issued from time to time based on the observations done about information published and broadcast over state print and electronic media institutions by the Media Observation Team of the Programme for Protection of Public Resources followed by a special final report.

We welcome your comments and feedback on the updates issued by the Media Monitoring Team and observations on media behavior during presidential elections. We believe that your active engagement will help contribute to make the media monitoring process a success.

Send in your responses to 2015ppprmm@gmail.com

Media Monitoring Team

Transparency International Sri Lanka

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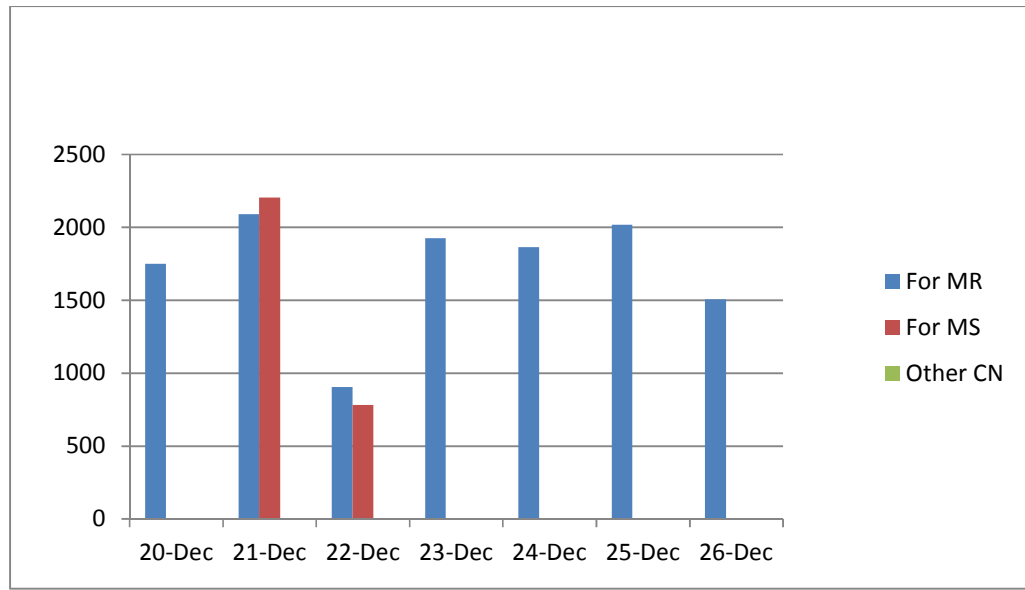
Colombo 06

An analysis of front page news and their continuations from 20th to 26th December 2014 of state print media

The graph given below shows the spaces divided among presidential election candidates in the Front pages and their continuations of Sinhala, Tamil and English newspapers published by Associated Newspapers of Ceylon (ANCL). This analysis has taken into consideration **spaces provided** in headlines, photos and contents in the front page and articles continued to other pages excluding spaces for advertisements.

Spaces divided among presidential candidates during a week from December 20th to 26th 2014 in

Dinamina and Silumina (Daily and weekly newspapers-Sinhala)

