

Newspaper Reporting of Suicide Impact on Rate of Suicide in the Contemporary Society in Sri Lanka^{*}

Manoj Jinadasa

University of Kelaniya, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

Suicide has been largely investigated by many researchers in a variety of perspectives. The objective of this study is to identify the relationship between the rate of suicide in contemporary society and how it can be affected by the way of suicide reporting at the same time. Qualitative method is used to analysis the data capturing from observation, interviews and textual analysis. Special attention has been paid to the news reporting in the suicide in Sri Lankan newspapers. Sinhala medium newspapers: *Lankadeepa*, *Diwaina*, *Lakbima*, *Silumina*, *Dinamina*, *Rivira*, were used as the major sample of this study. Time period is located from January 2000 to January 2010. In conclusion, Suicide has been reporting in Sri Lanka as a heroic and sensational action for the target of maximum selling and the financial benefit of media institutions. Use of Language in suicide reporting and the placement of the story in the newspaper have been two major factors that cause to glamorize the incident. Suicide reporting is highly sensational and rhetorically made by the ownership of the media and non-ethical consideration of the journalism in Sri Lanka. Victims and vulnerable are encouraged to get in to suicide and they are generally encouraged to their action for faith. Suicide should be reported in the newspaper as a problem of mental health and attention should be drawn to well inform the public on the issue. Human incidents should not be reported in media for cheap commercial purposes that indirectly chance to gain much financial profit through the highest selling and expansion. This study suggest to take necessary action to immediately make a frame of ethics of media reporting that avoids such unethical reporting in the practice of suicide reporting in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: suicide reporting, rate of suicide, newspaper, sensational reporting, mental health

Introduction

In recent times, it is evident to observe the growth of suicide reference to Sri Lankan society. Meanwhile, the news reporting in the media in such a situation is also significant. In this, our observation is that the news reporting on such incident of crime, murder and particularly in suicide has been rather harmful. Television and Newspaper reporting of these incidents have been very shocking as they violate the basic ethic of reporting in the media.

Media use the sensitive reporting with full of emotional factors. This reflects their thorough effort of

^{*} **Acknowledgement:** This research has been funded by the annual research grant (RP/03/03/06/01/2012 20.03.2012 - 11.02.2015) of the University of Kelaniya, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. I am totally indebted to the labor made by my research students in last couples of years from whom I grasped many information from different perspectives, so that finally I was possible to see them in a broader framework of analysis. Special gratitude is deserved for the anonymous reviewers of this paper.

Manoj Jinadasa, MSSc, Senior Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Kelaniya.

bringing upon a sensational news over their audiences. Necessarily they disregard the psychological ill-effect of the reporting towards the society.

Moreover, this issue has long been identified in the beginning of printed media in the world. A copycat suicide is defined as an emulation of another suicide that the person attempting suicide knows about either from local knowledge or due to accounts or depictions of the original suicide on television and in other media (WHO, 2000).

There is a significant evidence-base demonstrating that media reporting of suicide is linked to copycat suicides among youth and young adults under 24 years of age (Gould, Greenberg, Velting, & Shaffer, 2003; Gould & Kramer, 2001; Shoval et al., 2005; Appleby et al., 2007). It has been deemed reasonable to believe that a causal link exists between the reporting of suicides in newspaper and television and copycat suicides in the community (Ranson, 2001).

This study remains a great significance in this background. It may provide a platform for the discourse of this issue further in the minds of media personal. And, even though that there are several other studies and international agencies have so far have drawn their attention on this issue, it is difficult to find a research on this issue conducted on the psychological perspective and professional advancement of Journalism.

Media, its content and their reporting inject psychological effects towards human behavior (Jinadasa, 2011, pp. 67-81). Media impact has been immensely investigated since its inception of the media studies. Blumer (1933), Blumer and Hauser (1933), Peterson and Thurstone (1933), Hovland et al. (1949), Star and Hughes (1950), Lazarsfeld et al. (1944), Berelson et al. (1954), Klapper (1960), Trenaman and McQuail (19651) have researched on the effects of media on the social and cognitive behavior while Lang and Lang (1981), MacGuire (1973), MacLeod et al. (1991), and some other many researchers have developed their theories on media ill and powerful effects on human behavior (McQuail, 2005, pp. 456-462). The effects of media violence has been a major research field in the media psychology (Giles, 2005, pp. 49-71). My purpose in this research is to examine suicide reporting on the perspective of media psychology.

Review of Literature

There are many researchers and institutions who have been done researches leading to suicide reporting in the Sri Lankan scenario; Sri Lanka Press Institute (2010) has conducted a study on *Mental Health and the Media*. Rathnayake and Laksmi (2002) conducted a research on *Suicide in Sri Lanka: Reaching the suicidal in Rural communities* is another research conducted by Rathnayake and Laksmi (2002).

In 2012, Dr. Neil Fernando, who headed the Country's National Institute of Mental Health Promotion said the "risk factors for suicide" were mental and physical illness, alcohol and other substance abuse, chronic illness, acute emotional distress, violence and sudden and major changes in peoples' lives, such as job losses or separation of a partner. He claimed that the suicide rate could be reduced by improving the life skills and cultural outlook of children through improved education, but the "risk factors" represent the harsh social and economic conditions that confront millions of ordinary Sri Lankans.

There is no single explanation of why people commit suicide. However, many suicides happen impulsively and, in such circumstances, easy access to a means of suicide—such as pesticides or firearms—can make the difference as to whether a person lives or dies.

Social, psychological, cultural and other factors can interact to lead a person to suicidal behavior, but the stigma attached to mental disorders and suicide means that many people feel unable to seek help. Despite the

evidence that many deaths are preventable, suicide is too often a low priority for governments and policy-makers (WHO, 2014, p. 7).

There are an estimated 10 to 20 million non-fatal attempted suicides every year worldwide (Bertolote & Fleischmann, 2002). While a 1986 study found increased rates of suicide following the television of news stories regarding suicide (Phillips & Carstensen, 1986).

An estimated 804,000 suicide deaths occurred worldwide in 2012, representing an annual global age-standardized suicide rate of 11.4 per 100,000 population (15.0 for males and 8.0 for females). However, since suicide is a sensitive issue, and even illegal in some countries, it is very likely that it is under-reported. In countries with good vital registration data, suicide may often be misclassified as an accident or another cause of death (WHO, 2014, p. 7).

As per the 2014 report of WHO Sri Lanka has placed the 4th place in world suicide rate out of 172 countries. From 1985 to 2000 there are 106,000 suicide cases have been reported by Sri Lanka health Ministry. And there are 3,500 suicide cases have been reported in 2012 (*Daily News* 10.10.2013).

Media can perform a pivotal role in deglamorize suicide and violence and to educate people to solve their problem (Silva, 2000). In solving this issue World Health Organization also suggest some recommendation. In this background, media plays a dramatic role in minimizing Suicide. Promote implementation of media guidelines to support responsible reporting of suicide in print, media broadcasting and social media are very important (WHO, 2014, p. 57).

An emulation of another suicide that the person attempting suicide knows about either from local knowledge or due to accounts or depictions of the original suicide on television and in other media is broadly defined as Copycat Suicide.

Various countries have national journalism codes which range from one extreme of, "Suicide and attempted suicide should in general never be given any mention" (Norway) to a more moderate, "In cases of suicide, publishing or broadcasting information in an exaggerated way that goes beyond normal dimensions of reporting with the purpose of influencing readers or spectators should not occur. Photography, pictures, visual images or film depicting such cases should not be made public" (Turkey). Many countries do not have national codes but do have in-house guidelines along similar lines.

