

# Centre for Policy Alternatives

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Media Unit, CPA

## **Media monitoring report of post tsunami coverage**

**No 01**

### **SHORT REVIEW OF SRI LANKA RUPAVAHINI CORPORATIONS ( SLRC) NEWS TELECASTS ON TSUNAMI RELATED ISSUES BETWEEN 01-07 JANUARY 2005**

For the purpose of this review SLRC alone was selected since it is the main public television channel.

There was general consensus in the country that the government and opposition should work together to meet the widespread disaster caused by the tsunami, of 26<sup>th</sup> December 2004.

Against this backdrop, the SLRC news coverage of tsunami relief operations and the involvement of the government and opposition was reviewed in respect of the period 1-7 January .

The number of news items and duration of news telecast pertaining to different parties and individuals were taken into consideration.

### **News categories monitored relating to political parties**

#### Government

- I. President's statements and engagements.
- II. Prime Minister's statements and engagements.
- III. Ministers and deputy minister's engagements and statements.
- IV. Alliance Party Representatives and Provincial Council Ministers and members engagements and statements.

## Opposition

- I. Opposition Leader's statements and engagements
- II. Hela Urumaya statements and engagements
- III. UNP statements and engagements
- IV. Sri Lanka Muslim Congress statements and engagements
- V. Tamil National Alliance statements and engagements

Government – opposition joint activities were regarded as instances of consensual politics.

**Chart 01**

Parties /Individuals	News Items	Percentage	Duration		
			Minutes	Seconds	Percentage
All Parties			135	41	
UPFA parties only	113	89.97%	118	8	87.20%
H.E President	16		20	59	
Prime Minister	10		10	5	
Entire Opposition	14	11.03%	17	33	12.80%
Opposition Leader	2			53	
JVP and its ministers	11	8.73%	11	4	8.15%
(as a component of total UPFA coverage)		9.73			9.34%
LTTE	4				
(Two items referred to foreigners touring the Vanni areas, whilst the balance two were critical of the LTTE)					
TNA	1			34	
Muslim Congress	1			46	
CWC (Nil)					
All party participation presided over by HE President	2		2	25	

### Note:

- On 05.01.2005 SLRC spent 53 seconds to allege that the Leader of the Opposition had told “Sudaroli”, the Tamil language publication that the LTTE be allowed to handle relief assistance in the areas held by them. The allegation was not verified from the Leader of the opposition or any responsible member of the UNP. The office of the Leader of the opposition stated that this news was distorted so as to ridicule him.

### **News categories monitored related to general post tsunami coverage**

1. National Conflict and Tsunami Tragedy
2. Geological Survey and Mining

3. Government activities during the Tsunami disaster.
4. Foreign Aid.
5. National Reconstruction
6. Victims of the Disaster.
7. Problems of Relief distribution and related issues
8. Children affected by the Tragedy
9. Fisheries
10. Tsunami hit LTTE held areas.
11. Arrival of Foreign Dignitaries and Representatives of International Organisations.
12. Activities of Civil Society Organisations
13. Others.

### Chart 02

Subject	Duration %	Duration		Frequency	and %
		Minutes	Seconds		
1 National Reconstruction	21.17	46	28	41	19.43
2 Government Intervention	14.86	33	2	42	12.78
3 Foreign Aid	12.78	28	55	32	15.16
4 Foreign Heads of State and Delegations	10.52	23	5	15	7.1
5 Displaced families and their welfare in LTTE held areas					
6 NGOs which toured LTTE held areas.	3.21	7	19	9	4.26
7 Victims of the Tsunami		16	1	9	
8 News relating to collective participation in rebuilding the nation		5	55		
9 Distribution of relief assistance and requests		16	16	8	
10 Civil Organisations		9	1	8	
11 Fisheries		6	4	6	
12 Children affected by the Tsunami		8	39	5	
13 Geological Survey and Mining and Natural Disasters		4	31	6	

Only meagre News was available. It was reported that the govt. had dispatched an Aid consignment to North East . The instance of setting fire to a refugee camp and the forcible removal of its goods allegedly by the LTTE was given prominence

### Few conclusions

- In its post Tsunami news telecasts SLRC functioned in a partisan way. It fell short of the standards for public service broadcasting which can be expected of it as a public institution.
- As demonstrated in our previous study on general election coverage, SLRC coverage of the tsunami disaster relief effort promoted the image of the Government.

