

Findings of the  
**Language Audit**

in 35 Selected Divisional Secretariats of Sri Lanka

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Summarised Report

Centre for Policy Alternatives



CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES

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The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) is an independent, non-partisan organization that focuses primarily on issues of governance and conflict resolution. Formed in 1996 in the firm belief that the vital contribution of civil society to the public policy debate is in need of strengthening, CPA is committed to programmes of research and advocacy through which public policy is critiqued, alternatives identified and disseminated.

Address : 6/5, Layard's Road, Colombo 05.  
Telephone : 011 2370803/4  
Fax : 011 2370801  
Website : [www.cpalanka.org](http://www.cpalanka.org)  
Network  
Website : [www.citizenslanka.org](http://www.citizenslanka.org)  
E-mail : [info@cpalanka.org](mailto:info@cpalanka.org)  
: [vibhasha@cpalanka.org](mailto:vibhasha@cpalanka.org)



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## Foreword

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The two national elections of 2015 heralded the reintroduction of governance values, principles and procedures in government in Sri Lanka. As such, language assumes a particular saliency since it goes to the heart of the challenge of bridging the governance deficit in the country in terms of citizens' access to government, the latter's communication with them, the demonstration of equality and respect, dignity and pride of all the peoples of Sri Lanka, so pivotal as well to the national objective of reconciliation and meaningful unity.

The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) has long believed that fullest implementation of the official language policy of the country would have gone and will still go, a considerable way in building confidence amongst all our peoples with regard to their status and position within society as equal citizens. Language is a fundamental tool for governance, national unity and reconciliation and as this Audit shows, we have some way yet to go to remove the tension, frustration and anger caused by both the apparent unwillingness and inability of governments to ensure language rights.

CPA hopes that the Audit by revealing some progress and enduring challenges will inform and inspire the efforts of all stakeholders in realising language rights to the fullest.

As noted on a previous occasion, CPA records its appreciation of the cooperation provided to it in the implementation of this programme from the state sector and urges that the issue receives the policy prioritization and requisite resources it deserves. The ultimate objective after all is to embed language rights in the institutions and processes of governance and government, as well as in the popular culture to the point at which it no longer requires special mention and attention as a source of conflict, diminished citizenship and/or feelings of marginalization.

Dr.P.Saravanamuttu,  
Executive Director,  
Centre for Policy Alternatives

February 2016



## A Language Audit that overcame challenges

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In present-day social and political practice everywhere, language goes beyond its basic functional purposes of communication and covers a wide range of fundamental elements of one's life and livelihood which are important in order to lead a dignified life, as accepted universally. By now, it has been seven years since Sri Lanka ended an enormously destructive military conflict that had much to do with a crisis of identity linked as much to language as to ethnicity and contested notions of binary-nationalisms and competitive interpretations of history. In this context, a crucial period during which the country should have seriously considered the politico-developmental position of language in envisioning the future of the country has already passed. This is a necessary move towards reconciliation, cohesion, harmony and peace- a context in which the benefits of democracy and good governance can equally be enjoyed by every citizen of Sri Lanka.

The Government has the responsibility of establishing a society which upholds understanding, diversity and social integration particularly in a country like Sri Lanka which is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious nation. Such an aspiration however can only be accomplished through the knowledge, respect and appreciation of each other's languages and culture, a cornerstone to a country which seeks reconciliation, peace and unity and has come a long way since ending part of the broader ethnic conflict lasting almost three decades. The constitutional and policy provisions linked to language rights reflect this vision while questions on the sufficiency and efficiency of the actual practical efforts undertaken to ensure that the envisaged policy goals are translated into what is needed by people of the country, remain to be asked.

Once at a workshop in Jaffna a group of academics proposed a language audit in Sri Lanka which they called a timely necessity. There it was discussed that the present shortcomings regarding the application of languages in the country can be overcome through a language audit. We focussed our attention on that idea as an organization and made an inquiry as to whether there has been a language audit in Sri Lanka before.

During that time we were actively working in different parts of the country throughout a long period of time with Language Societies. We had the potential of doing this with the help of these language societies.

So we initiated this taking also into consideration the limitations existing for a language audit and what methodology should be followed etc. It was launched all over the country based on selected 35 divisional secretaries' divisions.

In this we focused our attention on two matters. First, we identified the language related problems at the regional level through the language societies. Then we obtained basic data on matters such as identifying the governmental institutions, common institutions and private institutions that work at the regional level with the language societies and who are the officers working in them etc. Then we carried out the language audit in governmental, common and private institutions in the 35 selected divisional secretaries' divisions through such data while taking into consideration the structure and the process of those institutions.

The Language Audit was conducted covering a diverse range of government and private institutions, and public and private/common venues either those from which different kinds of services are delivered to people or where people get the opportunity to interact as part of daily life and examine the level of implementation of the Language Policy in Sri Lanka. Notably, the following sectors and areas are very



fundamental to people and language policy and therefore these categories of sectors have been specifically covered through the said language audit.

Here the basic data were obtained through the language societies and the secondary data were obtained with the use of a formal questionnaire through the field monitors. What is the language proficiency of each officer? How is the application of language in day to day work of the institutions? 45 field monitors were engaged in this data collection process. The nature of the institution, interrelationship between the individuals etc. were also taken in to consideration in this exercise.

Service receivers were not subject to this audit since we had identified the language related problems faced by them through the language societies and therefore only service providers were covered.

More emphasis has been given to the “Public Officers” category in that more than 5000 officers from different sections of the government and more than 1000 school principals were contacted in this language audit.

Accordingly, we believe that this is the broadest independent language audit conducted up to now .

An adequate time was spent for conducting this audit with the due formality and sufficient quality. Sometimes the necessity arose to verify the accuracy of the information provided by the data collectors. For this on numerous occasions we had to telephone the officers who were subjected to the audit and even sometimes had to meet them and discuss. Although they might have sometimes been inconvenienced due to this process we would like to remember the assistance they gave us with much gratitude. We consider it a great victory to be able to prepare a formal report after completing this language audit overcoming many difficulties.

The conclusion that we can reach through this study is that the contribution and unrestricted participation of all institutional structures including all the ministries, departments and local and regional level administrative structures etc. are necessary for the proper implementation of the official language policy in Sri Lanka. The relevant linear ministry and overall political leadership should take the lead and work with close collaboration with all the relevant sectors for giving the vision and leadership for this task.

We have to mention here with much gratitude the efforts of the staff of CPA including the Executive Director in the successful completion of this task. Also all divisional secretaries and the officers of the divisional secretariats in the D.S. divisions that were part of the language audit deserve our thanks. Further, we are grateful also to all members of civil society organisations, citizens’ councils and private institutions that assisted in this language audit. Finally we also value very much the dedication of the field monitors who contributed to the success of this language audit and are thankful for their service.

This language audit was very much instrumental in the identification of the shortcomings in the public, common and private institutions in implementing the national language policy and a clear understanding emerged as to the short term and long term measures to be adopted for resolving those problems. Although the Official Languages Policy was implemented from 1987 the shortcomings that existed from that time up to now and the practical difficulties people are facing should be taken in to consideration and it is the duty of the policy makers of the government to plan for long term solutions based on these findings. It is our firm belief that this language audit would be a useful tool for this historical task.

Lionel Guruge,  
Senior Researcher,  
Centre for Policy Alternatives



# The Project Protecting Language Rights of Minorities (PLRM)

## 2011-16

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The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA), Promoting Language Rights of Minorities (PLRM) project was conceived of following a previous research project on marginalized communities conducted in 2010.

While equality in citizenship is provided for via Article 12 of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and both Sinhala and Tamil have been declared Official and National languages by Articles 18 and 19 respectively under Chapter IV of the Constitution, there was however a severe shortfall in the actual implementation of these rights and their translation from law and policy into practice within the island at the conception of the PLRM project.

This lack of implementation was initially noted by the Language Audit conducted by the Official Languages Commission in 1998; just over a decade after Tamil was made an Official Language via the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution in 1987. As such, the PLRM project was initiated by CPA in July 2011, taking into account the vital role that can be played by Civil Society in urging, promoting and fostering the speedy implementation of the Official Languages Policy in a post-war Sri Lanka, two years down the line.

The PLRM project objectives were as follows:

- To Promote implementation of the Official Languages Policy in Sri Lanka,*
- Secure fundamental rights of minorities via addressing language related issues and inequalities,*
- Create a network of independent autonomous organizations that work on Language Rights at a regional level,*
- Create a body of resources related to Language Rights including legal precedent, research and new literature,*
- Engage with National Policy formulation on Language Rights via recommendations*

Through these objectives the PLRM aimed to promote social acceptance of the importance of Language Rights within the Government and Private sectors, Civil Society, general public, obtain legal recourse where possible with regards to Language Rights violations, thereby setting legal precedent and creating change to policy and practice related to Language Rights in Sri Lanka, and add public opinion to the discourse on Language Rights via discussion forums and literature.

The project was implemented in regions that showed most frequency of OLP violations. Accordingly, the Districts of **Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, Monaragala, Ampara, NuwaraEliya, Kandy, Badulla, and Matale** were selected for this program.



### The PLRM model

The PLRM model for change took a 3 pronged approach to creating change within its project areas and thereby consists of 3 key interrelated components. They are:

- Component I : Creating actual and attitudinal change through Community Mobilization, Sensitization and Networking
  - Via the establishment and mobilization of capacitated Language Societies (LSs) at the regional level
  - Sensitization of key stakeholders within the geographic location and networking them with trainers and Language Societies
  - Public and Target Group awareness raising through media generation, discussions, events, publication, competitions and a Final Report containing recommendations for future action
  - Creating opportunities for experience sharing and building and promoting inter-ethnic harmony amongst Language Society members via an Inter District Language Society Exchange Program
- Component II : Creating change to law, policy and practice through
  - The use of Courts
  - The use of the Official Languages Commission and the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka
- Component III : Creating autonomy of Language Societies and systematic change within the project locations via
  - A Language Audit

According to this model, the PLRM program conducted awareness sessions, Training of Trainers sessions with Partner organizations that proceeded to work on the field and raise awareness on Language Rights, filed cases and complaints with the Supreme Court, Official Languages Commission, and Human Rights Commission, and conducted a comprehensive independent language Audit (the first of its kind) to ascertain to what degree the Official Language Policy is being implemented in public level institutions and service providers. Discussions have also been convened with private sector stakeholders to adhere by the Policy. In this manner, an overwhelming amount of positive influences were made and positive changes were witnessed. At a grassroots level, 2000+ regional level changes were made (such as changing of name boards to both languages, filing complaints to relevant authorities on language rights infringement, lobbying for Tamil and Sinhala language teachers in schools without, etc.) whilst championing legislative successes such as the decision to print the National Identity Card in both official languages, the decision to print important information on pharmaceutical products in both official languages, as well as the positive verdict received by the Supreme Court to translate 260+ laws drafted only in English. 400+ complaints have already been filed with the OLC and HRC through this program, with many positive outcomes. It can certainly be considered a significant success of this program that at separate occasions, the Commissioner of the Language Commission as well as both Ministers of Official Languages (former and present) acknowledged that the work CPA had conducted on Language Rights exceed their



expectations. This was backed by the independent evaluation conducted in previous years which observed that with a limited amount of resources the project yielded a significant outcome.

Given the increasing trend towards rapid information dissemination and exchange, the need to create an online portal to store and disseminate information, promote initiatives taken, and network grassroots activists for Language Equality. Thus, the Citizenslanka.org website was established and currently boasts a 600+ database of legal documentation relevant to citizens, as well as represent a repository for information and current affairs that benefit citizens.

#### Identified Gaps in Language Policy Implementation

After extensive engagement with almost all levels of administration, CPA finds itself in a unique position to identify gaps in language policy implementation that hinder further progress, being;

- ❖ **The Official Languages Commission does not have the strength or power necessary to implement the Official Languages Policy to its fullest extent.** After many consultations with the Commissioner it is clear that the mandate of the Commission allows the Commission to make formal requests to institutions to adhere by the Policy, and failing which, write a letter of complaint to the Presidential Secretariat (PS). For this year itself, no such letter has been drafted to the PS for this cause.  
**Remedy** – A separate series of discussions must be conducted at an administrative level, taking into account the Ministries that collaborate most frequently with the public. A comprehensive research must be conducted into the adherence of the Policy in these institutions, and via a consultative process, recommendations and action points must be highlighted. This will also serve to broaden the scope significantly, as the program has so far only collaborated with the Official Language Commission and the Ministry affiliated with this mandate, and not with other Ministries.
- ❖ **More popularity must be given to the Citizenslanka website** – For greater awareness and subsequent utility of the website. There must also be a linkage created between the public institutions and this website, for the same cause.
- ❖ **Strategies are lacking in institutional level language policy implementation** – Many complaints directed towards the OLC from public institutions is that they had not included the Policy in their mandate and therefore have not allocated a budget for it.  
**Remedy** – a collaborative effort must be taken to identify the issues in Policy implementation at these separate institutions and work in unison to find alternatives for these issues. A 3 pronged (short term, mid-term, and long term) strategy must be created, as well as a feasible action plan to follow through.
- ❖ **Educational curriculum does not include language equality** - A disturbing reality is that school children are not given any information or knowledge about the Official Language Policy, its background, or its significance. With this in mind, it is not surprising that only 15% of Sri Lankans were aware that Sri Lanka had two official languages. CPA recognises the need to promote language equality among the younger generation so that they become active agents for tolerance, reconciliation and equality.  
**Remedy** - To achieve this, significant change must be targeted at the educational level. A



specific research and advocacy program should be conducted with the Ministry of Education to include a chapter on language rights into the school curriculum.

- ❖ **Legal advocacy is lacking** – CPA, through its language Rights program, has been the leading institution to submit cases and complaints regarding the infringement of the Language Policy. If this is discontinued, a significant proportion of legal advocacy will be excluded.
  - Remedy** – There are already a pending number of complaints and cases submitted that need overseeing. These cases/complaints must be monitored until completion.