In the US there are no industry wide standards and a survey of in-house guides of sixteen (16) US daily newspapers showed that only three mentioned the word *suicide* and none gave guidelines about publishing the method of suicide. Craig Branson, online director of the American Society of News Editors (ASNE), has been quoted as saying, "Industry codes are very generic and totally voluntary. Most ethical decisions are left to individual editors at individual papers".

The industry would fight any attempt to create more specific rules or standards, and editors would no doubt ignore them. Guidelines on the reporting of suicides in Ireland were introduced recently which attempt to remove any positive connotations the act might have: e.g., using the term "completed" rather than "successful" when describing a suicide attempt which resulted in a death (Norris, Jempson, & Bygrave, 2001).

Numerous studies into the effect of suicide reporting on the incidence of suicide have been conducted in the United States and Europe (Blumental S, Bergner L.1973; Gould M.S, Saffer D.1986; Motto J.A.1970; Phillips D.P.1977). According to Stack (1985) there were 293 investigations concerning suicide news reports and suicide as of 1999. Although the findings have been mixed, the overall trend indicates that the media does

have an impact on suicide (Phillips, 1974; Stack, 1987; Wasserman, 1984; Stack, 2005; Niederkrotenthaler & Sonneck, 2007).

Between 1967-2009 at least hundred and twenty (120) scientific studies were published on the possible link between media depictions of suicide and suicides in the real world. Most studies measure the suicide rate before and after a widely publicized news story (or film) on suicide. If the change in the suicide rate is positive, a copycat effect is reported. Many investigations are based on a single story (e.g., Cheng et al., 2007). Some investigations explore mimesis effects for a large number of 30 or more media stories (Phillips, 1974).

In large scale investigations, some of the time, research finds that after controls for confounding factors (such as seasonal effects, day of the week effects, unemployment trends, and holiday effects) publicized suicide stories are associated with increases in one or more population suicide rates.

Hawton et al. (1999) determined that 20% of suicide attempters reported that a recent suicide on British television had influenced their attempt (Hawton et al., 1999). Effects of a drug overdose in a television drama on presentations to hospital for self-poisoning (*BMJ*, 318, 972-977). Fekete found that 41% of suicide attempters in Hungary reported a suicidal role model from the media compared to 10% controls (Fekete & Schmidtke, 1996).

Cheng et al. found that 39% of 438 depressive patients exposed to a media report concerning a celebrity suicide reported that the media story had an influence on their subsequent suicidal behavior (Heng et al., 2007). The influence of media reporting of a celebrity suicide on suicidal behavior in patients with a depressive disorder (*J. of Affective Disorders*, 103, 69-75). Tousignant et al. found that 13% of suicides after the highly publicized suicide of a well-known Quebec were influenced by the reporter's suicide (Tousignant et al., 2005).

However, Mercy found that suicide attempters were actually 80% less apt to report having been exposed to a media depiction of suicide (a dichotomous conglomerate measure of any exposure in newspapers, film, books, television, etc) in 30 days prior to the attempt (or interview) than a sample of community controls.

However, suicide is given a positive definition as freeing the individual from stress. Photo of her body being wheeled out from her home, violates a WHO guideline for reporting (no photos of suicide scene or body of suicide). In general, the average increase in suicide was 2.51% after the 34 Newspaper stories analyzed (Phillips, 1974).

In the largest study to date, Kessler et al. (1988) analyzed 87 *Television News stories* on suicide. No evidence was found for an increase in suicide in 65 out of 69 regression analyses (Kessler et al., 1988). He suggests research based on TV coverage may nullify the copycat effect, for some reason.

Systematic scientific investigations on copy cat suicides began with the work of David Phillips in the 1970s. Largest possible copycat effect was found for the well-known movie star Marilyn Monroe. During the month of her suicide in August 1962, there was an increase of 12% suicides compared to last year. Normally, highly publicized stories increase the national suicide rate by only 2.51%.

Etzersdorfer and Sonneck wrote a report called *Preventing suicide by influencing mass-media reporting: The Viennese experience, 1980-1986*. An extensive subway network was created in Vienna in 1978. There was a large number of suicides reported; people were jumping in front of the trains. These deaths were reported in graphic detail in the newspapers.

The Austrian Association for Suicide Prevention drew up a guide for responsible suicide reporting. Implemented in the latter half of 1987. Methods of suicide victims were no longer mentioned. What happened?

Rates of subway suicides decreased by 80% in the following six months. However, suicidal deaths in general decreased by a very small amount.

“Suicide and the Media” is an exhaustive review of studies on the media effects on suicide. In 42 nonfiction media reports of suicide, she found that 29 showed an apparent imitative effect, 8 did not and 5 had mixed results. Twenty-nine fictional media reports showed that 15 appeared to have an imitative effect, while 9 did not and 5 had mixed results. Combining the two showed 61% fit, 23% did not and 14% were mixed. She concludes that there is no doubt about the validity of contagion effects on suicide. Although not a formal meta-analysis, her results are pretty convincing.

In a study called, “Media coverage as a risk factor in suicide” Stack looked at 293 findings from 42 studies on the impact of publicized suicide stories. Used logistic regression analysis. What do you think happened when he compared celebrity, real vs. fiction, television vs. newspaper studies?

Found that studies measuring the effect of a celebrity suicide were 14.3 times more likely to find a copycat effect. Studies based on real stories were 4.03 times more likely to have a copycat effect than fictional stories. Research based on televised stories were 82% less likely to report a copy cat effect than research based on stories.

A decrease in the suicide rate was observed in Detroit when the newspaper was on strike (Motto, 1970). Interestingly, once the strike was over and the newspaper resumed publishing, the suicide rate increased back up to previous levels (Blumenthal & Bergner, 1973). This phenomenon was also observed during a newspaper strike in New York in which the rate of suicide decreased with respect to young women. Correlations have been made about sensational reporting and suicide rates (Tousignant et al., 2005; Gould, 2001; Norris et al., 2001).

Materials and Methods

Aims and Objectives

To identify the grounds behind the malpractice of suicide reporting that leads to increase suicide in Sri Lanka.

Specific Objectives

- To investigate the textual features of suicide reporting in newspapers that leads to maximize suicide in Sri Lanka.
- To identify the reasons for suicide that is having a thorough effect of suicide reporting in newspaper.
- To examine the socio-economic and psychological factors behind the sensational reporting of suicide in newspapers.

Research Methodology

This study conducted using methods of qualitative research. First, it was able to identify quantitative measures in the first instance and thereafter, went on the inner levels of the problems using qualitative tools of research.

First, conducted a basic survey study using questionnaire in order to identify the existing nature of the amount of suicide in the country. This would be held with special reference to convenient sampling representing approximately each and every geographical and social differences in Sri Lanka.

In qualitative measures in this research, first, conducted a textual analysis for gathering substantial suicide case. These texts found in local newspapers of Sri Lanka. For this, I found them at the National Library, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Secondly, in accordance with the selected cases in the newspapers, conducted field visits for identifying this specific cases. In this, interviews with the police station officers were hold, where these cases have been reported in the official manner with accepted particulars.

Thereafter, serially went to the referred village or community in order to find the case at it best. Basically, discussions with neighboring were conducted and after that directly went on interviewing with the family members.

In its broader sense, in the textual analysis, needed to conduct interviews with the journalists, who have been in this suicide reporting for many years.

Ethical Considerations

All the subjects were previously being acknowledged, informed and aware of the purpose of being selection of their subjective behaviors, attitudes and opinions, so that consent has been granted through this formal acknowledgement before gathering data from them. Personal names were not applied for the data collection methods and data analysis techniques. None of the subjects were used without prior consent made by the key research officer.

