

CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN: AN INHERENT STUDY ON CRIME PORTRAYAL AGAINST WOMEN BY TAMIL DAILIES OF TAMIL NADU

R. Venkatesh Aravindh

Doctoral Research Scholar, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication,
Periyar University, Salem, Tamil Nadu
Email - rvenkatesharavindh@gmail.com

Abstract: *Women happen to occupy a major percentile of the population in a country like India. More often they were looked down upon as someone who are incapable of doing things. Over the course of time, this perception has changed greatly and as a result of it, we get to see women play active roles in various fields and arenas. Although there is much progress in this regard, there are crimes that are happening even at this juncture against women. Crimes against women have been prevalent in the Indian society in various forms and dimensions. The degree or the type of crime committed against them vary from one another. Recent turn of events in the country has seen women being at the forefront of things especially in movements like total prohibition of liquor, fighting for one's rights etc. One of the chief arguments put forth by many scholars is that the stereotypes and perception against and on women prevalent in the society must change. This research study aims to look at the coverage of crimes that are happening against women in the recent past. The researchers will employ qualitative research approach in the form of content analysis and analyse the news articles in the leading Tamil dailies of Tamil Nadu.*

Keywords: *Coverage, Crime, Women, Print Media, Tamil dailies,*

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 *Print Media - A historical perspective:*

Previously done research studies spoke about the evolution and history of newspapers in India. The evolution of Newspapers in India started with the introduction of 'Bengal Gazette' started by James Augustus Hickey in 1780 from Calcutta as a weekly two sheet paper. This newspaper paved the way for Indian freedom struggle and the fight against the social evils in India by the way of revolutionary and enlightening writings. Other newspapers such as Calcutta Chronicle, Madras Courier, and Bombay Herald, Bombay Courier, Bombay Gazette entered into the scene and the newspapers in Hindi and other regional languages also started flourishing in the various parts of the nation. Bengal was the birth place of Journalism in India and the language press. 'Samachar Darpan' was the first Indian language newspaper which was a Bengali weekly newspaper introduced in 1818 and the first periodical of India in Indian language was 'Dig Darshan' in Bangla language started in the same year. 'Eenadu' was a Telugu daily which was started by Ramoji Rao, the first Gujarati Newspaper was 'Bombay Samachar' which still exists and is considered as the oldest living Indian newspaper of India. The prime motives to start the newspapers in Indian languages were to promote the feeling of patriotism and to encourage social reforms also because the society was occupied with lots of prejudices, orthodoxies and social evils like sati pratha, child marriage, caste discrimination, idol worship, animal sacrifice and other narrow beliefs.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

2.1 *Women representation*

The representation of women in India was a matter of concern even after independence. Previous research studies drew the attention of the researchers to various issues present at that time (Epstein, 1978a; Tuchman, 1987b; Molotch 1978).

Women despite accounting for half of the world populace, happen to be the marginalised section of a society in spite of the country in which they reside happening to be a developed or a developing nation. Women are seen less newsworthy and more as entertainment objects. Gaye Tuchman (1978) in her book 'Hearth and Home: Images of women in Mass media' spoke about the stereotyping of women within media outlets and the absence of women from news pages. She terms it as 'symbolic annihilation - a combination of condemnation, trivialization and erasure.'

2.2 *Women portrayal*

Bamburac, Isanonoc and Jusic (2006), in their research analysed old and new modes of gender representation in newspapers and whether there was a balanced portrayal of women in their dynamic lives and the realities of the politics of representation. It was revealed that even in developed countries like Europe, male dominance in

newspapers is prevalent and women are marginalised into cornering to private and entertainment and news. Female voices are often silenced and kept in background which is passive or pacified in comparison to their male counterparts. The study showed the systematic constructs of social identities. It constructs the male domain with the infusion of symbolic inequality which is prevalent throughout the world.

