

## **Sri Lankan Best Environmental Journalists of the Year 2006 & 2007**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY - 2006/7**

#### **Executive Summary**

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#### **01 Introduction**

It is a well observed fact that the average person is becoming more environmentally conscious. Thus, environmental reporting has become an indispensable component of many national newspapers in Sri Lanka. However newspapers vary in terms of environmental coverage. Some newspapers frequently the report environmental issues while others may rarely report it. Thus far no comprehensive qualitative or quantitative analysis has been conducted to gain insights to environmental reporting in Sri Lanka.

This report was compiled in a bid to lessen the gap knowledge by identifying environmental reporting trends in English newspaper in Sri Lanka.

The goal of the project is to analyze the environmental reporting trends of the years 2006 and 2007. This goal will be achieved by executing the following specific objectives

- The quantitative analysis of specific categories covered in the newspapers during the years 2006 and 2007
- The identification of the newspapers which show the most environmental coverage during the years 2006 and 2007
- The quantitative analysis of days of the week in which environmental reporting was prevalent during the years 2006 and 2007
- The quantitative analysis of reporters who frequently report on environment during the years 2006 and 2007
- The quantitative analysis of the correspondent's categories(i.e., provincial, national and international) during the years 2006 and 2007
- The quantitative analysis of the gender of reporters during the years 2006 and 2007

The report, for these purposes, has analyzed articles from the years both 2006 and 2007. Articles were obtained courtesy of the national daily and weekly English newspapers in Sri Lanka.

## **02 Materials and Methods**

### **2.1 MATERIALS**

The series on environmental articles published in national daily and weekly English newspapers in Sri Lanka.

### **2.2 METHODOLOGY**

For the purpose of gathering primary data, the total of 24 months of the years 2006 and 2007 were divided among the research assistants.

#### **2.2.1 SUMMARIZING ARTICLES**

Each article in each newspaper was read and articles on environmental issues were selected. These were then summarized and tabulated along with the additional data of the name of the paper, the date, the day, the name of the reporter, gender of the reporter, the category of the reporter (i.e., national, provincial, international) and topic and content briefing.

The environmental articles were gathered from the following national newspapers.

- Daily Mirror
- Daily News
- Friday
- Lakbima News
- Morning Leader
- Sunday Island
- Sunday Leader
- Sunday Observer
- Sunday Standard
- Sunday Times
- The Island
- The Nation
- Weekend Standard

The content of each article was analyzed in accordance with the following categories

1. Agriculture
2. Air, water, soil
3. Biodiversity
4. Children
5. Climate change
6. Culture
7. Development
8. Energy
9. Environmental education
10. Health
11. Industries
12. Natural disasters
13. Pollution
14. Tourism

Each article belonged to at least one of the above categories. Each article was assigned to a maximum number of three categories.

The term 'Environment' encompasses a broad field of categories ranging from the much hyped climate change and energy crisis to the little known issues of environment related health perspectives. The categorization of topics was done taking all these matters into concern.

The agriculture category includes all matters related to agriculture and agricultural policies...etc. The air, water, soil category includes all matters pertaining to natural resources and their sustainable use, conservation, exploitation and conflicts. The biodiversity category includes all biodiversity including the diversity among ecosystems, species and genes and also their conservation, sustainable use, exploitation and related conflicts.

The children category includes environmental matters pertaining to children. The climate category includes all matters pertaining to global warming, climate change and relevant legislative instruments. The culture category includes heritage, indigenous people, knowledge, traditional arts and crafts... etc, with particular regard to their tie with the environment.

The development category includes everything of environment that reasonably affects the development of the country or any development activities that affect the environment. Issues pertaining to power and energy generation are discussed in the energy category. Environmental education includes the awareness component. Anything of environment that affect health or vice versa are included in the health category.

All industries, livelihoods and self-employment aspects pertaining to the environment are included in the industrial category. Tsunamis, floods, landslides...etc is included in the natural disaster category. The pollution category covers all aspects related to environmental pollution. The tourism category deals with the travel industry in the country.

