

Social Construction of News



Media Monitoring on Corruption

Centre for Culture, Media and Governance,
Jamia Millia Islamia

Sample

The Hindustan Times
Hindu
Times of India
Indian Express

Sample Size

Hindustan Times:

CWG:124

2G:166

Hindu

CWG-310

2G-285

Times of India

CWG:325

2G:545


Indian Express

CWG: 29

2G:377

- ▶ **Time Frame : Oct 2010– July 2011**

CORRUPTION & SCAM

- ▶ CORRUPTION: It is an illegitimate, immoral practice which raises questions on ethical standards. Corruption often results from patronage and is associated with bribery. In simple terms- ‘An act of Bribery’.
 - ▶ SCAM: Involves deliberate misrepresentation of facts and/or significant information to obtain undue or illegal financial advantage.
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CWG

Common Wealth Games 2010 (CWG Scam):

- ▶ CWG games held in the year 2010
- ▶ Handing out contracts to firms for equipment and services at exorbitant rates; reasonable bids from other firms allegedly ignored
- ▶ Allegations of conspiracy and cheating

People Involved


- ▶ Suresh Kalmadi, Chairman , Organizing Committee (OC)
- ▶ Lalit Bhanot, Secretary General of OC
- ▶ V. K. Verma, Director General
- ▶ Other Politicians like Sheila Dixit, CM, Delhi

2G Spectrum Scam


2G Spectrum Scam:

- ▶ 2G licenses issued to private telecom companies at throwaway prices in 2008
- ▶ **CAG:** Spectrum scam cost the government Rs. 1.76 lakh crore
- ▶ **CAG:** Rules and procedures flouted while issuing licenses


People Involved

- ▶ A Raja, Telecom Minister
 - ▶ Kanimozhi, Member of Parliament
 - ▶ Shahid Balwa, Promoter, Swan Telecom
 - ▶ Sanjay Chandra, Unitech Chief and Vinod Goenka, DB Realty founder
 - ▶ Gautam Doshi, Hari Nair and Surendra Pipara, senior executives of Anil Ambani controlled ADAG
 - ▶ Sidharth Behura, Former Telecom Secretary
 - ▶ RK Chandolia, A Raja's Personal Secretary
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Corruption & Role of Media

- ▶ Brings out instances of corruption in the public domain by reporting them
 - ▶ Builds public opinion on the issue
 - ▶ Can sustain momentum and keep the issue alive by regularly following up the story
 - ▶ This can help in bringing the guilty to book
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Objectives

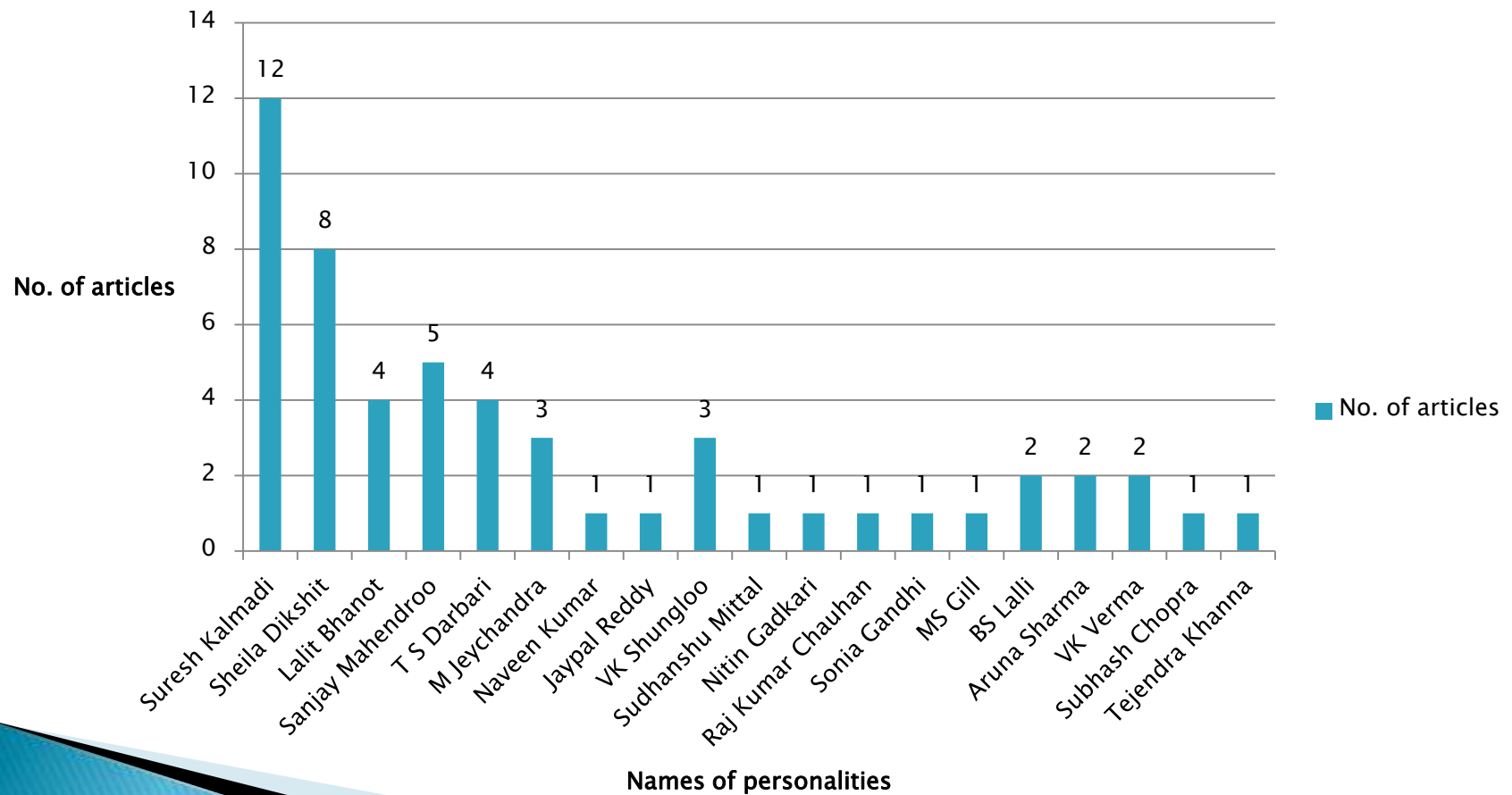
- ▶ How was the issue of corruption framed by the 4 leading English dailies while reporting on the CWG & 2G corruption stories?
 - ▶ Were there any significant differences in the way the 2 stories were approached in the same newspaper?
 - ▶ Did different papers take similar or differing approaches while reporting on these stories and on the larger issue of corruption?
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CWG Data Analysis