- SLRC news telecasts did not allocate adequate time to those affected by the Tsunami to voice their needs.
- Despite the relatively high level of devastation and destruction in the North and East, SLRC accorded these areas low coverage when compared with the coverage of the South.

### **Recommendations.**

As the Centre for Policy Alternatives has repeatedly pointed out , urgent steps have to be taken to transform the State Media into a people oriented one, so that the valuable public service media contribution can be made towards the functioning of democracy in Sri Lanka. Such a course of action would be a decisive step towards consensus building amongst all parties. It will be invaluable in ensuring the participation of all communities and groups in Sri Lanka, that is essential for the Post Tsunami reconstruction and rehabilitation drive.

End.

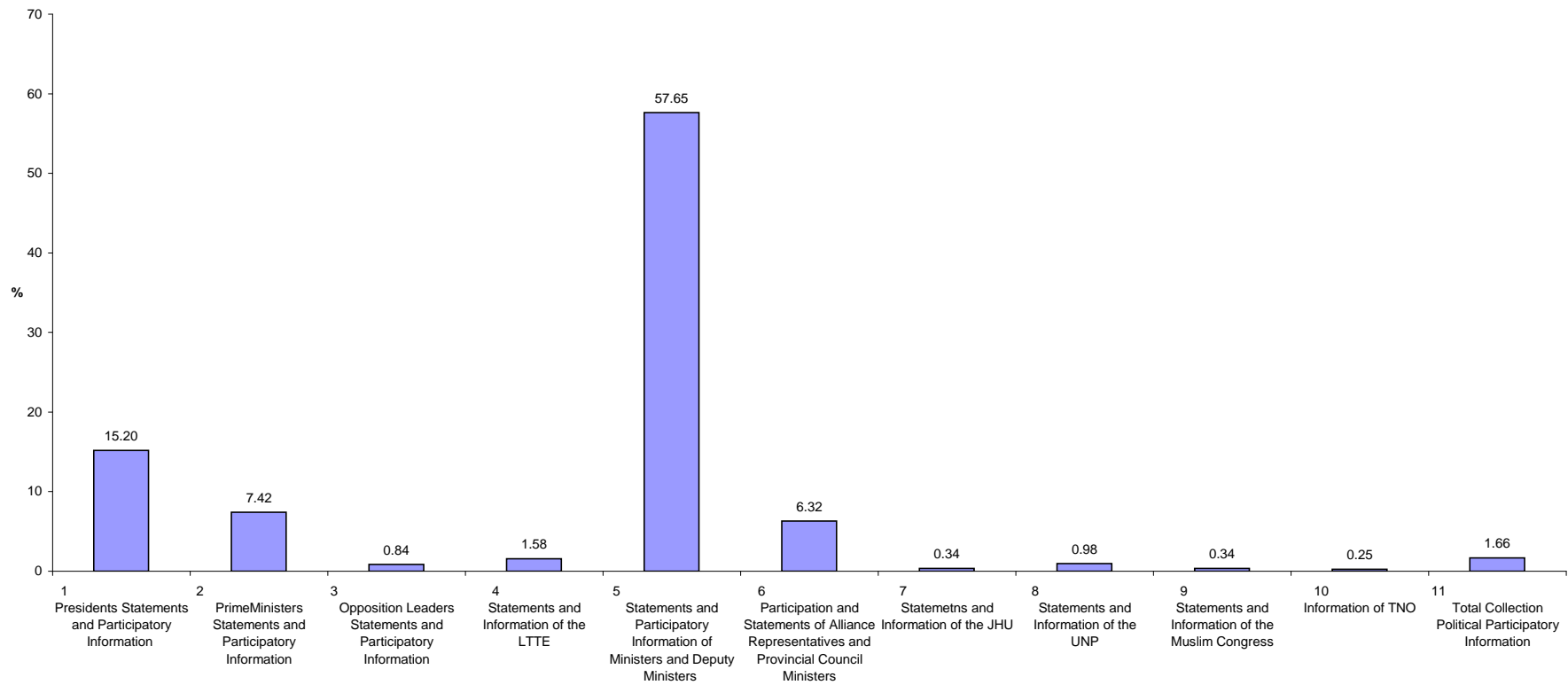
*This report is available on our website [www.cpalanka.org](http://www.cpalanka.org). For further details contact Sunanda Deshapriya, Head, Media Unit at [sunanda@cpalanka.org](mailto:sunanda@cpalanka.org)*