### **2.2.2 Data pooling**

Data of all 24 months were pooled into a common format

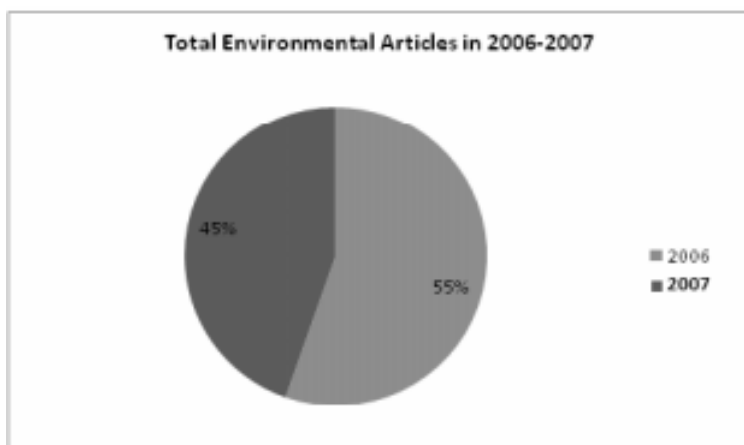
### **2.2.3 Data analyses**

Data of the two years were analyzed separately, and subsequently compared and contrasted to analyze the trends of the two years.

### 03 Environmental Coverage

#### Environmental coverage in years 2006 and 2007

Figure 3.1 depicts the total number of articles on environmental related issues in the years 2006 and 2007 collectively.



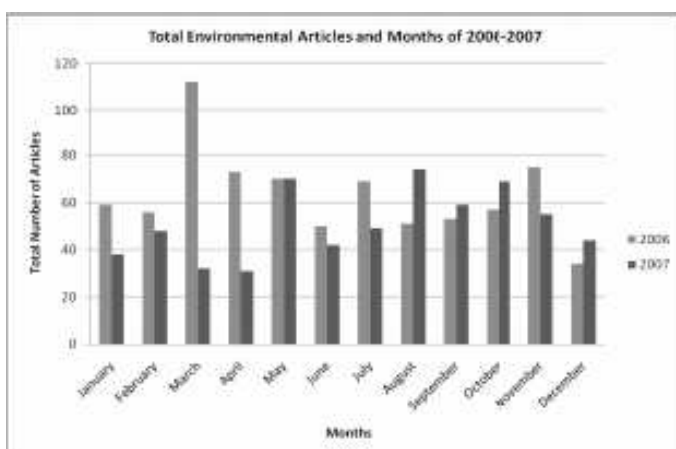
**Figure 3.1** Total environmental articles in years 2006 and 2007

Out of the total environmental articles analyzed (1370), a portion of 55 % hailed from 2006 while the remainder was from 2007.

Therefore it is evident that the trend to report the environment has decreased by 19.5 % from 2006 to 2007.

#### Monthly coverage on environment in 2006 and 2007

Figure 3.2 depicts the comparison of the number of environmental articles in each month of 2006 and 2007

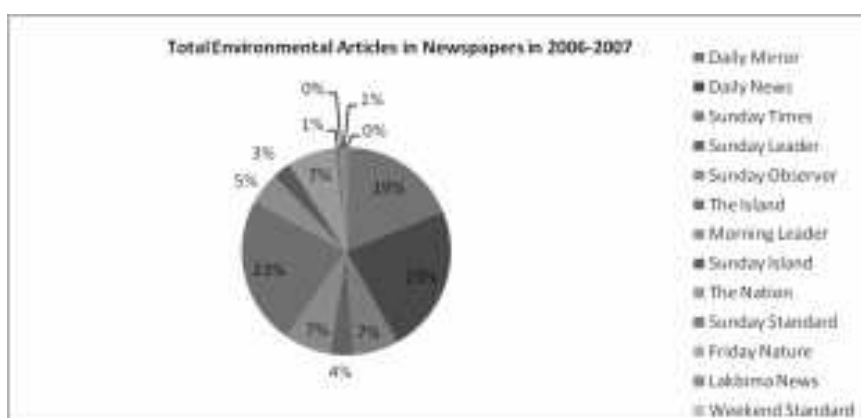


**Figure 3.2**

Monthly coverage of environmental issues in 2006 and 2007

Environment reporting in January, February, arch, April, June and November 2006 has exceeded the corresponding months of 2007. The reverse is true to August, September, October and December.