Focus on Personalities

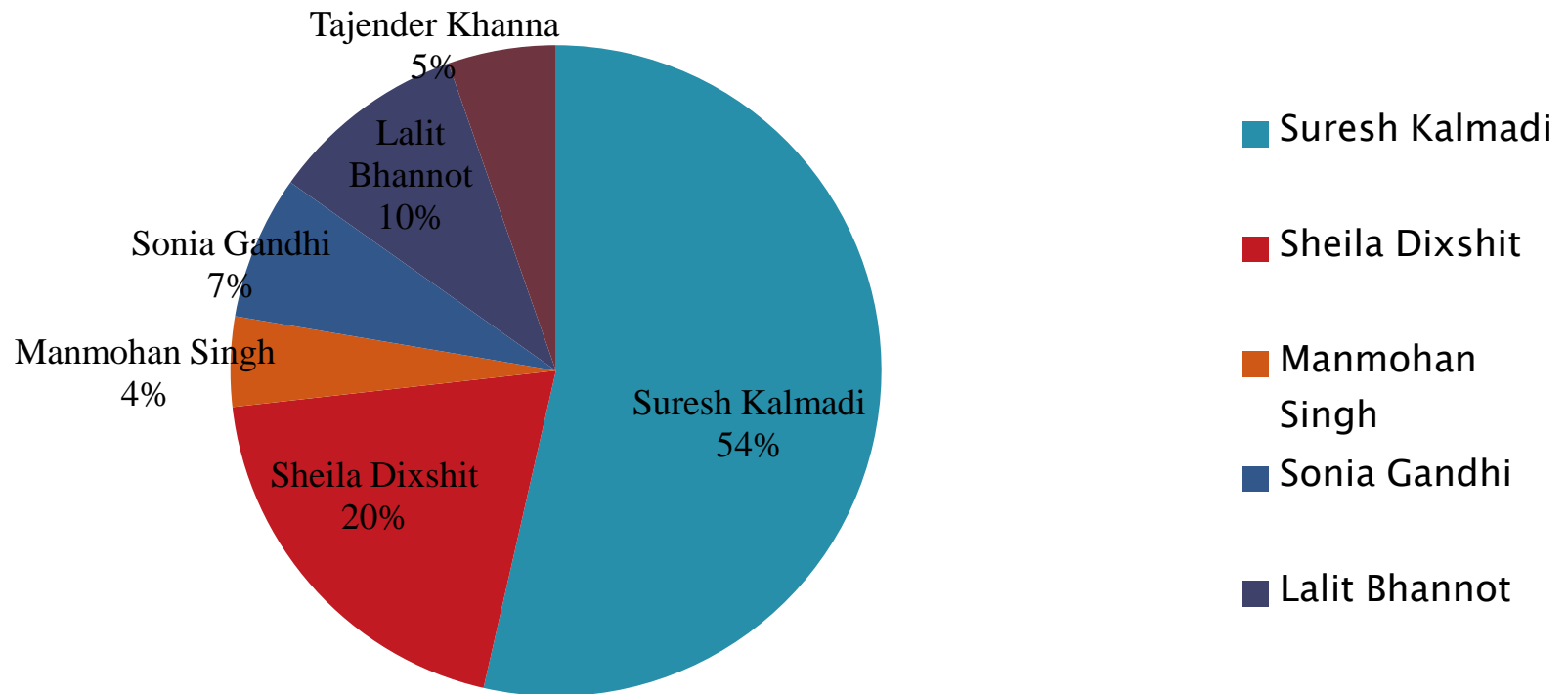
Hindustan Times

Focus on Personalities



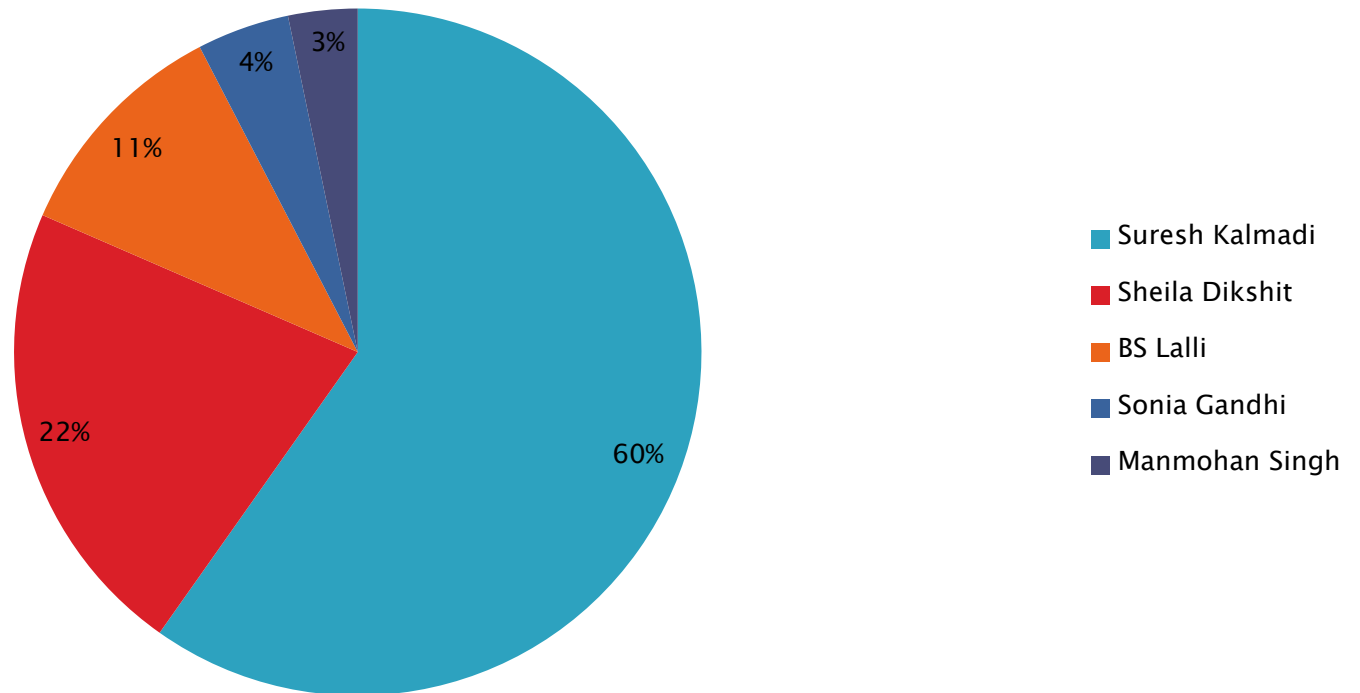
Hindu

Political Personalities



Times of India

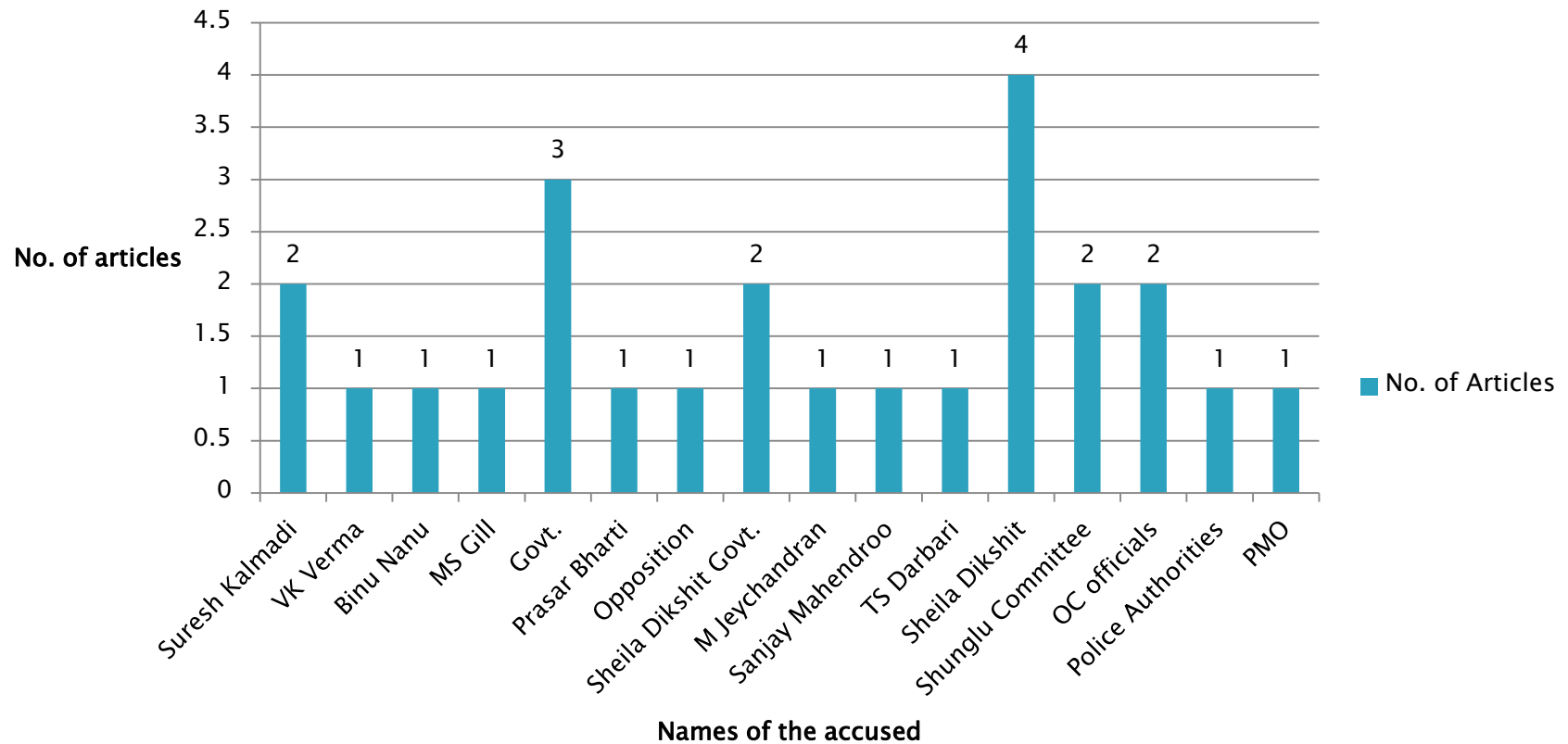
