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Changing Images In Media Portrayal
In Sri Lanka

By

D C Ranatunga
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D.C. Ranatunga

August 1992

AMIC WORKSHOP ON MEDIA EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA, NEW DELHI
On July 21, 1960 Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike, widow of Sri Lanka’s (then Ceylon) fourth Prime Minister, the late Mr S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was sworn in as Prime Minister following a landslide victory for the party she led, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) winning 75 out of the 151 seats in the House of Representatives. She had created history. Not only was she Ceylon’s first woman Prime Minister, but the world’s first woman Prime Minister as well. It was also the climax in the achievements of women in the exercise of political power in Sri Lanka.

As early as 1927 when the country was still a Crown Colony in the British Empire, a Commission (commonly called the Donoughmore Commission, the head being Earl Donoughmore) appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the British Government to consider proposals for the revision of the then existing constitution, commented on the political consciousness of women in Ceylon. In its report, the Commission stated that it had given serious consideration to the question of women’s franchise and added: "It is also true that though the position of women in the East has not till recent years been suitable for the exercise of political power, that position is rapidly changing and the demand for the vote was put before us by a large and representative deputation of Ceylonese ladies. It was difficult to deny the force of the argument that the women of Ceylon are at least as competent to exercise the vote as
the women of India, a considerable number of whom already possess the franchise".

The result of these efforts was the granting of universal adult franchise in 1931 to every citizen - men and women - over the age of 21 years. This enabled the women of Ceylon to play an important and active role in the exercise of political power. The same year (1931) the first woman was elected to the State Legislature (the State Council) in the country. The establishment of a second Chamber - the Senate - in 1947 enabled the government to obtain the services of persons of eminence in professional, commercial, industrial or agricultural life in framing the country's legislation. From the inception of the Senate until its abolition in 1971 with the inauguration of the new Constitution of the Republic of Sri Lanka, six women had served as Senators. In fact, when Mrs Bandaranaike led the SLFP to victory at the 1960 General Election, she had not contested a seat. As the leader of the party that won the election, she was invited to form the government and subsequently appointed to the Senate.

With Mrs Bandaranaike's appointment as Prime Minister, the attitude of the media towards women took a totally different complexion. The media recognised that women thereafter would be a force to be reckoned with. The 'supremacy' of the man which had traditionally been recognised and acknowledged in
every quarter began to change. Although Women's Lib was being talked about in other parts of the world, we as easterners or 'traditionalists' preferred to treat women as 'second grade' or inferior. But the moment the country was being led by a woman Prime Minister, the attitudes changed. The media began to 'recognise' the need to give more coverage to women and to treat them as equals with men.

The achievement of Mrs. Bandaranaike in leading the SLFP to political victory and becoming the first woman Prime Minister in the world stirred the political consciousness of the women in Sri Lanka, and more and more women began to take an active interest in state and local politics. Today women play an increasingly important role in political activities at all levels. There are 12 women Members of Parliament in the current (Ninth) Parliament of Sri Lanka. Of them, one is a Cabinet Minister and three are Ministers of State. The position of the Leader of the Opposition is held by Mrs Bandaranaike.

What may be termed the 'positive' attitude of the media towards women has helped to upgrade their status in society. The woman has been pulled out of the house and given her due place in society. The sex-stereotyping of occupations or the acceptance of some occupations as suitable only for females and others for males has broken down to a large extent. Top level civil service jobs which were exclusive to males not
too long ago have been thrown open to women as well. In addition to Cabinet portfolios, today a number of positions as Secretaries to Ministries, Departmental heads, heads of provincial administration are being held by women. Among the top level women bureaucrats are the Secretaries to the State Ministries of Education, and Women’s Affairs, the Bribery Commissioner, Director of External Resources, a provincial Government Agent, Commissioner of Internal Trade and the Controller of Insurance.

Educational changes

An important feature in the recent history of Sri Lanka is the rapid expansion of educational facilities throughout the country. Universal franchise in 1931, free elementary, secondary and tertiary education since 1945, the change in the medium of instruction from English to the mother tongue and the provision of educational institutions to meet social demand have led cumulatively to a significant increase in the enrolment in educational institutions and the transformation of an elitist ex-colonial society to a more egalitarian social structure. Women in Sri Lanka have been beneficiaries of all these social and educational changes.
Commitment to educational expansion by successive
governments during the past half a century enabled Sri Lanka
to develop a comprehensive system of formal education and an
extensive network of schools. The increase in formal
schooling accounts for most of the literacy gains in the
country during the past few decades.