### Introduction to The Language Audit

During discussions held in 2011 with Language Society members in Jaffna, the need was identified for an audit exercise to clearly map out the extent of implementation of existing regulation on Language Rights. CPA went on to plan out a detailed Language Audit exercise in 08 service sectors covering government and private institutions and their operations, officials and locations.

The Language Audit was conducted covering a diverse range of government and private institutions, and public and private/common venues either from which different kinds of services are delivered to people or where people get the opportunity to interact as part of daily life and examines the level of implementation of the Language Policy in Sri Lanka. Notably, the following sectors and areas are very fundamental to people and language policy and therefore these categories of sectors have been specifically covered through the said language audit.

Categories of stakeholders contacted for the Language Audit	
01. Government Officers	05. Government Sector officials
02. School Principals	06. Private Sector officials
03. Police Stations	07. Government Sector
04. Hospital Police Hubs	08. Private Sector and Public Locations

List of DS Divisions in which the Language Audit Exercise was carried out						
Valikaman West	Karachchi	Kurunegala	Pottuvil	Kathankudy	Rattota	Udawalapaya
Wallikaman East	Vavunia	Tirukkivil	Dehiwala	Eravurpattu	Lunugala	Kantalai
Nallur	Vavunia South	Addalachenai	Koralaiattu	Tangalle	Passara	Tambalagamuwa
Tellipalai	Mannar Town	Akkaraipattu	Eravur	Ambagauwa	Buttala	Trincomalee
Chavakachcheri	Nanaddan Town	Lahugala	Manmunaiattu	AmbangangaKorale	Monaragala	Kinniya



## Objectives

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The main objective of this report is to highlight the key findings, analysis and recommendations of the Language Audit on the implementation of Language Policy in Sri Lanka. The Audit was conducted by the Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) across Sri Lanka focusing on selected Divisional Secretariats in which the project Promoting Language Rights of Minorities (PLRM) has been implemented.

## Methodology

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The methodology adopted in this language audit is based on 08 structured questionnaires administered through a team of enumerators. The information gathered pertains to the actual ground level implementation of the bilingual policy in the country and the audit covers diverse sectors, institutions, and venues in which both the application of the spirit and letter of language policy is relevant and essential.

The Audit was conducted in 15 selected districts and the two key criteria for selection of these districts included 1) largest minority population and 2) implementation of the PLRM project over the past two years. Thirty –five (35) DS divisions in which the PLRM project was implemented were selected. That Language Societies had already been formed in these DS divisions, was one of the bases for selection. GramaNiladaries, Samurdhi Officers and Divineguma officers, Family Health Officers were contacted and in the case of ‘Government Officers,’ either the officer in charge or deputies were contacted to gather information.

As part of the Audit, a comprehensive three day training was given to all 49 enumerators on conducting interviews, discussions, observations and a thorough briefing was done on the administering of various questionnaires. Mock interviews were also demonstrated with the supervision and direction of trainers before the enumerators were sent to their respective field locations. Structured questionnaires were used and all collected data has been put through systematic coding and analysis processes. No random sampling method usually practiced in surveys was adopted in this Audit and instead, the design of the Audit has focussed on areas in which CPA has been implementing its regular programme activities.

The series of questionnaires used were first designed in the Sinhala language and subsequently translated to the Tamil and English languages. Additionally, before the enumerators were deployed, a pilot run was carried out using the relevant questionnaire to ensure their effective administering in the field.

The field component of the Language Audit was conducted from 27th May to July 1st of 2014. A total of 49 enumerators were deployed to conduct the Audit comprising 34 male and 15 female enumerators. Bilingual capacity was one of the key criteria in selecting the enumerators to conduct interviews and gather data.



## Top Line Updates

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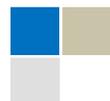
- Apart from those in the Hambantota district (75.3%), between 85%-90% of government officers in all other districts agree that *“All government institutions should work in both official languages”*.
- In five districts (Hambantota, Batticaloa, Mannar, Killinochchi and Jaffna), 20% or more government officers have stated that they have not heard about the Official Language Commission.
- 67% of government officers stated that neither the Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration<sup>1</sup> nor the Department of Official Languages have conducted any awareness raising programmes related to the OLP for officers in their respective institutions.
- Of the officers who joined government service in 2007 or after, almost 73% indicated that no awareness programme on OLP had been conducted in their institutions.
- 62.4% of the government officers involved in this Audit stated that they have not received relevant circulars and gazettes with regard to the Official Language Policy.
- The two key obstacles faced by the government officers in relation to the above are: 1) 55.4% - being overloaded with office work/not having enough leave and 2) 52.4%-not having access to a teacher/class.
- 90% of the government officers agreed that *“All government institutions should work in both official languages”*.
- The majority of 864 principals interviewed stated that awareness programmes on the OLP, have not been conducted by the Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration or the Department of Official Languages for officers in their schools.
- It was noted that among 1035 schools governed by the provincial councils, 749 of them had not received reading materials on building reconciliation, while 286 schools of the same category had received the same.
- Among 1141 respondent schools, the majority of 999 respondents stated that they *“Agree”* with the said statement that *“All government institutions should work in both official languages”*.

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<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration was renamed as the Ministry of National Co-existence Dialogue and Official Languages following the change of Government of January 2015.



- In 91.3% Tamil medium schools, the numbers of teachers available to teach Sinhala are insufficient. In bilingual schools, the shortfall of teachers for Sinhala language stands at 56.6%.
- Even within the deliberately limited sample of police stations contacted for this language audit, there is a sizable deficit of skilled police officers with sufficient language proficiency. Furthermore, the same need in hospital police hubs was relatively higher compared to the usual police stations covered in this Audit.
- The majority of respondents among 568 officials in charge of common access places such as temples, kovils, churches, societies and other institutions contacted, showed higher awareness and knowledge about OLP and language rights.
- Among 704 personnel in charge of private entities, over 50% of respondents have heard about the Official Languages Commission, or Department of Official Languages.
- Among government institutions studied in this Audit, a majority of- 53.5% maintained nameboards in all three languages.
- 60% of government institutions subjected to the audit, had no language plan, while there was approved language plans in only 9.1% of such institutions.
- Overall, the use of both official language and/or all three languages in private sector institutions and public locations is higher than in government institutions.



## Legal Background

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In the General Election of 1956, the main populist and popular sentiment of the victorious Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP) of which the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) was the main stakeholder, was the introduction of a “Sinhala Only” official languages policy. Accordingly the Official Language Act, NO 33 of 1956 was passed, giving rise to the key Tamil grievance of the discriminatory use of language underpinning second –class status as citizens. Language thereby became a principal contributory factor to the ethnic conflict. Subsequent attempts to allow for and ensure in practice, the official use of the Tamil language fell victim to the ethnic outbidding that became institutionalised in the two party competition at elections until the Indo Sri Lankan Accord of 1987 and the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution which it paved the way for. Through that amendment the Tamil language was “also” recognised as an official language. As attested to by this Audit, problems however persist to this day with regard to implementation, despite an Official Languages Commission being in existence since 1991.

The 1978 the Constitution of Sri Lanka sets out the overarching legislative and policy context for official languages of the country. The right to equality clause (clause 12) proscribes discrimination on the grounds, inter alia, of language while it further prohibits discrimination in access to “shops, public restaurants, hotels, places of public entertainment and places of public worship of his own religion”, on the grounds, inter alia, of language. Sub section 6 of Clause 27 of Chapter IV of the Constitution; “Directive principles of state policy” stipulates that the “state shall ensure equality of opportunity to citizens, so that no citizen shall suffer any disability on the ground of, inter alia, language”.

Sri Lanka being one of the countries that has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is therefore bound by Article 27 concerning the rights of minorities including the “right to use their own language”. -The Public Administration Ministry through Circulars No. 3 and 7 of 2007 has sought to give effect to this recommendation. Serving public officers who obtain or demonstrate expected proficiency in a second official language (Tamil in the case of Sinhala-speakers and Sinhala in the case of Tamil-speakers) are awarded lump-sum payments as well as monthly increments as per the directives given in Public Administration Circular No. 3/2007. Meanwhile, According to the provisions of the Public Administration Circular No. 7/2007; new employees to the public service must, within their first five years of service obtain proficiency in a second official language or lose increments.

Another measure taken recently by issuing the Extraordinary Gazette Notification No. 1620/27 dated 25.09.2009 is to create focal points in all local, provincial and central government institutions designated as the ‘Official Language Implementation Officer’ among senior-level administrators, who report to the ‘Chief Official Language Implementation Officer’ who is also the senior-most officer in the institution. The role of the focal person is to raise awareness among staff on the official languages law; to develop strategies and take action for its implementation; to formulate schemes for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of those strategies and actions; and to provide relevant data and other information to the line ministry, Department of Official Languages and Official Languages Commission.

As per the Official Languages Commission Act, No. 18 of 1991; core functions of the Commission are to advise government on matters of language policy; to monitor the compliance especially of public authorities with the constitutional provisions on language; to educate state officials, the private sector and the general public on



the status and use of Sinhala, Tamil and English and finally, to investigate complaints arising from alleged violations of the official languages legislation.

While the Chapter IV of the Constitution provides provisions with regard to the official languages, clause 25 therein states that “The State shall provide adequate facilities for the use of the languages provided for in this Chapter”. Thus, apart from having number of legal, policy and administrative measures with regard to the language rights of citizens of the country, it is also the state’s responsibility to ensure the provision of sufficient financial and human resources needed at all levels to effectively implement the official Language Policy in Sri Lanka. The findings of this report illustrate some of the gaps and challenges in terms of facilities available for implementing the Official Languages Policy and are expected to be a reference for respective policy making and administrative officials to bring necessary affirmative changes.

## Key Findings of the Language Audit

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Among the 08 sectors audited the 02 main sectors where awareness was high were that of ‘Government Officers’ and the ‘School Principals’. In the former category 5167 individuals were interviewed and in the latter 1142. Selected police stations and hospital police posts were also included as well as officers in charge of common and private entities such as Temples, Kovils, Churches, Societies and businesses.

868 officers in charge of common/public locations (Temples, Kovils, Churches), 704 officials in charge of private locations (business outlets, vendors, service providers), 651 government institutions, 236 private institutions, 30 police stations and 18 hospital police hubs were included under this language audit.

The following eight chapters summarise findings of the language audit



## Chapter One

### Government Officers

Considering the whole gamut of statutory requirements regarding language rights it is vital to have the requisite regulations and procedures to ensure this is institutionalised within the administrative structure.

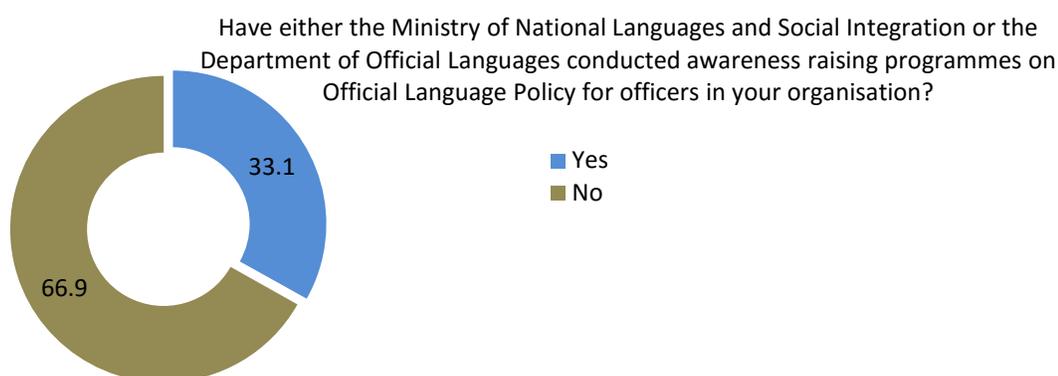
Of 15 districts, as shown in Figure 1 illustrated below, it was observed that in seven districts (Colombo, Hambantota, Monaragala, Badulla, Matale, Kandy and Kurunegala), Sinhala is the language of proficiency of more than 90% of the government officers. In five districts (Ampara, Batticaloa, Mannar, Kilinochchi and Jaffna), Tamil is the language of highest proficiency of more than 87% of the interviewed government officers.

It should be noted that the Public Administration Circular No. 7 / 2007 / 1 dated 2007.05.28 stipulates that proficiency in the second language was made compulsory for government officers while the same provision has also been integrated in to the Establishment Code, under Chapter 11, subsection 12:12:1. Accordingly, the provision 12:11:2 of the Establishment Code stipulates that “Every officer should obtain the proficiency in the second language as specified for the relevant post (the level is specified for the post) within five years of appointment to the service/position.

Considering the time of introduction of the above circular, it is useful to observe 45.5% of government officers included in this Audit joined the government service in 2007 or thereafter and it is most likely that the majority among them are subject to the provisions of the above circular.

However, as Figure 1 below highlights, from among the government officers involved in the Language Audit, almost 67% stated that neither the Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration nor the Department of Official Languages have conducted any awareness raising programmes on the Official Languages Policy for officers in their respective institutions, while only 33% stated that there have been such awareness programmes.