And the gathered information was analyzed for this research study only and not being distributed or revealed to any other third party. As this study was funded by the annual research grant program of the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, formal ethical permission had been made by the senate of the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.

Limitations of the Study

This research study was based on the time frame of January 2000-January 2010. Large part of research was qualitative In-depth analysis on the textual patterns comparatively to the representativeness of the suicide case. And also I concerned on how such exaggerated reporting influence on the rate of suicide in contemporary society in Sri Lanka. Though it is rather hard to examine the relationship between the suicide reporting and the rate of suicide in the perspective of media reporting. The best effort was made to eliminate personal assumptions in the practice of observation and analysis of the collected data gathered from the field of the study. One of the major issue that was raising in this study is whether suicide reporting and its sensation merely effect on directly towards increasing suicide in the contemporary society. Effects of the sensational reporting with the vulnerable situation has always interconnected with the rate of suicide.

Data Collection and Analysis

(1) Quantitative data were collected using Questionnaire—100 questionnaires were analysed using SPSS 16.0 version

(2) Qualitative data collected using Observation and Interviewing:

- Observations conducted using field visits to relevant areas and community;
- Interviews conducted with police reporters, medical officers, journalists;
- conducted twenty (20) in-depth interviews.

(3) Textual analysis was used to find out the suicide cases in Sri Lanka. For this it was used daily and week-end popular and widely expanded Sinhala newspapers: *Lankadeepa*, *Diwaina*, & *Silumina* and other Sinhala newspapers.

Qualitative data were analyzed comparatively and analytically.

Results and Discussion

In this research study, first it was used a general survey using questionnaire for identifying the measures of suicide in Sri Lanka. Basically questionnaire was distributed among hundred (100) subjects. A variety of groups including rural mass, professionals, educated people and students were represented in this sample. Gender is distributed as 60% of female and 40% of Male.

Educational levels are as follows:

- Below O/L 07;
- O/L pass 35;
- A/L pass 27;
- Graduated 13;
- Professional 18.

Suicide reporting has been very sensational in their reading in 74% of the total survey subjects, while many of them have been stuck with this reporting style. When they were asked whether they are interested in highly sensational reporting, 48% of the subjects were not interested in this style of reporting as it caused them to mismanage their mental health through these sensational illustrations of reporting suicide.

According to survey, suicide as a social psychological issue can be happened widely in both urban and rural geographies. Suicide is a mental illness relating to both genetic (biological) and socio cultural influences. However the media, the way how they report suicide has been caused to many ethical consideration in the society.

Media reporting on suicide can be differently discussed in terms of newspaper and television in addition to the current widespread use of new media. In the newspapers according to the textual analysis, it suggests that *Dinamina*, *Lankadeepa*, and *Diwaina* three major local newspapers of Sinhala report in a fairly sensational position on behalf of a wider audience attraction, so that they expect finally a maximum income in the sale of newspapers. As an extension of this trend, this style of suicide reporting has also been imitated in the screen of Television. *Sirasa* and *Derana* channels of Television are reporting suicide in a much emotional way. This reflects the imitation of a much emotional news reporting style of newspaper to television media in the contemporary local media culture.

Nearly thirty (30) suicide reporting texts in the three Sinhala newspapers of *Lankadeepa*, *Diwaina* and *Dinamina* were analyzed in the textual analysis. More or less each of these papers follow the same style of suicide reporting, while *Dinamina* enjoys a rather different practice, which emanates a deep emotion in reporting suicide. *Dinamina* reporting of suicide heads as *Thawath Dukahithena Kathawak* (Another story of sad) with a drawing sketch of tearing face before the narration of news. This tradition suggests that media is highly administered for commercial and market objectives that earn maximum monetary profit, so that they present a general emotional sensation on their reporting.

Headlines of the suicide reporting were very expressionistic. They used method of committing suicide, poetic narration, and they are creating a much vulnerable position on the reporting of suicide towards readers. Suicide reporting were full of the feeling of innocence, and always seek to yield attention towards suicide and he/she was threaten by the society or any other related institution. All most all the news narration were not producing an objective manner of reporting while they express more attraction towards the case, which make

an undervaluation over the subjects, relations and environment. However, newspapers were not keeping the proper way of narration in the suicide reporting. Following headlines of suicide news shows the sensational features of reporting these cases:

- *My husband tagged on roof using bed sheet in a closed room* (16th June 2009—Diwaina)
- *Six students have been eaten Kaneru (Oleander) as their love have been stopped* (27th July 2009—Dinamina)
- *School administration have been unproductive to eat Kaneru (Oleander)* (27th July 2009 another News Paper)
- *Couple ended their life for their love with a bomb in a hotel room* (6th September 2009)
- *Love lamp is shut, She burnt on fire* (13th March 2005 Diwaina)

Case one—2010 September 23—Suicide of Chathura Saranga in Badulla

This case has been reported in Diwaina on the date of 24th of September 2010. Features of the reporting are as follows: suicide method has been exposed, three pictures of school children's gathering, death body after self-firing and the lady who was fired by him were included in the news.

Lankadeepa and Dinamina reported the case on the same date, while Lankadeepa and Diwaina have reported the case in the following day in a much exaggeration. In these following day (25th and 26th) issues of the Lankadeepa and Diwaina papers have much concerned on the sensational and emotional features of the case, so that the news was reported as a story of emotion. Other papers of Rivira and Lakbima were also reported the case in much exaggeration. Rivira heading was *Siyabalanduwa* School was wetted by the Lakshikas' blood while Lakbima has made it into a horror type visualized narration. This overall reporting concludes that the basic ethics of suicide reporting has been violated by each and every newspapers.

Case Two—2010 July 23—Suicide of Kanchana Kumari (13 age) in Pallegama Ganthuna, Bulathkohupitiya, Kegalle

This case was reported in the Diwaina as heading "*little butterflies who paid death for their love*" (8th August 2010 Diwaina). This same case was reported in Lakbima Newspaper as heading thirteen aged she-lover was dissatisfied her life by the suffer of the death of her lover and blames came from everywhere (11th August 2010 Lakbima). This case was very exaggeratedly reported in these both newspapers as she has written her personal letter before she committed suicide. Reader has to shed tear by this news as the content is full of emotionally written. This school girl suicide using a cloth tagged on the roof of an isolated old house. This was also as her long felt regret of her lover. Instead of bringing upon the psychological and cultural barriers she was unable to overcome were not clearly reported in this news content, whereas they report a serious meta-feeling towards the suicide case.

Case Three—2009 March—Suicide of Jeewani Deepthi, Gokaralla, Kurunagala

Diwaina reported this case on the date of 23rd of March 2009. Suicide method has been communicated by the heading itself in this news as "*a mother at Gokaralla committed suicide with her two kids by jumping into well*". Diwaina on the date of 25th of March 2009 reported, *unspoken story of the mother of Gokarella* as the heading. In this news after couple of days they present some inferences that led to this suicide. In Lakbima newspaper at that same date also reported this case in the same heading. On that same date Dinamina reported this incident in interrogative form as whether *Jeewani jump into the well or was she being fallen into the well who has been in extreme poverty* as the heading of the news. Its sub-heading was *Gokarella death is yet to be a*

mystery. However, Dinamina reporting in suicide was relatively highly embroidery. And also in the following day, Dinamina reported with much emotionally and poetically using a poem and some dialogues between mother and daughters. One of the crucial aspects of Dinamina suicide reporting was violation of basic ethics of suicide reporting and making a deep grief at the audience using rhetoric of emotional feelings. Lankadeepa on the same date reported *a young mother and two daughters bodies are in the well*. Rivira newspaper dated on 29th of March 2009 reported it *Mother who committed suicide with her two kids with a secret in the bottom of the well* as the heading. This denotes a rather embellishment in supporting to her as a heroic action. However, almost all the news heads of reporting of this case in all the papers have been mistaken their responsibility.