According to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, the literacy
levels in the population over 10 years grew by a phenomenal
20 percentage points within the span of two and a half
decades, from 61 per cent in 1960 to 87 per cent in 1985. In
fact, Sri Lanka's literacy rate was the highest among the
low income countries in 1985. It was also above the average
adult literacy rate of 75 per cent of the middle income
countries. In contrast, neighbouring countries such as
India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh had very low literacy
rates of 43, 29, 25 and 33 per cent respectively, in 1985.

Commenting on other aspects in education the Central Bank
says: "The gradual narrowing of gender inequality in
education is another significant achievement in the human
development front. This is more or less reflected by the
school enrolment ratios for males and females. It is also
noteworthy that the rate of females continuing their
education into the secondary level in Sri Lanka is at a
higher level compared to most of the developing countries.
The number of educated females for hundred males in 1988 was
93 at the primary level while at the secondary level it was 108".

In the past two decades, progressive improvements in the sphere of education have been recorded. The proportion of the population who had attained secondary or higher education increased from 30.6% in 1973 to 42.8% in 1986/87. This improvement was recorded for both males and females with the percentage of males attaining secondary or higher education increasing from 32.8% in 1973 to 43.8% in 1986/87 while the corresponding proportion for females rose from 28.5% to 42.4%. The trend is indicative of a narrowing of the gap between males and females with respect to education over the years.

Wide newspaper readership

The high literacy rate is reflected in the wide readership enjoyed by the printed media in Sri Lanka. Apart from nine national dailies published by four newspaper groups in Sinhala (4), Tamil (2) and English (3), a host of weeklies hit the newstands throughout the week. These deal with a wide range of subjects ranging from politics to films, sports, cartoons to astrology.

The Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd (popularly known as Lake House) publishes three morning dailies in the three
languages, two afternoon papers in Sinhala and English, three Sunday papers and nine weeklies (tabloids) — Sarasaviya (films), Tharunee (women’s mag), Yovun Janatha (for youth), Kreeda (sports), Madhura (cartoons), Mihira (for children), Subasetha (astrology), Budusarana (religious — Buddhist) and Nava Yugaya (literature). A significant feature is that all these weeklies are published in Sinhala.

With the change in the country’s policy on medium of instruction, the thirst for reading material in Sinhala is clearly seen. In fact, a number of weekend tabloids which could conveniently be categorised as political newspapers (though not published by a particular political party) enjoy a fairly wide readership. Published in Sinhala, these basically carry news critical of the government and comment on current issues. People are fond of political gossip and anti-government news particularly when the radio, television and the most influential newspaper group (Lake House) are State controlled and news and features presented by them have a government bias.
The health scene

The improvement in the educational level among females has had far-reaching consequences particularly in the fields of nutrition, hygiene and child care. While the English educated are able to pick up publications devoted to these subjects, those with a knowledge of the indigenous languages Sinhala and Tamil depend mainly on the media to gather information on such topics. The Sinhala dailies devote weekly columns to discuss these topics. So are the other media - radio and television. In fact, recent audience surveys have revealed that TV viewers rate health oriented programmes very high in their preferential ladder.

The media has contributed in large measure to create awareness on health problems, particularly essential child health information. Vital subjects like Timing births, Safe motherhood, Breastfeeding, Immunization, Diarrhoea and Home hygiene are given wide coverage. Child survival rates in Sri Lanka are comparatively very favourable when viewed with other countries in the region. Official statistics have shown that infant mortality rate at 32 per 1000 live births is one of the lowest recorded among the countries considered. Only Malaysia ranked above Sri Lanka with an infant mortality rate of 24.
Child mortality (children under five years) is also significantly low in Sri Lanka at 43 per 1000 live births compared with India (149), Pakistan (166) and Bangladesh (188). Here too it was Malaysia which had a more favourable rate at 32. Officials attribute the high child survival rates partly to the superior educational status of Sri Lankan mothers.

The role played by the media in the highly successful child immunisation programme is another clear illustration of responding to a clear, simple message easily understood by the average housewife. The figures indicate that 79 per cent of one year olds had been immunised in Sri Lanka as compared to 33%, 24% and 18% in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh respectively. This proportion was 79% in Indonesia and 74% in Malaysia. The Philippines fared better with a rate of 82%. High levels of immunisation would have helped to reduce child mortality.