**Figure1: Awareness programmes conducted by the line ministry on OLP**



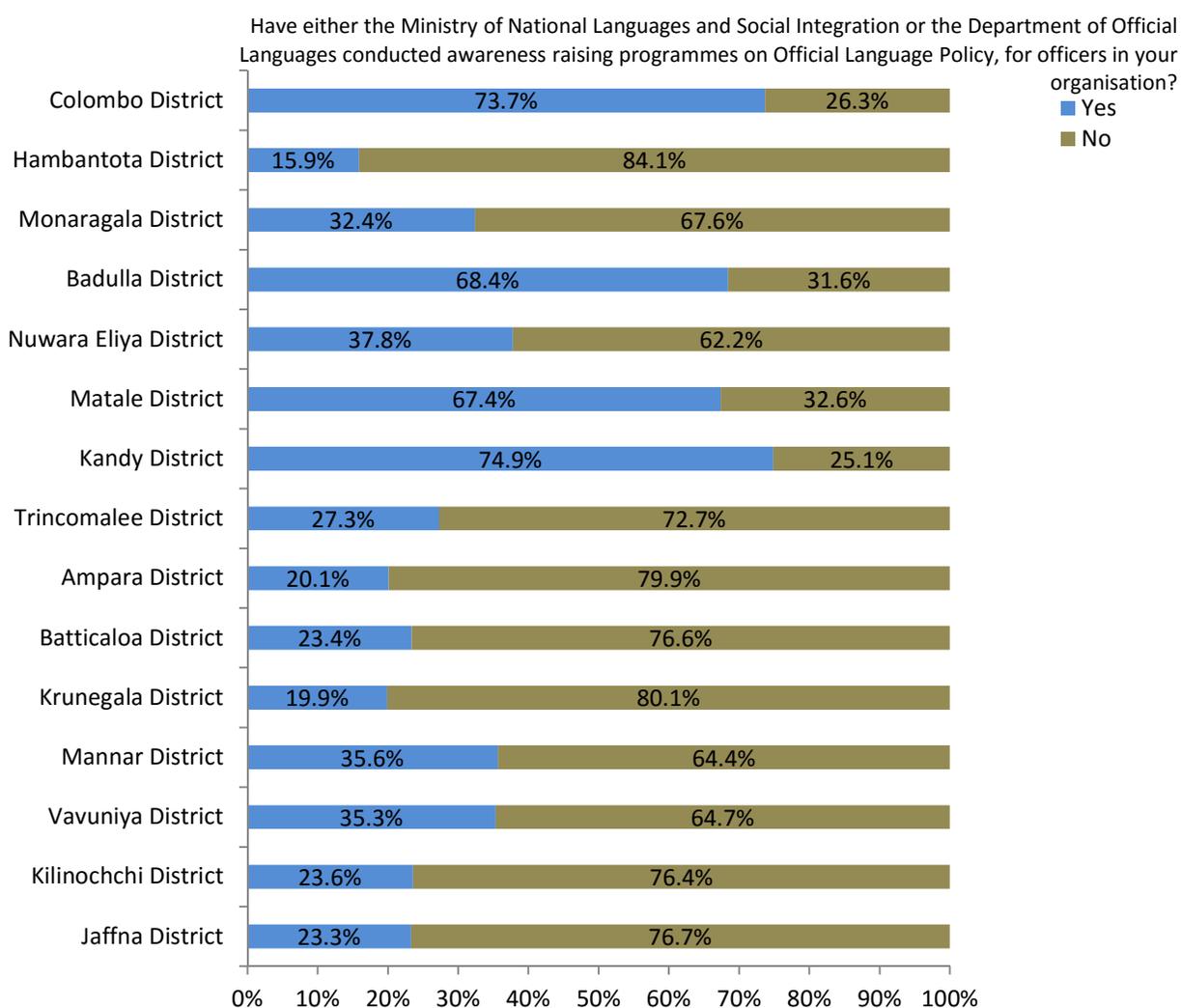
Thus, it is essential to understand the extent to which the government officers in respective districts in which this audit was conducted, have had the opportunity to be part of any such training programme on the Official Language Policy, conducted either by the Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration or the Department of Official Languages.



As presented in Figure 2 below, out of 15 districts covered by the Audit, only in four districts (Colombo, Badulla, Matale and Kandy) did more than 65% of officers receive awareness programmes on the Official Languages Policy that had been conducted either by the Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration or the Department of Official Languages. Kandy district records the highest; almost 75% of officers have received such awareness programmes.

Most importantly, more than 60% of government officers in the other 11 districts stated that they have not had an opportunity to be part of such awareness programmes. Even among this classification, in seven districts (Hambantota, Trincomalee, Ampara, Batticaloa, Kurunegala, Killinochchi and Jaffna), more than 70% of officers stated no such awareness programmes were conducted and notably five districts out of these are districts in Northern and Eastern provinces.

**Figure 2: Awareness programmes conducted by the line ministry on OLP – on a district basis**



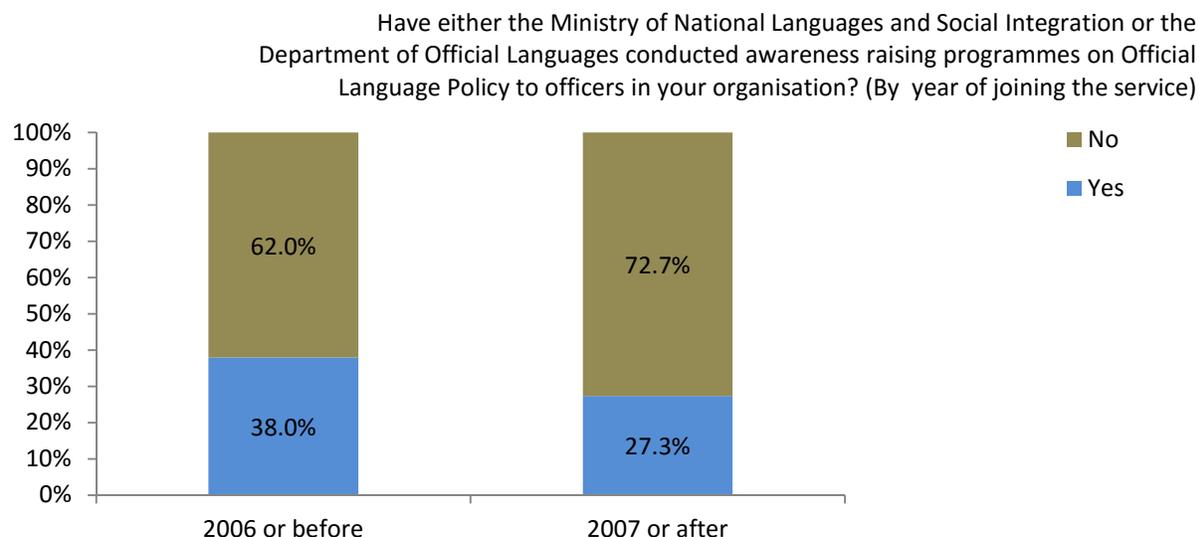
The Language Audit further attempted to understand the extent to which individual officers in institutions where such awareness programmes were conducted have actually attended such programmes.



As indicated in the Figure 3 below, of the officers who joined the government service in 2006 or before, 62% stated that no such awareness programme was conducted in their institutions while only 38% had the opportunity to attend such an awareness programme.

Data analysis further highlights that, from the officers who joined the government service in 2007 or after, almost 73% indicated that no such awareness programme had been conducted in their institutions while only 27% have had the opportunity of participating in such awareness programmes carried out either by the Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration or the Department of Official Languages.

**Figure 3: Awareness programmes conducted by the line Ministry on OLP Vs. Year of joining**

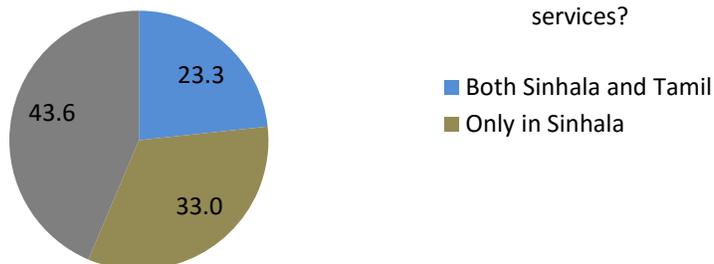


This Language Audit focussed on the extent to which government officers are able to do their duties or provide services bilingually. As presented in Figure 4, only 23% of government officers who interacted with this Audit in 15 districts in Sri Lanka can carry out their duties in both Sinhala and Tamil.

Accordingly, 77% of government officers can carry out their duties/provide services only in one of the official languages and among them, 43.6% can perform their duties only in the Tamil language while 33% can carry out duties only in the Sinhala language.

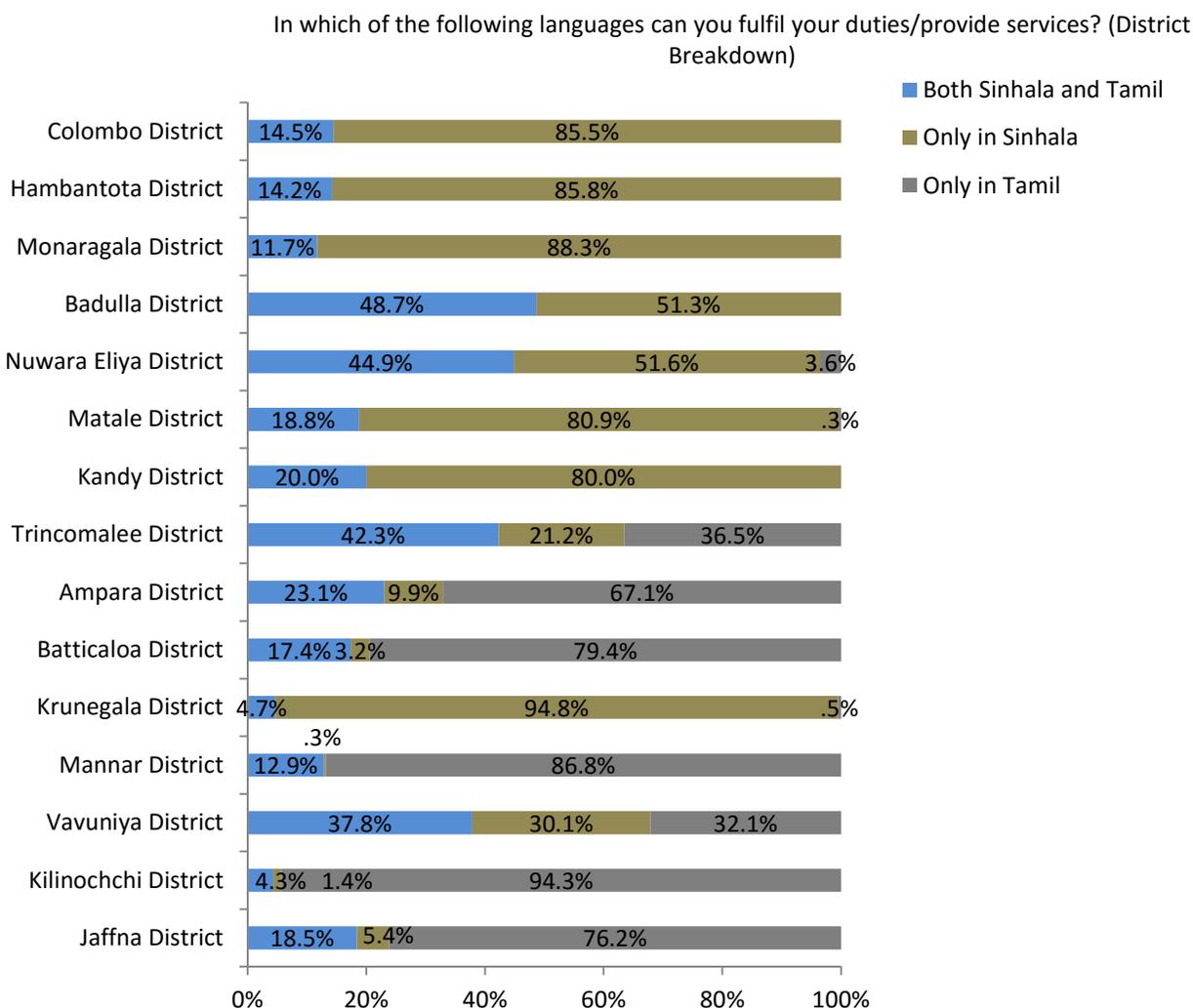
**Figure 4: Languages in which services can be provided**

In which of the following languages are you able to carry out your duties/provide services?



However, with the percentages of respective district sampling, it is noticeable as shown in the Figure 5 below that there are relatively higher numbers of government officers who are capable of providing services in both Tamil and Sinhala languages in districts such as Badulla (48.7%), Nuwara Eliya (44.9%), Trincomalee (52.3%) and Vavuniya (37.8%).

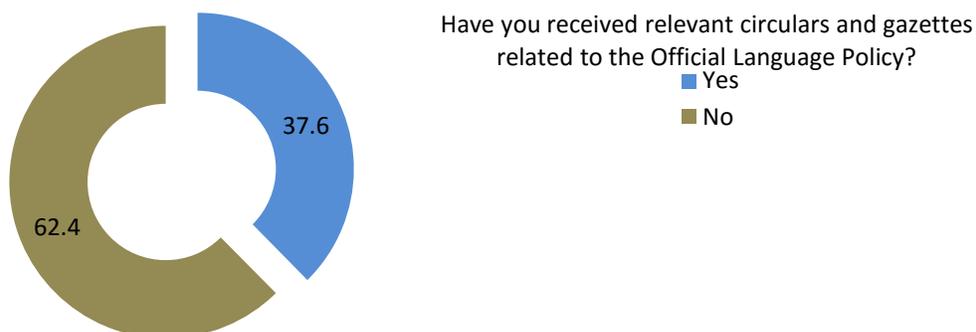
**Figure 5: Languages in which services can be provided – percentages on a district basis**



As reflected in the Figure 6, it was observed that the overwhelming majority of 62.4%, stated that they have not received relevant circulars and gazettes with regard to the Official Language Policy.

