

Voters' Role in the Election: Sociological Study on the Deceive Background Factors on Demeanor of Constituent in Sri Lanka

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Abstract: - It is noticeable that the process of holding elections in Sri Lanka was subjected for contraries that had resulted due to the reformation of constitutional system. Accordingly, the preferential voting system introduced was a crucial factor. As far as this study is concerned, it was based on the behavior of voter and his/her composition within the system of preferential voting practices. In this respect two geographic locations namely; the *Thanamalwila* police domain in *Vellavaya* Divisional Secretarial Area in the *Monaragala* district of *Uwa* province and the University of Jayawardanapura were selected for the research. In it's place of full coverage of voters within the study area, a random sampling method was applied having selected 708 persons to represent voters from the *Monaragala* area and 177 university students added with 59 non-academic staff to encompass the overall sample of 944 informants. Instinctively, the voters cast their votes in concern with the political opinion of the family, obligatory services needed for the area, party-political policies and the aspirations of the candidate to meet the desires of the public. Likewise, it was also revealed that the extent of thoughtfulness of rural communities on elections was limited. Similarly, it was found that 41% out of total voters interviewed who had read and understood the manifesto of respective candidate or the party and those who casted their votes in view of reducing bribery and venality behavior was 65%. Accordingly, the outcomes of this research will be vital in the restructuring of the political causes of action and the procedures on forthcoming general elections.

Key words: Election; voter; preferential voting system, common candidate. Politics.

I. INTRODUCTION

Balloting is a fundamental right of every person in any democratic country whereas, a human by his birth becomes a political being. Thereby, it is a usual state of affairs that elections are held in different formula such as; Local government elections, Provincial council elections and the Presidential elections to designate peoples' representatives to govern the country. Accordingly, people pay higher attention on the process of elections especially with the vested power of the vote on all above 18 years old as per the Donoughmore Constitution – 1931. Also, the voter needs to hold higher responsibility in the process of selecting people's representatives. On obvious reasons the roles and responsibility of the voter too, affects due to the timely changes ushering politically or caused by the constitutional

amendments. Therein, the executive presidential system as well as the preferential voting practice becomes important. Also it is a known factor that preferential voting is the lawful system in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the sovereignty power of Sri Lanka gives possession of to the general public. As per the existing voting method a voter entitles to a single vote and he or she can cast the vote in support of a political party or an independent group shown in the ballot paper. In addition, the voter is entitled to cast the vote for 3 members representing the same party or the group, voted.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Manifestly, there were political changes happened in varied instances within the Sri Lankan society. Specifically, such changes were happened owing to the constitutional amendments brought in. These amendments were resulted conversions in the overall context of the politics also influencing the processes of holding elections. Consequently, the determined research problem is to diagnose the role and the behavior of constituent who becomes a key factor in an election.

III. OBJECTIVES

a. Main objective

- To perform a sociological study on the practices being applied by the voters in casting their votes.

b. Specific objectives

- To study the scale of consciousness of general public on the existing election process
- To inquire the public opinion on the election system in prevalence
- Also, to assess the concurrent opinion of public on the preferential voting system
- To inquire and analyze the public views on the executive governing method.

IV. THE LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Constructing the political spectacle.

Edelman, M. (1988). *Constructing the political spectacle*. Chicago, IL, US: University of Chicago Press has discussed

how citizens can protect and promote their own interests and the public interest more effectively. Or can they? Murray Edelman argues against this conventional interpretation of politics, one that takes for granted that we live in a world of facts and that people react rationally to the facts they know. In doing so, he explores in detail the ways in which the conspicuous aspects of the political scene are interpretations that systematically buttress established inequalities and strengthen already dominant political ideologies. And also Edelman examines the ways in which social problems, leaders, and enemies are constructed and the political functions they serve. Influenced by twentieth-century language theory, and especially by the work of Nelson Goodman, Michael Foucault, and Jacques Derrida, Edelman treats the contemporary political spectacle as a set of symbols and signifiers that continuously construct and reconstruct self-conceptions, the meanings of past events, expectations for the future, and the significance of prominent social groups. He recognizes language forms as a central influence in such construction and examines the specific ways in which that influence is exercised. He shows how recognition of the spectacle as a construct carries far-reaching implications for the revision of democratic theory and considers some antidotes to the mystification and fetishism at the heart of politics.

b. Social Media Use for News and Individuals' Social Capital, Civic Engagement and Political Participation - (Zuniga, 2012) argued through his study although the effects of citizens' news consumption via SNS is a relatively new venue that merits further examination in the context of the general U.S. public opinion, this study sought to be a first step in that direction, revealing a number of important leads for future research. The present research empirically tested the influence of SNS use for news on four types of public life within the social and political process: proliferation of social capital, civic engagement and online and offline political participation.

