Media Framing of 2015 Sri Lanka Presidential Election: Content Analysis of Daily News and Daily Mirror Newspapers

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This study analyzed print media framing of the 2015 Sri Lanka Presidential Election coverage. A total of 603 news stories and editorials published in two leading newspaper "Daily News" and "Daily Mirror" published during the period of 21st November 2014 to 13th of January 2015 were selected for this study. The study considered the postulates of "Agenda Setting" and "Framing" to examine the 2015 election. The study focused on the Equivalence frame, Game frame, Interparty relation frame, Issue frame and Emphasis frame. The following questions were asked: Was there a difference in the editorial coverage of selected English newspapers? What were the dominant issues discussed in the Presidential Election coverage? Which election frame got the maximum newspaper coverage? Which newspaper performed the watchdog role regarding the coverage of Presidential Election 2015? Which newspapers favored to which candidate, regarding his campaign leading up to the presidential election? Overall, the findings of this study revealed that the Equivalence frame was the most dominant frame used in the coverage of the 2015 Sri Lanka Presidential Election. Issues of Peace (Terrorism) and Corruption were the most discussed in the coverage of the 2015 Presidential Election. Also, the researcher investigated the consistency of editorial policy and the watchdog role played by the selected press. Newspaper coverage can have a positive or negative impact on the image of an individual. The study reveals that the two organizations framed the information differently. Media played the roles of informing, persuading, educating, and acted as the agenda setter to its audience by putting more emphasis on some issues.

Keywords: *Media framing, Agenda setting, Watchdog roll, Editorial policy, Presidential election*