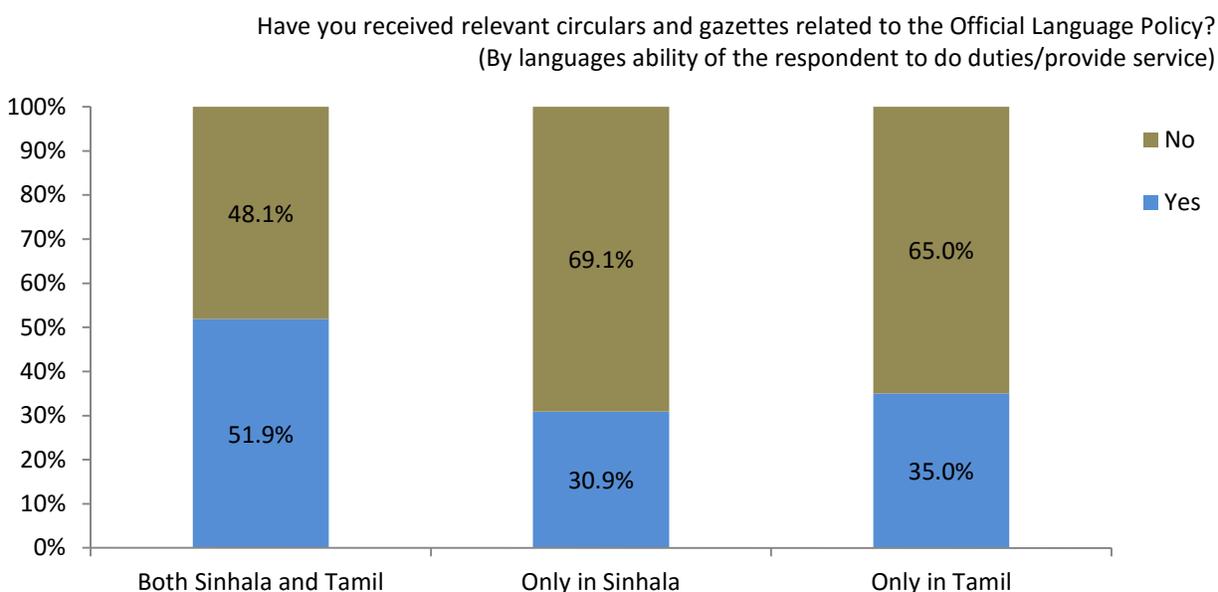


Figure 6: Receipt of circulars/gazettes on the OLP



As shown in Figure 7 below, 51.9% of government officers who are able to work in both official languages have received circulars and gazettes on OLP while 48.1% have not.

Figure 7: Receipt of circulars/gazettes on OLP Vs. Language proficiency



A large percentage namely 95% stated their eagerness to learn the Tamil or the Sinhala languages.

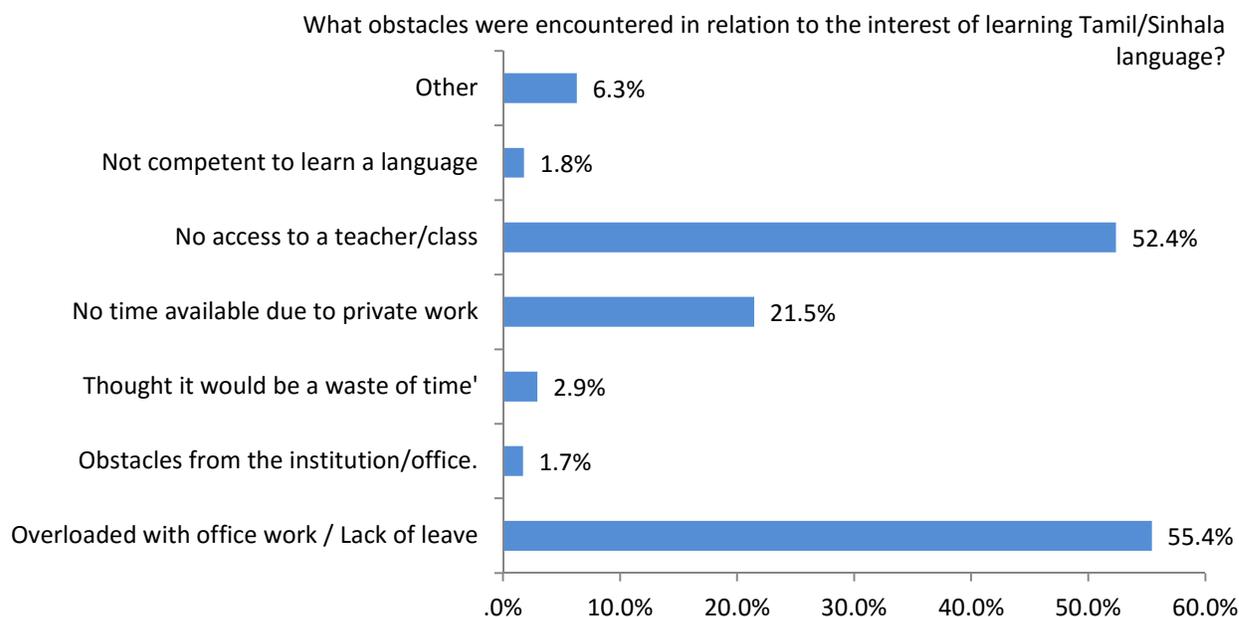
It is important to highlight that the Official Languages Department and the Official Languages Commission functioning under the purview of the Ministry of National Languages and Social integration are entrusted with respective responsibilities in directing and ensuring the realisation of necessary proficiency levels of government officers in all three languages through essential trainings.

From among the respondents that stated that they have faced obstacles to accomplishing their interest of learning Tamil/Sinhala languages, the Language Audit focussed on the possible reasons for such challenges. Accordingly, as illustrated in Figure 8 overleaf, it can be observed that the two key obstacle faced by the government officers in relation to their learning desire; 1). 55.4% gave as reasons



being overloaded with office work/not having enough leave and 2). 52.4% indicated that they do not have access to a teacher/class to accomplish their learning need.

**Figure 8: Types of obstacles to learning interests**



In this context it is important to give a district-wise breakdown of the number of government officers based on their level of awareness about the existence of the Official Language Commission.

Notably, in five districts (Hambantota, Batticaloa, Mannar, Killinochchi and Jaffna), 20% or more of the government officers interviewed in this Audit have stated that they have not heard about the Official Language Commission. In Jaffna, as shown in Table 1 below, out of 910 respondents, 223 are not aware of the Official Language Commission while in Batticaloa, out of 564 officers contacted, 113 have not heard about the Official Language Commission.

**Table 1: Awareness of the OLC – on a district basis**

District					Total
	Yes (Count)	Yes (Percent)	No (Count)	No (Percent)	
Jaffna	687	75.5	223	24.5	910
Killinochchi	90	64.3	50	35.7	140
Vavuniya	328	94.0	21	6.0	349
Mannar	243	80.2	60	19.8	303
Kurunegala	180	94.2	11	5.8	191
Batticaloa	451	80.0	113	20.0	564



Ampara	534	88.3	71	11.7	605
Trincomalee	477	91.7	43	8.3	520
Kandy	212	98.6	3	1.4	215
Matale	314	98.4	5	1.6	319
NuwaraEliya	209	92.9	16	7.1	225
Badulla	200	87.7	28	12.3	228
Monaragala	236	84.0	45	16.0	281
Hambantota	185	77.4	54	22.6	239
Colombo	76	100	0	.0	76
<b>Total</b>	<b>4422</b>	<b>85.6</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>5165</b>

In an effort to understand the level of awareness about the Official Language Commission among the government officers who have sat for the language proficiency exam and the others who are yet to sit for the same exam; as show in the Table 2 below, among 367 officers who have passed the said exam, 20 officers had not heard about the Official Language Commission. Additionally, among 70 officers who have done the exam and expecting results, 10 of them stated that they are not aware of the Official Language Commission while out of 105 officers who have failed the same exam, 7 officers had not heard about it. Among 663 officers yet to sit for the language proficiency exam, 52 respondents stated that they too have not heard of the Language Commission as illustrated below.

**Table 2: Awareness about the OLC Vs. Status in the Language Proficiency Examination**

Have you heard about the Official Language Commission?	Have you passed the language proficiency exam for government officers?			
	Among those who have passed	Among those who have not passed	Among those who have not sat for the exam	Among those who have sat for the exam but not received the results
Yes	94.6%(347)	93.3%(98)	92.2%(611)	85.7%(60)
No	5.4%(20)	6.7%(7)	7.8%(52)	14.3%(10)
<b>Total</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>70</b>

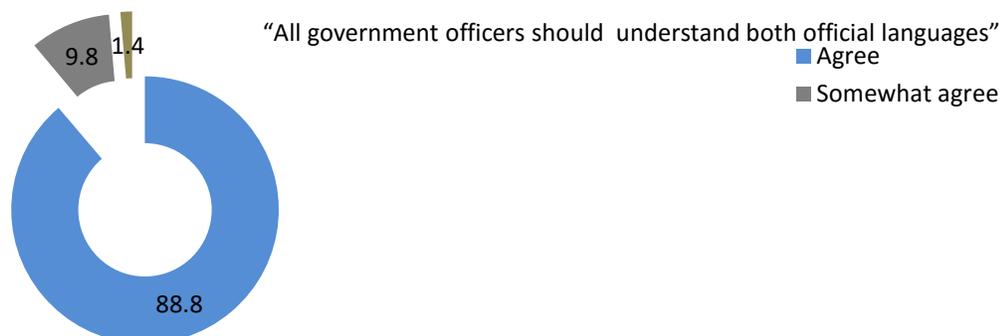
In terms of assessing the positioning among government officers in relation to the idea of “All government institutions should work in both official languages”; as reflected in Figure 9 depicted below, almost 90% of the respondents of this Audit stated they agree to the said idea while approximately 9% noted that they too ‘somewhat agree’ with the said idea.

Having unveiled the positive stance of government officers on the notion of working in both official languages in government institutions, the Language Audit further inquired the extent to which all government officers should be aware of both official languages.



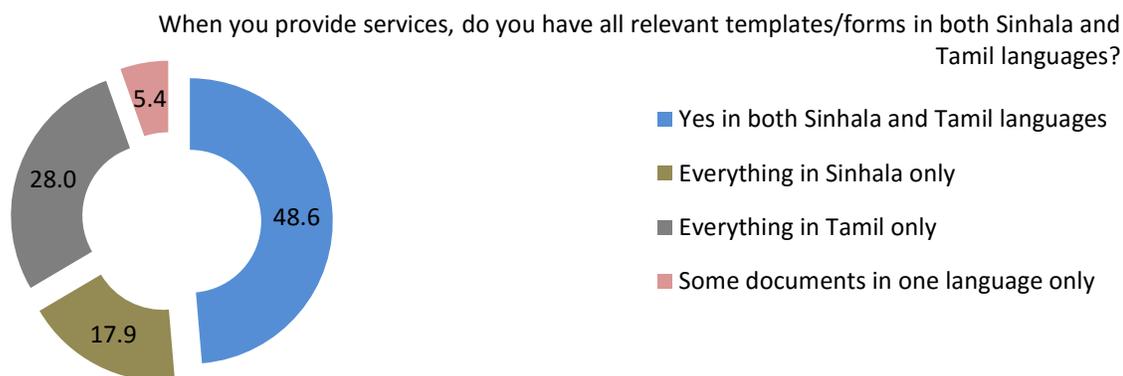
As highlighted in Figure 9, an overwhelming majority of 88.8% indicated that they agree with the idea that “All government officers should understand both official languages”.

**Figure 9: Opinion on the statement “all government officers should understand both official languages”**



In terms of the availability of relevant templates/forms in different languages required by government officer to provide their services, as reflected in Figure 10 given below, 48.6% stated that they have these documents in both Sinhala and Tamil languages. However, given the selected sample category, 28% stated that they have documents only in Tamil language while 17.9% noted that they have everything in Sinhala language only.

**Figure 10: The availability of necessary forms/templates in both languages**

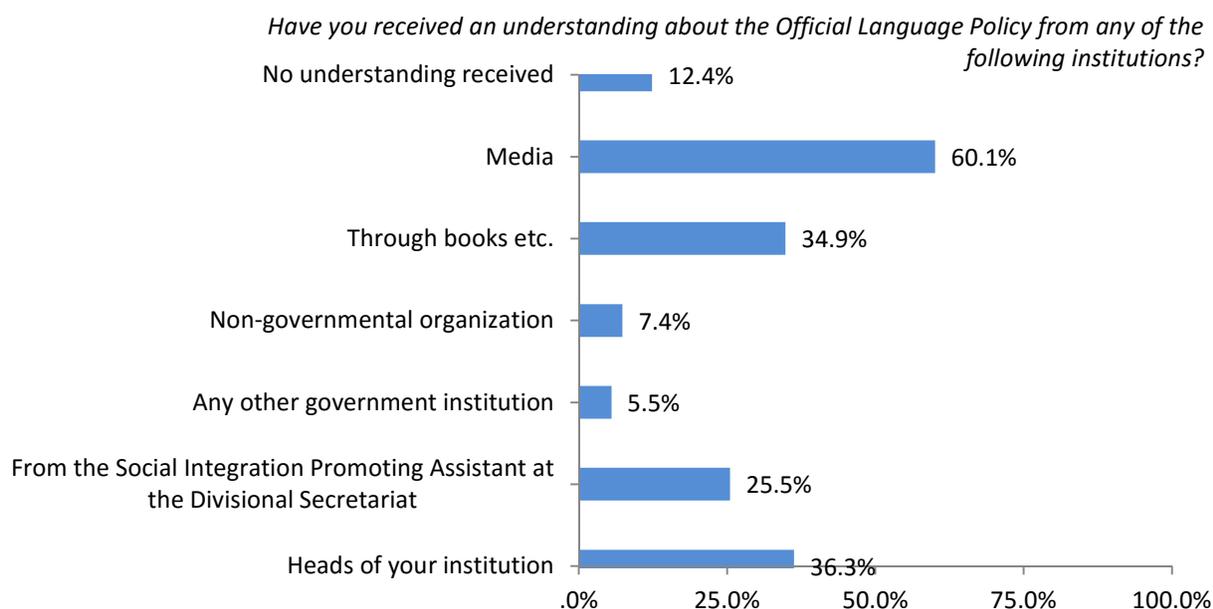


In terms of receiving the knowledge and understanding through various institutions about the Official Language Policy, as illustrated in Figure 11, an overwhelming majority of 60.1% stated that they have received an understanding about the Official Language Policy from media.

