

## TV Narrations of Ratupaswala: A Case Study

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### Abstract

Multiplication of media establishments in a country does not necessarily make that country more democratic and its content of the media pluralistic. Television is the most popular one among the electronic media in Sri Lanka. It can be observed that as a result of deregulation of the media since 1992, some 72 radio channels and about 21 television channels have been thrived. The objective of the present study is to examine through the content of news whether the abundance of broadcasts has had an influence on their content so as to make it pluralistic. This research can be called as an analysis of the media content in particular, the content of news telecast by six Sinhala medium television channels during a period of 10 days relating to a public conflict occurred in Gampaha District. The clash which affected 22 *Grama Niladhāri* Divisions namely *Ratupaswala*, *Nadungamuwa*, *Imbulgoda*, *Walivēriya*, *Ambaraluwa* and *Galoluwa* in *Gampaha* and *Mahara* Divisional Secretariats over an issue of pollution of water went on from 12.07.2013 to 01.08.2013. The main cause of the above crisis was the complaint of the residents of the above-mentioned area against the discharging of polluted water by the factory, *Dipped Product Plc.* established in this locality

in 1994. Consequently, a mass protest was organized by the residents of the affected area by blocking the *Kandy road* and new *Kandy road* compelling the government to remove the factory. Further, a fasting was organized by way of protest by the Buddhist clergy in the *Veliveriya* playground. The present study concentrates on examining the pluralistic differences of media content of the news broadcasts pertaining to the above on the basis of the mode of its reconstruction of 6 Sinhala television channels.

**Keywords:** *Media diversification, Rathupsawala water commotion, TV narrations*

## **Discussion**

Television as a media can perform an exceedingly perfect role in inquiry for news and analysis and presentation of information etc. because it is an audio-visual technique. Consequently, the social community with a television characteristic of pluralistic content manifests advances democratic features. There are a number of factors behind this pluralism. They include media culture of a country, state of artists being trained and skilled, nature of regulation, and pluralism of media establishments.

Case study is one of the means of studying the behaviour of the media. It is in different ways that various media establishments pay response to the one and the same event. On the basis of this point behaviour of each media establishment can be observed. Factors that determine such behaviour can be investigated separately. In the light of response given by various media to a particular event and the way they present it to patrons, one can draw a clear-cut picture of not only their expressions but also other features such as information pertaining to artists themselves, their media culture and authority they exercise. The aim of the present study is to re-examine how the particular event in question occurred in Sri Lanka had been reconstructed by 6 Sri Lankan television channels. Drawing information from the above, it is expected to solve the problem whether the multiplication of media establishments has led to a pluralistic use of the media.

## **Nature of study**

This is a case study. It is the file photos of the leading news broadcast transmitted from 27.07.2013 to 05.08.2014 which is used herein as sources. All these file photos were taken from internet. It was only television news which was adopted. Out of all the main channels now being operative in Sri Lanka news broadcasts of 6 of them, i.e., *Sirasa*, *Swarnavāhini*, *Hiru*, *Derana*, *ITN* and *National Rupavāhini* have been selected. It was the series of incidents occurred at *Ratupaswala* in *Weliwēriya* during the period of 10 days referred to above that form the present study. As the Ph value in water at *Ratupaswala* went down the residents of the locality lay the blame on Dipped Products PLC establishment for the adverse effect and following a tumult they made and in the process of their protest 3 people were shot dead by armed forces. How the above incident was reported by those 6 TV channels is the subject of the study. Only the above 6 channels were made use of because they are the most recognized chief news transmissions in Sri Lanka. Although TNL is also yet another channel of importance as we could not get their file photos from the internet we had no occasion to use the particular data. The presentation of data herein take place according to chronological order.