As proposed by the hypotheses posed in this study, informational use of SNS exerted a significant and positive impact on individuals' activities aimed at engaging in civic and political action. Thus, results invite us to think that achieving a better understanding on how citizens use SNS may help clarify the newer and different paths that spur political and civic action over the Internet. In this vein, this study also found a statistical relationship between using SNS for news and reporting higher levels of social capital which implies that social media may also facilitate community life beyond the strict measures of civic participation. Interestingly, all these relationships are true once the models meticulously controlled for the respondents' demographic particularities, news media use, general SNS use, important political antecedents, people's discussion networks, as well as other discussion attributes and characteristics as to whom and how individuals discuss politics.

As elaborated in the literature review, learning about what happens around us and in our community, reflecting on it, and discussing about it with others constructively affects the political realm; as well as it facilitates a cohesive community by enabling citizens to engage in civic action. The models presented in this study carefully controlled for the effect that other media may had in this process. And they were pretty exhaustive, including traditional media, news online, and even sources of news generated by the so called "citizen journalism." Thus, the influence information distributed and presented through SNSs comes add to all the positive effects those other sources of information may already have. Thus, it is plausible to think that the information and what people learn through SNSs is to some extent distinct. Or at least different than the information provided through other informational venues. Perhaps this is also due to the fact that the information citizens are exposed to in these websites is also filtered by people whom SNS users trust and relate to, so it may be another reason why this information may become more effective.

c. Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation Henry E. Brady (2013)

This paper develops a resource model of political participation. The resources considered are time, money, and civic skills—those communications and organizational capacities that are essential to political activity. These skills are not only acquired early in life but developed in the nonpolitical institutional settings of adult life: the workplace, organizations, and churches and synagogues. These resources are distributed differentially among groups defined by socioeconomic status. A two-stage least squares analysis shows these resources have powerful effects on overall political activity, thus explaining why socioeconomic status has traditionally been so powerful in predicting participation. We disaggregate overall activity into three kinds of acts: those that involve giving time, those that entail donating money, and voting. Each requires a different configuration of resources resulting in different patterns of stratification across various political acts.

d. Unraveling the Effects of the Internet on Political Participation? Caroline J. Tolbert (2013)

While a long tradition of research documents the demographic and psychological determinants of political participation, there is also evidence to suggest that changes in communication technology may play an important role in influencing electoral behavior. We suggest traditional models of voter turnout may be under-specified with respect to changes in the media, especially use of new information technologies. The Internet may enhance voter information about candidates and elections, and in turn stimulate increased participation. Using NES survey data and multivariate analysis we find respondents with access to the Internet and online election news were significantly more likely to report voting in the 1996 and 2000 presidential elections. This was

true even after controlling for socioeconomic status, partisanship, attitudes, traditional media use, and state environmental factors. Simulations suggest access to Internet and online election news significantly increased the probability of voting by an average of 12 percent and 7.5 percent, respectively, in the 2000 election. The mobilizing potential of the Internet in 2000 was also associated with increased participation beyond voting. The findings help us understand how technology can impact voting and American political participation.

Through above literature, various researched tried to draw a various picture regarding the political institution and interrelationship of voters behavior. In here researcher attempt to understand voters' behavior and their attitudes towards their vote within the Sri Lankan social cultural and political background.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a. The selection of study area and the Sampling

In terms of the behavioral studies of the voters the team selected *Thanamalwila* police domain in *Vellavaya* Divisional Secretarial Area in the *Monaragala* district of *Uwa* province and a team of students of *University of Jayawardenepura*. In this respect, instead of full coverage of voters within the study area, 944 persons were selected in a random sampling basis of which, 708 informers were selected from the *Monaragala* area and 177 university students added with 59 non-academic staff from *Jayawardenepura University*, as follows.

• Interviewees identified from Monaragala	- 708
• Students from the University	- 177
• Non-academic staff from the University	- 59 = 944.

b. Data Collection

A detailed questionnaire was exercised in collection of data from the sample of 944 selectees and in addition the needed information were gathered through focused group discussions (FGDs), and observations as well. Furthermore, besides the targeted interviewees' data collecting was proceeded through institutional data providers as well along with the added series of information through primary sources. Also literature reviews too was accomplished in par with the study by evolving secondary sources of information.