Additionally, 36.3% had received such understanding from the heads of respective institutions while 34.9% stated that they received information through books. Importantly, 25.5% indicated that they have been able get knowledge on the Official Language Policy from Social Integration Promoting Assistant while 12.4% stated that they have not received any such understanding at all from any of the below mentioned means.



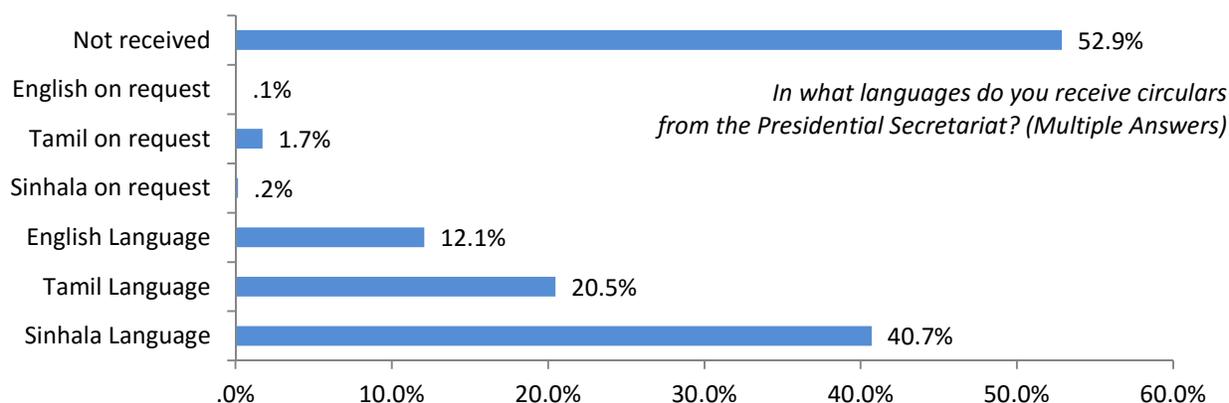
**Figure 11: The institution from which an understanding on OLP was received**



With regard to the question of language in which government officers receive their appointment letters and/or service agreements, as shown in Figure 27 given below, 80.9% of such documents have been received in Sinhala while 52.9% have been in the Tamil language. Only 7.7% of such documents have been received in English.

The Language Audit focussed on the type of languages in which the information from diverse state institutions is received by government officers. With the responses received, as shown in Figure 12 below noted, 40.7% of respective circulars from the Presidential Secretariat have been in Sinhala language. While 20.5% of circulars have been in Tamil language, 12.1% of them have been received in English.

**Figure 12: The language of circulars from the Presidential Secretariat**



## Chapter Two

### School Principals

Based on the importance of the service of education, the category “School Principals” was also one of the core focus areas of this Language Audit. Accordingly, a total of 1142 school principals were interviewed. In terms of the coverage of geographical locations of these respondents, schools in all 35 Divisional Secretariat areas in which the Promoting Language Rights of Minorities (PLRM) project was implemented, were included in this Audit.

Initially, all the respondents were asked about their main language / the language they were most fluent in. 855 principals stated Tamil was their main language while 285 said Sinhala was their main language.

Thus, as a percentage of the total sample of 1142 principals involved in this Audit, the Tamil language is the main language of highest fluency of almost 75% of the respondents while Sinhala is that of highest fluency is 25% of the respondents.

In assessing capabilities of respondents in accomplishing their duties in each language, as indicated in Table 3 below, 275 respondents have stated that they are capable of providing their services in both the Sinhala and Tamil languages. Additionally, 267 principals stated that they can deliver their duties only in Tamil while 240 indicated that it is only through the Sinhala language that they are able to perform their duties.

**Table 3: Languages of service provision**

What are the languages in which you can perform duties / provide services?	Number of Principals
Both in Sinhala and Tamil	24.1%(275)
Only in Sinhala	21.0%(240)
Only in Tamil	54.9%(627)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%(1142)</b>

This Language Audit covered 145 mixed schools in which the teaching is conducted in both official languages (Sinhala and Tamil). It was intended to understand the extent to which the school principals who work in these bilingual schools can perform their duties in both official languages.

Therefore, the analysis in Table 4 shows that 66 respondents out of 145 can perform their duties in both Sinhala and Tamil . However, in such schools too 52 principals were able to work only in the Sinhala language while another 27 principals can perform their duties only in Tamil.



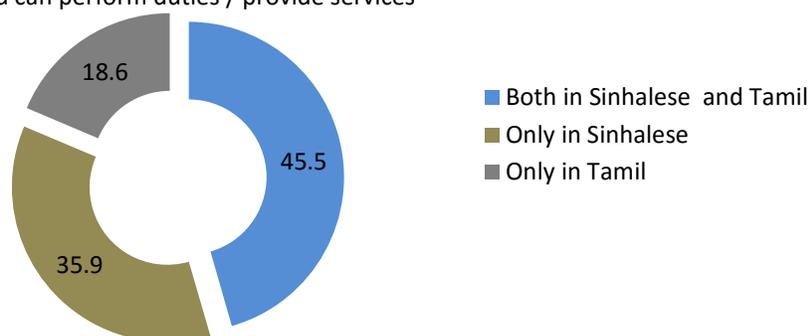
**Table 4: Language of service provision Vs. Schools teaching both Sinhala and Tamil languages**

What are the languages in which you can perform duties / provide services	Number of Principals in schools teaching Sinhala and Tamil languages
Both in Sinhala and Tamil	45.5%(66)
Only in Sinhala	35.9%(52)
Only in Tamil	18.6%(27)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%(145)</b>

However, it is noteworthy to observe that among 145 school principals in bilingual schools, 45.5% are able to provide their duties in both Sinhala and Tamil languages as illustrated in Figure 13 presented below.

**Figure 13: Language of service provision Vs. Bilingual Schools - Percentages**

What are the languages in which you can perform duties / provide services  
(In bilingual schools)

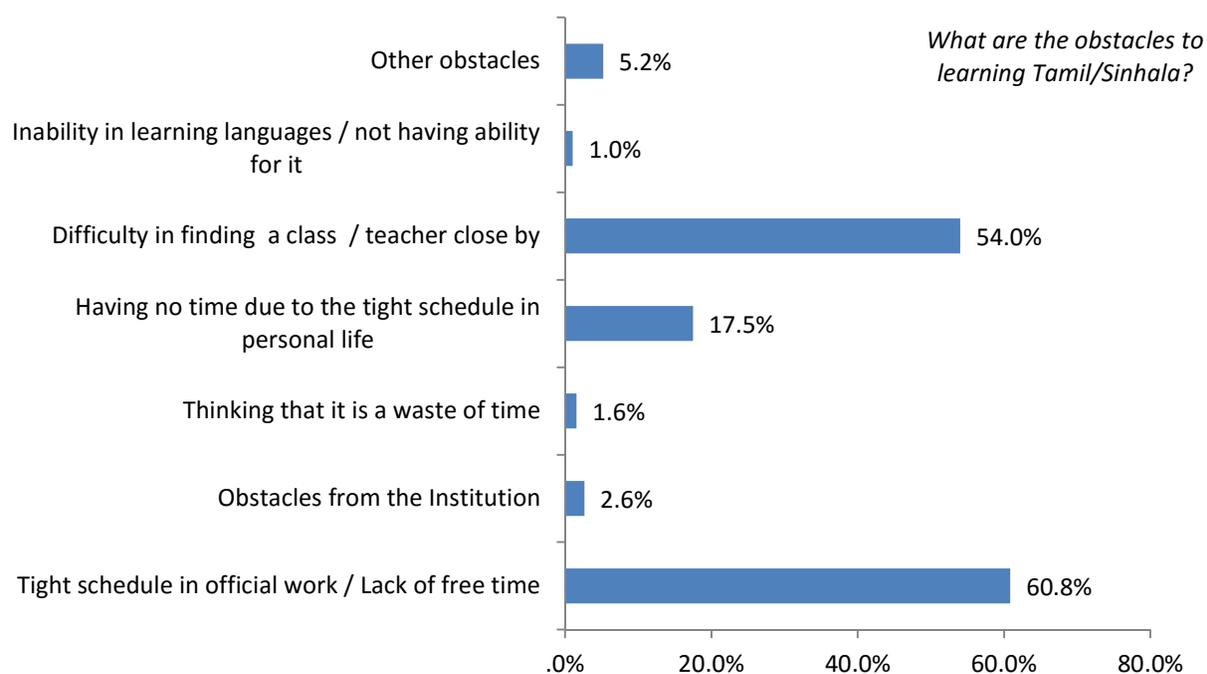


The Language Audit inquired into the interest in learning languages of the respondents of the contacted schools and out of 1142 principals, 1069 of them stated that they had an interest in learning either Tamil or Sinhala while 53.5% said they faced a challenge in finding the opportunity to learn.

In an effort to classify the actual challenges in materialising their learning interest, as indicated in Figure 14 overleaf, among the ones that showed interest in learning, 60.8% stated that the main obstacle is the 'tight schedule of office work/lack of free time'. Additionally, another 54% of the respondents in this case noted that a 'difficulty in finding a class or a teacher' has also been one of the main obstacles.



Figure 14: Type of obstacles faced in relation to learning Tamil/Sinhala languages



In relation to whether awareness programmes on the Official Language Policy have been conducted by the Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration or the Department of Official Languages for officers in these schools, as shown in Table 5 below, the majority of 864 respondents stated that no such awareness programmes have taken place while 277 noted that there have been such programmes conducted by the respective authorities.

Table 5: Awareness programmes on OLP conducted by the line ministry – count & percentages

Whether awareness programmes on the Official Language Policy have been conducted by the Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration or the Department of Official Languages for officers in your institution.	Number of Principals
Yes	24.3%(277)
No	75.7%(864)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (1141)</b>

When analysing information related to doing awareness programmes on Official Language Policy by the Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration or the Department of Official Languages and the language medium of teaching in schools involved in this Audit; as illustrated in Table 6, in 207 schools of which Sinhala is the language medium of teaching, 147 respondents stated that no such programmes were conducted in their institutions while 60 respondents mentioned that the authorities have conducted awareness programmes.



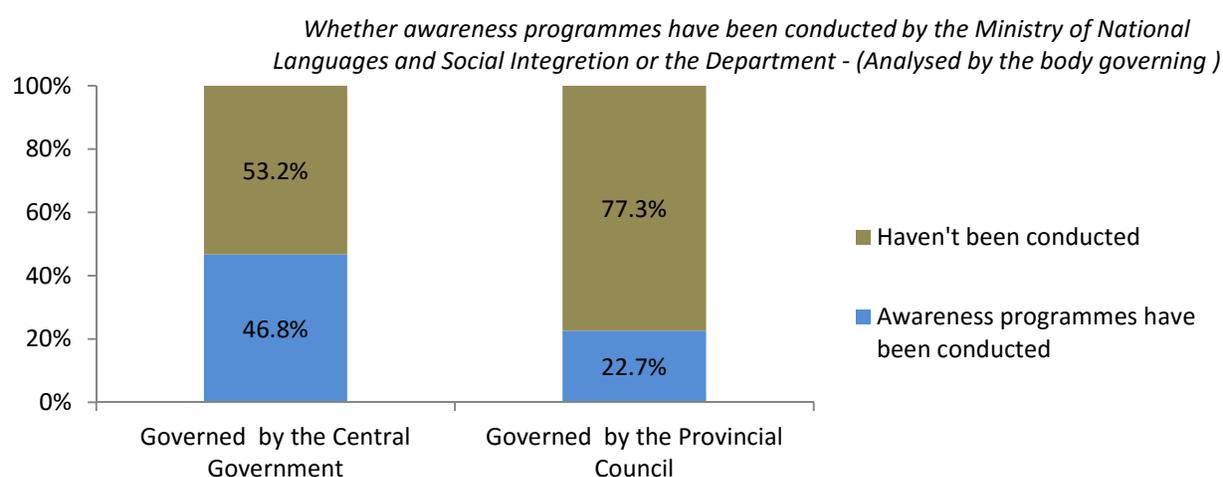
**Table 6: Awareness programmes on OLP conducted by the line ministry Vs. Medium of teaching**

Whether awareness programmes have been conducted by the Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration or the Department of Official Languages.	Medium of Teaching			Total
	Sinhala	Tamil	Both Sinhala and Tamil	
Yes	29.0% (60)	21.3% (168)	33.8% (49)	24.3% (277)
No	71.0% (147)	78.7% (622)	66.2% (96)	75.7% (865)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0% (207)</b>	<b>100.0% (790)</b>	<b>100.0% (145)</b>	<b>100.0% (1142)</b>

Among 1141 schools, 1064 were under provincial governing while 77 schools operated under the administration of the central government.

However, as indicated in Figure 15 illustrated below, more schools (46.8%) governed by the central government have had the opportunity to receive such awareness programmes than those governed by the provincial governments (22.7%).

**Figure 15: Awareness programmes on OLP conducted by the line ministry Vs. the body governed**



Among the respondents who did participate in awareness programmes, 76.2% had received relevant circulars and gazettes related to the Official Language Policy while 23.8% had not.



As shown in Table 7 given below, 1048 respondents stated that they have heard about the Official Language Commission while 94 respondents noted that they have not heard about such an institution.