Case Four—5th of September 2004—Suicide of a Couple, Mawanella

Lankadeepa reported this incident in the front page with the heading of “*Army soldier who suffer from cancer committed suicide using a bomb with his lover*” on 6th of September 2004. A piece of a letter written by the soldier before the suicide was also included in the content of this news. Sympathy and heroism were being embedded in the narration of this reporting. Diwaina reported the case in the front page and in the fourth page. Love of the couple was embellished in the reporting. Lakbima also reported this incident on 6th of September 2004 in the front page. In this reporting Lakbima overstated as *Suicide for their eternal love* for making sensational feeling over the incident. Irudina also reported this case in the page eight (8) as a descriptive reporting. Irudina heading was “*I told that we both commit suicide together*”, which resonates a love story in the news reporting.

However this reporting has immensely affected on the rate of increasing suicide aftermath of this reporting. In 29th of April 2006, one soldier committed suicide using a bomb at a house in Higurakgoda. This was also based on a love affair. Its heading was written as “*I was embraced by him as saying if you are not interested in marrying me I will commit suicide with you*”. Both previous Mawanella case and this Higurakgoda case have been reported in the same manner as these both cases were done in the same manner. This confirms of the copycat theory of the suicide reporting.

In 25th of July 2006, In Abilipitiya there was a similar bomb blast at a private computer training center. This case has been reported by Dinamina in both 25th and 26th of July 2006 with the following headlines:

- “*He lover committed suicide using love-bomb blasting. She lover is in extremely damaged*”.
- “*There are many weapons in the young man who committed suicide with love-bomb*”.

In the way of reporting this case they created a rhetoric form as Love-Bomb.

And also before the Mawanella case was happen there was a previous suicide case done by a police constable for their private love issue in the same way, which was dated on 8th of August 2004 in a computer room of the Narahenpita Police Traffic Section.

Case Five—28th of April 2009 Suicide of Indika—Mirissa, Weligama, Mathara

Lankadeepa, Diwaina and Dinamina newspapers reported this case in a different headlines as follows:

- *Kids were to go to suicide with their father without mother.*
- *Father of Henweala and two their children go to end with people’s deep sorrowfulness.*
- *Father suicide with two children.*

Case Seven—22nd of July 2009 Suicide of Kavindi. Musaeus College, Colombo

Kavindi was a student of Colombo Musaeus College aged fourteen. Sunday Lankadeepa (week-end) reported this case heading as “*Kavindi who disappeared from society for teaching a lesson to society*” on the

date 2nd of August 2009. Kavindi's mobile phone was caught by college students' leaders and passed it into teachers' hand. This is the basic incident behind this case. Kavindi's death of suicide was promoted by the Lankadeepa reporting with heroism and deep condolence in the phase of her action. Socio-psychological basis of suicide and the student's social and cultural perceptual aspects have not been properly addressed in this reporting. Lankadeepa has repeatedly overemphasized that her parents saying of that "our daughter was not taught to lying, so that we are not regretted as our daughter committed suicide for teaching a lesson to our society that she was unreasonably punished by the teachers of college..."

And also there are many sensational pictures in the news for making an exhaustive emotion towards the incident. In both writing and picturing in the reporting they have used many features for readers' partial attraction. Finally newspaper used this critical incident for their commercial purposes via reporting this important case in a sensational and highly emotional manner.

Rawaya Newspaper reported this issue on 2nd of August 2009 heading "Do justice for Kavindi". Though Rawaya reported this case using a variety of news sources with considerable balance, the heading denotes that there was a certain level of injustice to Kavindi. Social and psychological aspects that caused to suicide were not emphasized in this reporting. In the use of pictures, Rawaya has included a black & white photo of Kavindi's final trip at her coffin. This is a violation of the ethics of suicide reporting.

On the same date, Rivira reported this case heading as "Tale of student daughter who end her life due to the Mobile Phone". This reporting is also covered by a variety of angles for a well-balanced reporting, delimiting to the subjects parent's perception on the incident.

On the same date, Sunday Silumina reported this incident heading as "Beautiful Butterflies! Why this?" In the content of this news Silumina emphasized both Kavindi's suicide and Kaneru (Oleander) suicide case of Bakamuna of Alahera. Further, this reporting has covered the problems of personality of the school children and the responsibility of every parts of the society to protect our children better. And also this reporting questioned the importance of using mobile phone for the students.

Case Eight—27th of July 2010 Suicide of Chandrapala, Kollupitiya, Colombo

Chandrapala was a retired hospital laborer aged sixty-four (64) who committed suicide using a cloth of bandage at the toilet in the national hospital of Colombo.

Lankadeepa of 28th July 2010 reported this case in both front page and page six, heading as a patient of Colombo national hospital committed suicide hanging over the ceiling fan knotting his neck. Lakbima on the 29th of July 2010 also reported the case emphasizing the method of suicide. Diwaina of 28th of July 2010 also reported in the same way. In these each newspapers overemphasized the method he used to committed suicide. The privacy of the subject is also damaged by this reporting revealing his personal information.

Case Eleven—11th of August 2004 Suicide of Namalika De Silva, Musaeus College, Colombo

Namalika was a sixteen years old girl who studied at the Musaeus College, Colombo. She had a mental illness of depression. Diwaina (2004-08-12) reported this incident with the headline of "School girl aged seventeen committed suicide removing her shoes, keeping her books' bag aside, mounting into a barrel and jumped from five stories building". In this headline, it has violated the basic ethics of suicide reporting. Suicide method has been descriptively mentioned here. And a picture captured from that of four stories building of the college was also included to the news content. Fourteenth of August 2004 issue of Diwaina also reported this incident with much longer headline as "Musaeus girl who died with hidden mental depression, I can't go to

school today mother, I feel fear... Namalika who said this to her mother in front of the college gate soon after she left her life”.

There were two pictures in this news. One is her open death body in the coffin with one of her school friend looking at her body with a serious mood. Another picture was a gathering of her school friends talking about this incident. The reporter's effort was to create a romantic story behind this pathetic incident in a much sensational narration, while he had to report with some of the treatment and medication for such incident. In addition, there was a free stanza which create much tragedy and desperation with the news content in this paper.

Lankadeepa (2004-08-12) reported this case in its' front page with the headline of “Musaeus girl died after jumping from five stories building”. Headline of the magistrate reporting news related to this incident said “There was a quite difference when she went to school today morning.” The serial process of the method she used to suicide has been descriptively reported in this reporting also. However the relevant psychiatric medication with sufficient counseling that is what should be given by this news reporting has not been addressed by this suicide reporting news contents is the fact that this texts naturally concludes in this analyses.

Sunday Lankadeepa (2004-08-15), in its headline questioned whether she jumped or was she fallen? In this reporting, they did not care about their social responsibility in reporting the incident, distorting the real occurrence. Media should not conduct the role of judge while they provide information for take decision to audience.

Silumina (2004-08-12) headline was “Sixteen years old Musaeus girl committed suicide jumping from five storied building”. However, Silumina reporting on this case is relatively healthier in comparison with other newspapers as it did not mention her method of suicide, not confirming whether she has been suffering from mental illness, and not included any pictures. Consequently, this reporting is moderately impartial as it did not make any hyperbole or story building upon this critical incident.