It has been accepted that the Sinhala weeklies more than the English newspapers have followed developments in women’s issues and adjusted their editorial policy to suit emerging trends. These newspapers have treated women as responsible discerning individuals.
Family planning has got a big boost from the media in Sri Lanka. At a time when people were fighting shy to even talk about the subject, the media supported the efforts of the Family Planning Association (FPA) to spread the message on the need to plan one’s family. Editorial features, panel discussions on radio (TV was not available at the time the campaign was started) coupled with a strong advertising campaign succeeded in convincing the people on the need for family planning.

The head of the Advertising Agency which handled the subject, Dr Anandatissa de Alwis (who later became Minister of Information & Broadcasting) once explained the FPA’s efforts thus: “The campaign for the FPA was based on the premise that children per se are lovable, desirable and necessary. They make life worth living. They make a house a home. These are the very factors which should lead to the spacing and limitation of the birth of children so that each child is a wanted child and brings happiness to its parents.

“In 1973 the FPA campaign was designed to create awareness, disseminate knowledge and persuade people to accept the practice of family planning. The campaign was communicated in four different advertisements. The first showed a child appealing to its parents - “Give me a chance to live”. The second showed a wife’s viewpoint. It was headlined “I am a happy wife”. She explained why she was happy. She was lucky
to have a reasonable, thoughtful husband who wanted her to preserve her youth and health.

The third advertisement showed a husband’s viewpoint. The headline read: "I am a happy husband". He explained that he was lucky to have a happy home where he and his wife agreed on spacing and limiting the number of children. He was freed of anxiety and was in good health and good cheer. The fourth advertisement showed the family of father, mother and two children. The theme was "We are a happy family".

"The emotional motivating force necessary to attract attention and create interest was blended with the economic and health reasons that make family limitation necessary and this led to desire to act as suggested in the advertisement and finally to the practice of family planning. That was the strategy of the communication", Dr de Alwis explains.

The result of the endeavour was a success story of great significance. With caution and due respect for the ethical, social and cultural base of the country a product (the condom) was marketed. Where only a few thousands were sold in restricted outlets and under-the-counter, the programme has been able to deliver over 300,000 condoms each month into homes in the country. In twelve months the programme was to deliver nearly four million condoms representing a high level of family spacing on an all-island basis.
Impact of Television

Television which is just ten years old in Sri Lanka, has undoubtedly become a very effective and powerful medium in dissemination of information and creating awareness of social issues. With the high literacy rate, viewers are selective in their programmes and they are a critical lot. They look for quality. There are an estimated 850,000 television sets with 15% powered either by battery or solar power.

Viewership is estimated at seven persons per set. According to a survey carried out by the Rupavahini Corporation (the main State TV authority), 5.6 million or 32% of the population regularly view television. Community viewing has become a habit. Crowds throng to community centres particularly to watch teledramas in Sinhala. In the case of homes without TV sets, it is common practice to move over to the neighbour’s house to watch television. Teledramas enjoy a viewership of 70% of the total TV audience, Sinhala News 65% and Sinhala musicals 45%.

Attempts at using the teledrama as a medium of communication to discuss social issues have been successfully tried out. Drugs are a common subject. The accent, of course, is on highlighting the danger of drugs. Television has also helped to allay the fears of people and change their
attitudes towards incurable and chronic diseases. Leprosy is a good example. On top of an effective advertising campaign on TV, a teledrama with a popular cast provided an ideal backdrop to convince viewers that leprosy was not a disease to be scared about. The teledrama was totally independent of the advertising campaign and was in no way related to each other. Epilepsy is another subject which was the theme of a teledrama which drew a favourable audience response.

Teledramas are also used to promote the message of family health and hygiene to viewers. While the inclusion of popular stars help to draw an audience for such teledramas, there is sometimes a tendency to 'hard sell' the message thereby affecting the impact and effectiveness.

Regular programmes in the form of docu dramas, features and panel discussions on anti-smoking are intended to educate the public on ill effects of smoking. Incidentally, cigarette advertising is totally banned on television and radio. A recent health programme on tension and stress received a high rating from viewers resulting in a repeat telecast.

Sri Lanka, just like many other nations is threatened by the new global problem of AIDS. It has been accepted that public education would be the most effective weapon against the spread of AIDS. Media faces a challenge in formulating
policies on how it could help in this effort. The goal of the Ministry of Health is to reduce the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS to a level that would not cause any major burden on the health services and the economy of the country. The Ministry is developing a comprehensive educational programme for primary prevention of these diseases and the media will have a vital role to play in such a programme.