**Table 7: Awareness about the OLC - Count**

Have you heard about the Official Languages Commission?	Number of Principals
Yes	91.8%(1048)
No	8.2%(94)

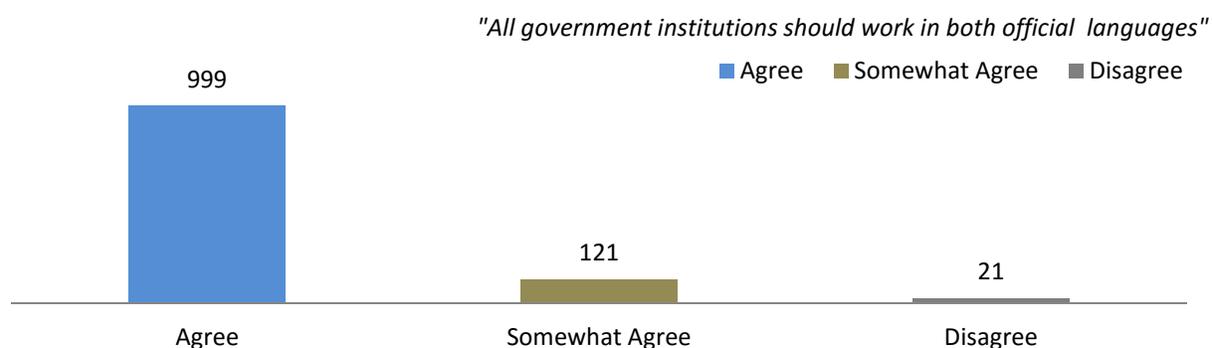
When this Audit focused in discovering whether schools have received needed translations of literature books which promote reconciliation in the country, as shown in Table 8 given below, it was noted that among 1035 schools governed by the provincial councils, 749 of them had not received such reading materials while 286 schools of the same category had received. Similarly, among 77 schools governed by the central government, 56 schools had not received whereas only 21 schools had received such books.

**Table 8: Receipt of literary works related to reconciliation Vs. Type of school - Count**

Has your school received the literature books which were translated to be distributed among students in order to create national and cultural reconciliation during the post war period?	Schools governed by Central Government	Schools governed by Provincial Councils	Total
Yes	27.3%(21)	27.6%(286)	307
No	72.7%(56)	72.4%(749)	805
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>1035</b>	<b>1112</b>

With regard to the statement "All government institutions should work in both national languages", as reflected in Figure 16 below, among 1141 respondent schools, the majority of 999 respondents stated that they "Agree" with the said statement while 121 principals stated that they "Somewhat Agree" and the number of respondents that "Disagree" with this idea was 21.

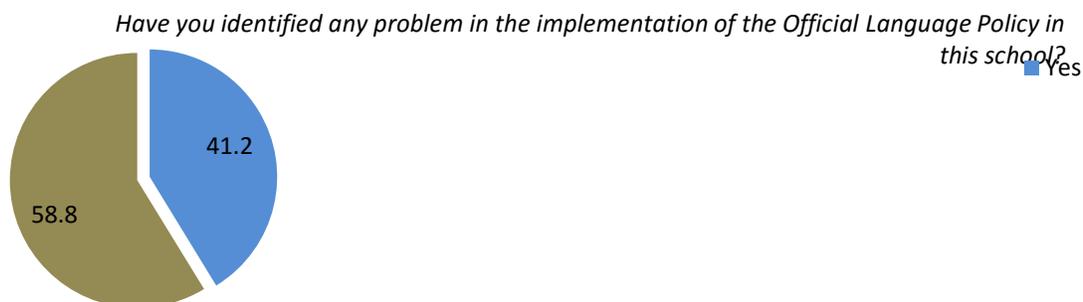
**Figure 16: Opinion on the statement "all government institutions should work in both official languages"**



The Language Audit placed the statement of "All public officers should be conversant with both official languages" before the school principals attending this Audit. Thus among 1141 respondents that answered this question, the majority of 1047 stated that they "Agree" with the said opinion and another 84 respondents indicated that they "Somewhat Agree" to it. Only 10 school principals showed their disagreement with the above statement.

As shown in Figure 17 shown below, among 1142 school principals, 41.2% of them had recognised some kind of a problem in implementing the Official Language Policy in their schools.

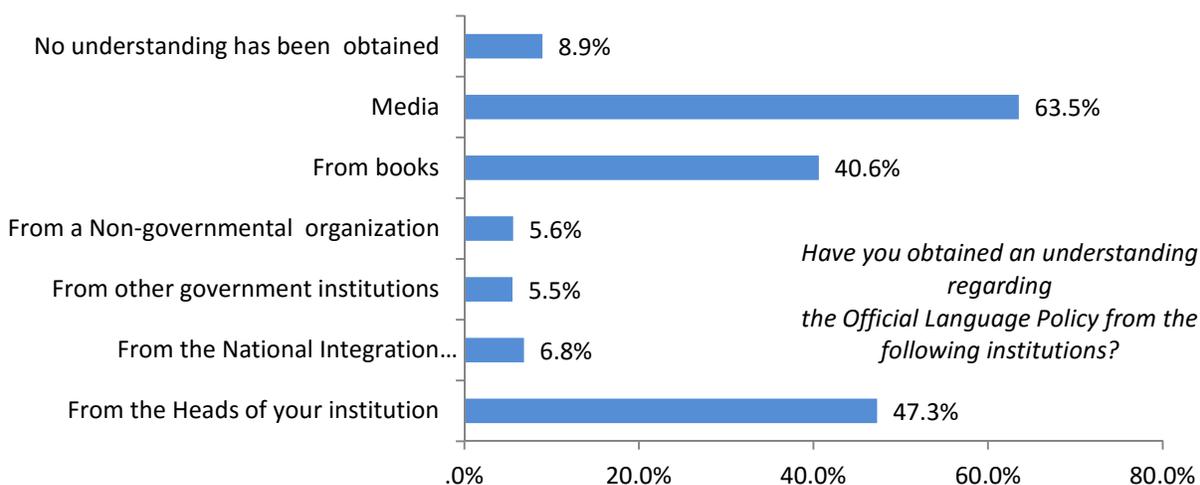
**Figure 17: Identification of problems related to implementation of OLP**



Interestingly, when inquiring in to the feedback received by these 322 principals who had informed their respective higher officials about their identified problems, an overwhelming majority of 92.2% stated that they have been informed by such higher officials about the possibility of providing a solution in relation to the highlighted problem but the actual issue remains the same as un-resolved so far.

As illustrated in Figure 17 shown below, a majority of 63.5% had stated media as the key institution by which they have received such understanding. 47.3% had obtained such understanding through the heads of their respective institutions while 40.6% had highlighted books as the means of obtaining such understanding.

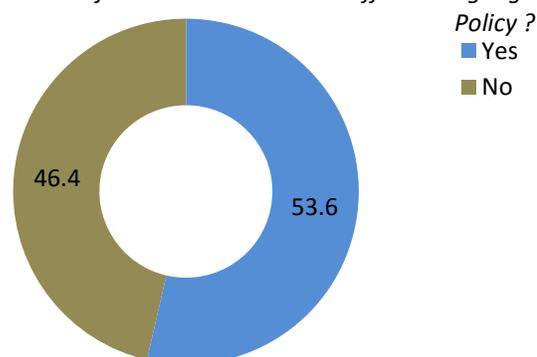
**Figure 18: Institutions from which principals received awareness on Official Languages Policy**



First and foremost, in order to expect substantial efforts to be made in schools to effectively implement the OLP, it is essential that these schools receive relevant circulars and gazette notifications pertinent thereto. Accordingly, as indicated in Figure 19 shown below, while 53.6% stated that they have received such documents, 46.4% indicated no such circulars or gazettes regarding the OLP was received by them.

**Figure 19: Receiving of circulars & gazettes related to OLP**

*Have you received the circulars and gazette notifications related to the Official Language Policy ?*

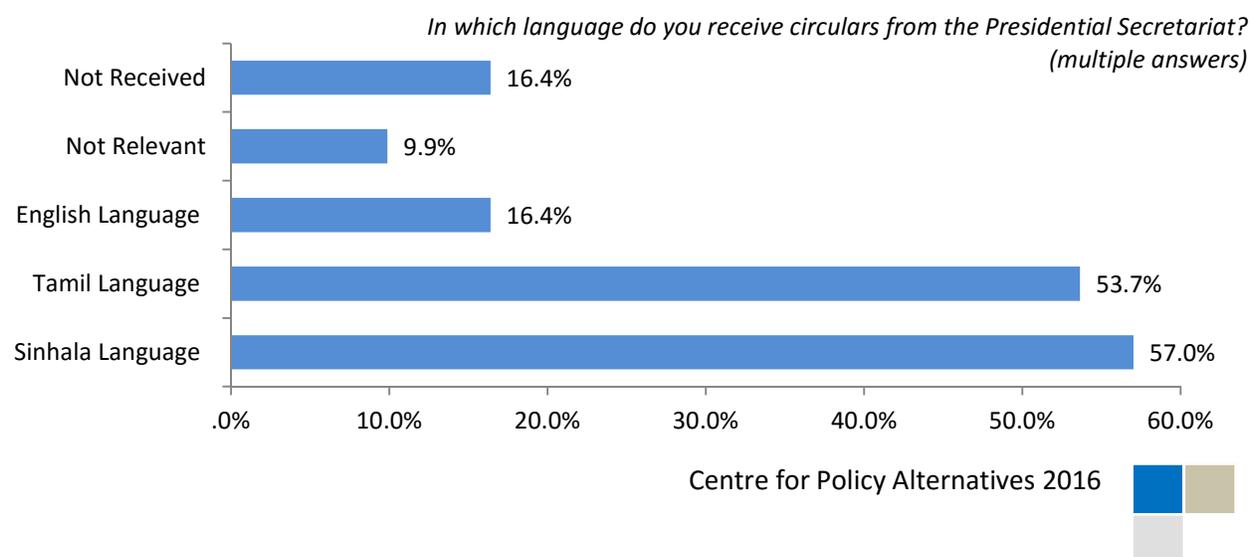


In consideration of proper implementation of OLP, it is of utmost significance to ensure that the adherence to fundamentals of OLP is demonstrated by the key and top level state institutional framework to establish best practices enabling peripheral state and private sector stakeholders to learn from such establishments.

Accordingly, this Language Audit inquired in to the extent to which these schools receive relevant circulars in different languages from various state institutions ranging from national to divisional levels.

As indicated in Figure 20, between 50-60 % of circulars received from the Presidential Secretariat are in Tamil and Sinhala languages while 16.4% are in English.

**Figure 20: The language in which circulars are received from the Presidential Secretariat**



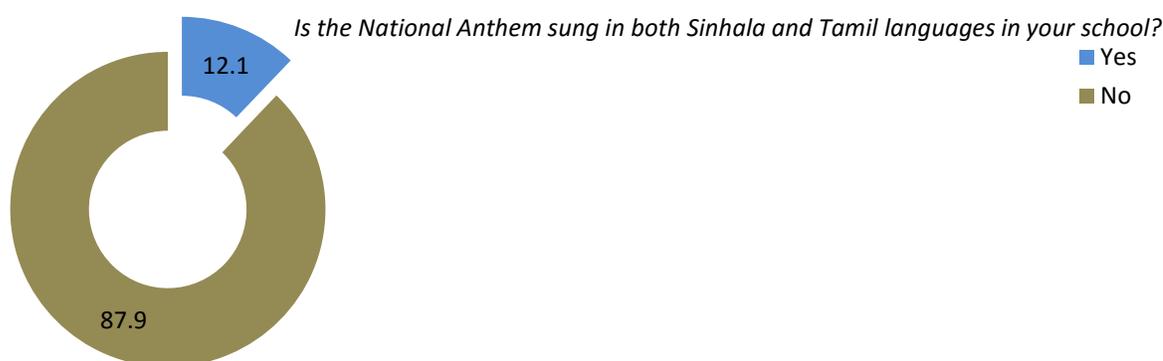
When considering findings in line with the medium of instruction in schools, in bilingual schools, 66% of circulars received from the Presidential Secretariat are in the Sinhala language while 41.1% are in Tamil. However, it is reflected that between 60-70% of such documents have been received by schools in their respective medium of teaching languages.

71% and 24.2 % of schools have stated that there are insufficient teachers to teach the Sinhala and Tamil languages respectively.

In relation to the sufficiency of English teachers, the Audit findings highlight that in Tamil medium schools, 48.7% stated that there is a shortage of English teachers. Additionally, 28.3% in bilingual schools and 20.8% of Sinhala medium schools voiced concern over the lack of English teachers in their schools.

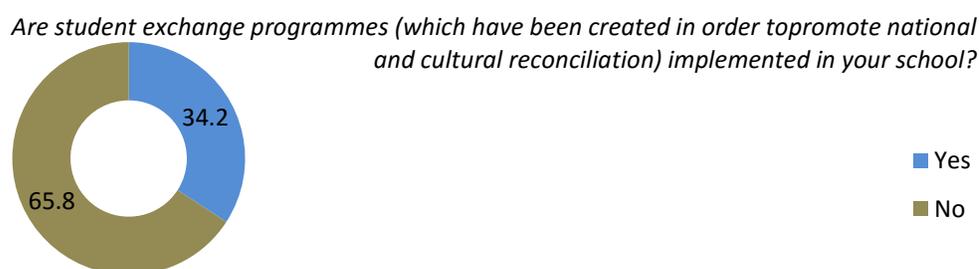
In the context in which singing the national Anthem in both Sinhala and Tamil languages is a policy stand in the country, it was found that an overwhelming majority of 87.9% indicated that the national anthem is not sung in both languages in their respective schools while only in 12.1% of schools is it sung in both languages as indicated in Figure 21 given below.

**Figure 21: Is the National Anthem sung in both Sinhala and Tamil?**



When considering the extent to which the schools implement student Exchange Programmes intended to re-establish the national and cultural reconciliation in the country, as indicated in Figure 22 given below, the majority of 65.85 stated that no such student exchange programmes are implemented in their schools.

**Figure 22: Implementation of student Exchange Programmes on reconciliation**



## Chapter Three

### Police Stations

As part of this Language Audit, 30 selected police stations were also contacted to make a brief analysis of how those institutions align their functions in line with the elements of the Official Language Policy and related other legal and administrative directions in existence at present. With regard to the selection of respective police station for this Language Audit, 30 police stations were contacted and the names of those are given below.

