

A Study on Ethnic Crisis and Newspaper Media performance in Sri Lanka (Related to selected Newspaper media from April of 1983 to September of 1983)

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Abstract: The strong contribution denoted by media, in order to create various psychological printings to contemporary folk consciousness within a chaotic society which is consist of an ethnic conflict is extremely unique. Knowingly or unknowingly media has directly influenced on intensification of ethnic conflict which was the greatest calamity in the country inherited to a more than three decades history. At the end of 1970th decade, the newspaper became as the only media which is more familiar and which can heavily influence on public. The incident that the brutal murder of 13 military officers becoming victims of terrorists on 23rd of 1983 can be identified as a decisive turning point within the ethnic conflict among Sinhalese and Tamils. The local newspaper reporting on this case guided to an ethnical distance among Sinhalese and Tamils. It is expected from this investigation, to identify the newspaper reporting on the case of assassination of 13 military officers on 23rd of July 1983 and to investigate whether that the government and privet newspaper media installations manipulated their own media reporting accordingly to professional ethics and media principles. The data has investigative presented based on primary and secondary data under the case study method related with selected newspapers published on July of 1983, It will be surely proven that journalists did not acted to guide the folk consciousness as to grow ethnical cordiality and mutual trust.

Keywords: Ethnic Crisis, Newspaper media, media ethics, Sinhalese, Tamils

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I. INTRODUCTION

The new national states emerged during the post second world war, and were with multi ethnic, multi religion and multi social groups. In those multi social groups, where the nationality was not established, effecting conflicts spreading racial differences. The “racial factor” was considered as very important with the natural conflicts occurred as a structural factor, with the commencement of the human civilization. In modern time, instead of having equal society states it is seen that several internal conflicts have risen within the states with multi ethnic, multi religion, multi social groups. In such sociality with multi ethnic groups, there is no satisfaction due to loss of anticipation; these groups end up mostly with a conflict disaster for human lives or loss of physical property.

Wealth is limited due to increase of population the restricted reserve of wealth cannot be confronted with the demand; to achieve one power wealth and requirement the conflicts among ethnic groups became very complex. Due to the in ability to gain their requirements, the small ethnic groups could not act along with the big ethnic groups while has effected a conflicting situation. Those small groups could not obtain their requirements in a democratic way and have taken authoritarian way to win over their demands. When groups stooped to terror and harmful act which is against democracy; there will be conflict arise with the state. In any country when there are national contravention then, there will be conflicts. In other countries national conflicts and the nationality remains on an exact formdelien. Such situations arise when there exist a poor establishment systems. This is evidently exhibited from the developing countries from the Balkan countries which were united with the old Soviet Russia countries (Samaranayake,1997:11).

Social conditions get changed due to the migration to towns; the development of education and the media development effect for higher social, economic, political condition are anticipated; there are many faction developed againstthe large groups who recent the quicker development of small groups. As stated in the book written by Samuel P. Hantinton entitled, “ Conflict in Cultural”, reveal that, due to the social and economic changes the political stability and the development has not taken place; which will cause conflict in the society.

Also there will be conflict among small ethnic groups who could not achieve their social, economic and political goals.

The small ethnic groups will create conflicts, learning the bigger groups over the religion, language, clean which are attached to their identity. There are also faction create struggles among groups when they find they there exist legal barriers to enjoy their cultures. In a complex society the attitudes to maintain veto powers in small groups create conflicts. For example the struggle between Indian Hindu and Muslim over their historical conflict and the civil war in Serbia, between Serbian and Kwait people over their guilt attitudes.

In the middle of 20th century in Sri Lanka, the Sinhala and Tamil struggle over their identity of Tamils, is identity field as an ethnic conflict. The Slaughter of 13 army sold in by Tamil separatists on 23rd July 1983, was the commencement of the conflict; in addition to the struggle against Tamils in the South created a total struggle in the whole country. (Ranasinghe, 1998: 266).