Lakbima also reported this case in a fairly unbiased approach as they did not include any methods she used to suicide or making further story using this incident.

Case Twelve—2002-10-03 Suicide of Chandrika. Rathnapura

Chandrika is a mother of three children lived in Rathnapura. She committed suicide after her children were being poisoned by her.

This case has been reported in Lakbima (30-11-2002), Dinamina (30-11-2002) Dinamina (05-12-2002), Tharuni (11-12-2002), Silumina (08-12-2002) and some other newspapers.

Lakbima and Dinamina (30) reported it in the front page. Dinamina (05), Tharuni (11) and Silumina (08) reported this incident in the other pages with much description using deep exaggeration. Except Dinamina dated on 5th other papers reported this case in their headline in a shorter form as “Mother drank poison after her three children were being drunken poison”. Dinamina (05) headline was somewhat descriptive as “My elder brother had made several clashes with his wife. In this news they have used three photos showing this subject and her kid were in hospital beds in two photos and in the other picture with the sympathetic care given by sister in the hospital. In the news content there are three sub topics as follows: Gramakson (an agricultural pesticides) Bottle, she was beaten up to nosebleed and collapse of social ethics. In this reporting method of suicide and all the personal and private information are revealed in a form of storytelling with much enthusiasm.

Tharuni newspaper reported this case with highly sensation. Its headline was “Chandrika who thought to departure from this world with her four children as she did not received love and care”. In the entire content of

the news of this papers projected a deep schmaltz in the narration. They have used two photographs that showing younger kid of Chandrika in the hospital bed with one of the nurses' love. And the other photo is showing Chandrika in the hospital bed.

Case Thirteen—2005-09-30 Suicide of Saman Nagastenna. Welikanda, Polonnaruwa

Saman was a twenty four years old rural peasant, who committed suicide as his harvest was damaged by lack of sufficient water, deficiency of satisfactory price and impossibility to cover his loan for his work in turning. Finally he took poison for commit suicide.

This incident was reported by the Irudina newspaper on the date of 6th of November 2005 heading “Harvest was impossible to sell to the price that government promised, so that my husband committed suicide, single child mother says crying”. In this reporting Saman’s act was highly exaggerated and over emphasized using emotional narration and very sensational pictures. There were four pictures in this news including isolated mother with her only child crying, their family photo with Saman, Saman’s father and a public notice of death of Saman.

Lakbima also reported the same incident on the date of 10th of October 2005 with the heading of “single child father of Nagasthanna of Welikanda, who was impossible to recover his loan from the currency produced from his crop, finally drank poison”. However, this story has made a particular heroism towards Saman’s action in the phase of his problem.

Before Saman’s action there were other several suicide cases from *Polonnaruwa* as in Table 1.

Table 1

Suicide Cases From Polonnaruwa

Date of the suicide	Subject of suicide	Age	Headline
2003.06.06	G.B Danapala	43	A peasant of the Mahaweli C zone committed suicide in hanging due to the inability to recover his loan. (Lakbima)
2005.03.16	W. Haramanis	80	Eighty years old peasant committed suicide drinking poison though he was told that his farming loan could be erased. (Irudina 24.04.2005)
2005.03.25	Kosgollegedera Senevirathna	28	Husband committed suicide after crying that <i>selling crops for twelve rupees how can I buy at least a piece of cloth for new year</i> . (wife says in the post-mortem (Lankadeepa 28th.03.2007)
2005.09.26	Sunil Rajapaksha	38	A peasant who was hard to recover his farm loan with his severe frustration committed suicide taking poison. (Lankadeepa 09.2005)
2005.09.08	Weththasinghe	30	
2005.09.30	Saman Kumara	24	Harvest was impossible to sold to the price that government promised, so that my husband committed suicide, mother with single child says crying (Irudina)
2005.11.06	Bodidasa	65	Twenty bags of Rice were remained: farming loan was not being paid: Bottle of poison poured into mouth. (Irudina 06.11.2005)

It is evident that the subject of suicide has been significantly supported by deep impression with the heroic action he has done in this reporting, so that this practice emanating a projecting trend of doing the same action in recovering such mental failures. In analyzing these texts, it can be concluded that there is a copycat occurrence in the frequency of these suicide as a result of this practice of suicide reporting. In this, both text of writing and use of picture in the suicide news reporting have supported to create an environment to commit suicide again in the society as that act was highly exaggerated by the newspaper.

Case Fourteen—2009 Suicide of Ayesha Gayani and Nirosha Sanjeevani. Gageyaya, Kottapitiya, Matala.

Six students of grade 10 and 11 of the Gageyaya primary school ate Oleander (*Kaneru*) seeds to commit

suicide on 24th of July 2009. Only two students died out of the six. Gayani died on 25th of July at the Dabulla Hospital. Nirosha died on the same date at the Kandy hospital. Police report says as they have been felt from certain problem they were to had this incident.

This case was reported by Lakbima and Dinamina on 25th of July 2009, Diwaina and Silumina on 26th of July 2009 and Lakbima again on 27th of July 2009.

Lakbima (25) reported this in front page and in page six, heading “two school girls died after eating poisonous seeds”. In this reporting, they only revealed the fact behind their act was that a love affair between six children. And also even it says the method of suicide, it does not say the name of the seeds in the headline and the content. In the Dinamina reporting its headline is “I did not ate Oleander seed though I was asked to eat as Nirosha and Ayesha have eaten them”. This is quoted below the headline as a Shanika’s evidence before the magistrate. Shanika is one of the girls who ate Oleander seeds. In the headline of this reporting in the Diwaina, they directly accused to school administration as “school administration has been failed down to eat Oleander seeds by children. Silumina reported as Six of Bakamuna have eaten Oleander as their love was being intimidated”.

Case Fifteen—2006-07-16. Suicide of Sajeewani Ileperuma. Kegalle

Sajeewani committed suicide with her four years old kid from jumping into train at the Alauwwa.

Sajeewani committed suicide as she was blamed unreasonably by her parents and other neighbors of her secret love affair with a three-wheeler (Taxi Driver). She was deeply distressed by this incident earlier. Before that, she was given a letter by a three-wheeler and she had informed it to her younger sister also. With the time past there were rumors and gossips of this incident over the rural mass.

Table 2

Suicide Cases Reported in the Same Time Period

Date of reporting	Newspaper	Headline	Other features in the content of reporting
18.July 2006	Diwaina	Pre-school teacher with her four years old kid jump into train, close to Alauwwa train station.	Reported in the front page and in the page four.
18.July 2006	Lakbima	Mother hugging with kid girl jump into the train	
18.July 2006	Lankadeepa	Poison pen letter (<i>Kelepaththaraya</i>) made the calamity, A mother with four years old girl jump into the train, Both died.	Reported in the front page and in the page six. There is a quite description in this reporting.
19.July2006	Lankadeepa	Life of a mother and a daughter ended unfortunately as a result of a Poison pen letter (<i>Kelepaththaraya</i>). In this reporting there is a sub heading as a mother with a baby as the train come fact sat on the railway road.	In this reporting in addition to the written piece they used two pictures of the victims. one is Sajeewani and the other is her little kid. This content is quite descriptive and a long passage comparison to other newspapers’ reporting.
19.July 2006	Silumina	Retrospection , Killing Poison pen letter (<i>Kelepaththaraya</i>)	This reporting is a column writing on the case. Much focused to the power of the Poison pen letter (<i>Kelepaththaraya</i>) in the time of highly modern mass media.
23.July 2006	Diwaina	Innocent lady and little angel who ended their life earlier as a result of cynic.	This reporting included quite exaggeration with a poem. This expresses deep sensation on the matter. It is included two pictures of both mother and little kid.
23.July 2006	Rivira	A tragedy made by an Poison pen letter (<i>Kelepaththaraya</i>)	Uses two photographs of both mother and baby-girl. Have a description on the case with highly personal information that results a deep emotional feeling over the reader.