**Table 9: Names of Police Stations contacted for the Language Audit**

Names of Police Stations contacted for the Language Audit		
Vavuniya	Gampola	Mawathagama
Kantale	Akkaraipattu	Uppuveli
Thambalagamuwa	Tangale	Monaragala
Kinniya	Vaddukoddai	Hatton
Passara	Pottuvil	Buttala
Watawala	Dehiwala	Thirukkovil
Raththota	Panama	Thellipillai
Norton bridge	Valaichenai	Ginigathhena
Norwood	Eravur	Bogawantalawa
Maskeliya	Lunugala	Chavakacheri

Among the limited number of police stations contacted in this Language Audit, as illustrated in Table 10 below given, out of 30 police stations, 12 indicated that they do not have sufficient number of officers with Tamil language competency to write down complaints in Tamil language during the 24 hours of the day.

**Table 10: Sufficiency of officers with Tamil language competency**

Do you think that the number of officers with Tamil language competency attached to your police station is sufficient to write down complaints in Tamil language during 24 hours of the day?	Number of Principals
Yes	13
No	12
Yes, But it is better if there are more	5



In relation to the actual need of competent police officers with Tamil language proficiency in respective police stations, as indicated in Table 11 illustrated below, the Language Audit found that 24 competent officers were needed by the Chavakacheri police station while Thirukkovil, Vavuniya, Tangale, Vadukkoddai and Eravur police stations required a minimum 10 or more of such Police Officers with due competency in Tamil language. Overall, such need has been highlighted in 15 police stations as indicated below.

**Table 11: The need for police officers with Tamil language competency in each police station**

If so, how many more officers with Tamil language competency are required to your police station to in order to write down complaints during 24 hours of the day?			
Police Station	Number of Officers needed	Police Station	Number of Officers needed
Chavakacheri	24	Gampola	5
Thirukkovil	20	Pottuvil	5
Vavuniya	14	Panama	5
Tangale	12	Lunugala	4
Vadukkoddai	10	Mawathagama	3
Eravur	10	Monaragala	3
Norwood	8	Dehiwala	No Answer
Thellipillai	8		
Kantale	6		

The Audit also investigated whether police officers who answered the questionnaire have informed on the requirement for more police officers with sufficient language proficiency in Tamil, to their respective higher officials upon identification of such a necessity. As indicated in Table 12 given below, 11 out of 17 officers indicated that they have informed their superiors on such requirement while 6 had not done so.

**Table 12: Communicating the need for more officers to the respective superiors**

Have you informed of this need to your superiors?	Number of Respondents
Yes	11
No	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>



## Chapter Four

### Hospital Police Posts

As a constituent of this audit, hospital police posts were also contacted to ascertain the degree to which the OLP was being implemented. As a result 18 such hospital police “hubs” were contacted.

This Audit focused on the extent to which these hospital police hubs had a sufficient number of officers with necessary competency in Tamil language to write down complaints in Tamil language during the 24 hours of the day there were not sufficient officers in 11 such places.

With regard to the police officers who stated that there is a need for more police officers with sufficient language proficiency in Tamil, the Audit inquired into whether they have relayed this need to respective supervisors upon identification of such necessity. 9 out of 13 officers indicated that they had informed their superiors on such need while 4 had not done so.

It was also observed that among the hospital police posts which have informed the need for officers with Tamil language competency, in 6 instances, there has been no response to their requests while in 3 cases, respective superiors have promised to provide a competent officer in future.

This Audit focused on whether retired police officers with bilingual capacity are hired to manage the actual need of Tamil language competency in the respective hospital police posts. It was noted that 17 hospital police posts do not hire such officers while only one case was reported of hiring retired officers with such capacity.

The Audit also investigated the alternative mechanisms adopted to bridge the language when a linguistically competent officer was not available. As illustrated in Table 13 shown below, hiring a professional / trained / official translator is adopted in 6 police stations while 5 police stations noted that the assistance of a another police officer is taken.

**Table 13: Actions taken in the absence of an officer competent in the Tamil language**

When an officer who can write down complaints in Tamil is not available in this hospital police station, who writes down the complaints / statements?	Number of Respondents
Hiring a professional / trained / official translator	6
With the assistance of another officer at the station	5
With the assistance of a client / person accompanying a client	1
An officers with Tami language competency is available round the clock	3
Other	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>



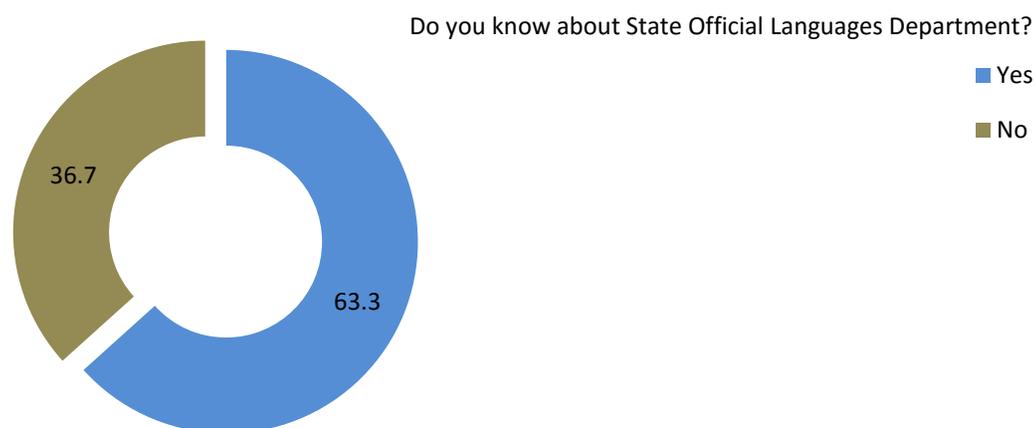
## Chapter Five

### Officials in charge of common access locations such as temples, Kovils, churches, societies and other institutions

Among the diverse range of sectors covered in this Language Audit, the officials in charge of common places such as temples, kovils, churches, societies and other institutions were also interviewed so as to assess the level of their familiarity with the OLP. Accordingly, among such places approached during this Audit; 868 focal personnel were involved in giving their feedback to the said Audit process.

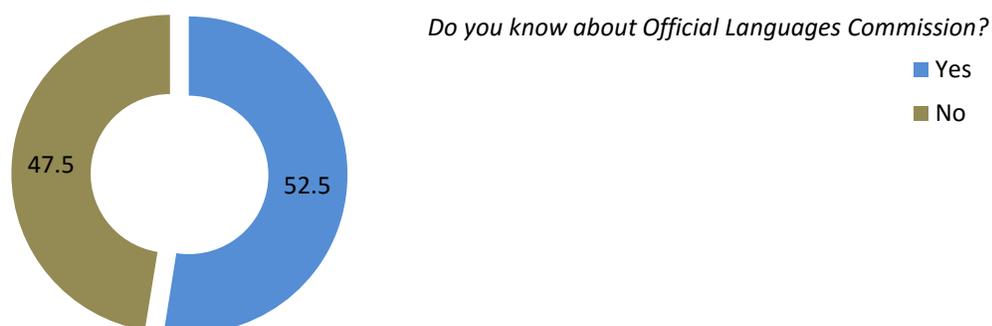
As shown in Figure 23 given below, 63% stated that they are aware of the Official Language Department while only 36% indicated that they do not know about this institution.

**Figure 23: Knowledge of officials of public places about the Official Languages Department**



With regard to the knowledge of the Official Language Commission, as reflected in Figure 24 indicated below, almost 48% indicated that they do not know about the OLC while 52% stated that they know about the Official Language Commission.

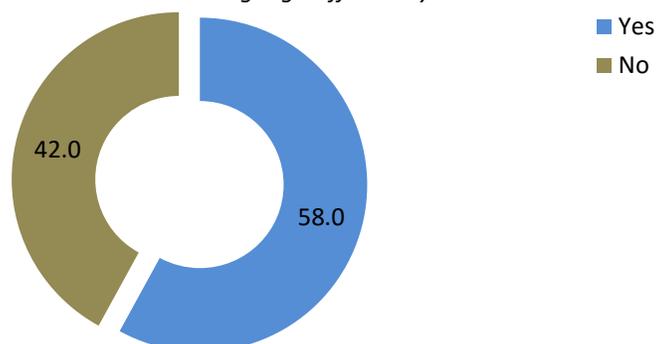
**Figure 24: Awareness of officials of public places on the Official Languages Commission**



The fact of availability of Language Officers at the Divisional Secretariat levels was found to be unknown by officials in charge of common places. As indicated in Figure 25 given below, while 58% knew that there is a Language Officer at their Divisional Secretariat areas, 42% were not aware of such a position being available at their divisions.

**Figure 25: Awareness on the availability of a Language Officer at the Divisional Secretariat**

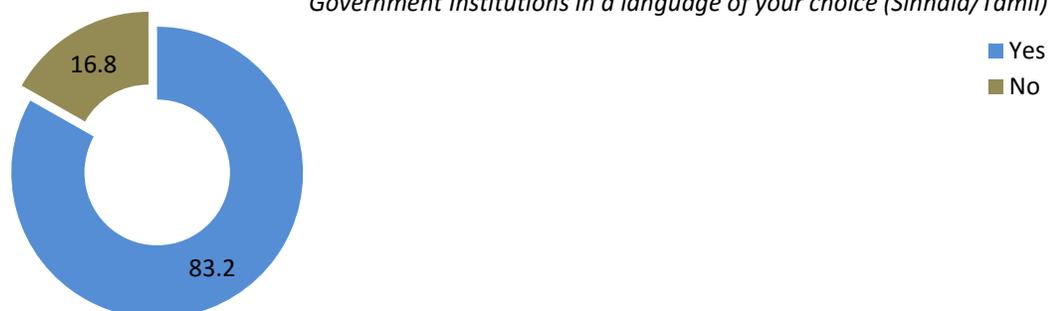
*Are you aware that there is a Language Officer at your Divisional Secretariat?*



Regarding the extent of the knowledge of those personnel in charge of common places about their right to obtain correspondence, and application forms from a government institution in a language of their choice, as noted in Figure 26, the majority, 83% stated that they know about this language right.

**Figure 26: Knowledge on language rights**

*Do you know that you have right to obtain correspondence, and application forms from Government Institutions in a language of your choice (Sinhala/Tamil)?*



Notably the majority 64.3% of officials in charge of common places stated that they do not receive relevant instructions/documents from the Municipal Council/Town Council/Pradesiya Saba and Divisional Secretariat in the language of their choice.



## Chapter Six

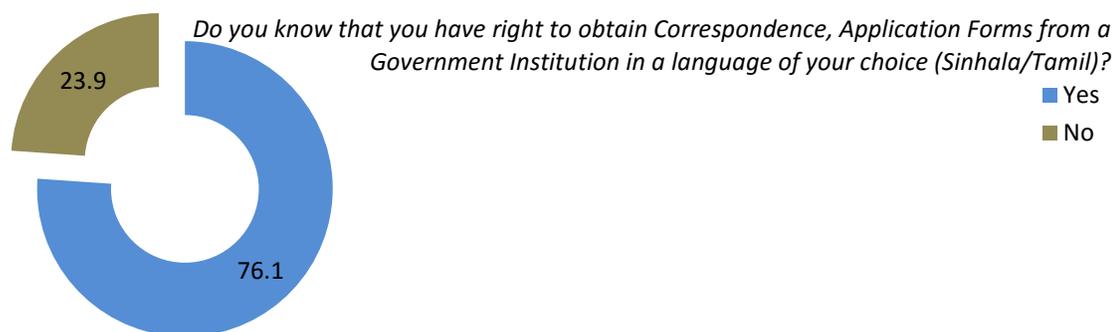
### Officials in charge of private sector entities such as business places, vendors, service providers

This Language Audit gathered the perspectives of officials in charge of private sector entities such as shops/business entities and other institutions providing services to people with regard to the OLP and its implementation within their scope of work.

Accordingly, while 57% of such respondents were aware of the Official Language Department, 42% stated that they do not know about the Official Language Department. Almost 52% of the respondents stated that they know about the Official Language Commission while 48% did not know about such institution.

In relation the extent to which these personnel in private entities are aware of their right to obtain Correspondence, Application Forms etc from a Government Institution in a language of their choice (Sinhala/Tamil), as shown in Figure 27 given below, the majority of 76% stated that they know their language rights while 23% were not aware of such rights they are entitled to.

**Figure 27: Awareness on language rights**



Similarly 75% of respondents knew that they can submit relevant documents to a public officer in a language of their choice and receive replies too in the same language while 25% of the officials in charge of private entities attended this Audit stated that they do not know about such possibility.

Almost 39% of officials interviewed in this sector stated that have faced problems in receiving information in their mother tongue. However, majority of 61% highlighted that they have not encountered problems on the same point.



## Chapter Seven

### Government Sector – Observations

The Language Audit extended its scope of assessment to observe various government institutions to analyse the extent to which their functions align with the basic principles of the Official Language Policy (OLP). Instead of conducting detailed one to one interviews based on a structured questionnaire with authoritative personnel of such institutions, the Audit made independent observations to witness the implementation of OLP in connection with areas such as visibility information, communication with service recipients, administrative functions, documentation, public awareness and consultations.

Accordingly, among such government institutions covered under this category, as highlighted in Table 14 given below, 53.5% of such institutions maintain their nameboards in all three languages.

**Table 14: Language/s of nameboards of buildings and other property of the government sector institutions.**

Nameboards of buildings and other belongings of the institution.	Percentage
Nameboards are not maintained	3.4
Nameboards are maintained in one official language only	9.2
Only a part of the nameboards are maintained in Sinhala and Tamil languages.	18.7
All nameboards are maintained in both Sinhala and Tamil languages	6.1
While all nameboards are maintained in Sinhala and Tamil, sections of the nameboards are maintained in English	8.6
Nameboards are maintained in Sinhala, Tamil and English	53.5
Only in English	.5
<b>Base</b>	<b>651</b>

As illustrated in Table 15 given below, it was noted that communication with the general public largely takes place only in one official language and while it was the case in 33.4% places, only in 14.8% of places, it happens always in both official languages. Additionally, it was also observed that in 12.5% of such places, communication with general public happens in all three languages all the time.