## **A brief introduction to Ratupaswala water commotion**

This issue was called by many a media establishment as “Ratupaswala drinking water crisis.” Residents of 22 Grāma Niladhāri Divisions belonging to PrādesīyaSabhā (Divisional Councils) Gampaha and Mahara were involved in this matter. (see Table 1) Principal villages involved included Gampaha, Sivuralamulla, Nāndungamuwa, Ūruwala, Wāliwēriya, Wāliwēriya west, Ambaraluwa, Kiritittala, Ätikehelgalla, Bandārawatta and Helanwatta. Ph value in water in these villages are less than 06. It is reported that the value is something like 3.5 and 4. In other words acidity is much higher. Due to this high acidity some of those who consumed the water in question fell ill and even died. We have come to know that a report issued in 1960s recommended that as the acidity of the water here is high it is not suitable

for drinking but the soil in this locality is suitable for a growth such as pineapple But the said report/paper says that a study pertaining to this matter had been carried out by a team of researchers and it had been found out by them that the water containing exceedingly vast amount of acidity has been released from the factory to be contacted the underground water. (janarala.wordpress.com/2013/08/02/helis-wenigrs) Report which was summoned by the courts from the analyst was presented before the latter and its contents are as follows.

*“Magistrate said that” according to the report of the Government Analyst Ph value in the water surrounding the factory is up to 4.55 and that of the factory is 6.52 and although the water in the surroundings lacks standard that of factory maintains the standard and the factory water has ammonia nitrate in it and it cannot be determined that the Ph value has gone down due to factory.” (Lankādīpa, 02.02.2015)*

According to the report of the Government water in the factor is more suitable for drinking than that of the surroundings of the factory. According to the standard No SLS 614 1983 of Sri Lanka Standards Institutoin Ph value should be between 7.0 and 8.5 and the maximum Ph value range not harmful to health is 6.5 – 9. However, clean drinking water is one of the fundamental human rights which is recognized not only by the world<sup>2</sup> but also by the government of Sri Lanka<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1. Population in the locality affected by the water crisis**

<b>Provincial Secretariat Division</b>	<b>GrāmaNiladhāri Division</b>	<b>Population</b>
Gampaha	Bälummahara	3,163
	Ratupaswala	3,294
	Galloluwa	1,932
	Imbulgoda (North)	1,591
	Imbulgoda (South)	2,149
	Välivēriya (North)	2,921
	Välivēriya (South)	1,874
	Välivēriya (East)	2,376
Mahara	Hēnēgama	2,206

**Table 1. Population in the locality affected by the water crisis**

<b>Provincial Secretariat Division</b>	<b>GrāmaNiladhāri Division</b>	<b>Population</b>
	Vilimbula (North)	1,797
	Vilimbula (South)	3,070
	Butpitiya (North)	390
	Butpitiya (South)	933
	Ūruwala (East)	1,756
	Ūruwala (West)	1,769
	Sivuralumulla	1,456
	Māharagama	1,507
	Kīnigama	1,835
	Kimbulgoda	1,724
	Pilikuttuwa	1,598
	Vilimbula (North)	1,797
	Vilimbula (South)	3,070

(Source: Dept. of Census & Statistics)

Dipped Products PLC belonging to Hayley's Company was opened in Nādungātuma in the year 1994. Even prior to this year the acidity in water in the region had already been there. This establishment is a factory manufacturing rubber glove. The production of this factory fulfils 18% of the world's requirement of rubber gloves. As the quality of these rubber gloves are higher in standard than that of in India and China it has become a challenge to those two countries. During the last few years at a number of occasions, the factory removed about 120 employees who were residing in the area. Some of these employees have been reported as active members of JVP. It is as a result of the combination of a natural phenomenon with a personal issue that the crisis in question arose. Some were of the opinion that Indian gloves factories had wanted to disable the factory and as such there had been the Indian Intelligence behind the issue. Accordingly, two main points seem to emerge.

- 1) *There is a water crisis in this area.*
- 2) *There prevails a hatred towards the factory.*

What the people were asking was to solve the water problem and to close the factory. As the police and the political authority did not pay due attention to the matter a large group of people blocked up the New Kandy Road at Wäliwēriya and the Colombo-Kandy Road at Bälummahara on 01.08.2013.

While a sub-division of the Army under Brigadier Desapriya Gunawardane was sent to this locality and all the three parties; the Police the Army and the STF (Special Task Force) got together and assaulted civilians, shot and killed 3 people and controlled the mob. This act was disapproved by all the political organizations, but pro-government organized bodies. Then in order to solve the problem a project to distribute drinking water was implemented and inquiries were held into killing and the injured. What the subsequent tests done by combined body of a number of institutes revealed was that the Ph value in water in the surroundings had not been changed owing to the filthy water discharged by the factory. In consequence, the factory won the case. Compensation for the dead and the injured was being considered.