Focus on Personality



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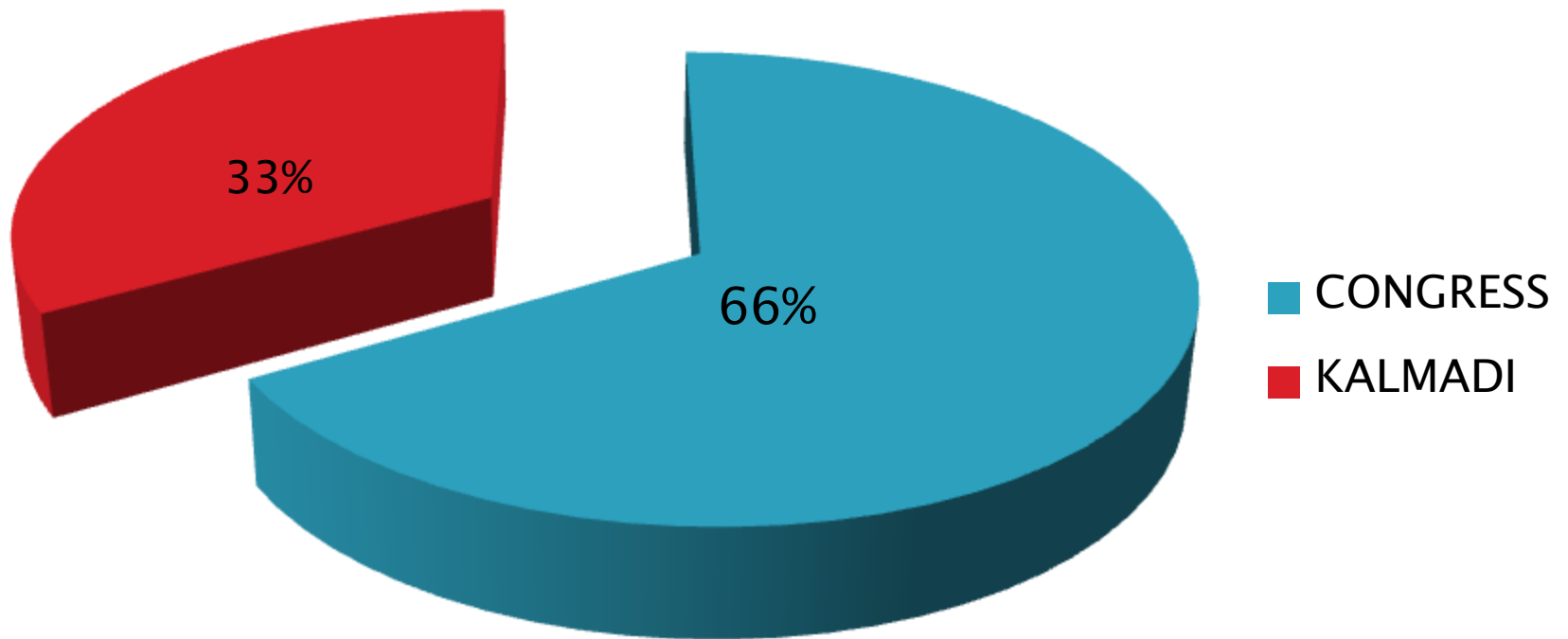
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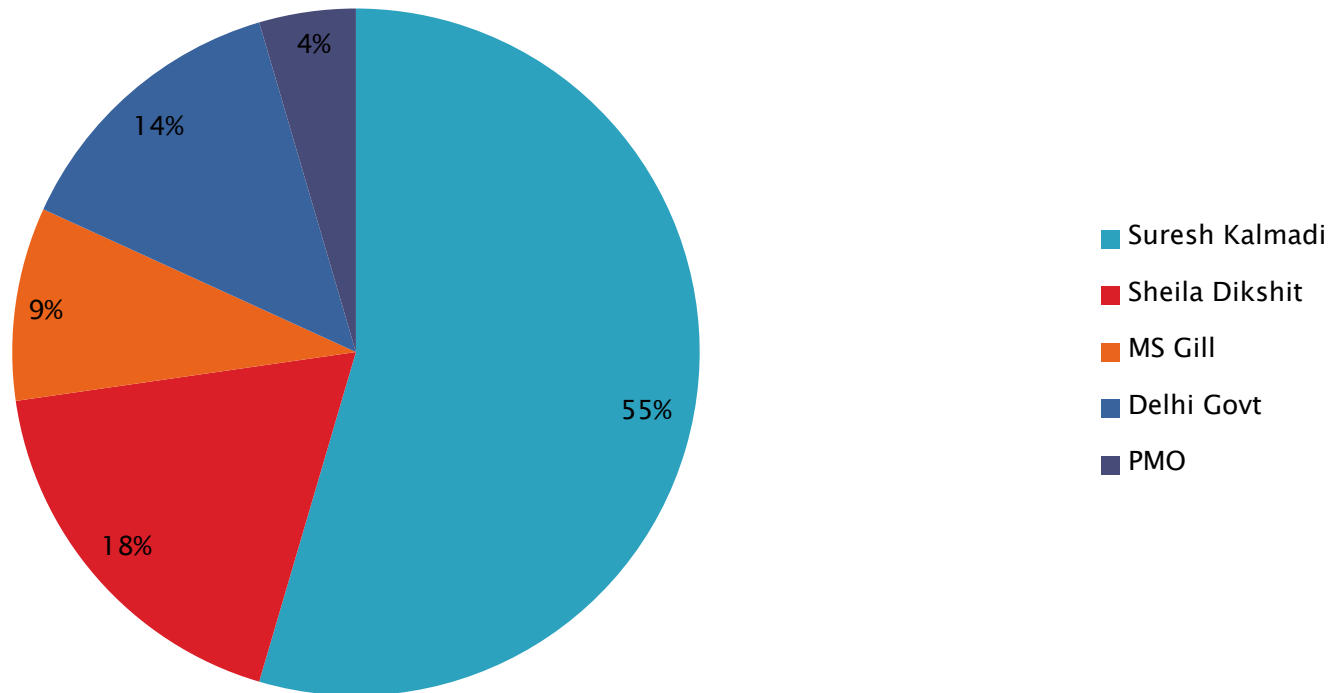
Indian Express