**The percentage of the total environmental articles of different newspapers in 2006-2007**

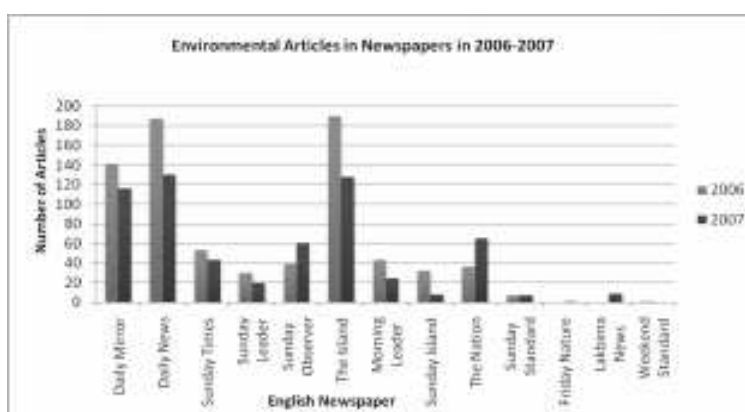


Total environmental articles in newspapers in 2006-2007

Figure 3.3 illustrates the total environmental coverage of different English newspapers during the years 2006 and 2007. The results of the above chart show that the highest environmental reporting of 23% was shown by both The Island and the Daily News followed by the Daily Mirror with 19%.

**Comparison of coverage of environmental categories in different newspapers in 2006 and 2007**

Figure 3.4 depicts the comparison of coverage of environmental categories in different newspapers in 2006 and 2007.



**Figure 3.4** The total coverage on environmental categories in different newspapers in 2006-2007

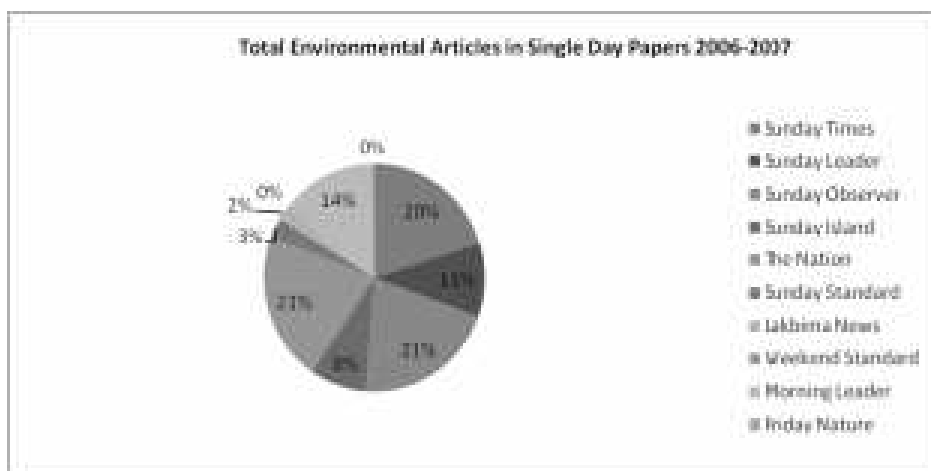
The Daily News and The Island reported the highest number of environmental articles in 2006, following suite in 2007. However, reporting on environment has decreased in both papers in 2007 compared with that of 2006. But The Nation and the Sunday Observer shows an increase in reporting on the environment in 2007.

It is also interesting to note that environmental reporting in Friday, Lakkbima News, Weekend Standard and Sunday Standard were less than 10 in both years. The Sunday Island has reported over 30 articles in 2006, but has dropped below 10 in 2007.

Thus it can be concluded that the overall reporting of environment related issues has decreased from year 2006 to 2007.