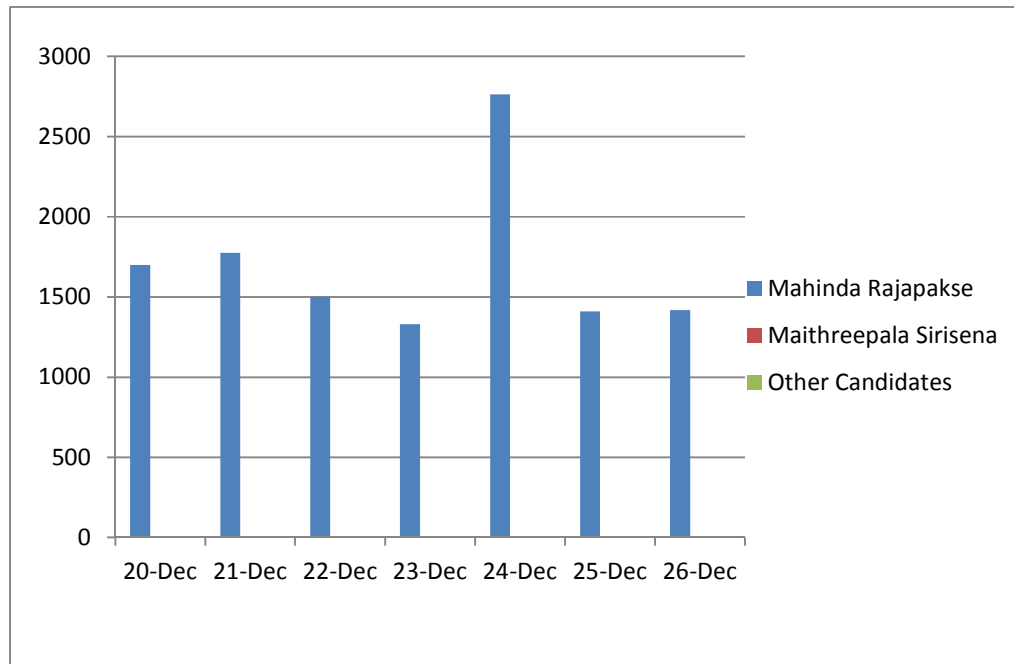


MR – Presidential candidate of UPFA

MS - Presidential candidate of the New Democratic Front

Others – News about other candidates

Thinakaran and Varamanjari (Daily and weekly newspapers-Tamil)



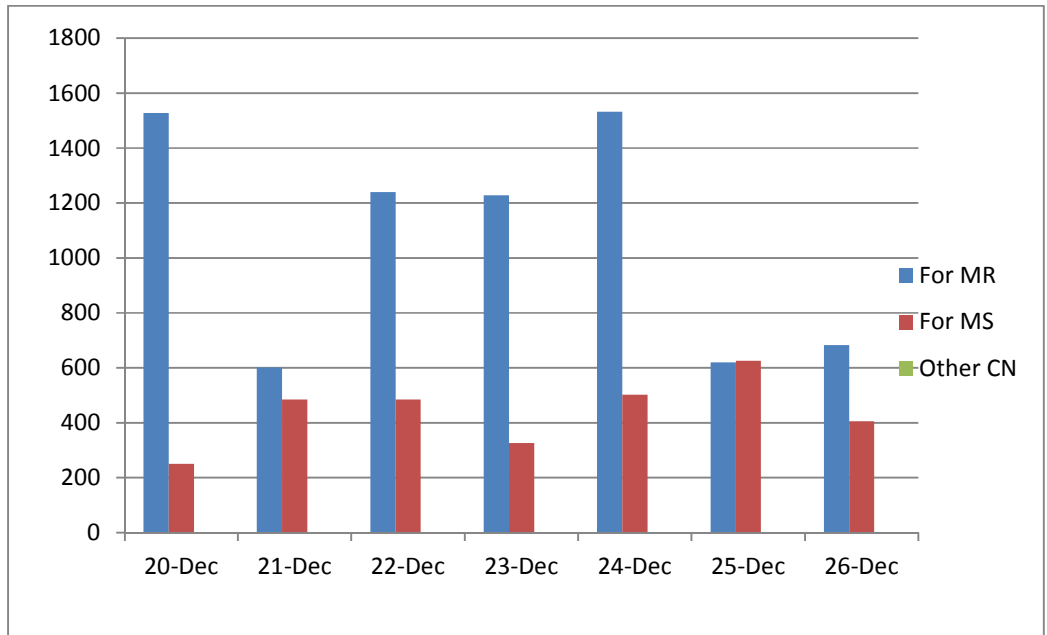
MR – Presidential candidate of UPFA

MS - Presidential candidate of the New Democratic Front

Others – News about other candidates

Daily News and Sunday Observer (Daily and weekly newspapers-English)