The incident referred to above is not simple as it seems to be. There were a number of individuals actively engaged in it. Interference of all of them with the case was highly complex. What we are discussing here is the contribution of the media. What follows is a table 2 which shows the nature/structure and portions of broadcasting time allotted to the incident by those 6 TV channels, during the relevant period.

### Television narratives

**Table 2: Reports and durations of telecast of 6 TV channels.**

<b>Channel</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>News 27.07.2013</b>
Sirasa	3 min.40 sec.	News telecast on 13.07.2013 referring to Contamination of drinking water with germs says that it was reported. People block up Biyagama - Gampaha Road and make a

		clamour. A.S.P. Gampaha, Ruvan Ranathunga, Chairman Pradesiya Sabha promised people to arrange a discussion with the authority at 10. a.m. next day. Then the uproar ends.
Swarnavāhinī	2 minutes 33 seconds	Residents of 8 villages block up Kandy Road asking for drinking water. People obstruct New Kandy Road at Bälummahara making a protest. SP says that he went to the factory and after coming back said that the factory would close. The people were dispersed. Ajith Mannapperuma (UNP) M.P. visits the spot. SP says that it cannot be reported to the Police. With SP's presence the protest ends.
Hiru	3 minutes 11 seconds	Residents of 10 villages protesting against a factory in Nädungama marched along the street. This is a crisis dating back to some years. Ph value in well water goes down. SP Chandana Kodituwakku Ajith Mannapperuma M. P.
Derana	1 minute 56 seconds	New Kandy Road is closed for 2 hours. Water is polluted. Authorities take no action. Atmosphere become hot when Ajith Manapperuma visits. People's furious protests are Broadcast. Settled after police intervention.
ITN		Not reported
S.L.R.C		Not reported
<b>Channel</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>News 28.07.2013</b>
Sirasa	3.min. 07.sec.	A fasting led by Ven. Siridhamma launched at Wälivēriya Playground. Commenced at 12 noon. Chairman, Pradesiya Sabha

		Gampaha said they would arrange a discussion with Susil PremJayanth at 2 p.m. tomorrow.
Swarnavāhinī	9.min.42	Reproached authorities for not visiting the place. Ven. Thēripāha SiriDhamma, Chief Incumbent, Galoluwa Temple would commence the fasting. Antiriot police were stranded at ease. Mr. L. P. Kularathna, D.I.G of the area calls on and asks not to obstruct Road. He says that he has arranged a discussion with Mr. Basil Rajapaksha the following day at 3.30 p.m.
Hiru	1.min. 58 sec.	Chief Incumbent of Galoluwa Sambodhi Temple commences fasting. D.I.G, S.P., says that the following day at Gampaha District Secretariat a discussion will be held. When people heard about the postponement of the meeting to be held on that day to the next day, they become agitated.
Derana		Does not report incident.
ITN		Does not report incident.
S.L.R.C		Does not report incident.
<b>Channel</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>News 29.07.2013</b>
Sirasa	3.min. 21sec.	Residents of 10 villages including Gampaha, Sīvaralamulla, Nadungamuwa, Uhuralamulla, are anticipating a discussion at 2.00 p.m. today. A farmer says that some 7 or 8 farmers have lost their lives. News 1 <sup>st</sup> carry out a special investigation into this. Death of Melani Asangika Pieris, 39, some 3 months ago. 60-year-old Anula Airangani Senarath who lost her eye sight are taken to



	account. For the last number of years cultivable land has been abandoned.
Swarnavāhini	Not Reported
Hiru	Not Reported
Derana	Assault by ruffians on Mervin Silva's son is the principal news item.
ITN	Not Reported
S.L.R.C	Not Reported

