



Eastern Provincial Elections 2008

The Centre for Monitoring Election Violence comprising Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), Free Media Movement (FMM), and the INFORM Human Rights

Documentation Center, monitored the Eastern Provincial Council Elections of May 10th and presented its Reports and Recommendations in a Press Conference held on May 12th at the SLFI, Colombo .

Speaking at the press conference were Dr P Saravanamuttu, (ED CPA) Udaya Kalupathirana (INFORM) Rasika Perera (CPA), D.M.Dissanayake (CPA/CMEV) and

Udaya Edirimanna(CMEV) . CMEV Reports and Recommendations are available at the CPA website at <http://www.cpalanka.org/cmev> and can be tracked at cmev.wordpress.com

National Conference on Provincial Councils, 2008

As the culmination of an islandwide programme analyzing the Provincial Councils system in Sri Lanka, Outreach Unit CPA hosted a **National Conference on Provincial Councils** on 28th May 2008 at the BMICH in Colombo.

The conference launched the Final Report on Strengthening the Provincial Council Process, as well as recapped on the diverse lessons captured from the exhaustive series of consultations with representatives and officials from Provincial Councils island wide.

Among the distinguished participants at the conference were Hon. MP Tissa Vitharana, Chairperson of All Party Representative Committee(APRC). Hon Rauf Hakeem, Leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) Hon.



AR: presenting the report to US Charge D' Affairs, Mr James Moore

BL: Hon Dharmasiri Dassanayake ,Hon Shan Wijeyelal De Silva, Hon. Rauf Hakeem and BR Hon. Minister Tissa Vitharana

cont pg 4

| PG 2 | PG 3 | PG 4 | PG 5 | PG 6 |
|---|--|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| English : An Undervalued Asset -Staff Article | New Publications at CPA Papers written | CPA in the NEWS | A Glance at Programmes | Calendar of Events |

the English Language- An Undervalued Asset



The rapid growth in communication technology such as mobile phone usage and internet is a prime example of how globalization and with it English language has spread across the world. Most businesses in this country and abroad use these communication facilities for their day to day business transactions. English is the language of commerce that the vast majority of businesses prefer to work in.

STAFF ARTICLE – NIRANJANA BANDARANAYAKE

I read with interest the article titled “Medium of Legal Education” by Mr. Savimon Urugodawatta in the Island of 29th May. I wish to make the following comments- We are now living in a globally interconnected 21st century Sri Lanka which requires a decent or high standard of both written and spoken English if a person is to find employment in the largely service oriented private sector and through such employment to earn a higher salary. English which is only recognized as a link language in our constitution, *has become a must for survival.*

There are many instances where young people just out of school or university whose written and spoken English skills are not up to standard have been turned down at job interviews in the private sector.

The CWW Kannangara education reforms of the 1940's had completed its course by the time the free market economy was introduced to this country in the late 1970's by J R Jayewardene. This led to unprecedented growth in the economy. Businesses were created and through these, more employment opportunities came into being where written and spoken English became a necessity. There was also a greater demand for professional courses such as Chartered Institute of Management Accountancy (CIMA) and Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) which required a high standard of English competency quite apart from the technical knowledge involved.

More parents sent their children to international schools as the standard of English in the vast majority of our state and private schools is abysmally low. This is probably because the English language teachers we now have in our local schools are themselves the products of the CWW Kannangara education reforms and the Sinhala only policy. We cannot blame the teachers for their lack of English. It is the education system that they received their education in that I blame. Students of our international schools are generally gainfully employed both locally and abroad because of the education they received in the English medium from top quality teachers in those schools. I have friends working as doctors, engineers, accountants and finance professionals in the UK, Australia, Canada, Singapore and other countries that not so long ago were students of international schools in Colombo.

I am almost sure that if they had received only a monolingual education in the Sinhala or Tamil medium they would not have the career opportunities they do both locally and abroad.

Both CWW Kannangara and F L Woodward were good for their time in history. But times have changed and what we have today is

Staff Articles reflect the opinions of individual members of staff and are not necessarily indicative of CPA.

expanding globalization. The rapid growth in communication technology such as mobile phones and the internet are prime examples of how globalization and with it English language has spread across the world. Most businesses in this country and abroad use these communication facilities for their day to day business transactions. And English is the language of commerce that the vast majority of businesses prefer to work in.

Updates in science, technology, medical advances and access to ever evolving information on global and environmental policy etc have to be accessed speedily without relying on translations.

To the credit of this Government the Presidential Task Force Initiative, “English as a Life Skill” was launched recently. It is aimed at gearing up youth for the job market by teaching them job-oriented English language skills.