Case Sixteen—2009.09. Suicide of Sadun and Vindya

Sadun and Vindya have fallen in a love. But the time past their love was threaten by their families.

This suicide case was reported in the Diwaina on 12th of September 2009 with the heading of “Why the life has been so unpleasant like this. Please tell me youth why did you go to death, the lesson that teach for both parents and children from Dunkannagama village”. This is a highly emotional use of the headline. Both Sadun and Vindyas’ photographs were included to this reporting. Story and the personal information were included in the entire report.

There was a much sensational and story building narration in the second reporting of the Diwaina on the 27th issue of September 2009. “Teasing of a love that is highly emotional” is the headline of this news. The second reporting of the case in Dewaina was a much overestimation. The reporter has transformed this sensational incident into a poetic narration, so that finally the entire news reporting has formed to a short story like art form.

As a result of the analyses of these cases, there are some aspects remained important in this inquiry:

- (1) Use of the Headline in a much exaggeration.
- (2) Use of the sensational photographs in addition to the writing of the suicide reporting text.
- (3) Story telling narration.
- (4) Revealing personal information for the taste of gossip and rumor.
- (5) Overemphasis and over estimation on the case.
- (6) Sentimental feeling on the case towards the reader.
- (7) Support to the suicide with the heroic action.
- (8) Absence of the emphasis of mental health and importance of counseling for the suicidal environments.
- (9) Newspapers utilize suicide cases for their profit-making agendas.
- (10) Violation of basic ethics of news reporting.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Suicide is the act of deliberately killing oneself. Risk factors for suicide include mental disorder (such as depression, personality disorder, alcohol dependence, or schizophrenia), and some physical illnesses, such as neurological disorders, cancer, and HIV infection. There are effective strategies and interventions for the prevention of suicide (WHO, 2014). The media affords the opportunity for indirect transmission of suicide contagion, the process by which one suicide becomes a compelling model for successive suicides (Gould & Davidson, 1988; Velting & Gould, 1997). Suicide contagion can be viewed within the larger context of behavioral contagion, which has been described as a situation in which the same behavior spreads quickly and spontaneously through a group (Gould, 1990). Social learning theory is another paradigm through which suicide contagion may be understood. According to this theory, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling (Bandura, 1977).

Rate of the suicide is increasing with the sensational reporting of suicide in the vulnerable groups such as patients of mental health, school students and rural farmers who have been depressed by the loans made for agricultural cultivation and socially depressed subjects of family problems. Contagion effect of suicide reporting can be confirmed in this study as newspapers have been practiced in the style of sensational reporting in almost all the newspapers in Sri Lanka.

News Contents are used to glamorize the incident with the use of highly emotional pictures, photos and headlines have been severely affected towards the contagion effect.

News content is constructed for a better sale (Profit) in the daily and week-end newspapers in Sri Lanka. Story telling style has been the major narration method in the suicide reporting. In addition, use of headlines are highly catalyst to the vulnerable groups. Method of the suicide is also fully exposed in the headline. News is always being reported as a suicide with the exceedingly emotional impression. Personal information of the victim and his/her family are being exaggeratedly reported for making optimum sale of the paper on the day.

Moreover, some papers are used to supplement some pictures and drawings that illustrates a face of tearing man or woman at the corner of the news content, while it is galvanized a big emotion in the headline and in the way that case being reported.

In the use of photos, death bodies of the victims in the coffins, cute attractive smiling faces of Children, poverty striking houses and the places as well as the tools that they used to get suicide are fully illustrated in the suicide reporting in Sri Lanka.

As the suicide incidents are intrinsically remaining a value of news in the perspective of Journalism, language and narration of newspaper reporting in such incidents are always full with exaggeration and emotion. Worlds such as tragedy, tearing story, innocent beautiful girl, fallen love... are used in the practice of language of reporting. So, this feeling of the content projects a taste of suicide and it could support for the reinforcement of the idea of suicide in the minds of vulnerable groups. One of the major catalysts in this is the glamorizing the case, from which making suicide as a heroic act in the face of such puzzling mental varying.

Suicide incidents are reported in the front page is also a fact that cause to increase the rate of suicide in the society. Sometimes, the major headline of the front page is based on suicide, so that headline itself titling as a massive tragedy or suicide in the day.

As a long lasting effect of the newspapers reporting towards media society, Television also have been adapted this sensational reporting in such a humanistic incidents of crime, murder, sex and suicide in the contemporary use of media.

Finally, this study concludes that current practice of newspapers in the suicide reporting has taking a much effect on the increasing of suicide in the contemporary society. When newspapers report some problem related to the vulnerable groups such as school girl's use of mobile phone and suicide, loan problem of rural farmers and suicide, poverty and family problems, it takes a contagion effect on such depressed vulnerable societies. In post-war society newspapers are always trying to find out an emotional incident and make it to a most romanticizing story in their newspaper. As contents of media are shaped by the institutional objectives of media owners, sensational reporting, which has been the technique for receiving optimum number of audience has been prioritized by the editors and regional reporters. As media is a highly profitable business and industry, their ultimate purpose is to make the highest profit through making its circulation over a maximum number of audience.

As Central Bank report says Literacy of Sri Lanka takes 91.9% by 2010 (2013:01). Yet, media literacy has been very low since media education has not been implemented along with the origin and expansion of mass media in Sri Lanka in its very beginning (Jinadasa, 2014, pp. 127-132). In a country, where literacy of media is relatively low in comparison to the rapid circulation and growth of media, media gratify their own benefits depriving social and ethical values of the society. This is mostly happening as a result of the priority of the profit-making objectives of media through selling human hazards in a mawkish reporting, which is a bestselling mode as far as public have not up to developed their ability to analyze and interpret, what is really media doing in their societies while media working with the sophisticated titles of democracy, media freedom and good governance.

Poverty of media literacy, which lead to lack of a critical and knowledgeable understanding has been dramatically influencing on the misconception and misuse of each and every social and physical institution for cheap economic profits in the developing countries (Jinadasa, 2014, pp. 360-394). In this background, media work for their own benefits, but not for the enhancement of standard and quality of human life. Even though there are many codes of ethics in suicide reporting in both local and global setting, governance and practice of such moral and ethical consideration in suicide reporting is impossible amidst the extremely consumerist as well as illiterate and culturally & critically under-developed media society.

This study recommends the following guidelines for the media in the suicide reporting:

(1) Suicide is an action of the imbalance of mental health. So, this incident should not be presented as a sensational story for attracting readers for a cheap financial benefits at the phase of the honor of human being.

(2) Journalism is a professional practice but not healthy to ecology of mind at the ill effects of reporting human personal and private incidents, so that journalist should not practice for the dilapidation of the standards of the quality of human life.

In the reporting of suicide incident reporting can be guided by following guidelines:

(1) Do not report suicide cases in the front page main headline.

(2) Do not report the suicide cases in the front page even in a small column.

(3) Do not use the word suicide in the reporting when it takes the headline.

(4) Do not use the words such as: tragedy, another regretful story, unfortunate beautiful girl.

(5) Do not make several sub-headlines in the reporting that exaggerate the story.

