

2.43 Newspaper Reporting and Social Responsibility (special reference to the news item on: "Issuing a writ by the Buddhist Monks (Sangha Sabha) against Former President").

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ABSTRACT

The Newspaper is the oldest medium of Mass Communication. Parallel to the limited facts dispersed by the Radio or the Television, the newspaper addresses all the people spread throughout the country. When we study the news, published by the newspapers, it is seen that newspapers pay less attention to the area of social responsibilities. An example of such a news item is one which was published in the "Lakbima" newspaper of 2005 .06.12

" A writ against Madam President is issued by the Sangha Sabha"

The background to this news item was the Tsunami Disaster which occurred on 26th December, 2004. The government made arrangements to provide relief facilities to the displaced persons. The Tsunami Relief Committee or the coordinate Tsunami Relief Machinery was involved in this process.

The above mentioned news item could be cited as a result of this protest. I have made a study of this news item in relation to the social responsibility and the ethics of the newspaper.

Here, I not only studied the news published in the "Lakbima" newspaper but also made inquiries about the situation from the relevant journalists. At the same time I consulted the editors of other newspapers at the national level and obtained relevant response.

When studying the facts, one point I noticed, was that the news item was based on false and incomplete facts. Readers of this country identify the "Lakbima" newspaper as an impartial one. In such a situation the allegation against the former president of the country is not small. A Newspaper should always act to provide full and clear information to its readers. When publishing any item of news, the media should be more responsible. Because of this incident, there were conflicts politically and institutionally between Former President and the Press ownership. But before the situation became aggravated the newspaper "Lakbima" acted swiftly to resolve the conflict.

Regarding this item of news, it is clear that the "Lakbima" newspaper had acted without regard to either the responsibility of the newspaper or the code of ethics to be followed by the media professionals. It was apparent that there was no real source or correct methodology in publishing such an item of news.