A study on women issues in print media in Tanzania by Eva Solomon (2006) revealed that women’s issues are covered more in tabloids than in broadsheets. One of the major finding of the study was that women’s representation is objectified to increase the sale of the newspapers which endorses the the theory of social construction where media coverage is integral to shape the construction of reality. Gallagher (2005) in his research questioned the visibility of women that ‘But do we see them or hear their voices frequently in the news media? News acts as a mirror of the world, but the question arises that whether we are presented with a clear unambiguous reality of the distorted reality?’ The study suggested the targeted intervention of media that distorts reality and construction of reality and flattening the importance of certain groups, while pushing others to the margin.

2.3 Feminist Perspectives

The chronicles of historical evidences shows origin and development of feminism. It is related to the historical process encompassing the multifaceted ideas and thoughts, common issues and particularly the fight for women’s rights. Mary Vollstonecrafts “Vindication of a Right of Women (1971) argued for higher education, economic independence for women and also attacked the patriarchy supremacy in the society.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To educe the kind of portrayal given to women based issues.
- To examine the kind of reportage given provided by Tamil dailies to the case study that has been undertaken for the study.

4. METHODOLOGY:

The research study adopts Qualitative Content Analysis method to examine the kind of portrayal and reportage given to women based issues specially with respect to the specific case study that has been taken up for the research study. The period of study is one month February 2017 among three newspapers viz. Dina Thanthi, Dina Karan and Dina Malar.

5. ANALYSIS:

Table 1: Total No. of Articles

Category/ Newspapers	Dina Thanthi	Dina Karan	Dina Malar	Total
No. of articles	8	12	10	30
Women based articles	12	16	8	36

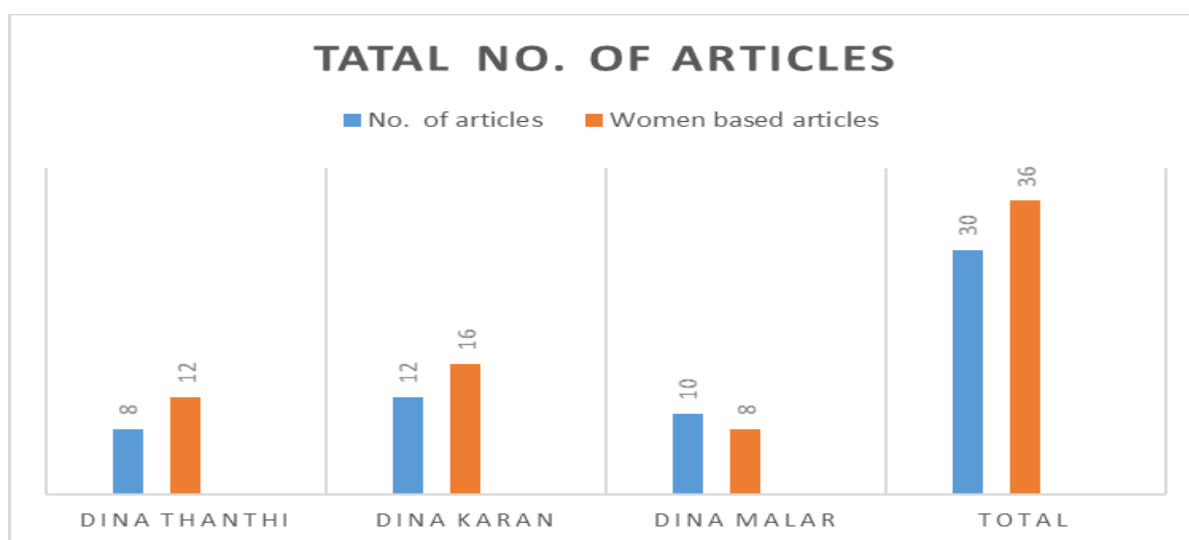


Figure 1

Table 1 and Figure 1 shows that, Dina Karan had more number of articles when compared to Dina Thanthi (8) and Dina Malar (4). Dina Karan had more number of women based articles than Dina Thanthi and Dina Malar.