It is difficult to identify as a hindrance in the media in political, economic and social field in the whole world. That is, there exist a connection in medium, social, economic, political, and cultural fields. The influence of the medium effect on social, economic, political and cultural field is greater for its development or for its downfall. Therefore the responsibility of the medium is to move over the idea of ethnic groups to exhibit the social diversity without inclining to narrow mindedness; also the medium should not prejudice over race and of a particular group.

Today it is accepted as the terrorism should be wiped out through terrorism; whatever, it is not a permanent solution (Ranasinghe, 1998: 259). Terrorism was not started by the medium, but to make it a bloody conflict is caused by the paper media to a certain extent. I feel that there wouldn't be July 1983 incidents in the country if there exist a media culture (Ivan, 1998: 255).

II. ETHICS OF THE MEDIUM

Ethics are identified as human behaviors, conduct, aims, intentions, desires and life styles by Prof G. D. Premasiri. Ethics have a long history. Aristotle the Greek who lived (384 - 322 B.C) considered as the pointer scholar of teaching of communication. The society was encouraged to take decision on principle, with the growth of the medium and it was framed with ethics of the medium, to protect its limitations.

Philip Teyler by his book entitled Ethical Journalism, describes that the medium is not acting or over acting on ethics, similar to the reason by critics on the first American constitution. The prescribed idea on religion work by Rojer Williams of America and on newspaper by John Milton of England are very popular. Thomas Jafferson who was initiated in the editing of the constitution, had a very good knowledge on its first reform with the affiliation and the newspaper art; it is not the full freedom of print. Ethics for the medium was introduced to use it as a frame in the use of the medium.

For media personal

They should consider peace as a valuable news

To allow all the participants to come out with their views, when holding a discussion with media personal

They should try to reconcile on social problems, education and on research on peace

To report in obtaining subject matter its authenticity and to cover all the areas when preparing ethnic reports

To prevent from getting at expected conclusions, at the interviews

To endeavor to visit the place of reporting ethnic situations

To improve the association with different societies with the aim of protecting peace

To identify to respect and enlighten the public on the culture of ethnic groups (Wickramaratna, 2001: 185).

III. THE WORK AND DUTIES OF THE NEWSPAPER REPORTER IN THE ETHNIC CONFLICT

The media and the ethnic conflict will have a close association at the time of confliction situation in a complex Society. At the time of reporting the conflict a close application has to be maintained. Medium is considered as a system to bring about peace and tranquility among people in a conflicting situation, in a time of dissension, suspicion, confusion.

Media has a great duty in reporting a conflicting situation the should devote on "sensitive medium on conflict" to bring about a transformation of peace and he duties are,

To refer toward communication

To find education

To build up confidence

To correct wrong views

To be humane

Abeyasinghe (1998) bears that the media personal should not be weak to will not permit area one to polite the mind, but as a truthful straight forward innocent person who bears noble principles. Dissanayake (1998) who

explains, that the newspaper reporting in a greatest occupation in the world but a noble battle performed with a great devotion to bring about a win situation to self and others.

Ratnapala (1998) has the following opinions,

To have the desire of publishing any news before finding it correctly and until believing on authentic

To publish without considering individual's feelings or gains.

Not to have a desire to publish news, which arose feelings of mentally weak readers.

To explore the prime news, with a great effort where such information is written or said and to add further detach, accept with equimanty any information contrary to your own belief.

Not to be arrogant and not to struggle

To have a social responsibility on whatever the news published

Ivan (1998) says, Reporters are a group in a way the society is directed and follow a principle along with it and it will be an impossible task to prevent such society free from conflict with bloodshed. I will not say that the conflict in Sri Lanka was caused by reporters in the media but I feel that they have many responsibilities for making in to be a major bloodshed he in the hands of them (Ivan 1998:255).