Channel	Duration	News 30.07.2013
Sirasa	05min. 20sec.	The priest goes on fasting. With a view to representing all the groups at the discussion, a committee has been appointed. The report has been called for within 2 weeks. The factory has been besieged by obstructers. Some more priests have joined the fasting. Three priests are fasting now. DIG Western Pro. Anura Senanayake, Mervin Silva and arrive in. Till they go to courts next day Marvin Silva requests to close the factory. It is done.
Swarnavāhini	07 min. 49 sec.	It is said that people have been on the road since last Saturday. Police and Army is on the alert. Protest goes on.
Hiru	2 min. 38 sec.	Factory is provisionally closed down. People are still near the factory. They besiege the factory at 8 pm. STF, Riot Police and army was stationed. Anura Senanayaka and Mervin Silva were present in the morning. Factory was temporarily closed. Hiru is carrying out a special investigation. Offers information about Kudumirislanda area. Asidity in the area is

		high. Ph value in water is 3.9. This report was presented by Ananda Mādagedera and Bhātiya Attanayaka.
Derana	2 min. 45 sec.	Ven. Siridhamma says that he is going to do a deadly fasting next 15 <sup>th</sup> . Mervyn closes down the factory. Reports that people who do not accept it go on protesting.
ITN		Does not report incident.
S.L.R.C		Does not report incident.
<b>Channel</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>News 31.07.2013</b>
Sirasa		Presents a review of Ratupaswala incident. Palita Senaratne, Attorney-at-law says that on that day police did not arrange the case in relevant manner. Ven. Gantaramulle Sēlaranata has a discussion with Ven. Siridhamma. President is speaking to him over the phone and trying to settle the problem.
Swarnavāhinī		Anura Senanayaka explains over the phone. To take legal action under section 98 of Penal Code more than 5 statements are necessary. He says only 4 statements are given.
Hiru		Ratupaswala case is put off for next day. Visuals are presented. Since previous day factory road is closed. Reports that the courts said that it cannot make an order to close down the factory only on the basis of 4 complaints. Courts made an order to get reports from 5 establishments.
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Water Resource Board</li> <li>2. Central Environmental Bureau</li> <li>3. Medical Superintendent of Health</li> <li>4. Government Analyst's reports are called for. Courts say that it has no authority to make an order to people to relinquish</li> </ol>

		the occupation (obstruction) of the factory road.
Derana		Keeps on reminding old news. Says the case was not filed under Section 98. Convince that police wilfully refrain from bringing this matter to the notice of the courts.
ITN		Does not report incident.
S.L.R.C		Does not report incident.
<b>Channel</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>News 01.07.2013</b>
Sirasa	6.30	Special news. (Gothābhaya Rajapaksha) has decided to close down the factory temporarily. Then it was revealed that there had been even a conflict.
Swarnavāhinī	5.30	Outcry of 10 villages for 6 days. Blocked New Kandy Road at Wāliweriya and Kandy Road at Bālummahara. Reference made includes use of teargas, water-cannon, a number of people being injured, case put off for 22 <sup>nd</sup> August. Shops in Wāliweriya closed down, police and Army using discretion, 13 admitted to Watupitiwala hospital some lost life, Water Board has been ordered to supply water.
Hiru	7.17	New Army Chief assumes duties Obstructors assaulted. Even the media artists are hurt. A priest explains Magistrate Gampaha needs reports within 2 weeks. Factory is closed for 2 weeks.
Derana		Broadcast of attempted murder of Mrs. Mandana Ismail.
ITN		Does not report incident.
S.L.R.C		Does not report incident.