Table 2: Articles by Story Type

Newspapers	Dina Thanthi	Dina Karan	Dina Malar	Total
News	8	12	10	30
Features	5	4	3	12
Letter to the Editor	4	8	2	14
Editorial	3	4	3	10

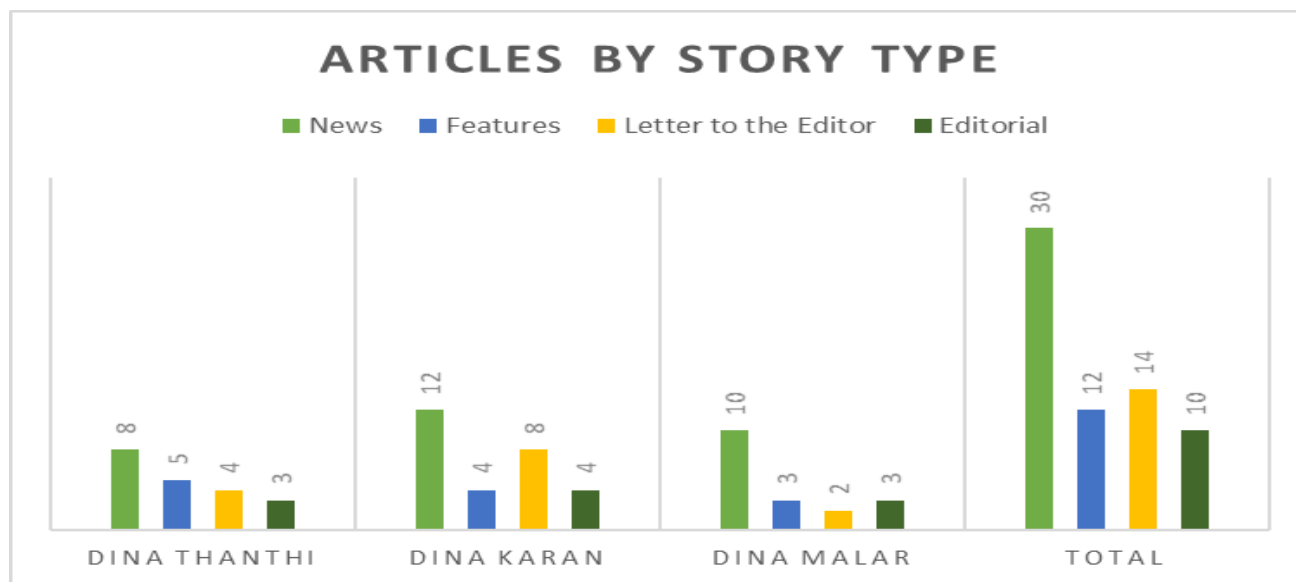


Figure 2

Table 2 and Figure 2 shows that, Dina Karan has more news articles (12) in comparison with Dina Malar (10) and Dina Thanthi (8). Features were higher in Dina Thanthi and letters to the editor were more in Dina Karan. Dina Karan had more editorials in comparison with Dina Thanthi and Dina Malar.

Table 3: Articles by Length

Newspapers	Dina Thanthi	Dina Karan	Dina Malar	Total
Number of Words	-	-	-	-
>800	2	4	3	9
400-799	3	10	6	19
150-399	3	4	2	9
100-149	7	4	4	15
<100	5	6	3	14