Under this initiative a center for English language training is to be set up. This institute will see the transferring of Indian teaching methods to Sri Lanka and train 30 English teachers as master trainers who will in turn spread their knowledge. A result of this initiative will be the recruitment of 54,000 persons who have acquired the necessary skills into jobs in the IT and the Business Process Outsourcing sectors. The Former Secretary to the Ministry of Education Dr. Mrs. Tara De Mel was correct in trying to reintroduce English medium at least to some selected schools for a start. It is a pity that her efforts did not produce the intended results largely due to factors beyond her control. F L Woodward when he wrote a hundred years ago that a person becomes an alien in one's community or nation because one does not speak his/her mother tongue, may not have mentioned the fact that the learning of English did nothing to prevent one from retaining a mother tongue perfectly well.

Just because a Sri Lanka does not speak or write Sinhala or Tamil does not mean that he/she is alienated from Sri Lanka or the community that he/she lives in. He/she is a Sri Lanka by birth and citizenship and not by language. A person with a working knowledge of English is an asset to his/her organization and to Sri Lanka and not a liability.

In the interconnected world that we live in where people move from country to country to live and work, a working knowledge of English would undoubtedly stand them in good stead. In such a scenario it is ironically those who cannot speak or write in English who may feel alienated. An alienation that leads to a distinctly “frog in the well” mentality.

article available at: <http://www.island.lk/2008/06/11/opinion6.html>

Niranjana Bandaranayake is Resercher with Conflict and Peace Analysis Unit, CPA

LIBRARY NEWS

Whats new in the world of books

NEW TITLES



The 13th Amendment
PRESENTS ITS

"No one can reclaim
powers vested on
S. Haimanagoda, Ex Secy. Wiyani



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**BiLingual
Modules on
Power Sharing
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**University
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STRENGTHENING THE
PROVINCIAL
COUNCIL
SYSTEM

REPORT OF
WORKSHOP DELIBERATIONS



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**Report of Workshop Deliberations- Programme on Strengthening the
Provincial Council System**

The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), has consistently held that a negotiated political solution of the ethnic conflict is possible through power-sharing. A collaboration between CPA and USAID was conceived as an exercise through which the views and experiences of those who have first-hand knowledge of implementing the Provincial Council system could be brought to light and collated in a systematic manner so as to be of use to policy-makers and constitutional reformers as well as the general public.

The programme itself comprised three stages. Firstly, initial rounds of discussions were held with the Chief Ministers, other elected representatives, and officials of the Provincial Councils. Thereafter, a series of three-day workshops, one for each Provincial Council, followed in which the current realities, effectiveness, challenges and alternatives were identified. Finally, a final workshop bringing together elected representatives and officials from all Provincial Councils was convened so as to (a) agree on a final set of common recommendations, and (b) to finalise the recommendations of each Provincial Council. In addition to the above, CPA also prepared a thematic report of issues highlighted in workshops. This publication brings together all outputs of the programme.

The report is available on the CPA website at - http://www.cpalanka.org/research_papers/FINAL_REPORT_ON_PC_2008_May_CPA.pdf

Sinhala and Tamil e copies too are available at this website and printed copies of the report can be collected from the CPA office upon request.

"Membership of the Human Rights Council ."- by Dr P Saravanamuttu, May 21 Morning Leader

**"HRC Defeat and Noyahr Assault : proving a point promptly"
Dr P Saravanamuttu, Morning Leader, 28th May**

**"Giving Power to Provincial Councils is essential" interview with Asanga Welikala
Lankadeepa May 27**

"Suspension of Video Conferencing a Major Hindrance to the Progress of the COI"- Dr Nesiah, Daily Mirror, June 26th

Statements

&

Press Releases

A Brief Profile of the Trincomalee High Security Zone and Other Land Issues in Trincomalee District

http://www.cpalanka.org/research_papers/Trinco_land_issues_2008.pdf

Civil society Organisations condemn all acts of violence against civilians

http://www.cpalanka.org/Statements/Statement_on_civilian_June_2008.pdf

Need for a Substantial Revision of the Victim and Witness Protection Bill

http://www.cpalanka.org/Statements/CPA_statement_on_Victim_and_Witness_June_2008.pdf



...pg 1 cont National Conference on Provincial Councils

Tissa Attatnayake , Gen Secretary United National Party (UNP) H.E. Mr James Moore, Charge d'affairs Embassy of the United States of America and the Chief Ministers of Southern and Central Provinces, Hon Shan Wijeyalal De Silva and Hon Sarath Ekanayake..

A short documentary showing highlights of the programme was screened and the Final Report was presented to all, after which distinguished participants shared their views.

"This kind of a clear discourse addressing these very relevant issues was very much welcome at this point in time" – Hon. Tissa Vitharana

"Not just the 13th, the 17th amendment is just as important and we have yet to see a real will to implement these," Hon Rauf Hakeem, leader SLMC

"The ethnic problem can only be solved by negotiation and as such, an endeavor of this sort, to bring about serious discourse on the subject, should be fully promoted" - H.E. James Moore, Charge d'affairs, US Embassy.