(6) Do not create the incident to a most emotional and creative story for sentimental taste of the illiterate reader.

(7) Do not use photos of the victims and vulnerable groups, their death bodies, places where suicide was happened, tools that they used for the suicide...

(8) Do not use drawings or pictures that glorify the mood into a terrible incident.

(9) Do not label the news as a sensational story of another regret story-let.

(10) Do not transform the entire story towards the victim as he conducts a heroic adventurous action, so that it would lead to a catalyst for those depressed vulnerable people to get into suicide as the reporting has already created a crowd sourcing and most concerned story of the day.

And there are some positive recommendations:

(1) Do report the story of suicide in the neutral way avoiding its sensational beauty in the perspective of Journalism.

(2) As Suicide is the final result of the lack of the understanding of world to a less experienced being, do report suicide as a deficiency of mental behavior, so that it is a situation of having many medications and counseling treatment of socially support, instead of reporting it as a most sensational tragedy in the day.

(3) As many psychological and psychiatric bodies of the world (American Psychological Association, American Psychiatric Association, World Psychiatric Association...), have pointed out there is an increasing trend of the rate of suicide, suicide can be happened as a result of social and economic problems in addition to genetic and psychological issues. Suicide is the most pathetic and unfortunate decision that comes to one's mind amidst the absence of others psycho-social support to the vulnerable societies, so that one of the interesting guides of reporting is informing reader about the prevalence of the suicide in worldwide, strategies

to cope-up with suicidal attitudes and the remedies that can be taken to expel such inhuman illnesses from the social environments.

(4) Do report the methods of overcoming from suicide, instead of glamorizing the methods of suicide in the headline and the entire text of the reporting.

(5) Do report suicide as a wrongly felt idea of the human mind. Report suicide as an action of the mental dysfunction and the result of a broken personality that impossible to tolerate or bear up the day today worldly issue, which is intrinsic to every human being in the society.

Finally, every media personal should respect for the standard and quality of the human life when they report suicide in their papers. Reporting should not work for the cheap priorities that satisfy the institutional objectives for a short term benefits.

References

- Abesinghe, R. (1996). Why Suicide? (In Sinhala). *Dinamina Newspaper* (p. 2).
- Amarasekara, D. (1990). *Sri Lanka society: A sociological analysis* (In Sinhala). Warakapola: Ariya Publishers.
- Amarasekara, D. (2001). *Social issues in Sri Lanka* (In Sinhala). Kandy: Heladiwa Publishers.
- Amarasekara, D. (2001). *Social problems in Sri Lanka* (In Sinhala). Warakapola: Ariya Publishers.
- America Foundation for Suicide Prevention. (2004). *Media guidelines for suicide reporting*. Retrieved from <http://www.211bigbend.org/hotlines/suicide/media.html>
- Annenberg Public Policy Center. (2005). *Reporting on suicide: Recommendations for the media*. Retrieved from <http://www.sprc.org/library/sreporting.pdf>
- Atukorala, K. (1998). *A study of suicide in Sri Lanka* (in Sinhala). Kandy: Integrated Development Association.
- Bandaranayaka, A. (1999). *Suicide: A psychological analysis*. Kottawa: Sara Publishers and Printers.
- Canadian Psychiatric Association. (2010). *Media guidelines for reporting suicide*. Retrieved from <http://www.cpa-apc.org/browse/documents/273&xxwm=true>
- Central Bank of Sri Lanka. (2013). *Economic and Social Statistics of Sri Lanka—2013*. Colombo: Author.
- Chamal, J. J. (2010). Why commit suicide for social hatred? *Sunday Divaina* (p. 13).
- Deshapriya, S., & Guruge, L. (2006). *Role of the media in suicide reporting*. Colombo: Media Unit of Centre for Alternative Policy.
- Deshapriya, S., & Guruge, L. (2006). *Role of the media in suicide reporting*. Colombo: Media Unit of Centre for Alternative Policy.
- Deshapriya, S., Guruge, L. (2007). *Sensational media usage in suicide* (In Sinhala). Colombo: Globe printing Works, Centre for Alternative Policy.
- Durkheim, E. (1951) [1897]. *Suicide: A study in sociology*. London: Routledge.
- Edirisinghe, D. (1991). *Philosophical insights* (In Sinhala). Dehiwala: Author.
- Etzersdorfer, E., & Sonneck, G. (1998). Preventing suicide by influencing mass-media reporting: The Viennese experience, 1980-1986. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 4, 67-74.
- Fernando, G. (2003). *Suicide in Sri Lanka and Christian attitude*. Colombo: Piyasiri Printing Systems.
- Gamage, C. (2006). Why commit suicide? *Rivira Newspaper* (p. 8).
- Gamage, W. (1998). Social and mental crises depicted in suicide. *Divaina Sunday* (p. 6).
- Gilbert, P. (1992). *Depression: The evolution of powerlessness*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Giles, D. (2005). *Media psychology*. New Jersey, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Goldney, R. D. (1997). An ethological perspective on suicidal behavior. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 15(1), 97-103.
- Gould, M. (2001). *Suicide and the media*. In H. Hendin, & J. Mann (Eds.), *Suicide prevention: Clinical and scientific aspects* (pp. 200-224). New York: NY Academy of Sciences.
- Gould, M. S., & Saffer, D. (1986). The impact of suicide in television movies: Evidence of Imitation. *New Engl J Med*, 315, 690-694.
- Gould, M., & Kramer, R. (2001). Youth suicide prevention. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 31(Suppl.), 6-31.
- Gould, M., Greenberg, T., Velting, D., & Shaffer, D. (2003). Youth suicide risk and preventive interventions: A review of the past 10 years. *Journal of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 42(4), 386-405.