**Environmental reporting in single day papers and daily papers**

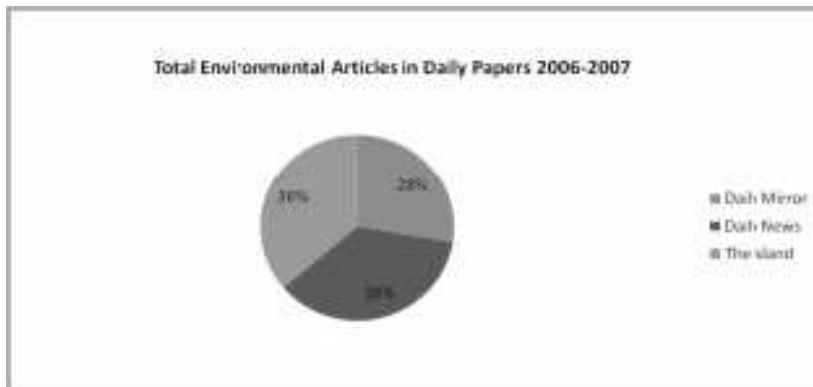
Figure 3.5 illustrates the total environmental articles in single day papers in 2006 and 2007.



**Figure 3.5** Total environmental articles in single day papers in 2006 and 2007

The Sunday Observer and The Nation reported the highest coverage in single day papers (21%), closely followed by the Sunday Times (20 %). The Sunday Standard and the Lakkbima News reported the least (3%, 2% respectively), while environmental reporting was zero in Weekend Standard.

Figure 3.6 illustrates total environmental articles in daily papers in 2006 and 2007.



**Figure 3.6**

Total environmental articles in dailies in 2006 and 2007

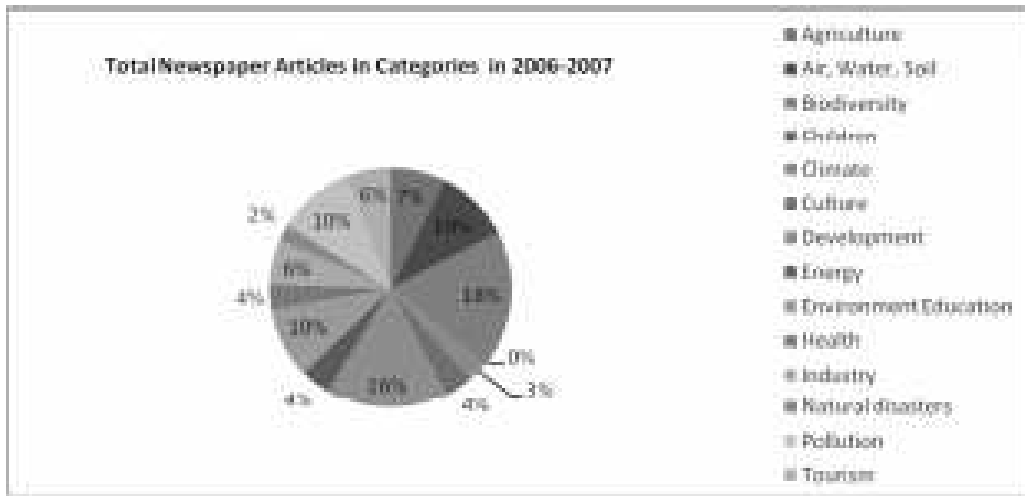
Out of the three analyzed daily newspapers, both Daily News and The Island reported the highest percentage (36 %) of environmental reporting. The Daily Mirror reported only 28 %.

The chance for an environmental article to appear in a daily paper is 6 times greater as compared to a single day paper, because a daily has 6 issues and a single day paper has only one issue per week. On the other hand, single day papers have many tabloids and magazines, in which environmental issues are reported routinely. Therefore the possibility for environmental articles to appear in such 'mandatory' columns is higher than in the daily papers which usually lack such columns. However, no proper comparison could be derived from the single and daily newspapers in this study as the number of single and daily newspapers differed greatly.

### **Total coverage of environmental categories in 2006 and 2007**

Figure 3.7 illustrated the total coverage of environmental categories in 2006-2007.