Tourism is a vital industry for Sri Lanka. It is an important source of foreign exchange earnings. Its contribution to employment generation and regional development are equally important. At the same time some adverse effects of growth in tourist traffic have also been felt. Erosion of cultural values among the younger generation may partly be attributed to exposure to tourism. The spread of drug abuse, increase in immoral activities and the consequent spread of sexually transmitted diseases are some of the dangers that may arise through exposure to tourism. The media has a responsibility to highlight these dangers and caution on the need for precautionary measures.
Consumer resistance

Advertising with a vengeance’ was the title of the leading letter in the Letters to the Editor page in a recent issue of Daily News, the influential morning daily. The subject of the letter was a TV commercial advertising a male cologne called ‘Avenger’.

"We are writing this letter to convey our grave displeasure and disgust with an exceptionally sexist and violent advertisement th is being repeatedly telecast on MTV (the third TV channel launched just three months ago) since its inception", the letter began. It went on to describe the commercial in detail and summed up: "The message here was clear, direct and horrifying. If you wear the correct cologne even sexual assault can be alluring to women. Furthermore, by suggesting that this cologne brought out the 'man in you', the advertiser seemed to be also suggesting that to be masculine was to also be violent; to physically and sexually avenge a woman who may have 'insulted' one's masculinity by refusing one's 'advances'.

The letter signed by 22 persons belonging to 16 voluntary organisations called for "the immediate suspension of the telecasting of the advertisement". The signatories represented bodies which keep an eye on matters of consumer interest. Here again, the more vociferous ones are the
women's organisations who are critically examining advertisements, particularly TV commercials.

An advertisement by an insurance company using a picture of a little girl identifying her as a '21st Century Bride' was taken up at a seminar organised by an influential women's organisation - Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR). The advertisement conveyed the idea that the female was still suitable only to be a housewife, it was said. The company was unfair to women, it was argued. The advertisement, in fact, was only the first in a series planned to create awareness of life insurance policies which would benefit children under a new concept called 'Insurance for Living'. The bride advertisement was followed by several others - a 21st century doctor and architect using girls, and a 21st century engineer, agronomist and sportsman with boys.

Women in Media

The CENWOR seminar and workshop on the theme 'Women in Media' was a serious attempt to exchange experiences and ideas among media personnel and other groups concerned with the portrayal of women in the media. It was pointed out that advertising both in the print and electronic media perpetuates the stereotypical image of women (and men). Advertisers appeared to be unaware of the gradual acceptance of housework, parenting, and increasing
employment of women. Also advertising promotes consumerism, western lifestyles and consumption patterns with adverse effects on traditional societies and creates frustration.

To illustrate, many examples were brought up. The well groomed woman sets the table, takes the dinner out of the latest microwave oven and is ready for the husband who comes home after work.

The wife is making a cup of tea for the husband who is leaving for work. The mother waves the father and children off after getting them ready in the morning. The husband quarrels with the wife as his clothes are not washed to his satisfaction. The images are created and the mind is conditioned.

Housework is fun, women are happy over the acquisition of the latest gadgetry, marketing is a pleasurable activity and feeding the family the simplest possible. Mother is the person who has to cook, sew, polish and clean. Her place is the home.

The male executives at the meeting take investment decisions. The smart global executive in his well tailored suit hops a plane for a meeting in Paris. The young boy jumps high to win his game.
Seminar participants pointed out that the reality is that housework is grinding, pounding and blowing into the hearth. Scrubbing and rubbing makes the clothes white. The vast majority of women cannot buy the latest in household appliances and an increasing number of women are engaged in economic activities, either in their own homes or outside the home which help them feed and clothe their families.

It was also pointed out that it is not only advertising that creates negative images or perpetuates stereotype images of women. Words, stories, headlines, news, features, photographs also convey subtly and often insidiously these attitudes. Cartoons - both strip and pocket - found daily in newspapers in all languages are some of the worst in portraying negative images of women. Some border on the offensive in their attempts to make women seem fools, nitwits and creatures to be laughed at and at the butt end of unsavoury jokes. This type of sexist humour reinforces male superiority and oppresses women.

