

## **Role of gender in the front page photography of Jaffna regional newspapers**

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Media Plays a vital role in society in that it serves its members with information that is social, economic, and political. As media becomes an even more powerful force in shaping the world's perception of itself, an individual's struggle to maintain a unique identity and self-understanding divorced from media influence becomes increasingly difficult. This has led to the increase of gender stereotyping in our society. Images are able to narrate a story more directly than words. This was the persuasion behind this research study that examined the photography in regional newspapers in Jaffna. Newspapers in Jaffna have a considerable impact on the reading habit of Jaffna people. The objective of the research is to analyze the role of gender as portrayed in the photography of regional newspapers in Jaffna. Male domination in the news room culture makes the newspapers to be biased in their reporting style. Role of men and women is also based on the representation of their role in society. In this research the regional newspaper namely *Uthayan*, *Valampuri*, *Thinamurasu* and *Thinakkural* are analyzed. The research study was conducted from November 2014 to January 2015, a significant time period when the Presidential Elections were held. The results show that while there is some gender sensitivity particularly in the reporting of political news in the four newspapers, it is inadequate when compared with the gender disaggregation in the population of Jaffna. Thus, the study concludes that portrayal of gender in the front page photography of the sample is inadequate, and that there is room for improvement in this regard.

Key words: Photography, portrayal of gender, newspapers, Jaffna, gender sensitivity