- Grimes, T., Anderson, A., & Lori, B. (2008). *Media violence and aggression: Science and ideology*. Los Angeles, USA: Sage.
- Gunasekara, R. (1998). *Advices for Journalists*. Colombo: Godage.
- Gunasekara, U. (1997). *Mental problems and counseling* (In Sinhala). Wellawatta: Tharanji Publishers.
- Gunasekara, U. G. (2000). *Photographic Journalism* (In Sinhala). Mulleriyawa: Wijesuriya Publishers.
- Gunathilake, N. (2013). *Today is World Suicide Prevention*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailynews.lk/?q=local/today-world-suicide-prevention-day>
- Hawton, K., Simkin, S., & Deeks, J. (1999). Effects of drug overdose in a TV drama on presentations to hospital for self-poisoning. *British Medical Journal*, 318, 972-977.
- Jayamanna, P. (2004). Motivators of the suicides. *Sunday Lankadeepa* (p. 14).
- Jayathunga, R. M., & Fernando, N. (2003). *Suicide behavior and counseling treatment*. Mulleriyawa: Wijesoriya Publishers.
- Jayawardana, A. (2004). Is Death merely a news? *Rawaya Newspaper*.
- Jayawardana, A. (2004). We get commit suicide on the sake of heroism. *Rawaya Newspaper* (p. 7).
- Jinadasa, M. (2015). Internet through mobile phone and its cognitive and behavioral impact: Changing sexuality. *Journalism and Mass Communication*, 5(12), 614-628.
- Jinadasa, M. (2015). Rate of crime and the involvement of Army soldiers in post conflict society in Sri Lanka: Gender representation in crime and lack of the psycho-social awareness in the Army profession. *Review of Journalism and Mass Communication*, 3(2), 41-57.
- Jinadasa, M. P. K. (2009). Media impact on psychiatric condition and mental disorders: Qualitative analysis of media psychological perspective. Proceedings from *10th Annual Research Symposium*, Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Kelaniya, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.
- Jinadasa, M. P. K. (2011). *Communication principles and Critical Studies*. Kadawatha, Sri Lanka: Author.
- Jinadasa, M. P. K. (2012). *Media and new media history*. Kadawatha, Sri Lanka: Author.
- Jinadasa, M. P. K. (2014a). *Development communication*. Medamahanuwara, Sri Lanka: CCRC.
- Jinadasa, M. P. K. (2014b). *Language and communication*. Medamahanuwara, Sri Lanka: CCRC.
- Jinadasa, W. W. M. P. K. (2008). Media impact towards psychiatric illness: Fundamental and operational research for development. Proceedings from *Humanities and Social Sciences in Sri Lanka*. National Centre for Advanced Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences (NCAS), Sri Lanka.
- Jinadasa, W. W. M. P. K. (2010). The impact of media reporting on suicide: A mix methodological study of newspaper reporting the suicide and its impact upon increasing suicide in Sri Lanka. Research Symposium 2010-Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Kelaniya.
- Jinadasa, W. W. M. P. K. (2015). *Community development programmes and folk-media: A communication model for Sri Lankan rural society*. Retrieved from <http://www.caluniv.ac.in/global-mdia-journal/Winter%20Issue%20December%20%202011%20Articles/AR-4%20Jinadasa.pdf>
- Jones, I. H., & Daniels, B. A. (1996). An ethological approach to self-injury. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 169, 263-267.
- Kalansooriya, A. D. P. (1973). *Modern western philosophy* (In Sinhala). Colombo: Department of Education.
- Kalansooriya, A. D. P. (1987). *Bertrand Russell and contemporary philosophy*. Warakapola: Ariya Publishers.
- Karunarathna, H. W. (1994). *Concepts associates with analyzing suicide as a problem*. University of Kelaniya: Department of Sociology.
- Kirsh, S. J. (2006). *Children, adolescents, and media violence: A critical look at the research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Manike, P. (2009). Is reporting on suicide correct? *Rawaya Newspaper*.
- McQuail, D. (2005). *McQuail's mass communication theory* (5th ed.). New Delhi: Vistaar Publications.
- Michel, K., Frey, C., & Wyss, K. (2000). An exercise in improving suicide reporting in the print media. *Crisis*, 21, 71-79.
- Motto, J. A. (1970). Newspaper influences on suicide. *Arch Gen Psychiat*, 23, 143-148.
- National Union of Journalists (UK and Ireland) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). (2003). *Reporting suicide: Guideline for journalists*. Retrieved from http://www.mediawise.org.uk/display_page.php?id=171
- Nawarathna, P. (2008). It is better to investigate on the suicide rather than reporting it. *Lakbima Newspaper* (p. 3).
- Nawarathna, P. M. (2009). Does suicide reporting correct? (In Sinhala). *Rawaya Newspaper* (p. 10).
- Niederkrötenhaler, T., & Sonneck, G. (2007). Assessing the impact of media guidelines for reporting on suicides in Austria: Interrupted time series analysis. *Australian N Z J of Psychiatry*, 41, 419-428.
- Perera, G. (1998). *Suicide*. Dehiwala: Wathma Publishers.

- Perera, G. (2007). *Suicide and Prevention*. Colombo: Sahashra Publishers.
- Perera, S. (2006). A sociological evaluation of suicide in rural community in Sri Lanka (In Sinhala) (Unpublished MA dissertation, University of Kelaniya).
- Phillips, D. P. (1974). The influence of suggestion on suicide. *American Sociological Review*, 39, 340-354.
- Phillips, D. P. (1977). Motor vehicle fatalities increase just after publicized suicide Stories. *Science*, 196, 1464-1465.
- Rajapaksha, D. S. N. (2003). *Media ethics and Sri Lanka Press Council*. Maradana: Godage.
- Ranson, D. B. (2001). Suicide and the media—A critical review. *Journal of Law and Medicine*, 9, 12.
- Rasnak, B. (1998). *Suicide* (In Sinhala). Maradana: Godage.
- Rathnapala, N. (1990). *Criminology* (In Sinhala). Warakapola: Arya Publishers.
- Rathnayake, L. (2002). Reaching the suicidal in rural communities. *Suicide Prevention*, Part 4, pp. 269-271.
- Rathnayake, L. (2002). Suicide in Sri Lanka. *Suicide Prevention*, Part 2, pp. 139-142.
- Samarakkodi, S. (2004). Is suicide a mode of emancipation ? *Lakbima Newspaper* (p. 15).
- Samaranayaka, R. M. P. (2004). *Suicide: Buddhist perspective* (In Sinhala). Dehiwala: Buddhist Cultural Centre.
- Senanayaka, T. (2004). Impact of suicide on society. *Dinamina* (p. 17).
- Senevirathna, S. (2004). Journalists who lead to commit suicide. *Dinamina Newspaper* (p. 7).
- Shoval, G., Zalsman, G., Polaketch, J., Shtein, N., Sommerfeld, E., Berger, E., & Apter, A. (2005). Effect of the broadcast of a Television documentary about a teenager's suicide in Israel on suicidal behavior and methods. *Crisis*, 26(1), 20-24.
- Silva, P. (1989). *Suicide in Sri Lanka*. Kandy: Institute of Fundamental Studies.
- Sri Lanka Press Council Act of 1973 No. 05. (1973). Colombo: Author.
- Sri Lanka Press Council. (2000). *An approach for provincial news reporting*. Battaramulla: Author.
- Sri Lanka Press Institute. (2010). *Mental health and the media: A hand book for Journalists and editors*. Colombo-08: VSO.
- Stack, S. (1987). Celebrities and suicide: A taxonomy and analysis, 1948-1983. *American Sociological Review*, 52, 401-412.
- Stack, S. (1996). The effect of the media on suicide: Evidence from Japan, 1955-1985. *Suicide Life Threatening Behavior*, 26, 132-142.
- Stack, S. (2000). Media impacts on suicide: A quantitative review of 293 findings. *Social Science Quarterly*, 81, 957-71.
- Stack, S. (2003). Media coverage as a risk factor in suicide. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 57, 238-240.
- Stack, S. (2005). Suicide in the media: A quantitative review of studies based on Nonfictional stories. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*, 35, 121-133.
- Stack, S. (2005). Suicide in the media: A quantitative review of suicides based on non-fictional stories. *Suicide Life Threatening Behavior*, 35, 121-133.
- Sumanasekara, M. (2010). Commit suicide for depression. *Sunday Lakbima* (p. 27).
- Thevanayagam, P. (2007). *Sensitive coverage saves lives: Improving media portrayal of suicidal behavior*. Retrieved from <http://www.mediawise.org.uk/files/uploaded/Sensitive%20Coverage%20Saves%20Lives.pdf>
- Tousignant, M., Mishara, B., Caillaud, A., Fortin, V., & St-Laurent, D. (2005). The impact of media coverage of the suicide of a well-known Quebec Reporter: The case of Gaetan Girouard. *Soc Sci Med*, 60, 1919-1926.
- Wasserman, I. (1984). Imitation and suicide: A replication of the Werther effect. *American Sociological Review*, 49, 427-436.
- Wijekoon, C. (1999). *Sri Lanka Press Council law and its role*. Maradana: Godage.
- Withanagama, S. (2008). Issues in Suicide. *Subasetha Newspaper* (p. 10).
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2000). *Preventing suicide: A resource for media professionals, mental and behavioural disorders*. Retrieved from http://www.who.int/mental_health/media/en/426.pdf