IV. ANALYSIS OF WORK OF THE NEWSPAPERS MEDIA WITH REGARD TO ETHNIC CONFLICT

4.1 Headlines and Subtitles in 6 newspapers on ethnic problem during 1983 April – September.

4.1.1 Divaina Newspaper Headlines and Subtitles

Attack to Airforce at Vauniya by terrorists. The dead soldiers are in the burning jeep (Headline - Divaina Newspaper - 02nd June 1983)

Leave North. In order from tigers (Headline - Divaina Newspaper - 05th June 1983)

Cannot hold responsibility for the scare city of goods, Minister of trade (Headline - Divaina Newspaper - 11th July 1983)

Arrest of 13 Tamils who entered Inginiyagala power station without permission (Headline - Divaina Newspaper - 13th July 1983)

A Sinhala Commercial Bank. Aim is to help Sinhala Traders (Headline - Divaina Newspaper - 05th Sep 1983)

4.1.2 Dinamina Newspaper Headlines and Subtitles

Assistance to Sinhala teacher employed in North and East. Leave with pay until they report to work. (Headline - Dinamina New paper - 31st August 1983)

Arrested 25 Tamils at Katunayake who possessed forged passport (Headline - Dinamina Newspaper - 26th August 1983)

A Peradeniya Tamil student handed over to police (Headline - Dinamina Newspaper - 13th April 1983)

What is the destiny of Tamils? (First page - Dinamina Newspaper - 11th Aug 1983) Marshal Law to North president says he will take drastic steps to wipe out terrorism (Headline - Dinamina Newspaper - 12th July 1983)

4.1.3 Lankadeepa Newspaper Headlines and Subheadings

Let's protect Sinhala Nation and the united govt. President (Headline - Lankadeepa Newspaper - 31st July 1983)

New homes for Sinhalese in Jaffna (Headline - Lankadeepa Newspaper - 3rd April 1983)

Sinhalese have loss interest of Jaffna (Headline - Lankadeepa Newspaper - 3rd July 1983)

Tigers possess passport to go round the world (Headline - Lankadeepa Newspaper - 18th July 1983)

4.1.4 Main headlines and sub headings in the Dawasa News paper

13 Tamil youth arrested at Inginiyagala. Did Tigers creep in to the power house? (Headline - Dawasa Newspaper - 19th July 1983)

Provide information to get buses and trains to North (First page - Dawasa Newspaper - 19th July 1983)

Bombed shot dead 25 in the army (Headline - Dawasa Newspaper - 25th July 1983)

Cannot do anything for the scarcity of goods in Jaffna (First page - Dawasa Newspaper - 11th July 1983)

2300 Jaffna Youth come from abroad (Headline - Dawasa Newspaper - 10th July 1983)

4.1.5 Main Headlines and Subheadings of Rivirasa Newspaper

Reasons for the commotion are due to conspiracy here and abroad (Inner page - Rivirasa Newspaper - 31th July 1983)

Army rule for North - East. Request from peaceful citizens (First page - Rivirasa Newspaper - 05th July 1983)

Another terrorism to suppress terrorism in North (Headline - Rivirasa Newspaper - 17th July 1983)

Terrorists in the North Elam, voice against Sinhala rule (Headline - Rivirasa Newspaper - 15th May 1983)