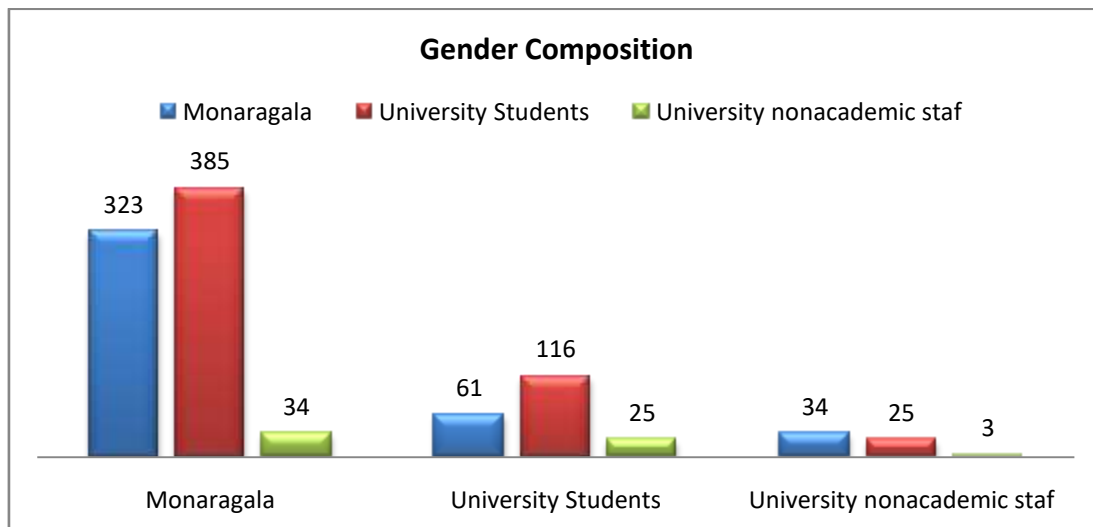
c. Data Analysis

When the data analysis is concerned the analysis of quantifiable data and related information were assessed and displayed by means of Graphs, Tables etc., applying - *SPSS Excel* software for assessment. Analysis of qualitative data was addressed through a descriptive approach.

VI. FINDINGS

a. Gender Composition & Age representation within the sample.