CM



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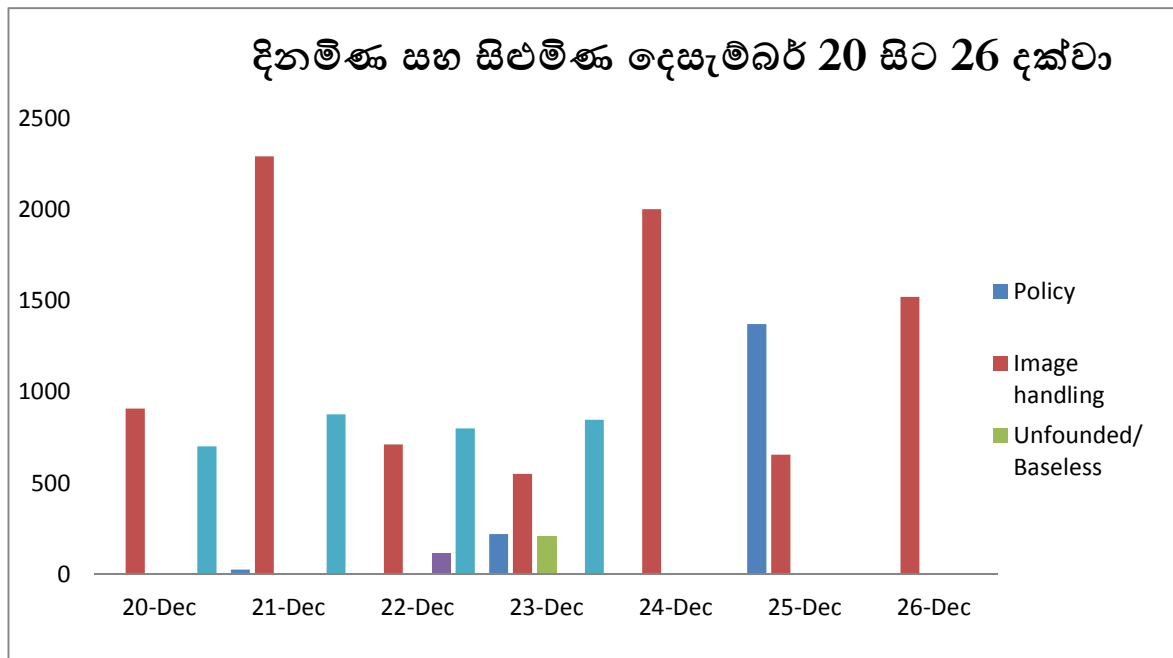
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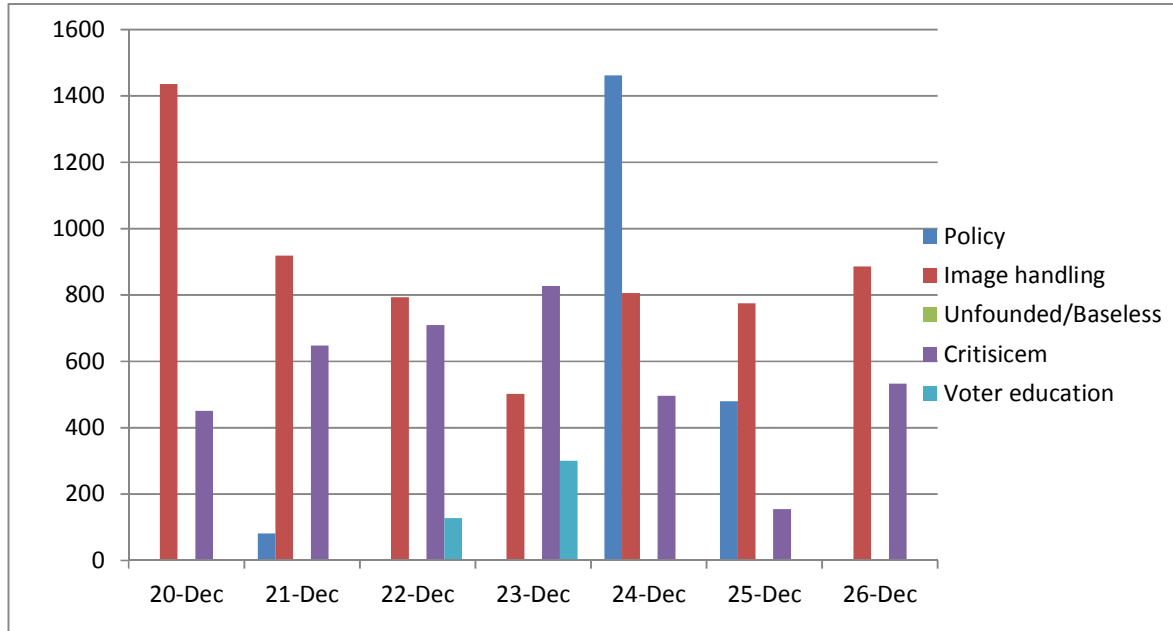
Content about election related news items divided under five main categories