4.1.6 Main Headline and Sub-headings of Janatha Newspaper

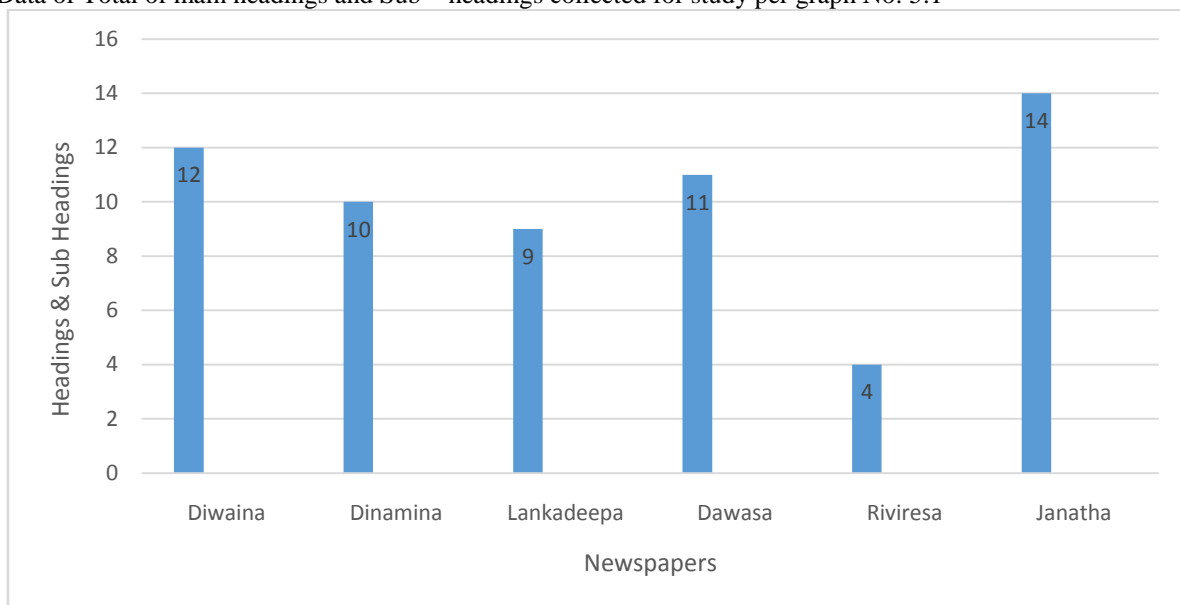
50 Elam terrorists fasting abroad (Headline - Janatha Newspaper - 29th April 1983)
 Tigers have robbed election papers (Headline - Janatha Newspaper - 3rd May 1983)
 Messages of Tigers through secret through a secret language (Headline - Janatha Newspaper - 6th June 1983)
 Useless in discussion. Terrorism will be subdued - President (Headline - Janatha Newspaper - 12th July 1983)
 Political solutions have to be found problems of Tamil people – (Headline - Janatha Newspaper - 04th August 1983)
 Tamil Union in search of another solution besides Elam - (09th September 1983)
 These are being selected from samples.

V. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF DATA ON REPORTS COLLECTED FROM MAIN HEADLINES AND SUB - HEADINGS OF NEWSPAPERS ON ETHNIC CONFLICT

Table No 5.1 Sixty samples of headlines and sub - headings of above one subject to study and for analysis.

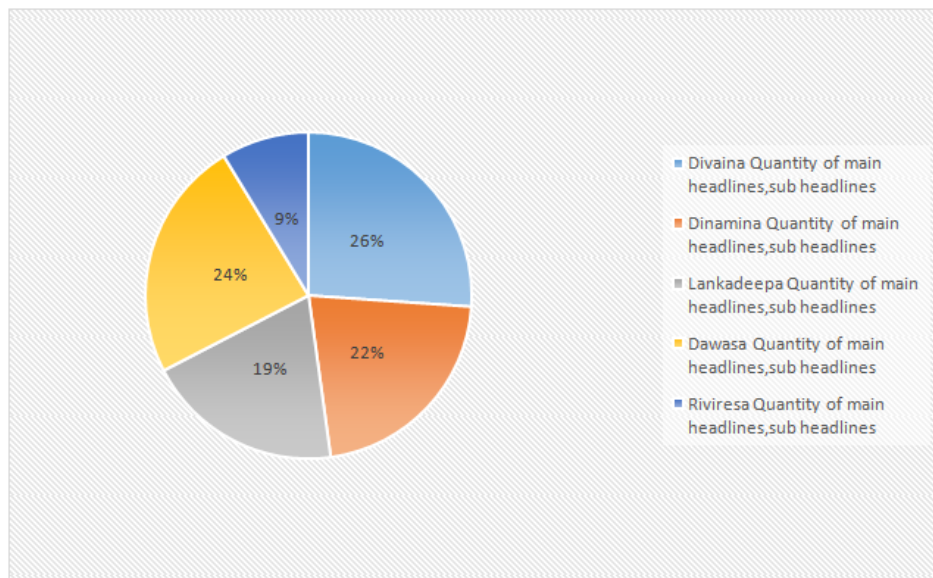
Name of the Newspaper	Quantity of headline and sub – headings selected from the sample.
Divaina	12 (20%)
Dinamina	10 (16.66%)
Lankadeepa	09 (15%)
Davasa	11 (18.33%)
Riviresa	04 (6.66%)
Janatha	14 (23.33%)
Total	60 (100%)