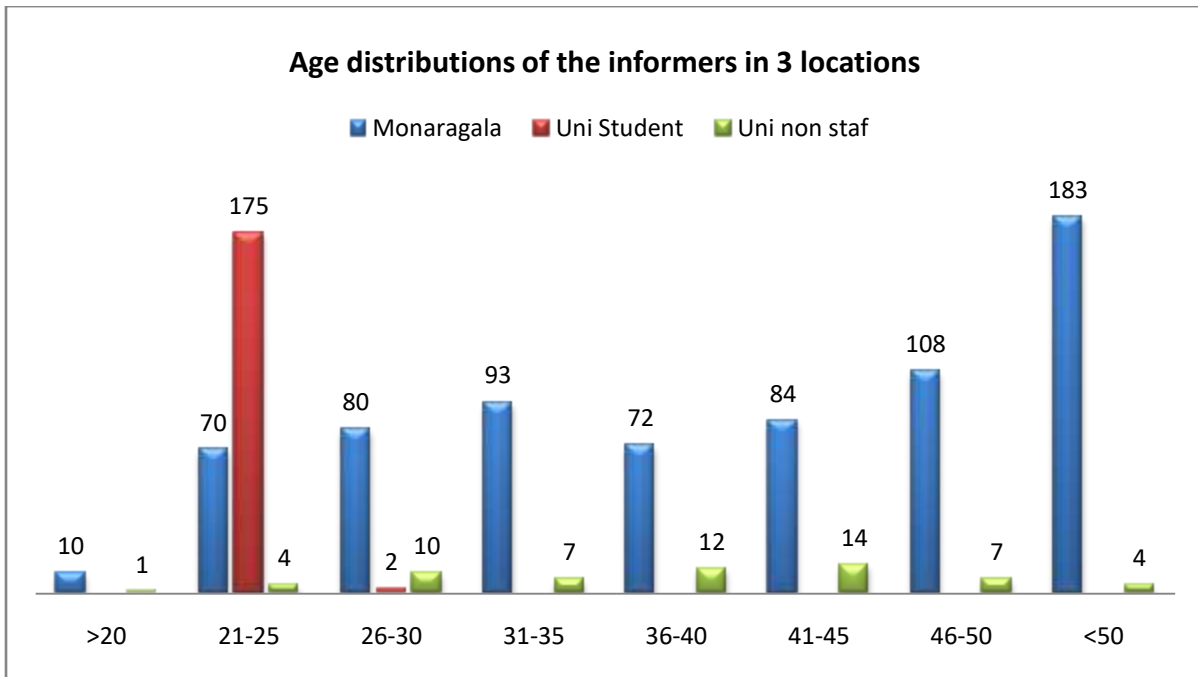
Graph No. 01 Gender Representation



As illustrated through Graph No. 01, the sample is consisted by 54% of female and 46% of male informers whereas, the Graph No. 02 exhibits the representation of students of Sri Jayawardenepura University in which 65% of female and 35% of male students were in the sample. Also 42% of female and 58% of male were represented the non-academic staff of Sri

Jayawardenepura University. Accordingly the first and second categories of selectees from the University and those from *Monaragala* symbolized higher percentage of female representation. Nevertheless, the third category of sample those were from the non-academic staff of the University portrayed higher percentage of Male.

Graph No 02 : Age-wise Representation

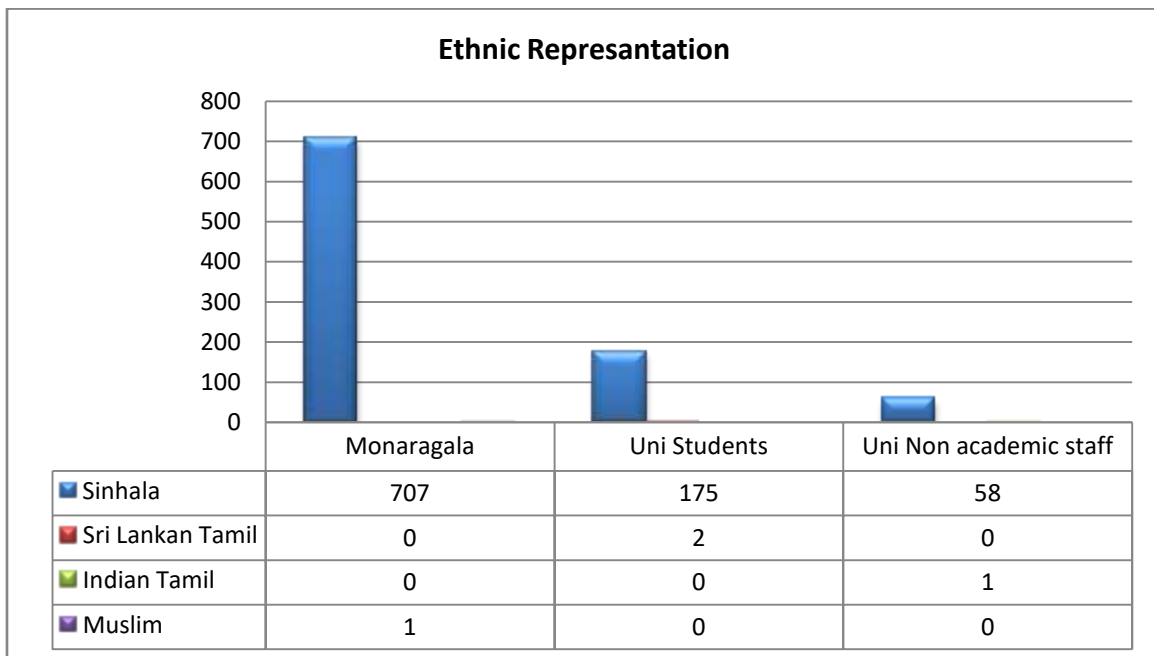


As per the selected locations there were 10 informants in Monaragala below 20 years of ages and no any informant from other two sectors found to be below the age category of 20 years. The majority of the age group of sample was

between 21st. to 25th. Also those informers in the category of above 50 of age too represented somewhat higher percentage. There were 187 in the said category.