CONGRESS VS KALMADI



Times of India

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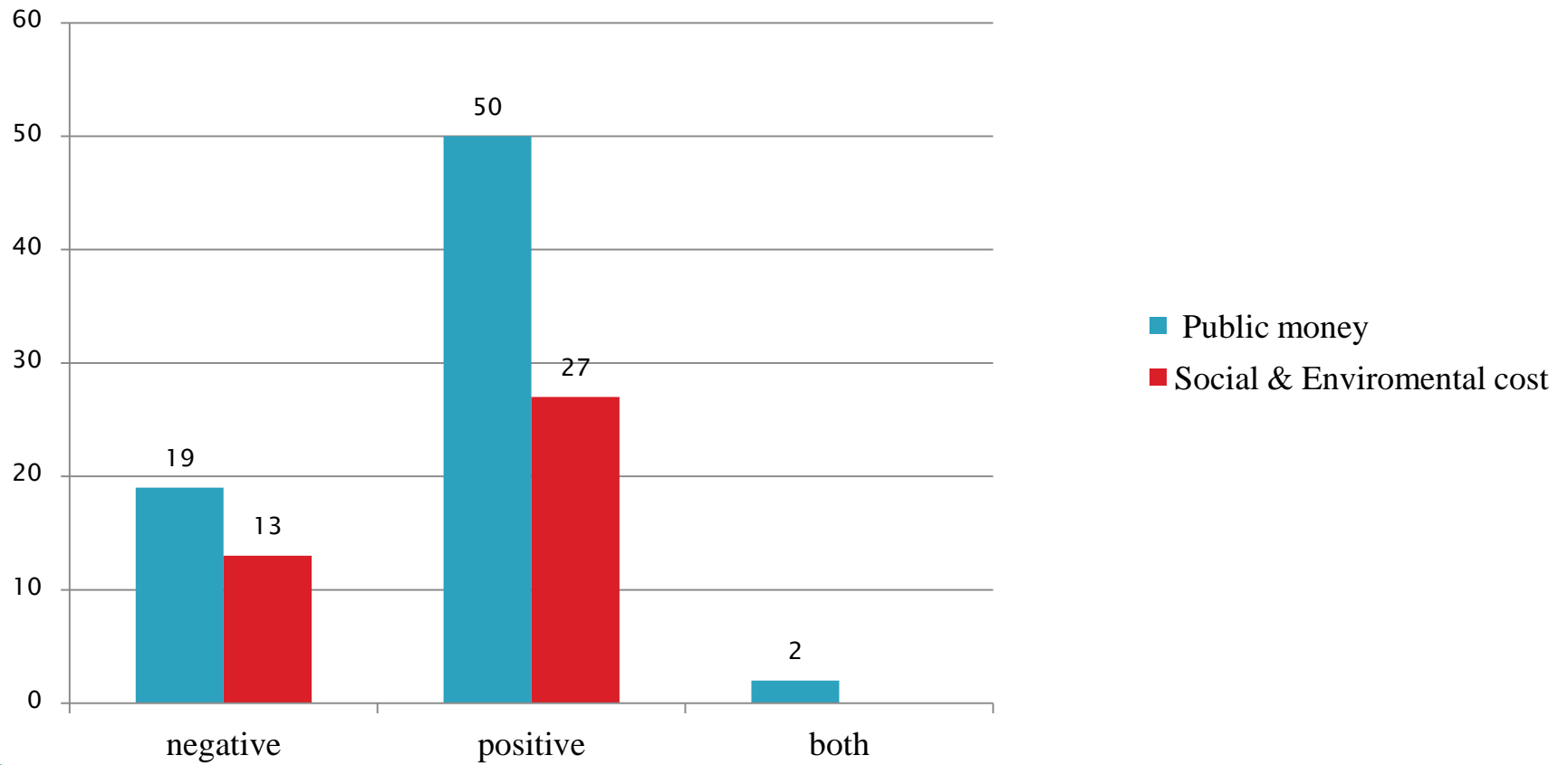


Wastage of Pubic Money
&
Consideration of Social
Environmental Cost
(Positive/Negative/Neutral)

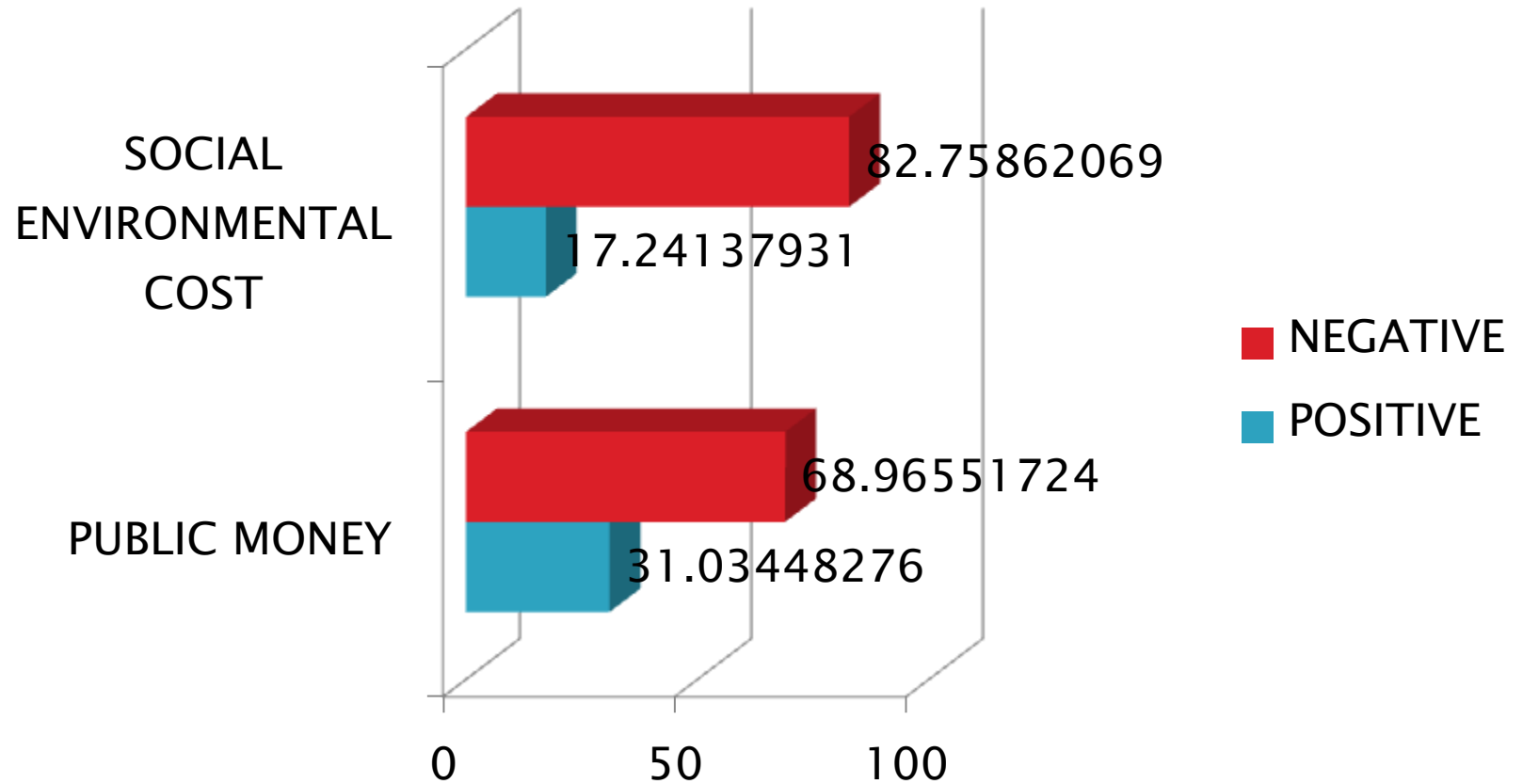
Hindustan Times

- ▶ Social/Environmental costs were not mentioned even once in the 124 news stories in the Hindustan Times. This was despite the fact that construction of the various sites for CWG had a direct impact on the residents of the several slums as they were forcefully evicted to make way for the stadium and other amenities