Channel	Duration	News 02.07.2013
Sirasa	4.47	It is said investigation is made by Colombo Crime Division. Army Mediaspoke man Rowan Wanigasuriya says a separate investigation will be made by Army. Corpse of the student is in Gampaha Hospital. 41 injured are still in 5 hospitals. Gampaha- Biyagama Road, closed last night is open this morning. Even at the moment Police and Army keep watch. Dead student K.A. D. Akhila Dinesh 17studied at Bandujoti College, Yakkala resided at Helanwatta, Wäliwēriya. It is said that Ven. TeripähäThero threatened to kill. The injured are given treatment in Gampaha, Watupitiwala, Uduwila, Ragama, Colombo Hospitals. Marvyn Silva, Sarath Fonseka etc. visit Hospitals.
Swarnavāhinī	7.53	37 people including 9 security officials are still in hospital. How did a clash arise following the fulfilment of peoples need. Army is hit with petrol bombs & bottles filled with sand. Discussion will be held at Dist. Sec. Gampaha led by Basil some political stooges who are addressing the media on behalf of the Govt. are behind the issue. He refers to removal of 120 JVP supporters from factory. 8 out of the injured are in National hospital 3 in I.C.U. Visuals Mervyn's visit to Hospital Gampaha.
Hiru	16.57	Information divulged cause of death of the student in Wäliwēriya clash was shooting. Colombo crime Investigation begins inquiries. Hiru broadcasts at 6.30 pm what a spectator supplied them. Telecast is on shooting which occurs as if in a war. Electricity is disconnected. Teargas The road about 200 meters from Wäliwēriya Town towards Helanwatta is stained with blood. This post-war position is

reported by Sandun Aroscha Fernando. The media was prevented from reporting what happened at night. A multitude of shops in the town damaged. Only after the arrival of the head priest St. Anthony church Wāliweriye the people who occupied it left the place. Church has been shot. As RuvanVanigasekara said Army has assisted police. People who had been in church and assented scold army. 5-member committee has been appointed by the army. Its chairman is Jagath Dias. Information about deceased Akhila Dinesh. He was in Gr. 12. Discus, iron ball all island player. Human Right Commission sent a group special representative. Views of Pratibha Mahanama, Dalas, Vijita Herat, Ranil, Fonseka, PubuduJayakody, Ven. Ratana – discussion of Basil to give 300 water tanks, 10 tractors, water Pumps arrangement will be made.

Derana	15.44	Who set fire at Ratupaswala.01army official injured all injured include 30. Father Cyril Parish priest ready to help people taken to custody by police by bailing out Karu Jayasuriya.
ITN		Who caused bloodshed in Ratupaswala. Object of <i>Peratugamin</i> of Ratupaswala coup d'etat is warriors. Information about the band of motorcyclists who peregrinated round the village is disclosed. Brigadier Desapriya Gunawardana who went to secure safety says this was done by <i>Peratugamin</i> , Diaspora and NGOOs
S.L.R.C	4.47	Buddhika Siriwardana police media announcer says that investigations will be held. 5 officials and 35 civilians are injured. Even O.I.C. Wāliweriya is injured. Visuals of Basil and

participants of his discussion. Crowd includes Lasantha Alagiya-wanna Minister, Prasanna Ranatunga Chief Minister PMM Ruwan Wijewardana Waruna Rajapaksha Ajith Mannapperuma, Sunil Wijeratne Provincial Council Chairman Dilip Raj Gampaha Pradesiya Sabha chairman Officials of Environment Health Water Resources Priest Ciril Gamini also makes a statement.

Channel	Duration	News 03.07.2013
Sirasa	5.16	Inquiries are being held. Akhila Dinesh's Corpse is placed in his home. Police escort is also given till burial. Arrangements are made to supply drinking water. A woman says while some places are given twice or thrice a day some other places are given once in 2 or 3 days.
Swarnavāhinī	3.08	36 are still in hospital. Investigations by a number of sections. Town is calm. Investigations by Colombo Crime Division 5-member committee. Ravi Karunanayake has visited the place.
Hiru	4.55	Five-member Committee headed by Jagath Dias will be making inquiries. Says Army Announcer. Ruwan Wanigasuriya situation come back to normal. 150 tanks given to distribute water. Condition of another youth is critical 8 in National hospital. 3 in I.C.U. 15 out of 30 at Gampaha hospital are still under treatment. Statement Daya Ratnayake Army Chief made in Kandy is broadcast.
Derana	4.36	(New) Army chief visiting Ven. MahaNayakas & addresses the media says that a committee is appointed. Chairman of this committee is Major General Jagat Dias. Report is requested within 2