**SLRC News Telecasts: Time allocation and number of news items on National Disaster 1 - 7 January 2005**

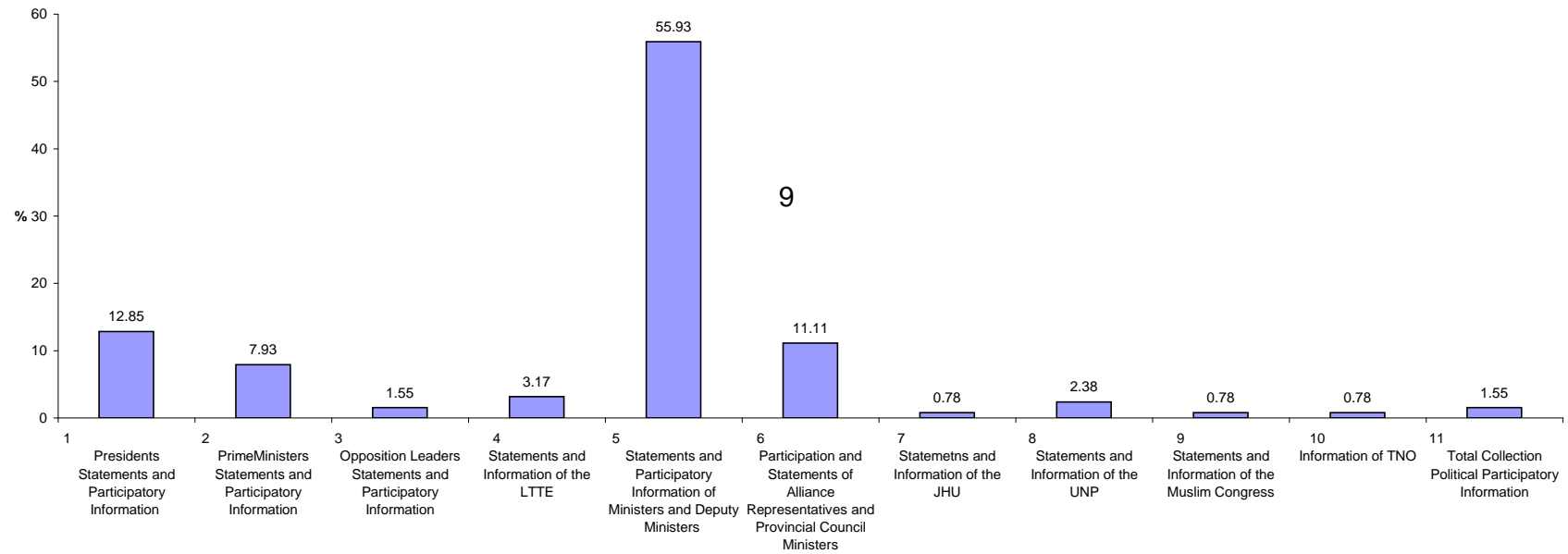
	1 Presidents Statements and Participatory Information		2 PrimeMinisters Statements and Participatory Information		3 Opposition Leaders Statements and Participatory Information		4 Statements and Information of the LTTE		5 Statements and Participatory Information of Ministers and Deputy Ministers		6 Participation and Statements of Alliance Representatives and Provincial Council Ministers		7 Statements and Information of the JHU		8 Statements and Information of the UNP		9 Statements and Information of the Muslim Congress		10 Information of TNA		11 Total Collective Political Participatory Information	
	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Occasion	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence
2005'01'01	1.16	1	0.37	1	0	0		0	18.46	15	0.12	1	0	0	1.03	2	0.46	1	0	0	0	0
2005'01'02	3.05	3	1.33	1	0	0		2	14.41	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2005'01'03	2.38	1	1.27	2	0	0		2	9.31	11	3.09	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
2005'01'04	5.48	4	0.4	1	0	0		0	8.17	8	1.2	2	0	0	0.3	1	0	0	0.34	1	2	1
2005'01'05	3.22	3	1.51	2	0.53	1		0	6.08	12	1.39	5	0.46	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2005'01'06	1.52	2	0	0	0	0		0	11.05	4	1.19	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2005'01'07	2.58	2	3.57	3	0.21	1		0	9.38	9	1.28	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.59</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10.05</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1.14</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>78.07</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>8.57</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.33</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.25</b>	<b>2</b>
Percentage	15.20%	12.85%	7.42%	7.93%	0.84%	1.55%		3.17%	57.65%	55.93%	6.32%	11.11%	0.34%	0.78%	0.98%	2.38%	0.34%	0.78%	0.25%	0.78%	1.66%	1.55%