Hindu



Indian Express

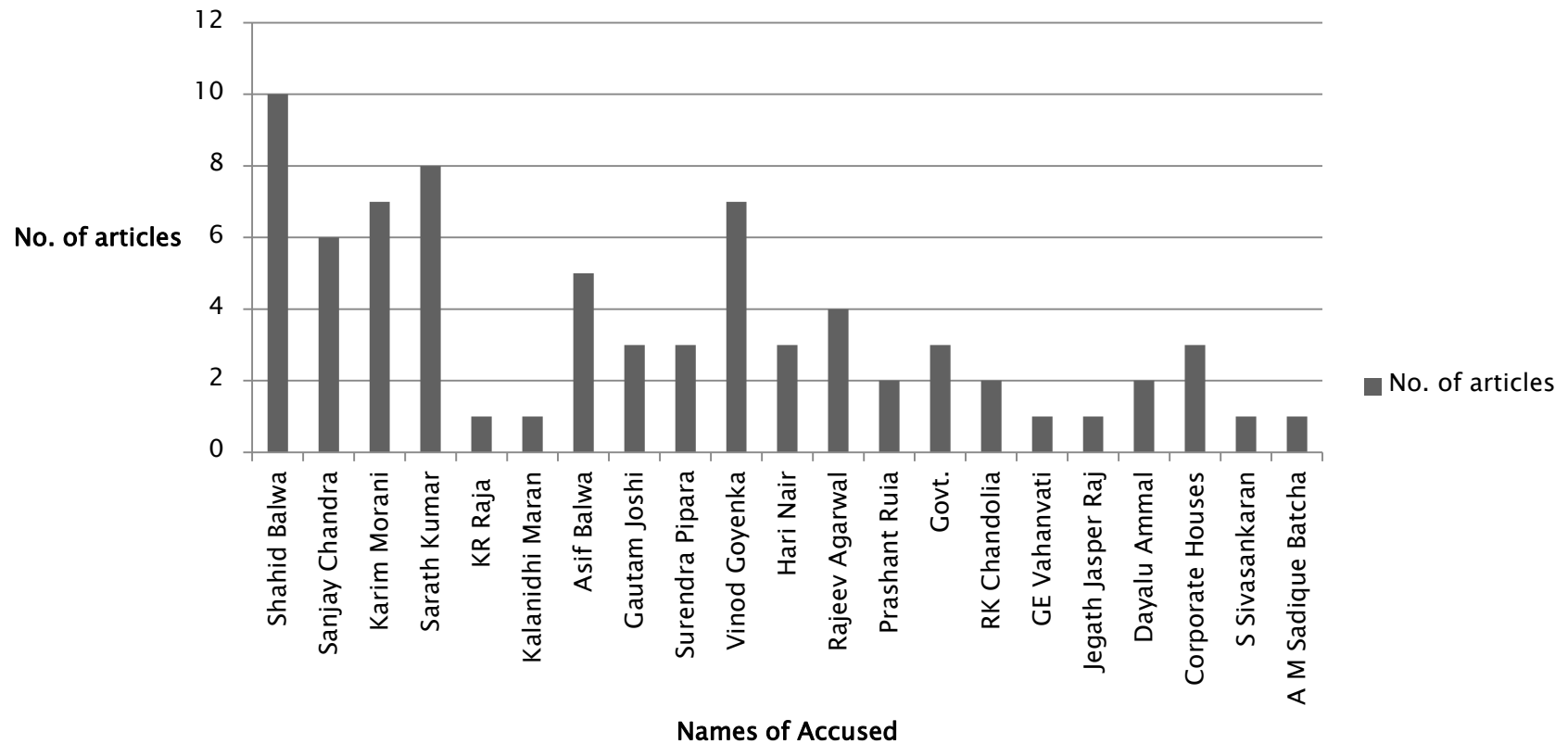


2G Scam

Corrupt Practices

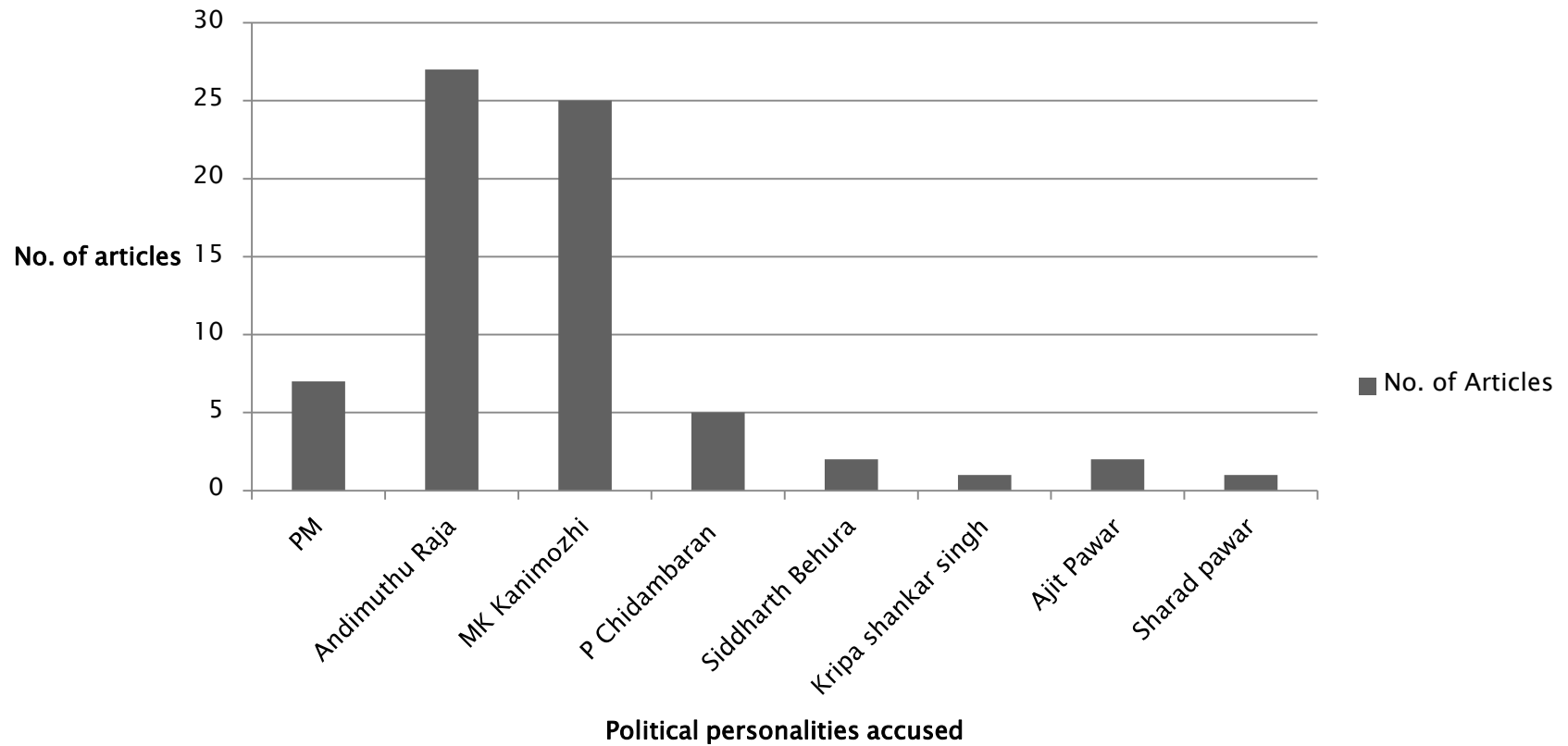
Hindustan Times

Corrupt Practises



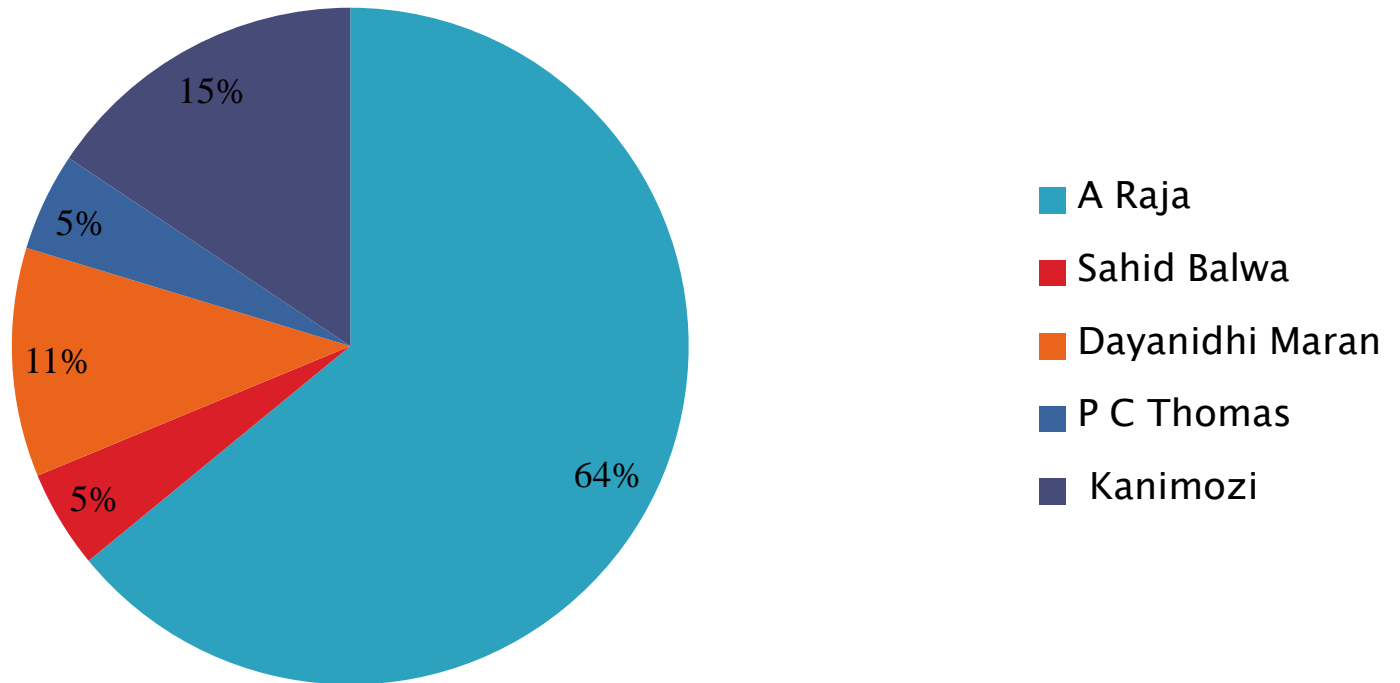