		weeks.
ITN	2.16	Don't try to gain political advantages from this death. Lakpriya Nonis chief priest mission house comments Army appoint 5 man commission to inquire into the incident.
S.L.R.C	4.39	At the meeting held to review progress on 26 <sup>th</sup> by Mahinda Rajapaksha.
<b>Channel</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>News 04.07.2013</b>
Sirasa	6.38	Death tolls reach 3 at Ratupaswala. Ravishan Perera, a student, 19 residents Bandarawatta, Wāliwēriya died this morning. Mr. Nilantha Pushpakumara, 29, resident Udahēntenna, Gampola died this afternoon. Teacher of Ravishan Perera, Chaminda. offers his opinion on him. Mine Bureau examines the soil surrounding the factory. Human Right Commission has begun work. Announcement issued by a chief of factory is presented.
Swarnavāhinī	2.0	Army Media Announcer requests not to blame the army till the reports are received.
Hiru	7.15	News of the day-speaks out on death of Ravishan Perera. Report on Nilantha Pushpakumara. He is from Gampaha, Kohuwala. He worked in Biyagama. He was boarded here. In addition to S.T.F., Army, Police and people another party was involved. Says Army media announcer RuwanVanigasuriya
Derana	4.00	Report on Ravishan Perera. He was to sit A/L this year. Akhila Dinesh's funeral. Hayleys Co. Dip Product PLC says it is a work of some people who wanted to muddle up.

ITN	5.9	Funeral of Akhila Dinesh 2 more die of injuries. Answers to blame put on the army. Announcement of Dip Product 18% of global need of rubber gloves is produced. Company runs with all permits of environment. Water is given by Gampaha Pradeshiyasabha. Ranjith Gunawardana says 350 tanks and 8 bowsers. Within one-year pipelines will be laid. (Information was not obtained by calling on the residents) A weekend paper says Gothābhaya will have to go to courts for assigning the case to army.
S.L.R.C	2.14	Has there been some other party behind the scenes? Death of schoolboy Akhila Dinesh is broadcast
Channel	Duration	News 05.07.2013
Sirasa	6.8	Patients are still under treatment. Nilantha Pushpakumara is referred to. He was married. A father of a child of 1 ½ years. Christian priests pay their last respect to Ravishan Perera. He studied at St. Peter's College, Udugampola. Even the brother of Roshan Chanaka who died some years ago in the Pension clash of Katunayaka Trade Zone is present at the funeral. It is 2 years 2 months and 4 days since he was killed. Human Right Council has begun inquiry.
Swarnavāhinī		Does not report incident.
Hiru		Does not report incident.
Derana	2.28	Human rights Commission says that investigations are in progress. Mass media people have been attacked says by Mandana Smile. The media was not attacked - Army



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	spokesman.
ITN	Does not report incident.
S.L.R.C	Does not report incident.

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### Analysis

First of all differences between the channels of the media in reporting this incident should be identified. The following table shows the duration of each channel allotted to this incident during the period of 10 days.

**Table 3: Airtime allotted by 6 TV channels during a period of 10 days**

Channel	Sirasa	Swarnavāhini	Hiru	Derana	ITN	S.L.R.C.
Airtime	46.38	40.26	35.56	33.58	15.5	11.40

It is the channel Sirasa which allotted the highest airtime for reporting this incident. i.e., 46 minutes 38 seconds. The least airtime was allotted by SLRC, i.e., 11.40. The three channels Swarnavāhini, Hiru, and Derana to a great extent allotted a moderate airtime for the above case. It was Sirasa which continuously furnished reports concerning these incidents during the period of 10 days. S.L.R.C was the channel least paid attention to the case. S.L.R.C. and ITN both state media establishments commenced reporting the incident only on 01.08.2013 after the public uproar which ended in one individual being killed on the spot and some 40 others injured by the army. The aim of the two channels S.L.R.C. and ITN is to convince the spectator that the government is not responsible for this occurrence, and that the armed forces and the police are two parties free from guilt who interfered merely to safeguard security, and that it is an event stirred up by JVP. Nevertheless, according to a videotape of a spectator broadcast on 22.08.2013 by the channel Hiru what quite clearly proved was at least 500 bullets were being fired by both the army and the police within the relevant period 15 minutes and 44 seconds at the spot in question.