b. Ethnicity

Graph No. 03 Ethnic Representation

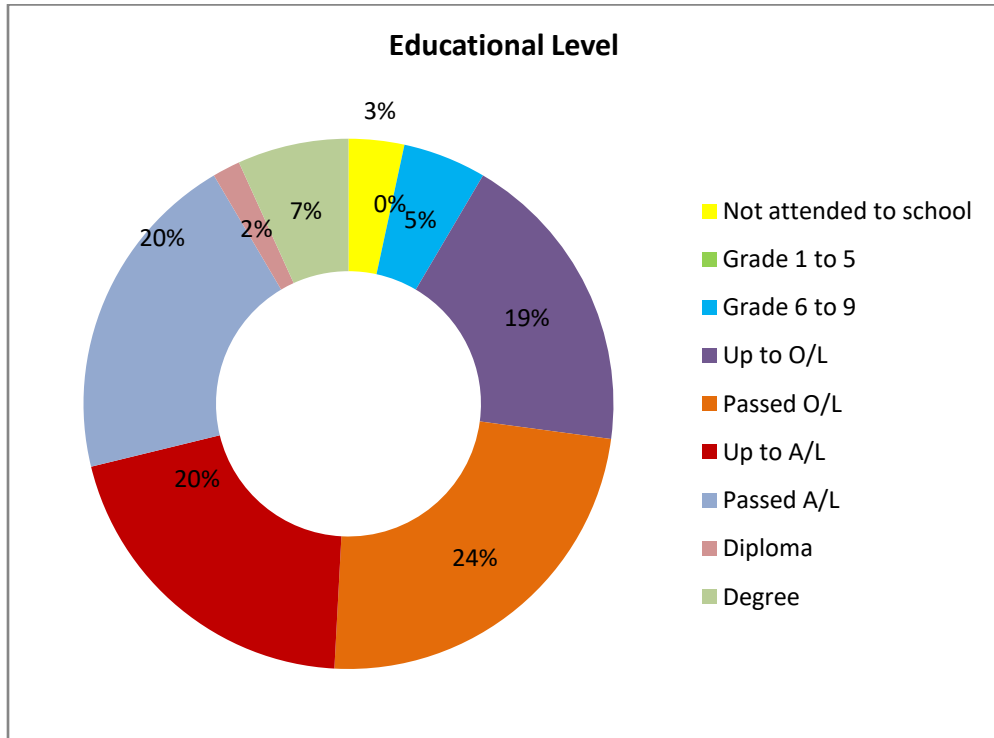


When the ethnic representation in the research is concerned a large majority of informers were Sinhalese whereas, 2 Sri

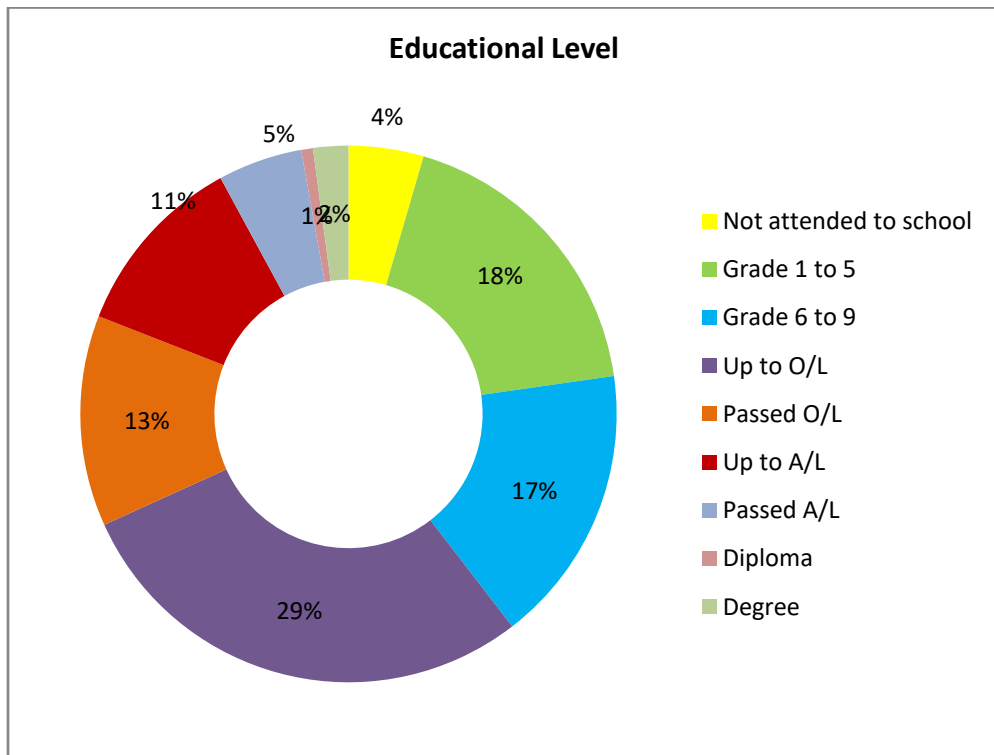
Lankan Tamils, One Indian Tamil and one Muslim were the other ethnic delegates participated in the research.