Hindustan Times

Political Personalities Accused



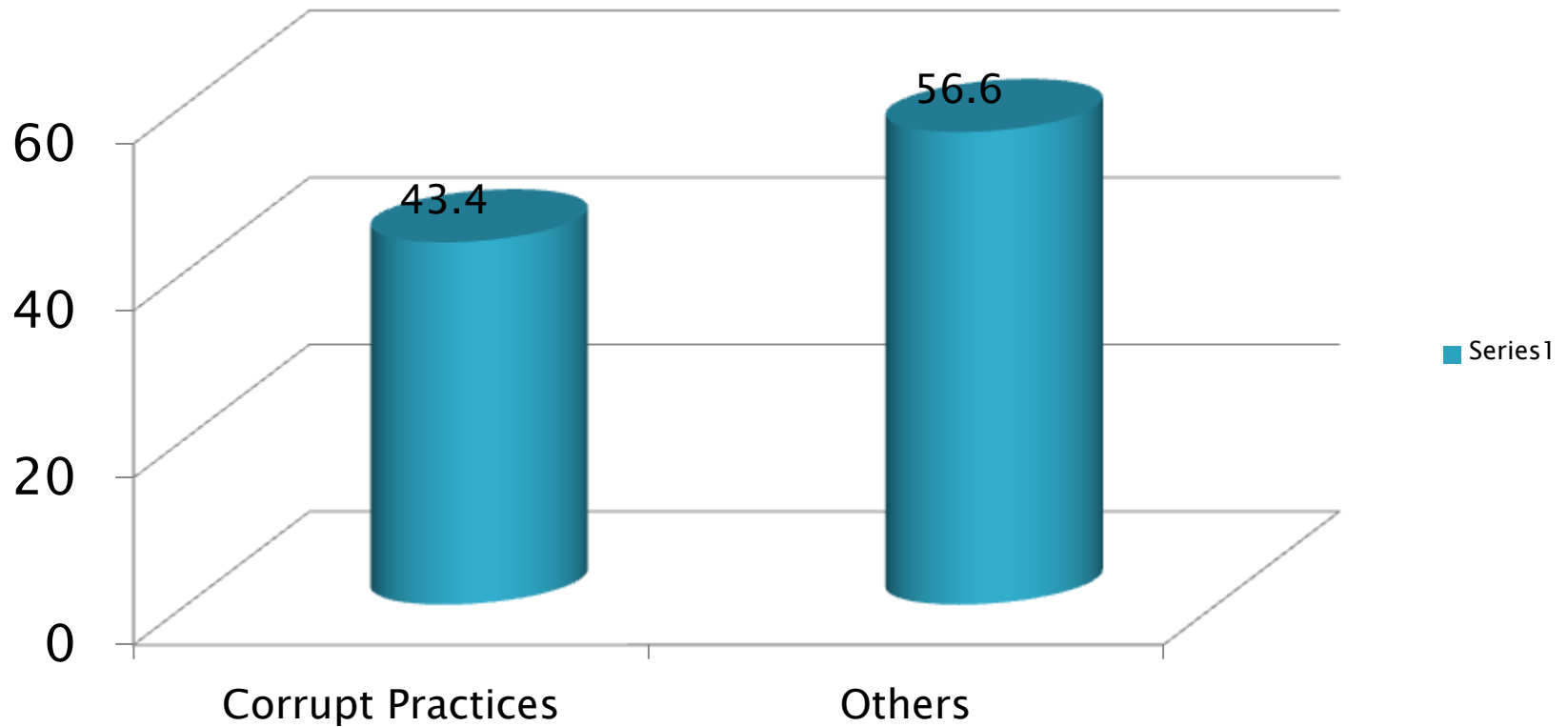
Hindu

Corrupt Practices



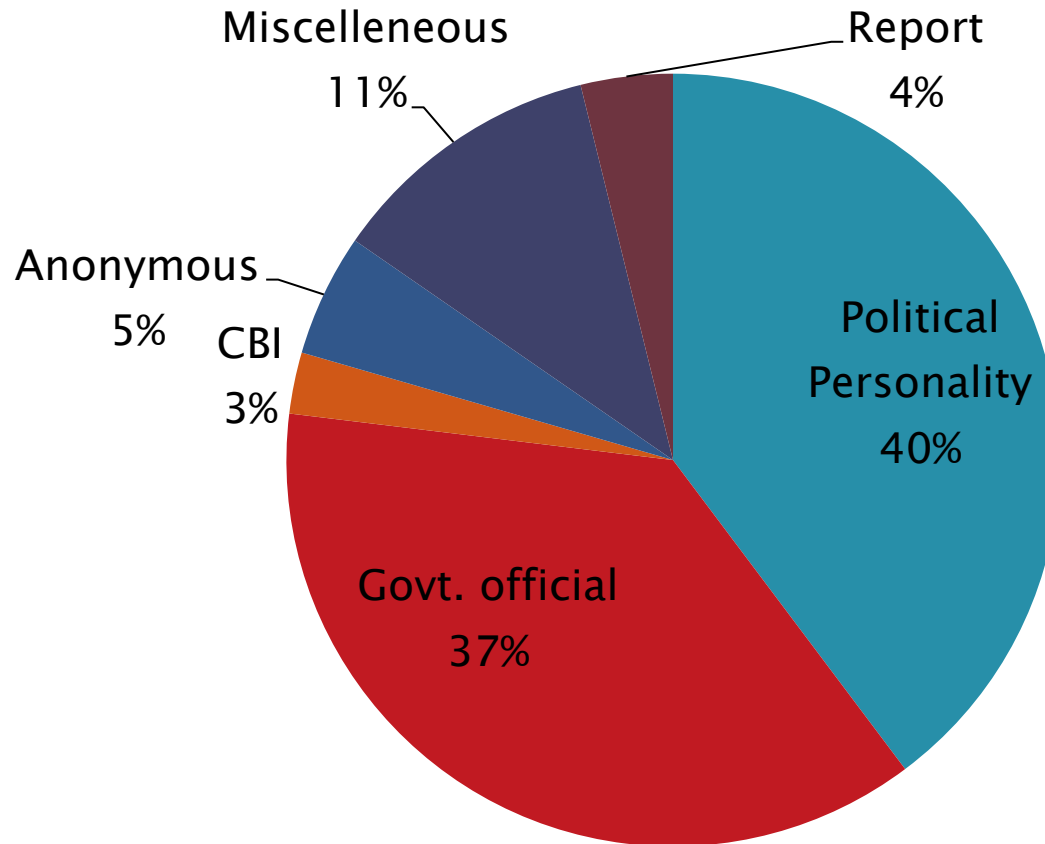
Times of India

Focus on Corrupt Practices (%)