Data of Total of main headings and Sub – headings collected for study per graph No: 5.1



To depict in Table No:5.3.1 and Graph No : 5.3.1 ; from April 1983 to Sept. 1983 and during this 6 month random samples selected from state and private media Sinhala Newspapers on ethnic conflict, covering main headline and sub - headings are analyzed.

In the Table No: 5.3.1 and Graph No: 5.3.1 explain; in the random samples collected from different newspaper show that the number of main heading and sub - headings. Diwaina – 12(20%), Dinamina – 10(16.66%), Lankadeepa – 09 (15%) , Dawasa – 11 (18.33%), Riviresa – 04 (6.66%) , Janatha – 14(23.33%). The distribution of data could be identified well in Graph No: 5.3.2
 Data on number of main heading and sub –headings published in selected papers for study in graph No: 5.3.2.

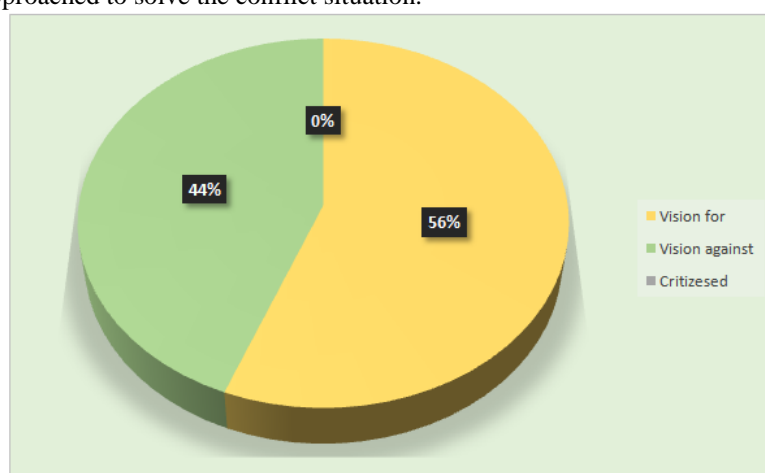


During the early period of 1980 decade there were many, very special occurrences that place on ethnic conflict. The state ousted papers and private media had tried to induce a new opinion to the minds of people. From those newspapers, we can comparehead what the newspapers bear their opinion on ethnic violence. Table No 5.3.2 and table No 5.3.3; indicated during the time & study, what the selected newspapers. As the sample on the resolving of ethnic violence and what the approach made by LTTE to settle the conflict as well as the date on attitudes of the Sri Lankan government done in comparison.