It resembled just some scenes of war. The other fact of great importance is that the two state channels refrained from presenting any information obtained from those who were involved in the incident by visiting the spot where it occurred. They simply present voice cuts of individuals they need to use as means by which to prove the justification of the shooting. None of these channels present a scientific and experimental programme in respect of this incident. The channel Sirasa visits the locality and presents a documentary of the water crisis of its residents on 29.07.2013. The documentary shows the fact that the water in the area is not suitable for drinking and certain instances of some deaths and illness caused by the consumption of the water. The channel Hiru which visited the village Kudumirissa on 30.07.2013 says that the Ph value of the water in that place is 3.9. This observation is conducted by Ananda Mādagedera and Bhatiya Attanayake. Both these reports pay attention to the problem connected with the water. No channel takes trouble to see whether the factory is or is not responsible for the issue in hand. If such a study has been done, the incident in question would not have ended up in the manner referred to above. At every press conference dealt with this incident all the microphones used bore the signs of all respective television and radio channels operative in Sri Lanka in front of the speaker who addressed the gathering. Thus, in all the channels one and the same visuals were in sight. All the events such as the new Army Commander's answer he gave addressing the media following his visit to MahaNayakaTheras in Kandy, and then DIG Western Province Mr. Anura Senanayake's address after the assault of the army on protestors, all these things broadcast by Sirasa, Swarnavāhini, Hiru and Derana were in one and the same identical manner. So, it is pretty obvious that the media functioned in relating to this occurrence with the object of creating an attractive narrative. It was only the frame of the state media which differed from that of others when playing its role in the process. While the frame of the narrative of the private media created was closer to truth than that of the state media which was much falser. This crisis which affected about 1000 people in Gampaha area was not at all an issue of importance to the

National Television channel. It is clearly manifested from the allotment of exactly a half of its airtime by SLRC meant for the news broadcast to “Ranaviru Real star”, the introduction of a performing programme especially at a time when “the Ratupaswala uproar” has already reached its uppermost position (the highest level) on the 28<sup>th</sup> day. This shows clearly to what extent are the state media establishments sensitive to problems of the public. In presenting the series of these happenings to the spectator what the media did was simply to create “hero” and “villain” (two extremes in the drama) and nothing beyond that. The following gives the nature of the narrative.

**Table 4: Narrative Patterns of private televisions – 1**

<b>Narrative Patterns of private televisions</b>	
<b>Hero</b>	<b>Villain</b>
1. People of Ratupaswala	1. Dipped Products PLC
2. Ven. Teripähä Siridhamma	2. L.G. Kularatne (D.I.G.)
3. Lakpriya Nonis	3. Mervyn Silva
4. Akhila Dinesh (the 1 <sup>st</sup> deceased)	4. Anura Senanayake
5. Nilanta Pushpakumara (the 2 <sup>nd</sup> deceased)	5. The army
6. Chaminda Vanigasekara (the 3 <sup>rd</sup> deceased)	7. Desapriya Gunawardana (Brigadier)
	8. Dalas Alahapperuma
	9. P.A Government

**Table 5: Narrative Patterns of state televisions – 2**

<b>Narrative Patterns of state televisions</b>	
<b>Hero</b>	<b>Villain</b>
1. Desapriya Gunawardana the Brigadier and the army	• Janatha Vimukti Peramuna
2. Army media announcer	• Peratugāmī Party
3. Anura Senanayake	• Dias Pora
4. Basil Rajapaksha	• Unidentified band
5. Mahinda Rajapaksha	

The channel Derana broadcast a voice cut of Mr. Mahesh Rajasoma on behalf of the management of Dipped Products PLC on 02.08.2013. It was only through the news broadcasts of Derana channel that we were able to find a different picture (approach) somewhat dialectic approach to the issue in question, i.e., these series of happenings connected with the water crisis in Ratupaswala. While expressing their distress over the case and stressing on the innocence of the matter Dipped Products Company issued a statement on 04.08.2013 and it was transmitted over the channels “Sirasa”, “Derana”, and ITN. ITN allots more airtime to the announcement than shvs.