c. Education as a vital component

Graph No. 04. - Distribution Based on Educational level – Monaragala



Graph No. 05. - Distribution Based on Educational level – Non-academic staff of Jayawardeneperu University

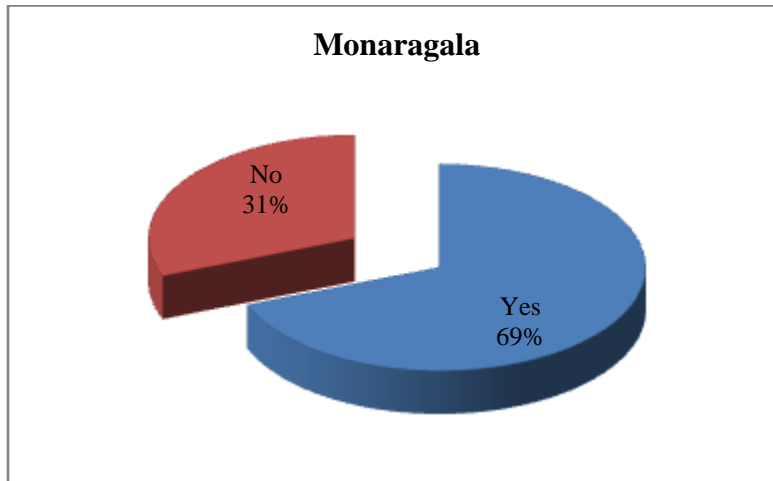


The Graphs No. 04 and 05 exhibits the educational levels of the two categories of informers namely the sample represented by people in *Monaragala* district and the sample of non-academic staff of the J’Pura University. The findings in pertinent to *Monaragala* showed that 5% of respondents had not attended school, yet, the number of those studied upto A’ level was in a satisfactory scale. Also exposed that 2 % of the sample had completed university education. Also visible

that a large number of children having studied up to Level and had engaged in agricultural work. When the academic standards of the non-academic staff is concerned, 3% of the informers had not attended school, and in contrary there were 7% of graduates. This also elaborated that the workers in a work place are in varied scales of academic levels.

d. Status of Employment

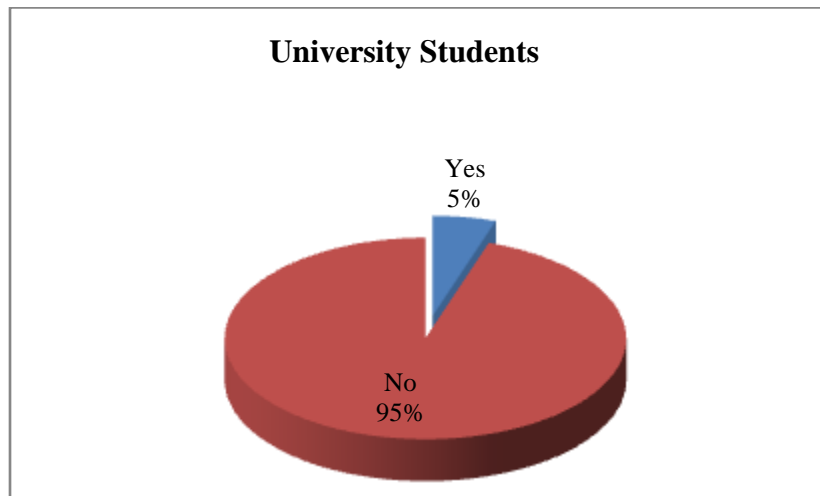
Graph No. 06 - Informers – *Monaragala*



On inquiry, on the employment, 69% of the tipsters of *Monaragala* asserted that they are employed whereas, 31% contended that they are not employed. Also revealed that 49% of those employed are involved in Agriculture based

livelihoods while 26% were self-employed, Apart from the said categories, 12% were found employed under private sector institutions whereas, those employed under Government institutes were 10%.