Table No: 5.3.2 shows the date on attitudes ofLTTE taken to solve the problem

Name of the Newspaper	No: of main headlines and Sub – headlines as per Sample	The vision indicated on the working of LTTE on terrorist activity.					
		Agreed		Against		Criticized vision	
Divaina	12	–	–	08	66 ' 66]	04	33 ' 33]
Dinamina	10	–	–	09	90]	01	10]
Lankadeepa	09	–	–	06	66 ' 66]	03	33 ' 33]
Davasa	11	–	–	05	45 ' 45]	06	54 ' 54]
Riviresa	04	–	–	–	–	04	100]
Janatha	14	–	–	09	64 ' 28]	05	35 ' 71]
Total	60	–	–	37	55 ' 50]	23	44 ' 48]

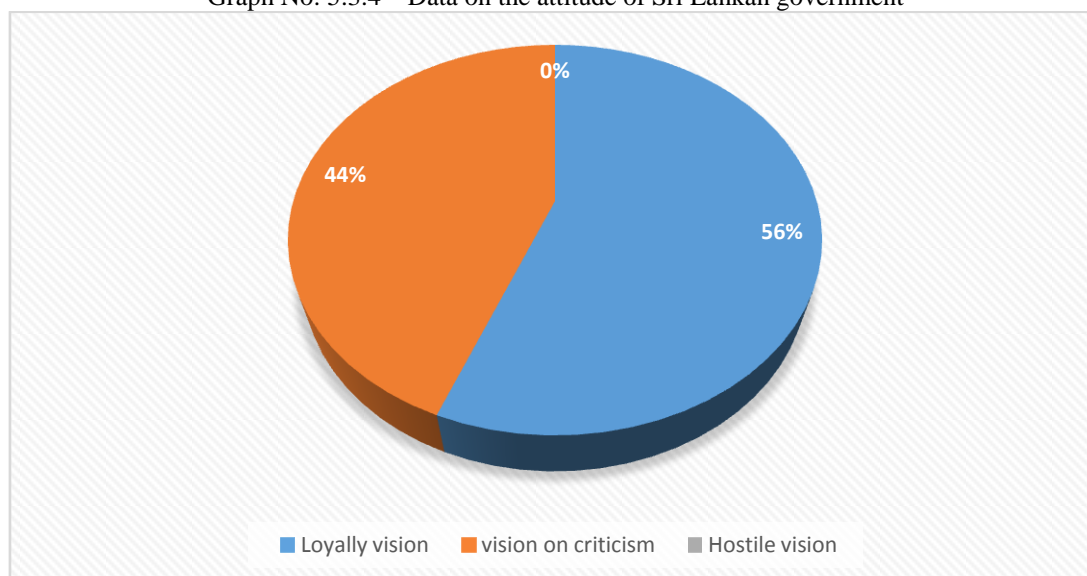
Graph No: 5.3.3 on ethnic conflict Data on the attitude taken by the LTTE organization and what the newspapers have approached to solve the conflict situation.



The newspapers in those reports as depicted in table No 5.3.2 and Graph No: 5.3.3 have reported for the terrorist action taken by the LTTE in the early 1980 – decade. That was a suitable social responsibility. But in analyze of data, the 55.50% main headlines and sub-heading had stooped to opposethe LTTE attitudes and to show a vision against the movement. The 100% criticism by the Riviresa newspaper was a speedily. Vision on criticism receive a zero % when bringing forward detach through the vision of criticism that in 44.48% of the total. The opposing vision newspaper in a factor which Sinhalese developed hatred toward the Tamils. Table No: 5.3.3 shows the detach of date on attitude of Sri Lankan Government on the action taken to solve the ethnic conflict

Name of newspapers	No: of main headline and Sub – headline on per Sample	Vision shown by the Sri Lankan Government					
		Agreed		Against		Criticized	
Divaina	12	08	66 '66]	-	-	04	33 '33]
Dinamina	10	09	90]	-	-	01	10]
Lankadeepa	09	06	66 '66]	-	-	03	33 '33]
Davasa	11	05	45 '45]	-	-	06	54 '54]
Riviresa	04	-	-	-	-	04	100]
Janatha	14	09	64 '28]	-	-	05	35 '71]
Total	60	37	55 '50]	-	-	23	44 '48]

