



NATIONAL MEDIA POLICY

Ministry of Mass Media and Information

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Preamble

In the post – Independence Sri Lanka, there was no systematic National Media Policy to guide media practice in the country. To fill this lacuna, the Ministry of Mass Media and Information, formulated the present Media Policy, with the support of a committee consisting of experts in the field of Media and Communication.

This Media Policy stems from the axiom, that a democratic society should possess a policy system that would authoritatively uphold the right of the media to articulate and express their views, to provide advice and guidance and to adopt a critical attitude, whenever necessary.

This media policy, upholds further, the view, that, the freedom essential for the people to receive the information and knowledge needed to enable them to become well informed citizens in a free, democratic society, should be ensured.

It is expected that the present National Media Policy will be given the deference that is due to a guiding principle, by all media practitioners – both in the electronic and print sectors and also by media institutions.

The strategies that have been incorporated in the Media policy Declaration will provide guidelines for the steps that should be taken by the State and other Media Institutions / media practitioners to implement the provisions in this media frame-work.

Mission

“Achieving excellence in the total practice of media by creating a people centered, development oriented, free, and responsible media culture as required by a well- Informed and democratic society”

Objectives

- ◆ To create a media culture that upholds national identity, unity in diversity and harmony.
- ◆ To establish a media tradition with a clear understanding of its social responsibility.
- ◆ To bring about a socially responsible, ethical media culture ensuring media freedom.
- ◆ To bring about an enabling environment to encourage and promote professionalism among media practitioners and organizations.
- ◆ To pave the way to create a media environment in keeping with technological advancements and best media practices.

Policies

Media Freedom and Right to Access Information

- ❖ To safeguard the right of all citizens to express their views via any and all media and to receive, provide and gather information required for the proper functioning of society.
- ❖ Ensure that the media would not in any manner harm the Sri Lanka National identity and would prevent any person or community being subject to contempt, insult, disgrace or hate by the media.
- ❖ To facilitate and ensure to all the citizens of Sri Lanka the right of access to information.

National and Social Responsibility

- ❖ To encourage media organizations to recognize, respect and safeguard and propagate Sri Lanka’s pluralistic identity.
- ❖ To bring about a well-Informed society enabling every citizen to actively participate in the democratic process.
- ❖ Encourage the media to promote all aspects of national and social development.
- ❖ Encourage media practitioners to produce media content which helps to improve the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the people in order to bring about a well – informed and democratic society.

Media Development

- ❖ To be pragmatically sensitive to all forms of global developmental trends in the fields of communication technologies and media practice.

Privacy

- ❖ The right of an individual or institution to privacy should be scrupulously upheld by the media.

Right of Reply

- ❖ Any person or organization that reasonably considers a report or comment about such person or organization requires reply, for the purpose of correction or clarification, should be provided the earliest opportunity for such correction or clarification by the media.

Accountability

- ❖ Media are bound by an obligation to be accountable to society.

Advertising and Publicity

- ❖ To ensure high standards in advertising and all forms of publicity in compliance with best media practices and relevant codes of ethics.

Use of Language

- ❖ To respect the accuracy and the conventions of language usage in the media.

Editorial Independence

- ❖ To ensure and guarantee editorial independence to all media personnel.

Rights of Media Personnel

- ❖ To take action to guarantee **and safeguard** the **professional rights of media** personnel.

Research, Training capacity building

- ❖ To encourage research as a means to ensure good quality and content in the media
- ❖ Recognizing the professional needs of the media, to provide adequate opportunities to media personnel for training, education and development

International Relations

- ❖ To maintain constant dialogue with international media organization and media practitioners to enrich local media practices.

Crime and Violence

- ❖ The media should totally refrain from encouraging and/or glorifying crime and violence.

Children's Rights

- ❖ To guide media organization and media persons towards best media practices to protect the rights of children and ensure proper development of the personality of the child.

Gender

- ❖ To pursue media practices that would ensure fair and just treatment in matters of gender.

Strategies for the implementation of Media Policy

Media Freedom and the Right to Access Information

- ❖ Formulation of enabling legal provisions to ensure the right of every citizen to acquire information and to stabilize media freedom in the country.
- ❖ Expanding infrastructure facilities to enable the masses to utilize all Mass Media.
- ❖ Organizing awareness – building programmes for media personnel and for those who decide policy in media institutions, to prevent the wielding of media, for the purpose of embarrassing, hindering and offending the masses.
- ❖ Instituting a national Information Center, to streamline the processes of gathering and distributing information.

National and Social Responsibility and Accountability

- ❖ Formulating a Code of Ethics for Mass Media, with the collaboration of all Media Institutions and media personnel and introducing it into the public domain.

Media Development

- ❖ To update the existing laws and regulations that affect the mass – media field, to reflect the current urges and to formulate rules and regulations accordingly.
- ❖ Creating new theoretical and institutional framework and principles, to enable the introduction of digital technology for electronic media.
- ❖ To take steps to upgrade the essential infrastructural facilities needed for the adaptation of modern technological know – how and technical systems, for the progress of indigenous mass media.
- ❖ To establish and maintain a “Media City” to present all media services from one focal point.
- ❖ Establishing a “Media Authority” to streamline the performance in the field of mass media and to ensure quality standards.
- ❖ To take steps to install a national system of communications satellites.
- ❖ Instituting Media Development Council, to recognize and identify the challenges, problems and new trends and to formulate methodologies to cope adequately with those.
- ❖ To establish a “National Media Advisory Council” consisting of media personnel of all fields, for the purpose of providing advice and guidance to the Government, conducive to the progress of the media field.
- ❖ Appointing an Ombudsman for media.
- ❖ To set – up an Authority to safeguard National Electronic Media Creations, for the preservation of audio and visual programmes of national and artistic significance, broadcast by Radio and Television Stations.

Privacy and the Right of reply

- ❖ Producing a Guide Book, to establish the right to privacy and the right of reply.

Advertising

- ❖ Production of a Professional Guide Book and a Code of Ethics for the fields of Advertising and Publicity.
- ❖ The formulation of legal and institutional codes, necessary to establish quality, standards for organizations, producing programmes and commercials.

Language Use

- ❖ Providing a training to make media – personnel aware of proper language use.
- ❖ Producing a Style Book for media personnel, providing guidance about the use of language.

Independence of Editorial Staff and the rights of media personnel.

- ❖ Setting up an “Authority” to protect the professionalism of media personnel.

Research Training and Capacity Building

- ❖ Instituting a National Media Research and Training Centre.
- ❖ Encouraging the formulation of standards to assess accurately, the responses of receivers of Media Programmers.

International Relations

Providing facilities essential to organize, Media Conferences, Work – Shops and Study Tours, to ensure the constant strengthening of links with International Media personnel and Media Institutions.

Crimes and Violence/ Children’s rights/ Gender issues

- ❖ To organize training courses to build awareness in media personnel and media institutions, of the need to refrain from encouraging the publication of programmes and advertisements that uphold crimes and violence.
- ❖ Implementing programmes to build awareness about providing guidance towards media practice, that will not harm the rights of children women and all citizens in society.