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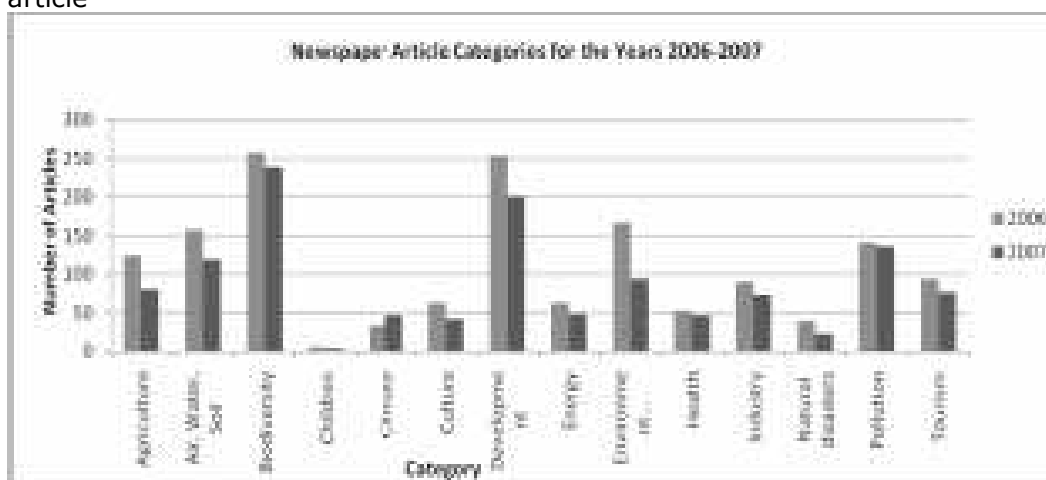
**Figure 3.7**  
Total coverage of environmental categories in 2006-2007

The category under which the most number of newspaper articles could be categorized under was biodiversity, which accounted for 18% of the total while 16% of the articles could be categorized under development. Similarly, the categories air, water and soil and environment education showed 10%. Thus it can be concluded that most of the environmental articles were related to biodiversity and development.

**Comparison of number of articles in newspaper article categories in 2006 and 2007**

Figure 3.8 depicts the comparison of number of articles in newspaper article categories in 2006 and 2007.

**Figure 3.8** Comparison of number of articles in newspaper article



categories in 2006 and 2007

In both years 2006 and 2007, the highest number of articles could be categorized under biodiversity, the second highest being under development. The least number of articles could be categorized under the children category.

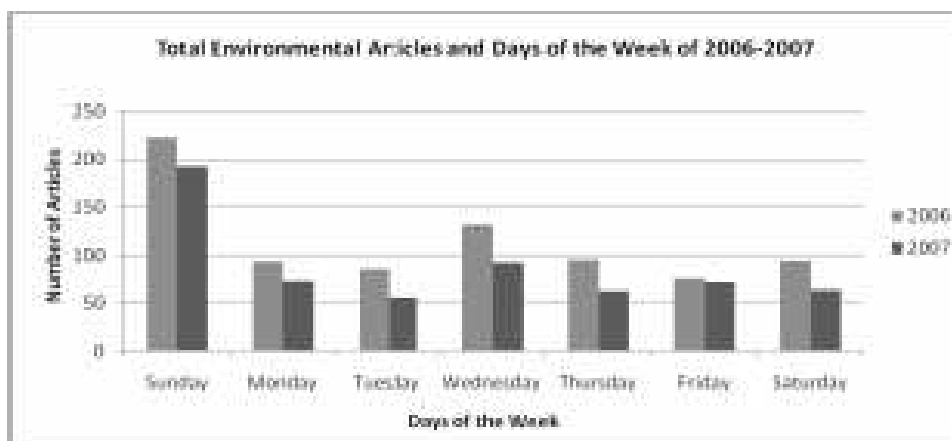
A clear decrease in environmental reporting in all categories was evident in all fourteen categories except in the climate category. The climate category reported an increase in the number of articles from 2006 to 2007 indicating increased awareness about climate related issues. However, the total number of climate articles was still comparatively low.

In general, it was observed that a majority of the articles categorized under agriculture were regarding paddy, tea, rubber and coconut crops. Majority of the articles categorized under natural disasters touched on issues related to the 2004 Asian tsunami and its aftermath.

**Total environmental articles in different days of the week in 2006 and 2007**

Figure 3.9 depicts the number of environmental articles published in different days of the week in 2006 and 2007.