Graph No: 5.3.4 – Data on the attitude of Sri Lankan government



The attitude of the newspapers on the behavior of the Sri Lankan government which was in power at that time was enlightened through the headline and sub – title of the newspapers over the ethnic crisis in the 1980 decade. This will indicate the partiality of the Sinhala media, newspapers and other private media organization towards the state. The state owned Lankadeepa, Dinamina and Divaina newspapers was shown their loyalty to the government; It was seen their Rivirasa was totally against (100%) the government leaving its loyalty but acted impartially; but there was totally 44.48%, of vision on criticism towards the action & the government, which was a low ratio related to the loyalty towards the action of the government. Such loyalty in considered as a violation of media principles.

Table No: 5.3.4 – Analysis of the pattern of presentedby the media over ethnic conflict existed.

Name of newspapers	No: of main headlines and Sub – titles on per the sample	Pattern of presentation			
		Subject cured pattern		pattern of agitation	
Dinamina	10	01	10]	09	90]
Divaina	12	04	33 '33]	08	66 '66]
Lankadeepa	09	03	33 '33]	06	66 '66]
Davasa	11	06	54 '54]	05	45 '45]
Riviresa	04	04	100]	-	-

Janatha	14	05	35 ' 71]	09	64 ' 28]
Total	60	23	44 ' 48]	37	55 ' 50]

Table No: 5.3.4 indicates in its analysis of that during the study period from the samples. What will be the opinion shown in 1980 in the Sinhala newspapers, ethnic issue. The two pattern used to present their analysis through the main headings or sub headings could be identified. That the normal way of presentation or the subject centered pattern or the pattern to show ones agitation are identified. Subject centered pattern (23 - 44.48%) while the pattern agitation (37- 55.50%) This indicates that the presentation by newspapers it is found that the latter has been used. Pay the analysis of data it is found that the newspapers, Dinamina, Divaina, Lankadeepa, Janatha newspapers have need the pattern agitation while the Rivirasa is inclined 100 % to the subject centered pattern Table No: 5.3.5 indicates analysis of data on secured/unsecured principles in the media during the time of reporting on ethnic issues.

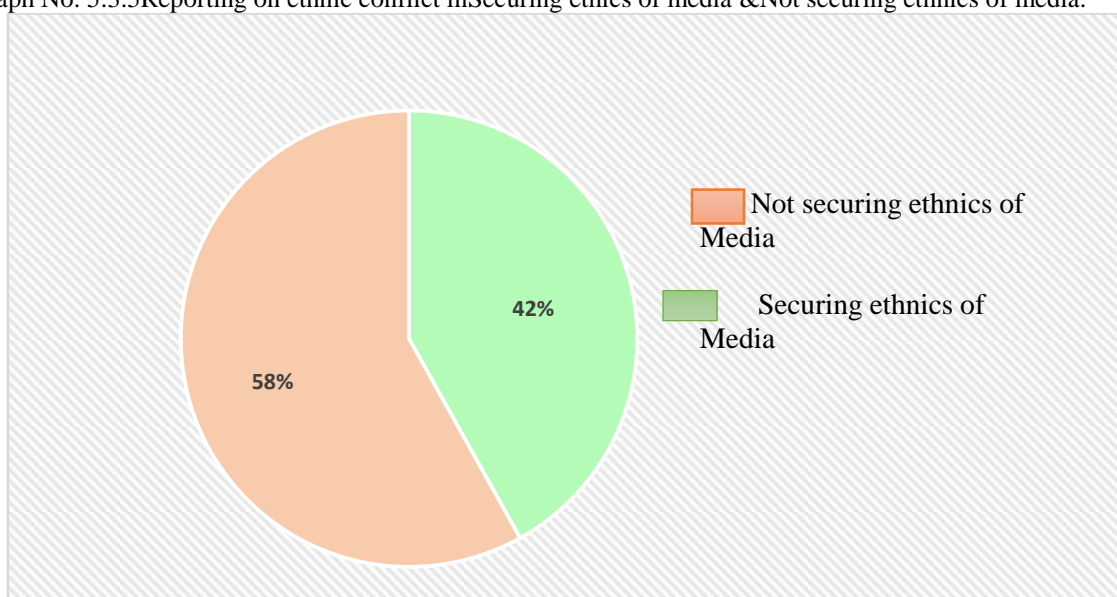
There is a set of principles a newspaper reporter should adhered to and it is analyzed widely in the chapter 3 and he should not be partial specially to his own nationality and should report impartially.