Graph No. 07 - Informers –University Students

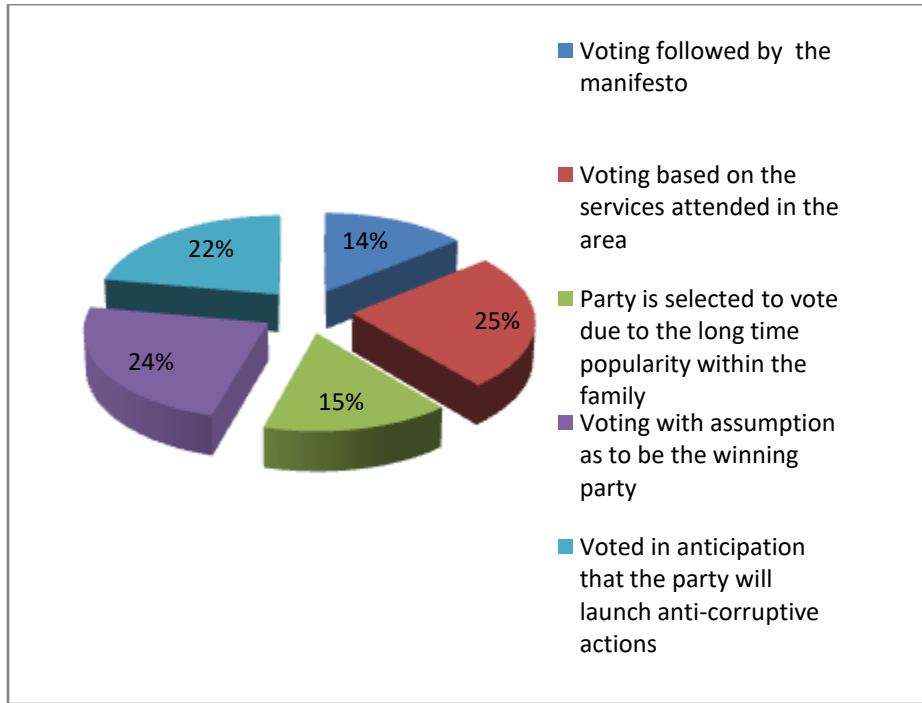


In quest of the nature of employment of the University students only 5% out of the total sample reported that they are employed mostly in the private sector. Those employed students elaborated further that some of them are employed as Bus conductors or else, to conduct tuition classes while some

others involved in selling daily newspapers or in the distribution of handouts.

e. Matters be of importance and to be attentive when casting the votes.

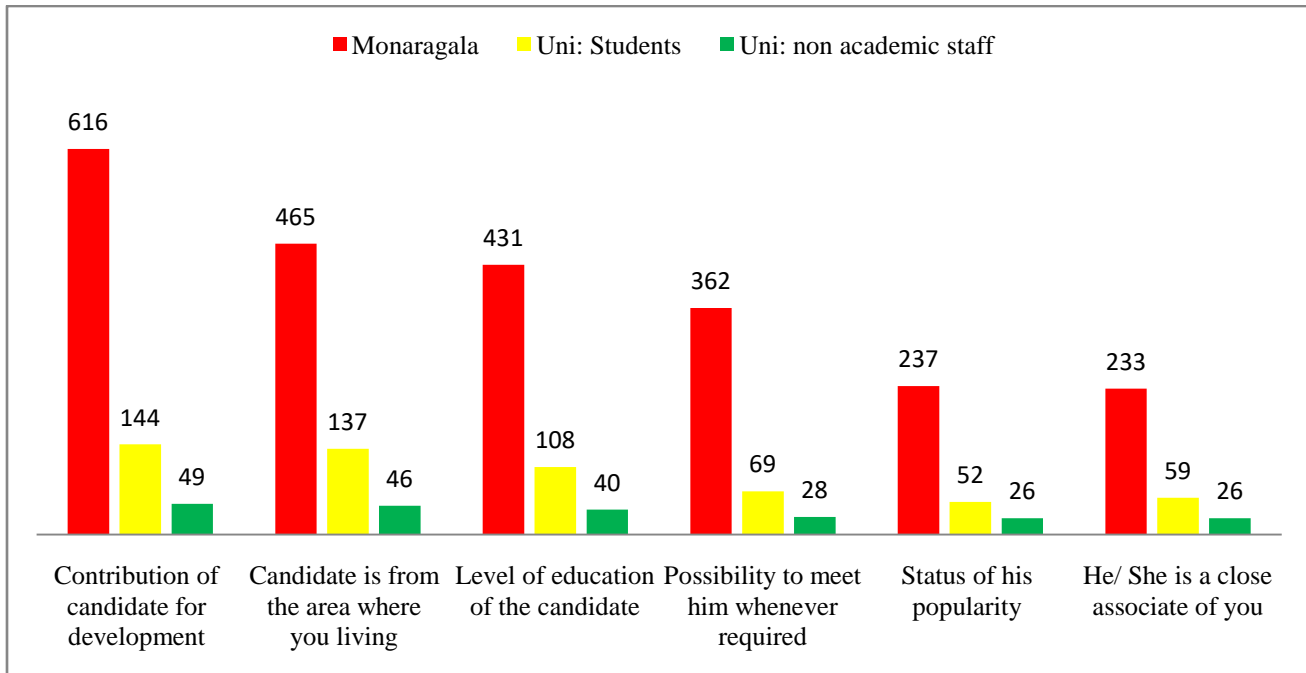
Graph No. 08 - Views on matters to be attentive by voters