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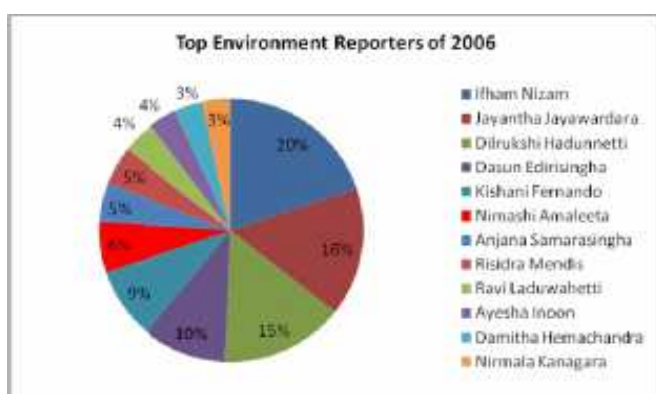
**Figure 3.9** Comparison of number of articles in newspaper article categories in 2006 and 2007

Sunday shows the highest number of environmental article publishing in both years 2006 and 2007. Friday showed the least number of articles in 2006 and Tuesday in 2007. On average, 144 articles were published a day in 2006 while only 88 articles were published in 2007.

environmental article publishing is Sunday. This might be attributed to the dedicated environmental columns in supplements of the newspapers published on Sunday.

**Top environmental reporters of 2006**

Figure 3.10 illustrates the number of articles published by different reporters in 2006.

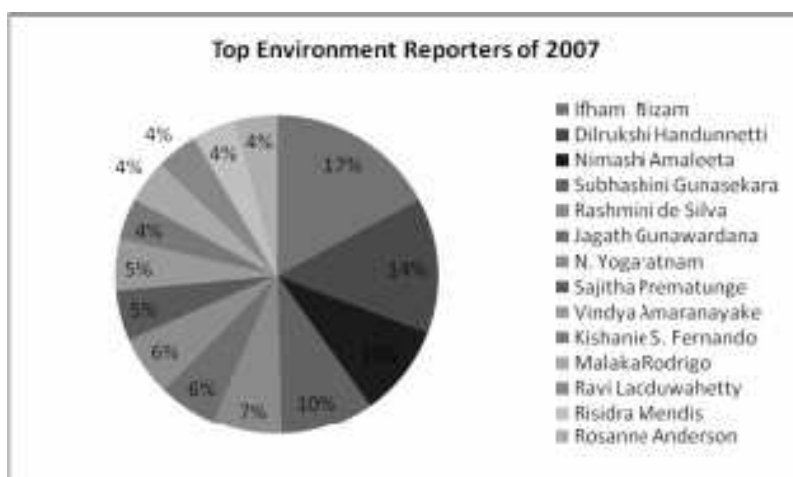


**Figure 3.10** Top Environmental Reporters of 2006

The most number of articles were written by Ifham Nizam whose articles account for 20% of the total in 2006. Jayantha Jayawardana, Dilrukshi Handunnetti and Dasun Edirisinghe account for 16%, 15% and 10% of the articles respectively.

### **Top environmental reporters of year 2007**

Figure 3.11 illustrates the number of articles published by different reporters in 2007.