The National Conference was covered in the Media by, Sirasa , Derana and MTV News and Daily Mirror, Daily Island and the Sunday Times. More information on the Programme and the E Versions of the Final Report are available on the CPA website at <http://www.cpalanka.org>



Action Plan on Gender Equity in Media TALKING GENDER

-Media Unit

photo from the two day Summit on Gender Equity in Media held, Colombo 3rd-4th May 2008



Dr Colin Irwin, from the Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Liverpool, who developed the peace polls method as part of the successful Northern Ireland peace process, directed a poll on Peace in Sri Lanka from March to May 2008.

The research for this poll was carried out by the staff of CPA-Social Indicator who collected questions during interviews undertaken by the research team from February and March 2008. The aim of this study is to identify the differences of opinion amongst different ethnic communities on Sri Lankan ethnic conflict thereby assisting parties in formulating a political solution.

The survey included a random sample of 1,700 people from all parts of Sri Lanka with the exception of the Northern Province.

Reports are available at http://www.cpalanka.org/research_papers/Peace_in_Sri_Lanka.pdf

Dr. Irwin's outline of the research was carried in Daily Mirror on Saturday June 21st and on Monday June 23rd.

A GLANCE AT programmes

Budget Transparency for Local Authorities



photo from the Workshop for the Balapitiya Pradeshya Sabha 23th June

Action Plan on Gender Equity in Media

"Talking Gender", a two-day Summit on Gender Equity in Media in Colombo held 3rd – 4th May 2008, culminated with the adoption of a two-year Action Plan on Gender, by the five journalist organisations: Federation of Media Employees Trade Unions; Sri Lanka Working Journalists' Association; Free Media Movement; Sri Lanka Tamil Media Alliance and Sri Lanka Muslim Media Forum.

Identifying the lack of women's participation in media unions/organisations as well as lack of training among women journalists as priority issues, the Plan aims to increase quantity and quality of participation in media unions/organizations and ensure leadership training and capacity building of women journalists.

The Action Plan, which is based on the foundation laid by the Charter of Gender Equity for Media and Journalism in Sri Lanka (2006) was an outcome of discussions among representatives of women journalists from print, electronic and online media. A Working Group, led by three Convenors was established to implement the Action Plan

● May

3rd-4th May Summit on Gender Equity in Media .
Colombo Media Unit, CPA

12nd May Press Conference on Monitoring of Eastern Provincial Council

28th May National Conference on Provincial Councils part of the Provincial Needs Assessment Programme
BMICH Colombo

Staff @ the Centre

Pradeep presenting his paper at the WAPOR conference in New Orleans



Meeting political scientist Dr. Pippa Norris, Professor of Political Science, Harvard University

Pradeep Peiris visited New Orleans to attend the WAPOR (World Association for Public Opinion Research) Annual General Conference that was held from **May 13th- 15th**, in collaboration with the American Association for Public Opinion Research. During the sessions, Pradeep Peiris presented a paper on polling for peace policies.

Sanjana Hattotuwa, Senior Researcher, CPA was invited to conduct a workshop on technology and peacebuilding at the **Global Peacebuilders Summit 6th - 7th** May in Belfast, UK



Sanjana's presentation was based on the experience of leveraging ICTs in Sri Lanka and the growing potential for their use under repressive regimes. More details at <http://www.globalpeacebuilders.org/english/conference.html#Programme>

Manjula Gajanayake of Outreach Unit participated in the 2 day Programme facilitated by UNDP titled **Applying HRBA to Access to Justice** held 23rd – 24th June in Colombo. Sundari De Alwis and Hasika Perera of CPA also participated. The Objectives of the Programme were Introduction of Human Rights Based Approach to Access to Justice assessments and programming and development of an Action Plan to implementing HRBA.

Among the exercises for example were identification of vulnerable groups and the challenges they face in accessing justice and obtaining basic legal aid, because of the difficulty of retaining their personal legal documentation. Participants were from diverse backgrounds including divisional secretaries, High Court Judges, Legal Aid commission officers, INGO and NGO workers, civil society leaders and retired civil servants. This forms part of the Access to Justice Project by UNDP for which CPA carried out the initial Mapping Exercise and CPA Social Indicator is involved in carrying out Focus Group Discussions and such qualitative research. UNOPS is also involved in this project.

Staff Changes

Ms. Anupama Ranawana of Social Indicator resigned from the unit to pursue Higher Studies.

Ms. Iromi Perera joined the same unit as Researcher from June. She has a BA. in Sociology-Psychology from

Christ Collage Bangalore.

Mr. Chanaka Krishantha left Media Unit after the close of the Project

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