On the positive side, the Sinhala women’s weeklies more than the English newspapers, have followed developments in women’s issues and adjusted their editorial policy to suit emerging trends. These newspapers have treated women as responsible discerning individuals. There are also columnists and editors, women’s pages and other editorial space which make an earnest attempt to destroy stereotypes.
and project a positive image of women. These give realistic, accurate and positive pictures of women as active confident individuals who work with men to provide economic support to the family.

While what the media says is important what it does not say is of equal or more significance. There is a 'blanking out' of areas of experience of women in economic activities which find their way into the mainstream media. There are innumerable experiences of women at the bottom of the social heap whose contributions can positively contribute towards eliminating stereotypes. The women who battle single handed in families without men, the thousands who leave their families for extended periods to work abroad in search of an economic base to build their lives afresh - their stories seldom find their way into the media unless it is to illustrate a scandal and then the negative effects start operating.

There are other women who fight other kinds of battles - sexual harassment at work, unequal pay for equal work, compulsory overtime, exploitation at factories and other industrial enterprises. The travails of women working in the Free Trade Zone are seldom told. More reportage of this kind of women will not only depict reality but it will also help empower women, make them (and their employers) aware of their rights as human beings.
The workshop recommended that the Media should -

- present the images of women and social issues in a more positive manner;

- point out contradictions between statement and reality;

- avoid the stereotyping of roles in media;

- conscientise women themselves about their own image in the media - including women and men working in the media;

- sensitise mothers in bringing up their children without gender discrimination;

- educate, motivate, guide and direct the public about social issues and values and principles on consumerism.

The need for a code of ethics to be adopted to prevent the exploitation of women and children in media presentation was also stressed.
Incidentally, the use of children in TV commercials and the portrayal of numerous characters by school girls (very often wearing school ties even though they are rarely identifiable) have also been commented upon at discussions on contemporary subjects.

It is rarely that these pressure groups show concern about newspaper or radio advertisements. Their main concern is the medium of television. The visual image being strong, television becomes a powerful medium for portraying either a negative or a positive image.

In Sri Lanka, while advertising of cigarettes and liquor is completely banned on TV, there are restrictions on products like agro-chemicals and pesticides. A warning indicating the dangers of these products is tagged on at the end of the commercial. The Health Ministry has stepped in to censor commercials promoting drugs.
Poverty alleviation

Many types of poverty alleviation programmes have been tried out worldwide. In Sri Lanka, the Food Ration Scheme and Food Stamp Scheme were tried out. These were aimed at providing sustenance to the poor. The United National Party (UNP) under the leadership of President Ranasinghe Premadasa in their election manifesto stressed on the need to "invest in our human base" and outlined a new programme called JANASAVIYA, for poverty alleviation. The programme has three key elements - the family, the resources and the time-period. The period is fixed for 24 months. A family is reckoned to be five persons. There are also some important secondary elements - counselling, skill and entreprenarial training and incentivizing.

Basically, each family has access to a pool of resources worth Rs 2500 a month. It is divided into two streams - one directed to investment, the other to consumption. Out of the total pool, the first Rs 1042 must be saved and invested as an obligatory savings/investment. This process continues every month up to the end of the 24th month, at which point the total savings accumulated would be Rs 25,000. A special counselling service at hamlet level informs and guides the family.
The balance Rs 1458 is primarily for consumption. While Rs 1000 may be used for consumption, the family has the option of saving the balance Rs 458. The network of Post Office Savings Banks were used for this purpose. The consumption components are primarily to provide adequate sustenance to the Janasaviya families in order to improve their health and nutritional status which would contribute to higher productivity.

The two year period covered by the Janasaviya programme is expected to be one of preparation and training when recipient families would be motivated to prepare themselves to engage in a viable productive activity. The accumulated capital collateral could be used as security to obtain bank loans for the purpose of investing in productive enterprises either individually or in pooled form.

The Central Bank has identified this scheme as one with objectives wider than providing sustenance to the poor. It is a process seeking ultimately to link those in poverty to the production process. One of its stated aims is ensuring that at least one member of a poor family achieves the means to obtain a sustainable income.

In a country where people had got used to a whole package of welfare measures either totally free or in subsidy form, the new concept had to be ‘sold’. Media support was once again
sought and obtained. In addition to editorial news and features in all media, effective advertising campaigns were planned to create awareness and convince the people of how the new scheme would benefit them. 'Production for People's Progress' was the theme of the advertising campaign.