Time is mentioned in Minutes and Seconds

### SLRC News Telecasts: Time allocation and number of news items on National Disaster 1 - 7 January 2005



SLRC News Telecasts: Time allocation and number of news items on National Disaster 1 - 7 January 2005





**Allocation of Time and Number of items according to issues, 1 - 7 January 2005**

	National Crisis and Tsunami Disaster		Geological and mining Information		Activities of the Govt on the occasion of the Disaster		Information on Financial Aid		Information on Nation Building and Rehabilitation		Information on the victims of the disaster		Problems on distributing of relief assistance and various requests		Information on Disaster Affected Children		Information on Fishery Related activities		Information on LTTE controlled areas		Coverage of Visiting Foreign Dignitaries and representatives		Coverage of the relief activities of Civil Society Organisations		Other	
	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence	Time	Incidence
2005'01'01	2.39	4	1.16	2	9.46	15	2.52	4	0.48	1	3.32	4	8.58	2	0	0	0	0	0.36	1	0	0	5.54	4	5.14	2
2005'01'02	0	0	0	0	12.34	12	4.1	3	5.55	6	9.01	2	2.26	1	0	0	0	0	2.34	2	2.1	2	0	0	0	0
2005'01'03	0.31	1	0	0	0.48	2	3.12	5	9.01	7	1.2	1	0	0	0	0	3.16	1	2.45	4	0	0	0.57	2	4.59	6
2005'01'04	2.45	6	0.48	1	7.07	6	3.4	3	11.11	6	2.08	2	0	0	1.27	2	0	0	0	0	2.45	2	0	0	1.11	2
2005'01'05	0	0	0	0	1.15	3	3.21	6	6.58	9	0	0	1.37	2	0	0	0.59	2	0	0	7.32	4	2.1	2	3	7
2005'01'06	0	0	0.47	2	0	0	7.58	5	7.59	6	0	0	3.25	3	6.24	2	1.49	3	0.16	1	0	0	0	0	0.41	1
2005'01'07	0	0	1.4	1	1.48	4	3.42	6	5.36	6	0	0	0	0	0.48	1	0	0	1.08	1	11.23	7	0	0	0.58	1
Total	5.55	11	4.31	6	33.2	42	28.55	32	46.28	41	16.01	9	16.26	8	8.39	5	6.04	6	7.19	9	23.5	15	9.01	8	16.03	19
Percentage	2.48%	5.26%	1.92%	2.84%	14.86%	19.90%	12.78%	15.16%	21.17%	19.43%	7.16%	4.26%	7.28%	3.79%	3.75%	2.36%	2.70%	2.84%	3.21%	4.26%	10.52%	7.10%	4.03%	3.79%	7.17%	9%

Allocation of Time and Number of items according to issues, 1 - 7 January 2005

