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ABSTRACT

The research title of this study is 'Reporting Green; An Exploratory Study of News Coverage of Environmental Issues in Sri Lankan Newspapers'. This research sought out to explore the news coverage of environmental issues in Sri Lankan newspapers in three languages; The Sunday Times, Irida Lankadeepa, and Virakesari Warawaliyeedu in 2014. In addition to that, this study examined the challenges face journalists in reporting on the environment. In order to carry out the objectives of the research, qualitative and quantitative methodology were employed. Primary data were collected through content analysis and interview method. The agenda setting approach was the theoretical framework for the study.

The research found that Sri Lankan newspapers have covered environmental issues, though the subject matter has not received much coverage in 2014. But, it is concluded that The Sunday Times newspaper has covered the highest environmental articles by contract to other two newspapers; Irida Lankadeepa and Virakesari Warawaliyeedu. In terms of the extent of coverage, types of environmental issues, level of prominence, it is evident that The Sunday Times newspaper has given the significant representation or considerable coverage for environmental related issues than other two newspapers. In Irida Lankadeepa and Virakesari Warawaliyeedu, environmental issues were not only ignored, but also (if covered) they were given very small portions of the newspaper and marginalized in relation to their presentation.

Reporters and editors are facing a plethora of challenges such as editors' lack of knowledge about environmental issues and science, lack of support from editors, lack of facilities such as proper professional training, limited space allocation, the complexity of environmental issues, the problems of getting information from the sources, the pressures from management of the newspaper, insufficiency of environmental beat reporters and their interest and passion, influences of advertisers, politicians, higher officials and the public.

Key terms: News Coverage, Environment, Environmental Journalism, Environmental Issues, Agenda Setting Theory