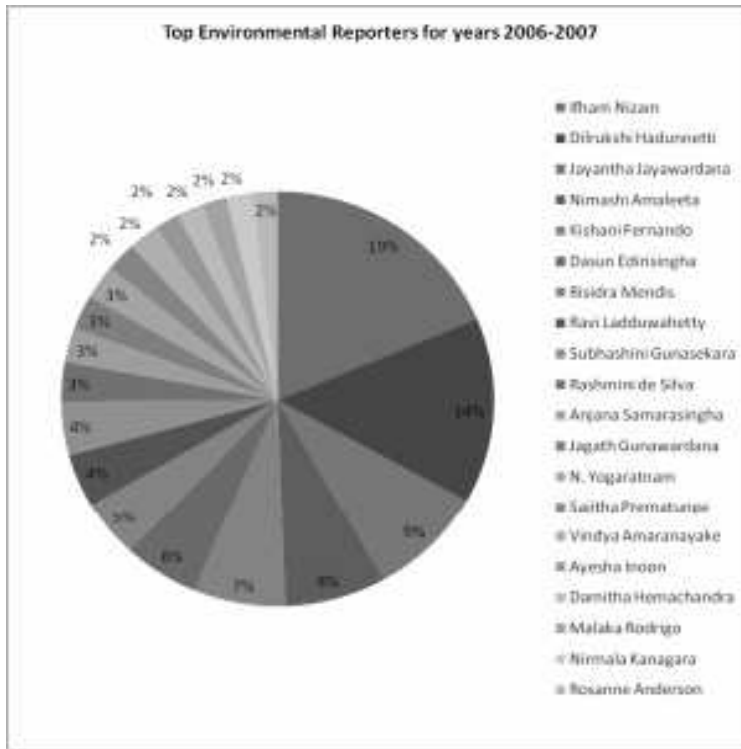


**Figure 3.11** Top Environmental Reporters of 2007

The most number of articles were written by Dilrukshi Handunnetti whose articles account for 17% of the total in 2007. She was followed closely by Ifham Nizam with 14% of the total articles while Nimashi Amaleeta and Subhashini Gunasekara both contributed 10% of the total articles respectively in 2007.

### **Top environmental reporters of 2006 and 2007**

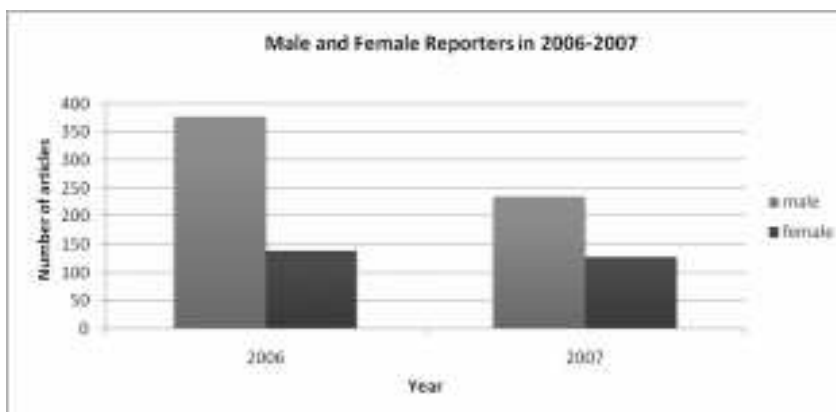
Figure 3.12 illustrates the total number of articles published by different reporters in 2006 and 2007.



**Figure 3.12** Top Environmental Reporters of 2006 and 2007 Overall for the years 2006 and 2007, the reporters with the highest contribution were Ifham Nizam, Dilrukshi Handunnetti, Nimashi Amaleeta, and Kishani Fernando who account for 17%, 16%, 8% and 7% of the total environmental articles. It is noteworthy that these top four journalists account for 50% of the total environmental articles published in the years 2006 and 2007.

**Comparison of the number of articles published by male and female reporters in 2006 and 2007**

Figure 3.13 illustrates the comparison of the number of articles published by male and female reporters in 2006 and 2007.

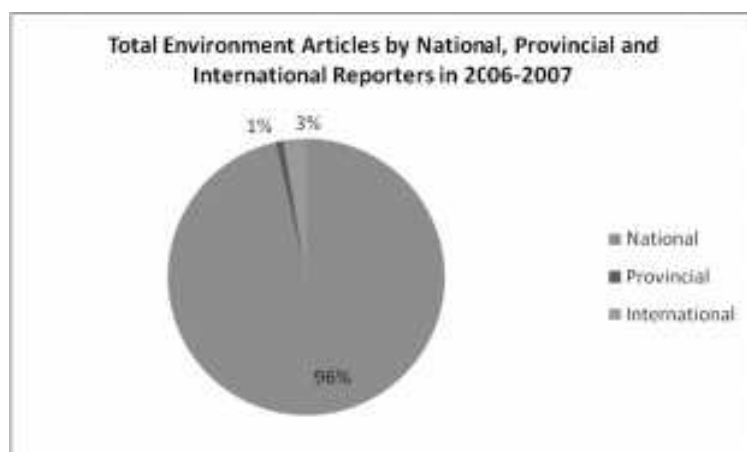


**Figure 3.13** Comparison of the number of articles published by male and female reporters in 2006 and 2007

It is clearly shown that there is a marked difference in gender of the reporter with the number of articles published by male reporters being close to more than twice the number of articles by female reporters in both years 2006 and 2007. However, it is noteworthy that while the number of articles contributed by males has decreased markedly from 2006 to 2007, the number of articles contributed by females has remained more or less constant.