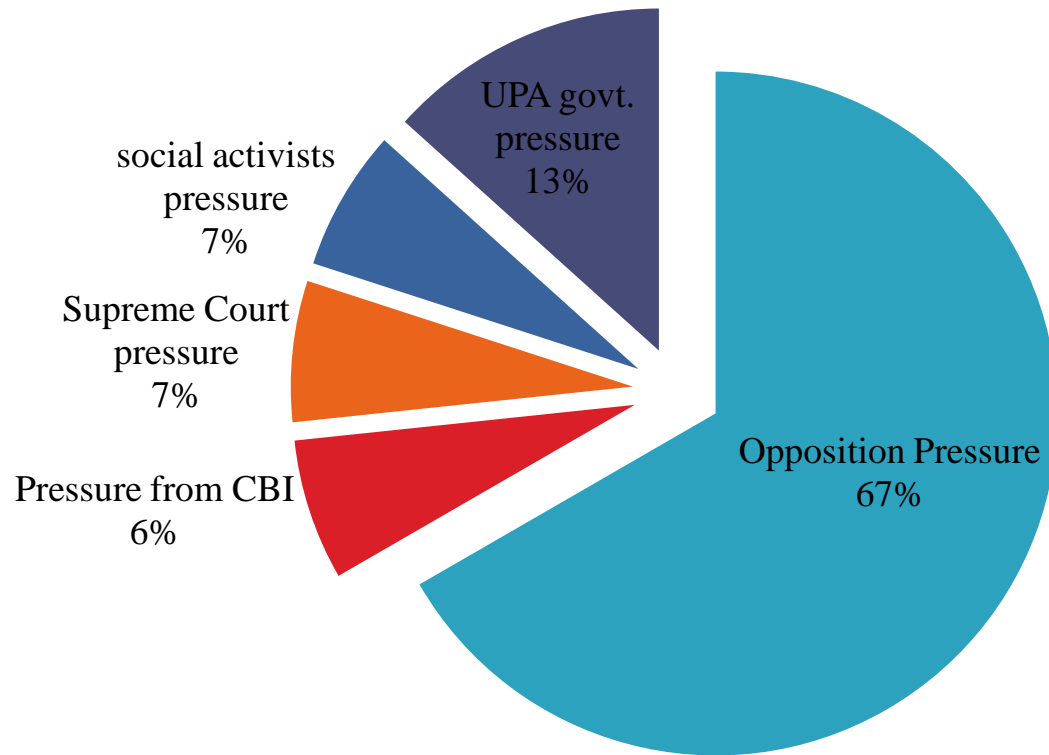


Source of Information

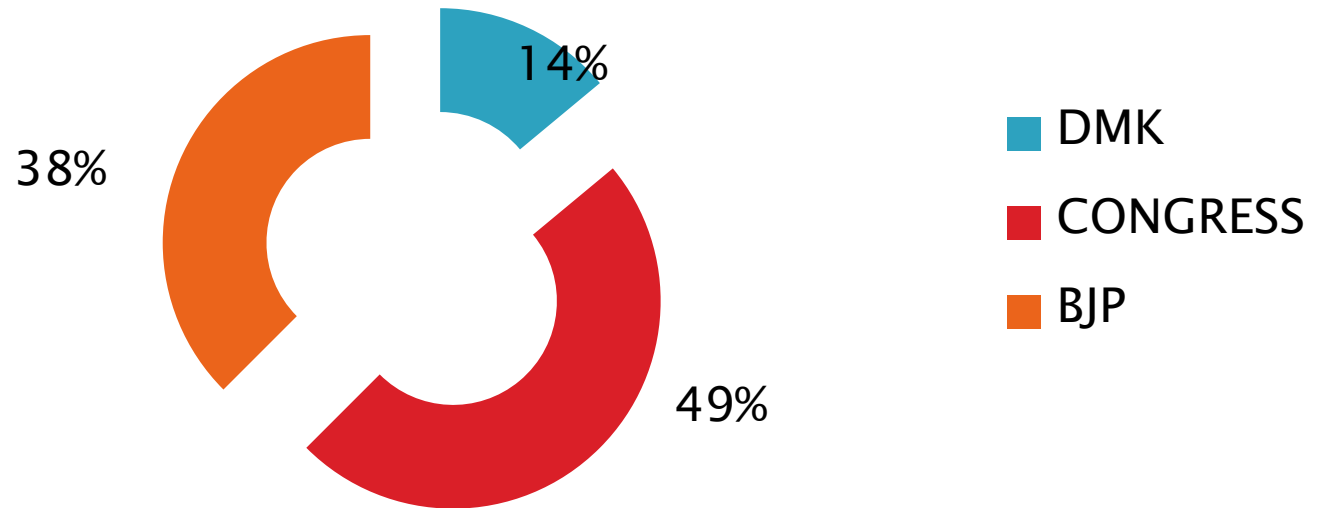
Hindustan Times



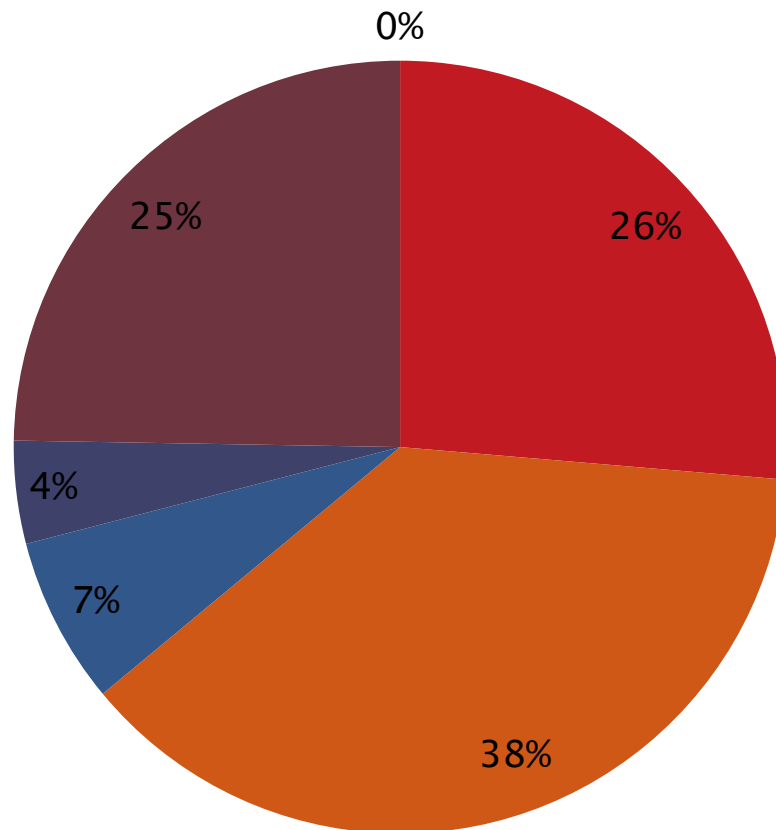
Hindu



Indian Express



Times of India

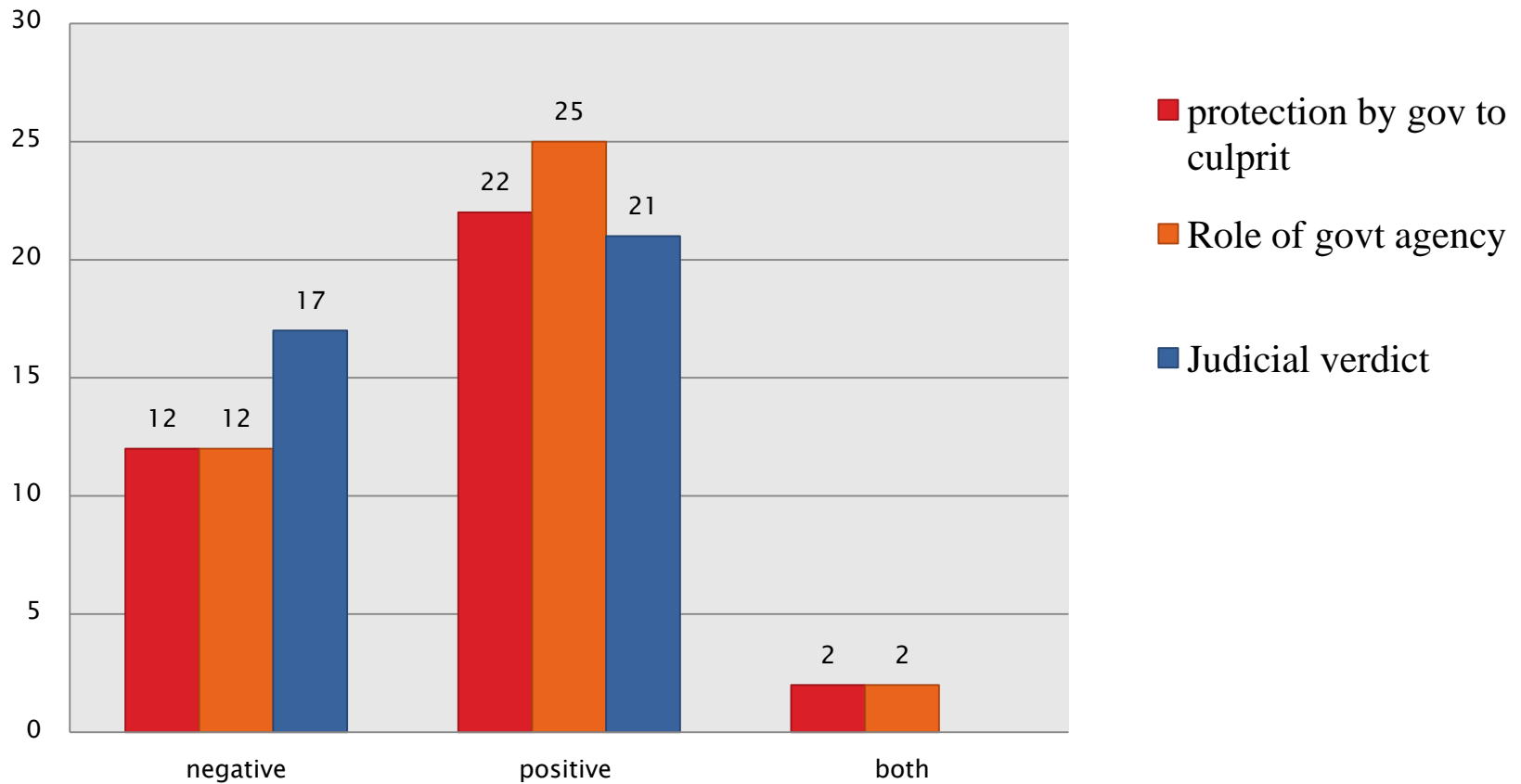


- Source of Information
- CBI
- Opposition
- Judiciary
- Home/Law Ministry
- Others

Positive/Negative Association of stories on 2G scam



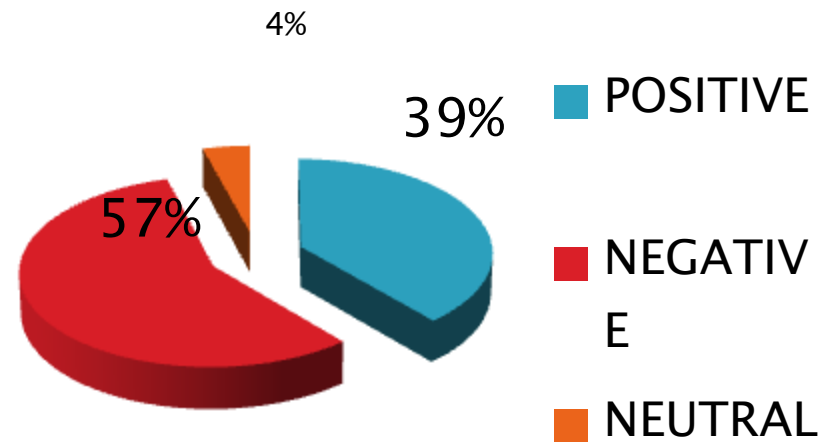
Hindu (2G)



Indian Express

► Projection of stories


2G



Frames / Metaphors / Key words

Hindustan Times

Framing

- ▶ Majority of the articles were around Kanimozhi & A Raja. Very few articles focused on the involvement of corporate bosses in the 2G scam. This shows that for the Hindustan Times it was the involvement of political personalities which was central to the story despite the fact that the scam could not have been possible without the equal involvement of private telecom companies and their executives
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Hindu

Use of Metaphors

- ▶ In CWG, phrases such as '*scam ridden India*', '*sea of corruption*', '*imbalance of power*', '*ideological and political bankruptcy*' indicate that news stories emphasize widespread corruption in the country and point towards structural imbalance in governance structures and lack of honest and credible political leadership for the same
- ▶ In 2G, phrases like '*conspiracy of silence*', '*damage control mode*' indicate that government authorities were not seen as serious in bringing the guilty to book. These news stories focus on the fact that the government was trying to cover up the scam

Indian Express

Keywords/Metaphors

- ▶ ‘*String of scams*’, ‘*big fish*’, ‘*tight lipped*’, ‘*smoke screen*’, ‘*under his nose*’, ‘*mute spectator*’ and ‘tail spin’. These key terms in the Indian Express tell a story of multiple scams taking place in the government in which people in high positions are involved and point towards an attempt to cover-up things happening right under the noses of people at the very top and they being able to/or wanting to do precious little. But the newspaper presents that despite this, the events unfolded in such a way that people (in the government) had little control over them

Times of India


Keywords

- ▶ In CWG, use of keywords and phrases like ‘*black money, graft, mess, shoddy works, extravaganza, wrongdoings, serious irregularities*, and *sheer wastage of public money* indicate that the paper’s focus was on uncovering corrupt practices taking place under the garb of organising CWG.
- ▶ In 2G spectrum, use of keywords and phrases like, *abnormal price, money laundering, elicit details, lawlessness and feigning ignorance* point towards the loot of public money and the government’s unwillingness to take action until the situation turned inevitable.

Conclusion




Hindustan Times

- ▶ HT framed the issue of corruption around the political personalities and the subsequent backlashes and mud slinging between political parties