Dinamina and Silumina(Daily and weekly newspapers-Sinhala)



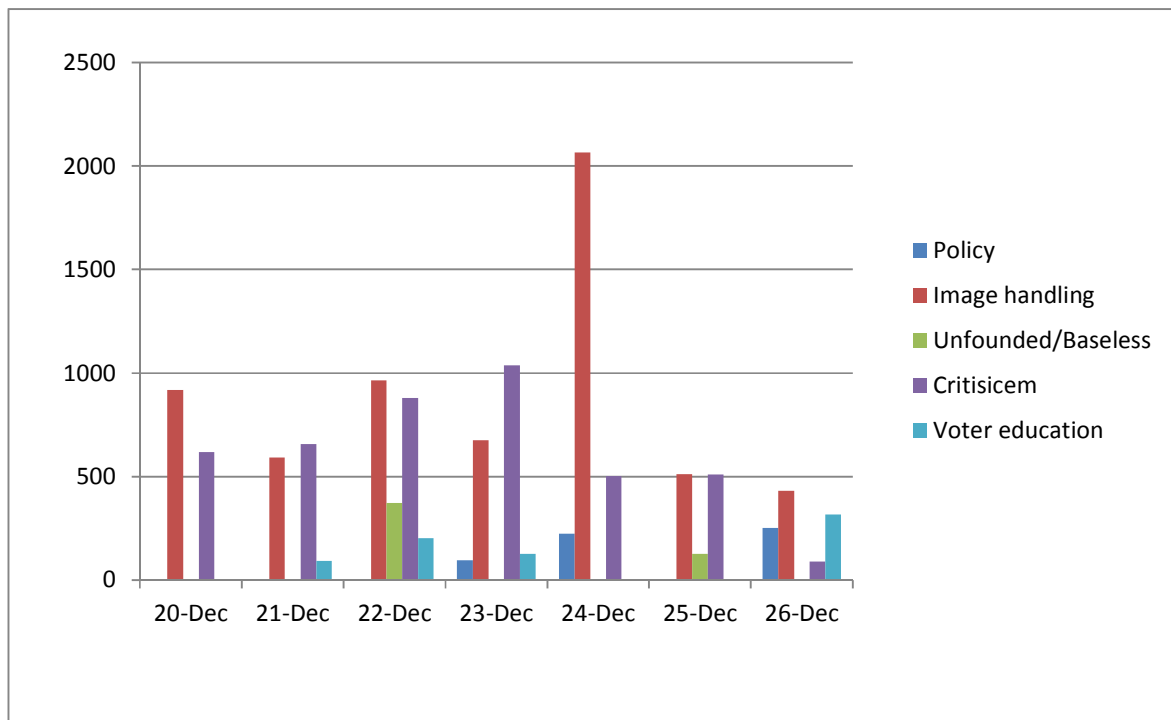
- Policy related
- Image building
- Unfounded
- Criticism
- Voter education

Thinakaran and Vara Manjari(Daily and weekly newspapers-Tamil)



- Policy related
- Image building
- Unfounded
- Criticism
- Voter education

Daily news and Sunday Observer((Daily and weekly news papers-English)



- Policy related
- Image building
- Unfounded
- Criticism
- Voter education

During the presidential election when citizens are informed about the policies helps the citizens to make informed choices.

Inflating or deflating the image of a particular candidate is non adherence to practising balanced or being non partisan journalism.

There has been limited space for voter education in these newspapers.

Inflating or deflating the image of candidates of the presidential election

During the particular week taken into consideration, and out of the total spaces in the front page, and articles continued into inner pages, a total space of (19,611.38cm²) alone, have been provided for inflating the UPFA presidential election candidate. Meanwhile total spaces used for deflating (10,268.77cm²) have been provided only for deflating the image of the New Democratic Front presidential election candidate.

Common observations

Despite the Elections Commissioner having released guidelines related to the presidential election it was observed that state media had not paid any attention to the guidelines. There had been gross violations of professional standard journalism practices such as accuracy, impartiality, balance and being non partisan.

Our observation is that being one sided, and partiality of state media which is a public property, is an abuse of public property. Thus has led to the main role by media during the process of an election which is neglecting keeping the citizens informed about the presidential election..

S. Ranugge
Executive Director
Transparency International Sri Lanka