By end May 1991, Rs 219.8 million had been obtained as loans by the first round Janasaviya recipients from banks and other financial sources. The number of loans obtained was 49,113 and the average size of a loan was Rs 4,475. These loans have been used by the recipients to establish self-employment projects. Most of them are in the agricultural sector while there have been a fair amount of projects in industry and trade. A common problem which has been identified is the failure of small scale enterprises fail due to marketing problems or inability to face competition.

Following the victory of the UNP at the 1989 General Election, the government decided to implement the Janasaviya scheme in stages. 28 Assistant Government Agent's divisions were chosen for the first round. The income cutoff for identification was Rs 700. The total number of beneficiaries in Round 1 was 156,245 at the end of December 1990. In Round 2, the estimated number of families benefitting from the scheme is 103,570.
Ethnic Issue

Sri Lanka, a 25,332 sq.mile (65,610 sq.k.m.) island in the Indian Ocean emerged from over 400 years of colonial rule in 1948. It is an unitary state with a democratic, multi-party system of government.

Sri Lanka's society is multi-racial and multi-religious. The majority (74%) of the 17 million population are Sinhalese who speak Sinhala, a language derived from Sanskrit. The next group is the Tamils forming 12.6% of the population. They are in a majority in the northern part of the country with a large concentration in the eastern area. Many live in the other areas as well co-existing with the majority community, the Sinhalese.

The Indian Tamils working in the plantations in the central region form 5.5% while Moors forming 7.7% are an important minority. The Burghers, descendants of the Dutch who were in Sri Lanka in the 17th & 18th centuries form another minority group.

Traditionally, the Sinhalese and the Tamils have lived amicably. All communities were united in the campaign for independence. When the British colonial government allocated a single seat in the local legislature to "Educated Ceylonese" in 1912 a predominantly Sinhalese constituency
elected a Tamil member to occupy that seat. Today in Sri Lanka, high level administrative posts are held by Tamils. A measure of autonomy was granted to the Tamils by a system of District Development Councils. A decentralized budgetary system provided all administrative districts with project funds without discrimination. The government's development policies have been so devised as to effect all sections of the population. World Bank assistance has been obtained for integrated rural development programmes in various parts of the country including areas where there is a concentration of Tamil people.

Tamil has been legally recognised as a national language in the constitution. The constitution has also entrenched the use of Tamils in Parliament, in education, in public administration, at examinations, in the courts and so on. The government has tried to resolve issues that had grown acute through neglect.

What was earlier known as the 'language issue' has, over the years developed into a demand for a separate state for the Tamils - the call for 'Eelam', the creation of an independent Tamil speaking sovereign state comprising the present Northern and Eastern regions of Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, militant Tamil youth have banded themselves into terrorist groups and are waging war against the government.
The media's role is a complex and sensitive one. While different points of view are presented to the public, the media is committed to uphold the declared intentions of the elected government - that of maintaining the integrity of Sri Lanka as 'a Free, Sovereign, Independent and Democratic Unitary State'. Newspapers open their editorial columns to present viewpoints of individuals and organisations. Letters to the Editor columns present different opinions. The State media - Radio and Television - however, would present only the government point of view.
SRI LANKA – MEDIA SCENE AT A GLANCE

Print
Dailies:
3 English – 2 morning & 1 afternoon
4 Sinhala – 3 morning & 1 afternoon
2 Tamil

Weeklies:
3 English
1 English Women’s
3 Sinhala
10 Sinhala tabloids
2 Tamil

Television
2 government owned commercial stations
1 private entertainment/commercial station (June 1992)
1 other private station due to operate later this year

Radio
1 government owned commercial station with 10 broadcast channels (4 all island & 6 regional)
1 private commercial station due to operate by end 1992

Outdoor
Hoardings
Bus shelter panels
Bus painting

Wall paintings
Bus panels
Airport signs

Cinemas
257 cinemas islandwide

NEWSPAPER CIRCULATION *

Morning dailies:
Sinhala – Divaina 154,000
Dinamina 98,000
Lankadeepa 85,000

English – Daily News 80,000
Island 46,000

Tamil – Virakesari 40,000
Thinakaran 13,000

Weeklies:
Sunday Divaina 292,000
Silumina 285,000
Sri Lankadeepa 240,000
Sunday Observer 118,000
Sunday Island 83,000
Sunday Times 94,000
V. Illustrated 54,000
T. Varamanjari 24,000

*Circulation claimed 1992
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