

Embattled Media

Democracy, Governance and Reform in Sri Lanka



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Embattled Media is the first book to look comprehensively at the evolution of news media in post-colonial Sri Lanka, with a focus on media policy, law and education. It offers valuable insights into the importance of independent media for democratic governance in the wider South Asian region. The book reviews the role of new media platforms in widening the scope for public debate. Further, it provides a detailed analysis of the existing media laws and policies and of campaigns to reform them. It also focuses on the role of institutions in media education by providing a comprehensive analysis of existing media curricula and underlining the

importance of improved media literacy and introduction of Right to Information Act for a healthy democracy.

The contributors to this volume are Sri Lanka's leading media practitioners, foreign correspondents, senior editors, lawyers, legal analysts and media academics including Amal Jayasinghe, Sinha Ratnatunga, Tilak Jayaratne, Kishali Pinto-Jayawardena, Gehan Gunatilleke, Jayantha de Almeida Guneratne, Nalaka Gunawardene, Ameen Izzadeen, Namini Wijedasa, Sarath Kellapotha and S. Raguram., write from extensive experience.

'Embattled Media is a book on the travails of the media in Sri Lanka that will be of interest to media academics, students and citizens outside the country because this collection is of a high standard, and engages with general issues of media, power and freedom.' — Professor James Curran, Goldsmiths, University of London

'This is a 'timely and important book about the difficulties of holding fast to the principles of free speech under lethal pressure from the forces unleashed in a conflict zone. Sri Lanka is currently on the world's conscience as a result of human rights atrocities. This work shows how crucial an independent media will be to any prospect of future peace.' —Geoffrey Robertson QC, author of Robertson & Nicol on Media Law and Crimes Against Humanity: The Struggle for Global Justice

'This pioneering study considerably broadens the scope of media studies in South Asia. ... The vibrant but beleaguered media in Sri Lanka deserves much greater scholarly attention and Embattled Media makes an invaluable contribution to this endeavour.' —Daya Thussu, Professor of International Communication, University of Westminster, London

'In this book, Crawley and Page and their co-authors have produced a remarkable and authoritative analysis of media in the region. We need more of this kind of analysis ... comprehensive, clear in its conclusions, carving clarity from complexity and beautifully written.' —James Deane, Director, Policy and Learning, BBC Media Action (writing in his personal capacity)

'This book is both a reality check and an eye opener on the state of the news media in the island nation. This corpus not only confirms what we have known for some time to be a state of siege of the fourth estate in Sri Lanka but also offers depth and breadth to that plight and puts the current condition of the news media there in

perspective. It is remarkable that resident media practitioners and proponents of civil liberty yet say all that they do with analytic clarity and cool conviction in the chapters they have contributed to this work. Between the lines in these pages, too, is a call for professional solidarity with those hunkered in the trenches in this struggle for restitution of free democratic expression.’ —Sashi Kumar, Chairman, Media Development Foundation & Asian College of Journalism, Chennai

- **Table of Contents**

Preface	
Democracy, Governance and Media Reform: Sri Lanka and the Wider Region	
I: THE PRINT MEDIA IN SRI LANKA	
The Erosion of Media Freedoms: Some Historical Reflections	Sinha Ratnatunga
Minority Media at the Crossroads	Ameen Izzadeen
Journalism on the Front Line	Amal Jayasinghe
Women Journalists: Fighting the Good Fight	Namini Wijedasa
II: ELECTRONIC AND NEW MEDIA	
The Political Economy of the Electronic Media	Tilak Jayaratne and Sarath Kellapotha
New Media, Old Mindsets	Nalaka Gunawardene
III: LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS	
One Step Forward, Many Steps Back: Media Law Reform Examined	Kishali Pinto-Jayawardena and Gehan Gunatilleke
Why a Right to Information Act Is an Urgent Necessity	Jayantha de Almeida Guneratne
IV: MEDIA EDUCATION AND REFORM	
Media Education: A Curricular Review	Kishali Pinto-Jayawardena and Gehan Gunatilleke
Media Education and the Tamil Community: A View from the North and the East	S. Raguram
Putting the Citizen First: New Approaches to Media Literacy	Tilak Jayaratne and Sarath Kellapotha

V:FUTURE PROSPECTS

Challenges Ahead and a Call for Action

Kishali Pinto-Jayawardena and
Gehan Gunatilleke

Conclusion: Media Reform in a National and Global

Context

Glossary

Bibliography

Index