### **Findings:**

1. Although the state media establishments depend on **public funds, they do not pay due response/sensitivity to issues of the public.** They tend to broadcast news pertaining to various state projects and neglecting burning issues of the masses.
2. In case of this particular issue the state media institutes pay no attention to opinions of the masses or their visual display but make public merely the views of officials and the authorities.
3. Private media houses pay particular attention to burning questions of the masses. They are ready to interfere with such matters too.
4. All the media establishments are, in general interested especially merely in reporting incidents but none of them perform an exploratory investigation.
5. All the media houses narrate events and conditions as they please to create a “hero” and a “villain”.
6. None of the media bodies goes beyond dialectic insight. They do not examine events and conditions through a pluralistic angle/approach.
7. Due to pluralization of the media, pluralistic characteristics can be found in news broadcasts.
8. As I observe with the exception of immense difference in content between media houses of the state and that of private sector bodies owing to

pluralization of the media no sufficient qualitative pluralism has been brought about in it.

### Conclusion

It can be stated with conviction that the media diversification or multiplication of their number also have paved the way for pluralistic differences in media content only if media houses of the state are compared with that of the private sector. The conclusion which can be drawn by an investigation into in what manner 6 TV channels within a period of 10 days broadcast a single event is that the content of none of those channels contained a pluralistic character with a qualitative value. Further, on the other hand, it must be added that when attention is paid to alternative media associated with the internet, they contain a more pluralistic content. The present observation is restricted merely to the television media.

### Conflict of interest

In this study names of the media establishments, political parties and individuals are mentioned. The authors wish to state that there is no conflict of interest associated with this scholarly work.

### Notes:

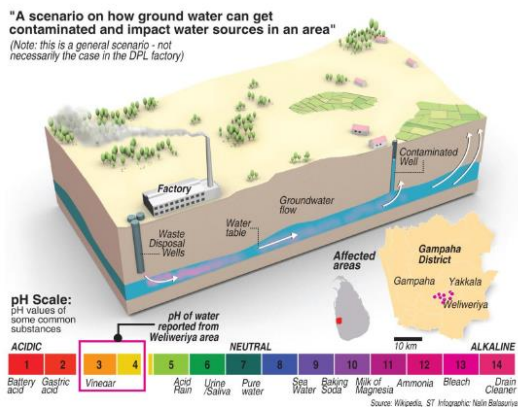


Fig. How ground water can get polluted (Wikipedia)

- A sketch showing how ground water can get polluted.
- *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, 3 September 1981, 1249 UNTS 13 [CEDAW], Article 14(2)(h); *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 2 September 1990, 1577 UNTS 3 Article 24(2)(c)
- **Constitutions** - Congo – Constitution of 2005 Article 48; Kenya – Constitution of Kenya Act 2010 Article 43(1)(d); South Africa – Constitution of 1996 section 27(1)(b); Uruguay – Constitution of 2004 Article 47; **Judicial Decisions** – Belgium - *Judgment N° 36/98* Belgian Court of Arbitration, 1 April 1998; Bangladesh - *DrMohiuddinFarooque v Bangladesh Writ Petition 998 of 1994*, CA 24 of 1995, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, Appellate Division (Civil), 25 July; India - *Subhash Kumar v State of Bihar and Others* (1991) AIR 420; Ireland - *Gladys Ryan v The Attorney General* [1965] IR 294; Nepal - *Advocate Prakash Mani Sharma and Others v Nepal Drinking Water Corporation and Others*, Supreme Court of Nepal, Writ Petition 2237/1990 (10 July 2001)
- “The Human Right to Water and Sanitation” UNGARes 64/292 (3 August 2010) UN Doc A/RES/64/292
- “Human rights and Access to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation” HRC Res 15/9, (6 October 2010) UN Doc A/HRC/RES/15/9
- General Assembly Department of Public Information, „General Assembly adopts resolution recognizing access to clean water, sanitation“ <[http://www.un.org /News/Press /docs/2010/ga10967.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/ga10967.doc.htm)> accessed 28 July 2014.
- Ministry of Water Supply and Drainage, National Drinking Water Policy s 4, 6(1) found at <[http://www.waterboard.lk/Scripts/htm/ Publications/Drinking\\_Water\\_Policy\\_updated.pdf](http://www.waterboard.lk/Scripts/htm/ Publications/Drinking_Water_Policy_updated.pdf)> accessed 28 July 2014

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