 - ▶ Both the corruption stories (2G and CWG) have been covered in a very similar manner as the stories in the newspaper revolved around political personalities and did not report on their larger implications or other aspects around them. The coverage was also event based with stories being around raids, charge sheets and subsequent arrests
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Hindu

- ▶ News articles in the Hindu did not depict any signs of political affiliation towards any particular party. The Hindu's coverage portrayed the stories as a larger malaise of corruption in the country, particularly among politicians. The paper also brought out the effects of corruption in the socio-economic context
- ▶ In reporting the CWG story, the Hindu also makes the connection of corrupt practices adversely impacting India's image, as CWG was an international sporting event. In its coverage of the 2G scam, the Hindu seemed particularly concerned over how to stop the menace of corruption which was hollowing the nation

Indian Express

- ▶ The Indian Express too has reported corrupt practices in both the stories (2G & CWG) by giving them a political angle
 - ▶ In the coverage of the CWG story, the paper is largely targeting the Congress party and its involvement in mismanagement of games and financial impropriety directly
 - ▶ Whereas, the 2G story has been reported in many diverse ways by looking at the role of Central Bureau of Investigation, the judiciary and that of the different political parties
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Times of India

- ▶ While the Times of India highlighted corrupt practices in both (2G&CWG) stories, it provided space not only to the opposing parties, but also to the ruling party as well as to the accused
 - ▶ The CWG stories were spread out -from the time the scam unfolded to the games being held and follow-up action, with the Times of India carrying stories on corrupt practices pre, during and post the event.
 - ▶ The coverage of 2G scam was mostly post the irregularities coming out in the open. They revolved around political personalities and subsequent actions like raids, CBI charge sheet, petitions in court and the politics that unfolded around them
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Inter-Newspaper Comparison

Representation of Corruption

- ▶ Hindustan Times: Mostly framed stories around politicians and their role
- ▶ Hindu: Focused more on the larger issue of corruption with politicians being seen as part of the problem. The paper also brought out the socio-economic aspects and reflected on the image of the country due to increasing incidence of corruption
- ▶ Indian Express: Majority of the stories were politically framed. 2G coverage focused mainly on investigation into corrupt practices
- ▶ Times of India: Also had a largely political focus but space was given to stories emerging from all sides. As in the case of the Indian Express, here too, 2G stories focused on the investigative aspects

Thank You