Those stimulus factors behind the decision of voters to cast their votes for a particular party or a candidate was categorized into 5 main areas. Accordingly the highest majority of 25% had voted for a candidate based on the volume of his services bestowed to the area. Whereas, 24%

had casted their votes after assimilating the manifesto made available by the respective candidate. Also, 22% had voted to a candidate with the assumption that he will take stern action against bribery and corruption.

Graph No. 09 - Matters in focus when the referendum votes are concerned.



Views of the informers in Monaragala.

It is mandatory that a candidate seeking higher majority needs to be a win over person. Voters prior to their voting do thorough assessment of the candidate to determine a specific quality of him. As revealed, 616 persons in the sample said that they do prior assessment on the types of development the candidate going to be executed. Similarly, 431 persons had considered the level of education of the candidate and 465 had emphasized whether the candidate is appointed from the area. After all, the popularity of the candidate is considered by a fairly low number of interviewees.

Views of students of the University

University students being the most intellectual team of the sample too emphasized the importance of services delivered

Are you willing to express that to which party you will cast your vote in the coming election ?

Nos.	Response	Informers in Monaragala		Student informers of the University		Informers of non-academic staff of the university	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
01	Yes	449	63 %	80	45 %	31	53%
02	No	259	37 %	97	55%	28	47%
		708	--	177	--	59	--

When the question raised whether the informers would like to express to which political party they intend to cast their vote in the next election, nearly half of the sample shared their response uttering 'Yes'. On the enquiry which would be that party the majority said it would be merely the "United Peoples' Freedom Alliance".

Consequently, attention was drawn to the issues of appointing a common candidate the majority of the informants except the University students, shared their opinion to say 'Yes'. Thereafter, the question was raised who would be that common candidate? In response to the question of common candidate, majority of informers shared their views to appoint a candidate selected from a coalition of several parties. Amidst of this view some other replies were there to say that the said candidate must be a person like present President who is the 'popular person in the country'.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The rational field study accomplished on the behavior of voters was concentrated on 944 informers selected in line with particular samples. As per the data congregated it was revealed that higher majority of the sample is consisted by inhabitants living in semi-urban or in rural areas. As emerged during the study a particular eminence noted within informers was their custom of following mixed views in casting their votes. Also, it was found that the sample is consisted by different ethnic groups yet, the majority was Sinhala Buddhists.

by the candidate for this area. 144 students affirmed that such assessment is compulsory for them to mark referendum. Similarly, 108 informers had confirmed that they had voted their referendum after assessing the academic qualification of candidates, whereas, only 52 had voted in favor of the popularity of the candidate indicating that popularity is not to treat highly.

Views of the non-academic staff of J'Pura University.

The opinion shared by 49 persons out of the total sample emphasized to consider the involvement of the candidate and his contribution for the development in the area. Only 29 against the sample had uttered to consider popularity and the friendliness being qualifications to attract voters.

As revealed, the casting of vote is attended based on certain indispensable factors such as, the politically oriented sentiments of the family, services made available for the area, the manifesto, and the types of services intended by the candidate. Also revealed through this study that no sufficient awareness on the election within rural communities.

Although, majority has expressed their views to elect a common candidate it was disclosed that there was no precise understanding whether the candidate must be the common candidate. Also noticeable that majority of informers are in the judgment that executive Presidency has to be nullified according to the constitution approved in 1978.

There was no common consensus within the selected sample to express the political party for which they should cast their votes in the forthcoming election, yet, an ordinary group expressed their views to vote in favor of United Peoples' Freedom Alliance. In this circumstance the doubts are there on to which degree the majority of the informers do have corollary on the referendum voting method. Also to be concluded that the majority do not have sufficient knowledge on the elections and just casting votes following ongoing trends and just to follow others.

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