**Table 15: Language/s in which communication takes place with the general public**

Communication with general public	Percentage
Service delivery takes place only in one official language	33.4
Service delivery takes place in both official languages very rarely	21.4
Service delivery takes place in both official languages always	14.8
Service delivery takes place in both official languages and very rarely in English	17.9
Service delivery takes place in Sinhala, Tamil and English all the time	12.5
<b>Base</b>	<b>641</b>



With regard to the public announcement system in public sector institutions, as shown in Table 16 given below, among the government institutions covered in this category, 33.3% showed that it takes place only in one official language. Markedly, only 8% of such places ensure that the public announcement system always takes place in both official languages.

**Table 16: Language/s in which public announcement are made**

Public announcement system	Percentage
Service delivery takes place only in one official language	33.3
Service delivery takes place in both official languages very rarely	18.2
Service delivery takes place in both official languages always	8.0
Service delivery takes place in both official languages and very rarely in English	15.4
Service delivery takes place in Sinhala, Tamil and English all the time	11.3
This service is not available	13.6
<b>Base</b>	<b>609</b>

With regard to the availability of translated reports and documents in respective institutions included in this sector of the overall Audit reports and documents are prepared in both Sinhala and Tamil languages all the time only in 11.3% of cases. Additionally, 34.3% indicated that the necessary translation facilities are not available and therefore, relevant documents and reports are provided only in one language.

This Audit inquired in to the fact that as to how the application of basics of the OLP when making formal agreements with various parties. A majority of 39.8% reflected that such agreements are prepared only in one official language.

In relation to the communication with citizens who come to these institutions, this Audit found that in occasions less than 15% only it takes place in both official languages all the time. Furthermore, majority of instances, 34.3%, communication with citizens happen only in one official language.

This Audit further investigated in to the applicability of different languages in public awareness and information dissemination. It was revealed that public awareness takes place in 46.2% occasions only in one official language while it happens in both Sinhala and Tamil languages all the time in 20.2% instances.

Community consultations being one of the significant elements in realising the actual public views on various aspects this Language Audit found that in 10.2% of occasions it happens in both official languages all the time. In majority of instances, 48.4%, community consultations take place only in one official language.

Notably Audit findings highlight that in 60% of instances, there are no language plans in place while only in 9.1% indicated that there are approved language plans in place. A positive development to mention is that in almost 25% of instances, preparing language plans are underway.



Given the prolonged challenges in proper implementation of the language policy and the fact that people are not essentially at the receiving end of the entitlements related to language policy entrenched through constitutional provisions; the extraordinary gazette notification No. 1620/27 dated 25.09.2009 was issued. Thus, the legitimate responsibility and the implementations tasks related to the official language policy were assigned to specific officials of a diverse range of state bodies through the said extraordinary gazette notification No. 1620/27.

In this context, the Language Audit attempted to unveil the extent to which the guidelines stipulated in gazette notification No. 1620/27 dated 25.09.2009 being applied in institutions covered in this category of the overall Audit.

According to the OLP, it is essential to have a division, action group or other measures to implement, promote and monitor language policy in the state sector. Also, there should be a language officer and language division in institutions. In this context, the Audit identified that in 65.1% of instances, there is no mechanism in respective institutions to implement the OLP. While 21.3% of cases reflected having a mechanism to implement the OLP, only in 1.7% cases show the respective implementation mechanism functioning fully.



## Chapter Eight

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### Observations in relation to the implementation of OLP in Private sector institutions and public locations

This Language Audit extended its coverage to private sector institutions and public locations from which the general public receive a diverse range of services. It was envisaged to identify the extent to which such institutions adhere to the fundamentals of the OLP. Thus, this Audit covered 236 such private institutions and public locations to gather information.

Accordingly, the Audit findings revealed that the private sector institutions and public locations covered under this category in contrast to government sector institutions, show a higher level of application of the trilingual approach to visibility aspects such as nameboards. Notably, 37.7% of such places have nameboards in all three languages. Yet, a substantial percentage, 23.3% indicated that nameboards are still only in one official language.

It was observed that in almost 30% of cases, communication with the public through electronic means such as telephone, facsimile, and emails takes place all the time in either in both official languages or in all three languages .

In almost 60% of instances witnessed, either necessary hardware, software and skilled human resources to prepare documents in all three languages were unavailable (38.2%) or such facilities are rarely available (21.5%). Further, it was also observed that in 10.3% instances, all the relevant officers require software and hardware skills and other resources to prepare documents in all three languages.

The Audit observations indicated that in 32.8% instances, documentation in those institutions is provided only in one language. Provision for translations in both official languages takes place in 17.7% cases while relevant documents are always prepared in both Tamil and Sinhala languages only in 7.3% instances.

In private sector institutions, a relatively higher percentage of cases, 24.1% were observed where entering in to agreements and contracts is in all three languages while in 28.6% instances, the same takes place only in one official language.

In relation to the communication with citizens accessing for various services, as indicated in Table 53 given below, 31.8% reflected that it happens only in one official language while in 15.7% instances, it takes place in all three languages.

It was also observed that the community consultations carried out by private sector institutions are done mostly, 38.2% in one official language. However, it was witnessed that the private sector substantially uses all three languages for community consultations, 15.5% which is relatively higher compared to the use of all three languages by the government institutions for the same service delivery which was only at 2.8% of instances.



## Suggestions/Recommendations based on the Language Audit

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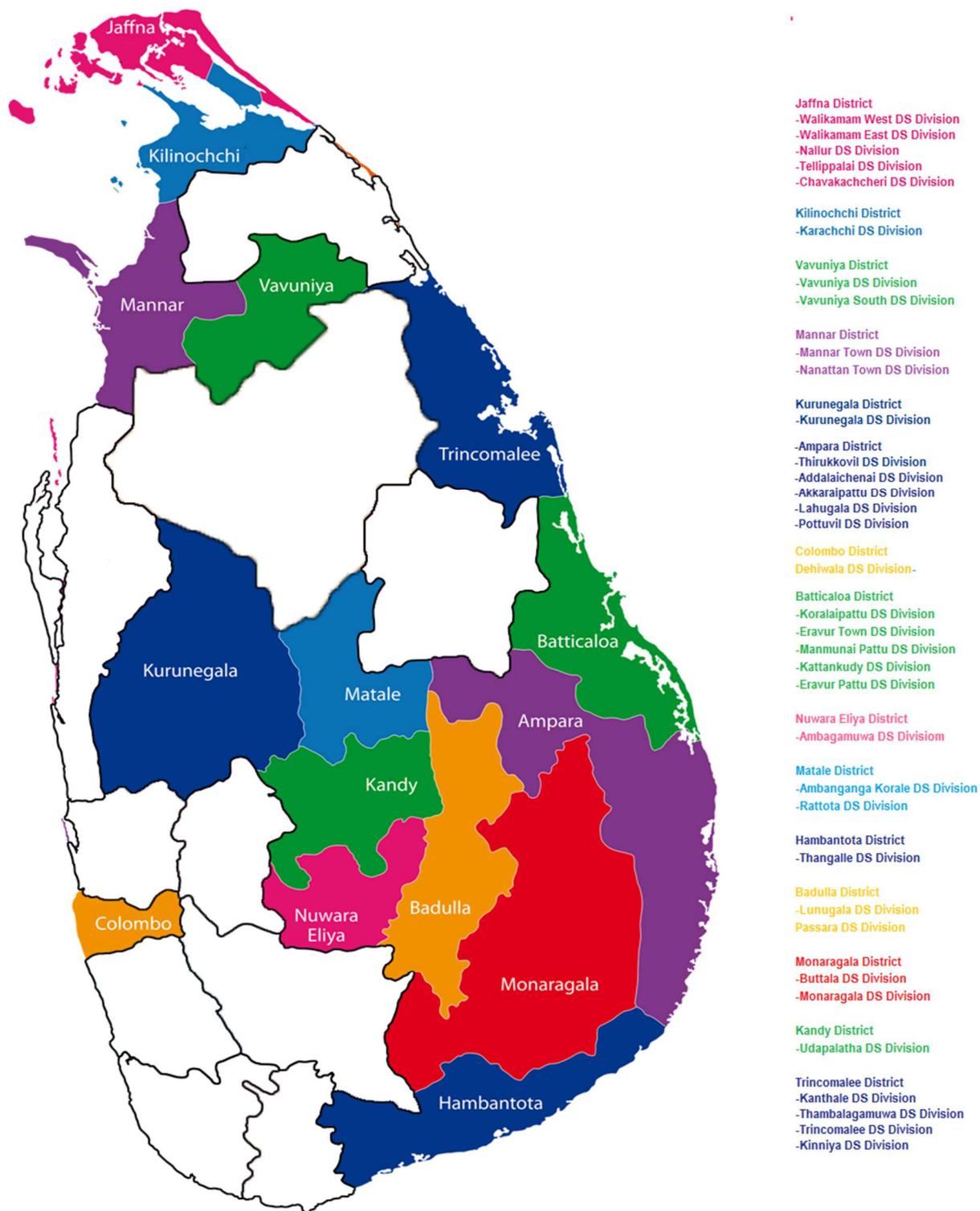
- The Ministry of National Co-existence Dialogue and Official Languages or the Department of Official Languages should design a comprehensive and well planned series of awareness programmes on the Official Language Policy for government officials at different strata across the country.
- The Ministry of National Co-existence Dialogue and Official Languages and the Public Service Commission should ensure that a sufficient number of officials proficient in Tamil language are placed throughout the public service. Short and long term measures to effect this have to be considered.
- Close collaboration is needed between the Official Language Commission and the Public Service Commission/Ministry of Public Administration in relation to recruitment plans and policies for public service. Other than the language proficiency exam for existing public servants, the language proficiency (speaking/reading and writing) should be considered as one of the core criteria for new recruitments.
- As short and medium term measures, government should prioritise the multi ethnic divisional secretariat divisions and districts and ensure the immediate gaps in required officers with language competency are filled.
- The Ministry of National Co-existence Dialogue and Official Languages or the Department of Official Languages should ensure that the relevant circulars and gazettes with regard to the Official Language Policy are delivered in both Tamil and Sinhala to respective government officers.
- The Ministry of National Co-existence Dialogue and Official Languages or the Department of Official Languages and respective district and divisional level administrative authorities should address the obstacles faced by government officers in accomplishing their interest of learning Tamil/Sinhala languages.
- The Ministry of National Co-existence Dialogue and Official Languages and should design a proper coordination plan with other ministries at national, provincial and local government levels related to its policy developments and corresponding implementation plans.
- The Ministry of National Co-existence Dialogue and Official Languages should design a joint programme with the Ministry of Education/National Institute of Education and ensure translations of literature which promote national and cultural reconciliation is integrated into the curriculum along with sufficient resource allocations for this irrespective of budgets.
- The Ministry of National Co-existence Dialogue and Official Languages and the Ministry of Education/National Institute of Education should collaborate to establish a Language Training College for teachers.



- Having realised the role of media as one of the central and effective communication mechanism, The Ministry of National Co-existence Dialogue and Official Languages shall design a joint programme with the Ministry of Media to create a constructive discourse on language rights and OLP targeting both electronic and print media institutions and respective journalists of state and private media.
- Ministry of National Co-existence Dialogue and Official Languages should identify unavailable documents, forms, templates in all relevant languages and ensure that such required documents in respective languages are available to respective officials for effective and efficient service delivery.
- The Ministry of National Co-existence Dialogue and Official Languages should rectify the gaps in using both official languages in public notices, on sign boards, and all other items in the government and non-state sector.
- Government officials mandated to ensure the implementation of the official language policy should be periodically sensitised on their core roles and responsibilities stipulated through relevant administrative circulars.
- A comprehensive monitoring mechanism to be designed at all levels and periodic reviewing should take place to identify the prevailing gaps and challenges in the proper implementation of the OLP. Respective mandated public servants shall be given the appropriate understanding to communicate institution level gaps and challenges in the implementation of OLP to relevant policymaking and administrative authorities.
- A Three Yearly Language Audit is suggested to be initiated under the preview of OLC of the Ministry of National Co-existence Dialogue and Official Languages within state and non-state sectors. The state sector should assess the overall national level of progress in implementing the OLP.
- Authorities should take necessary measures in schools to implement the policy provision of singing the National Anthem in both Tamil and Sinhala languages.
- Actions should be taken to ensure that police stations & hospital police posts across the country have sufficient number of officers with language proficiency to protect the peoples' right to have complaints/statements/grievances filed in the language of their choice.
- Given the lack of awareness about the core functions of the OLC, the government should take due steps to make the OLC a more accessible institution along with widespread sub offices established across the country.



## Areas Covered by the Language Audit



**MAKE A DIFFERENCE!  
BE PART OF DEMOCRACY**

**ATTENTION  
CITIZENS**

**ANNOUNCING!**

- Find government forms without waiting in line
- Learn about your language rights
- Receive rapid updates on current issues affecting you as a citizen
- Access expert advice and support
- Network with other citizen activists to raise a powerful voice for action

**IN SINHALA, TAMIL OR ENGLISH!**

**CITIZENSLANKA.ORG**

An initiative by **Centre for Policy Alternatives**

**CITIZENS  
LANKA**  
CITIZEN COUNCILS  
OF SRI LANKA  
FACEBOOK GROUP

**ACTS & GOVT  
FORMS**

A one stop reference for often needed government forms, regulations, Acts, Bills, gazettes and official documents

**YOUR  
LANGUAGE  
RIGHTS**

Sri Lanka's most comprehensive resource on your language rights

**EXPERT  
ADVICE AND  
SUPPORT**

Free training videos and resources on Social Media use in Activism  
Legal Support online

**NETWORKING**

Interact with a network of 6000+ grassroots activists