### **Total Environment Articles by National, Provincial and International Reporters in 2006-2007**

Figure 3.14 illustrates the total number of environment articles by national, provincial and international reporters in 2006-2007



**Figure 3.14** Total Environment Articles by National, Provincial and International Reporters in 2006-2007

The vast majority, 96% of the newspaper articles were by National reporters while 3% were from international reporters. Only 1% of the articles were by provincial correspondents.

It can be concluded that the almost all of the environmental articles of the years 2006 and 2007 were contributed by national journalists.

## **04 Summary of Articles**

It can be stated that the trend to report the environment has decreased by 19.5 % from 2006 to 2007. Environment reporting in January, February, March, April, June and November 2006 exceeded the corresponding months of 2007. The reverse is true to August, September, October and December.

When looking at the total environmental coverage of different English newspapers during the years 2006 and 2007, the highest environmental reporting of 23% was shown by both *The Island* and the *Daily News* followed by the *Daily Mirror* with 19%.

The *Daily News* and *The Island* reported the highest number of environmental articles in 2006, following suite in 2007. However, reporting on environment has decreased in both papers in 2007 compared with that of 2006. But *The Nation* and the *Sunday Observer* shows an increase in reporting on the environment in 2007.

The *Sunday Observer* and *The Nation* reported the highest coverage in single day papers (21%), closely followed by the *Sunday Times* (20 %). The *Sunday Standard* and the *Lakbima News* reported the least (3 %, 2 % respectively), while environmental reporting was zero in *Weekend Standard*.

Out of the three analysed daily newspapers, both *Daily News* and *The Island* reported the highest percentage (36 %) of environmental reporting. The *Daily Mirror* reported only 28 %.

No proper comparison could be derived of the single and daily newspapers in this study as the number of single and daily newspapers differed greatly.

Most of the environmental articles were related to biodiversity and development. In both years 2006 and 2007, the highest number of articles could be categorized under biodiversity, the second highest being under development. The least number of articles could be categorized under the children category.

A clear decrease in environmental reporting in all categories was evident in all fourteen categories except in the climate category. This is perhaps in tandem with the global discourse on climate change and an increased awareness about all climate related issues.

The majority of the articles categorized under agriculture were regarding paddy, tea, rubber and coconut crops. Majority of the articles categorized under natural disasters touched on issues related to the 2004 Asian tsunami and its aftermath.

However, it was also observed that environmental education and biodiversity were the most favorite choices in terms of providing coverage, ascribed to their easy access via books and internet that are literally just a mouse click away. They also appear to be the favorite choice in terms of 'fillers' (articles used to fill the space). For instance, certain reporters have continued column after column simply elaborating on grasses, lizards, amphibians, monkeys, birds, butterflies, water, air, soil and of course climate change which seem to be very popular sought after topics. This was true to most newspapers, and

was notably prevalent in the *Daily News*, *Sunday Observer*, *The Island* and the *Morning Leader*.

Sunday provided the highest coverage to articles in both years, and this observation is in tandem with the high prevalence of Sunday papers. This might also be attributed to the dedicated environmental columns in supplements of the newspapers published on Sunday. Friday showed the least number of articles in 2006 and Tuesday in 2007. On average, 144 articles were published a day in 2006 while only 88 articles were published in 2007.

Overall for the years 2006 and 2007, the reporters with the highest contribution were Ifham Nizam, Dilrukshi Handunnetti, Jayantha Jayawardena, and Nimashi Amaleeta, who account for 19%, 14%, 9% and 8% of the total environmental articles. These four journalists account for 50% of the total environmental articles published in the years 2006 and 2007.

The gender ratio of the reporters was notably skewed towards males on both years and in every single month. This marked difference in gender of the reporter was evident with the number of articles published by male reporters being close to more than twice the number of articles by female reporters in both years 2006 and 2007. However, the number of articles contributed by males has decreased markedly from 2006 to 2007 while the number of articles contributed by females has remained more or less constant.

It was further found that the vast majority of environmental articles of the years 2006 and 2007 were contributed by national journalists.

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