Table No: 5.3.5 will indicate media than secured the principles or not when reporting on the ethnic problem. This situation could be analyzed then,

Name of newspapers	No: of main headline and Sub – headline on per Sample	Reporting on ethnic conflict			
		Securing ethics of media		Not securing ethnics of media.	
Dinamina	10	01	10]	09	90]
Divaina	12	03	25]	09	75]
Lankadeepa	09	03	33 ' 33]	06	66 ' 66]
Davasa	11	06	54 ' 54]	05	45 ' 45]
Rivirasa	04	04	100]	-	-
Janatha	14	04	28 ' 57]	10	71 ' 42]
Total	60	21	41 ' 90]	39	58 ' 08]

The newspapers ethnics of newspaper media, contains responsibility, accuracy, integrity, conflict of interest and such ethnics are accepted by the associated pre managing Editors Association (APME) on 15th April 1975 where those are effecting in different societies as a whole or with a part and built up a media culture with fundaments were calved with a low attention during the 1980 decade; is clearly depicted in the table No: 5.3.5.

Graph No. 5.3.5 Reporting on ethnic conflict in Securing ethnics of media & Not securing ethnics of media.



As shown in Table No: 5.3.5 and graph No: 5.3.5 and from the six selected newspapers and from the required sample, the main heading and subheading and sub-titles, the majority 58.08% is reported to papers against the ethnics which clearly show that it has become a powerful factor to the Sinhala and Tamil ethnic incredulity and suspicion. But 41.90% are headings which are protected media ethnics. It is clear that Divaina, Lankadeepa, Dinamina the state media had violated the media ethnics.

Table No: 5.3.6 Data for analysis to the approach of resolving ethnic issue.

Name of newspapers	No: of main headlines and Sub – headlines on per Sample	Approached to resolve ethnic conflict			
		Peaceful approach		Belligerent approach	
Dinamina	10	01	10]	09	90]
Divaina	12	03	25]	09	75]
Lankadeepa	09	03	33'33]	06	66'66]
Davasa	11	06	54'54]	05	45'45]
Rivirasa	04	04	100]	–	–
Janatha	14	04	28'57]	10	71'42]
Total	60	21	41'90]	39	58'08]

Table No: 5.3.6 depicts in the analysis of April – Sept 1983, period of study of the sample of headings and sub - titles, that the media had clarified the two approach of resolving the ethnic struggle. Some newspapers had taken the peaceful approach while some had followed the belligerent approach like (refer 5.3.6 table) – Dinamina, Divaina, Lankadeepa, Janatha the state media. These media are with the state and agree with the decisions of the state and these papers had used headlines to cause agitation and used abusive words. Private media like Dawasa, Riviresa had used the peaceful approach.

VI. CONCLUSION

This letter will clearly show that the newspaper reporters had failed to bring out a successful political discussion to resolve civil conflict here in the island. It is evidently show that many media reporters who had not comprehend the majority social condition and considered the Sinhala nation as Sinhala ethnic group and the Tamil nation as a Tamil ethnic group. Most of the newspaper media had set aside the noble ethnic in the media had reported to agitate the minds, without any responsibility towards public Dinamina, Lankadeepa, Dawasa are examples. Therefore, newspapers media should build to promote social vision and should involve in reporting in a responsible manner giving truthful reports. The reporter who sees the world who looks as mirror held by another person (Abeysinghe, 1998;271).

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