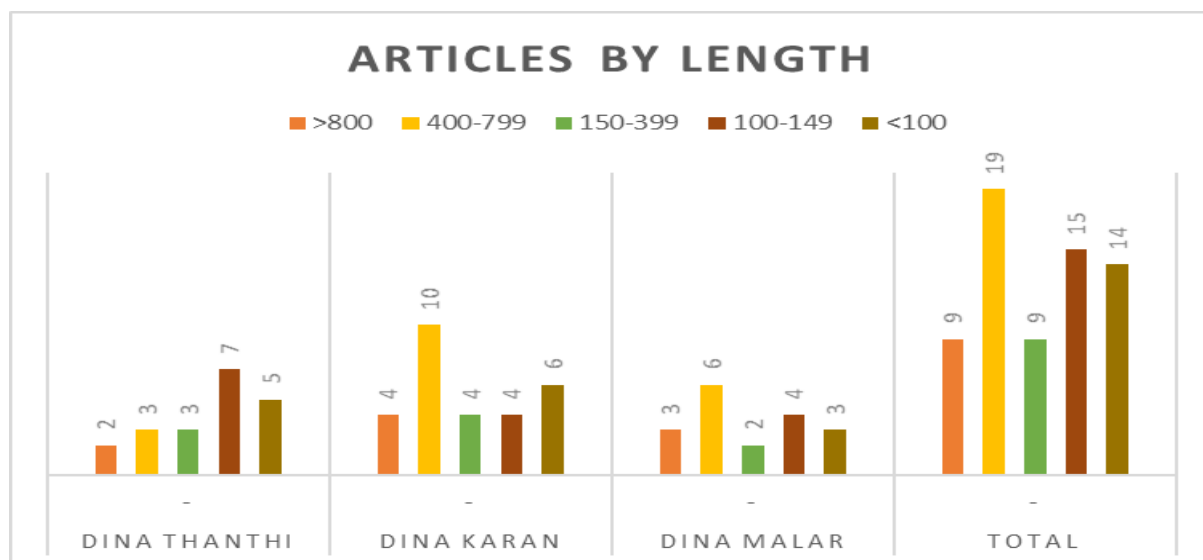


Figure 3

Table 3 and Figure 3 shows that, Dina Karan had more number of articles which were 400-799 words in length, Dina Thanthi had more articles among articles whose length was 100-149 words. Dina Thanthi had the least number of articles among those with 400-799 words.

Table 4: Tone of the Headline

Tone of News Headline	Dina Thanthi	Dina Karan	Dina Malar	Total
Sensational	5	2	3	10
Titillation	2	6	8	16
Trivialization	6	8	2	16
Exaggeration	7	12	5	25

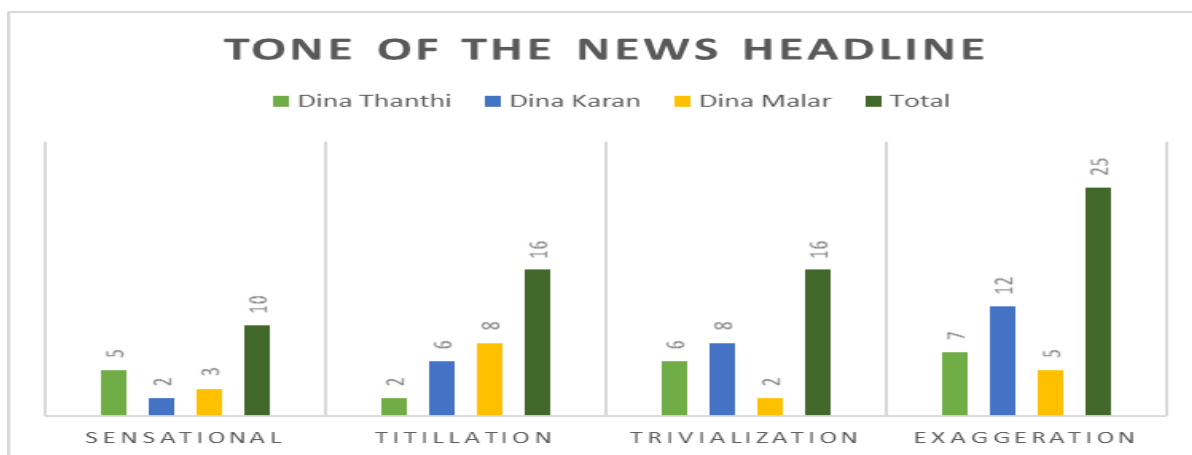


Figure 4

Table 4 and Figure 4 shows that, Dina Karan had more exaggerated headlines (12) in comparison with Dina Thanthi (7) and Dina Malar (5). Dina Thanthi had more sensational headlines (5) in comparison with Dina Karan and Dina Malar.

Table 5: Tone of the Lead

Tone of Lead	Dina Thanthi	Dina Karan	Dina Malar	Total
Sensational	2	8	3	13
Titillation	2	6	3	11
Trivialization	2	2	2	6
Victimization	4	3	5	12
Exaggeration	2	4	1	7
Neutral	8	5	4	17

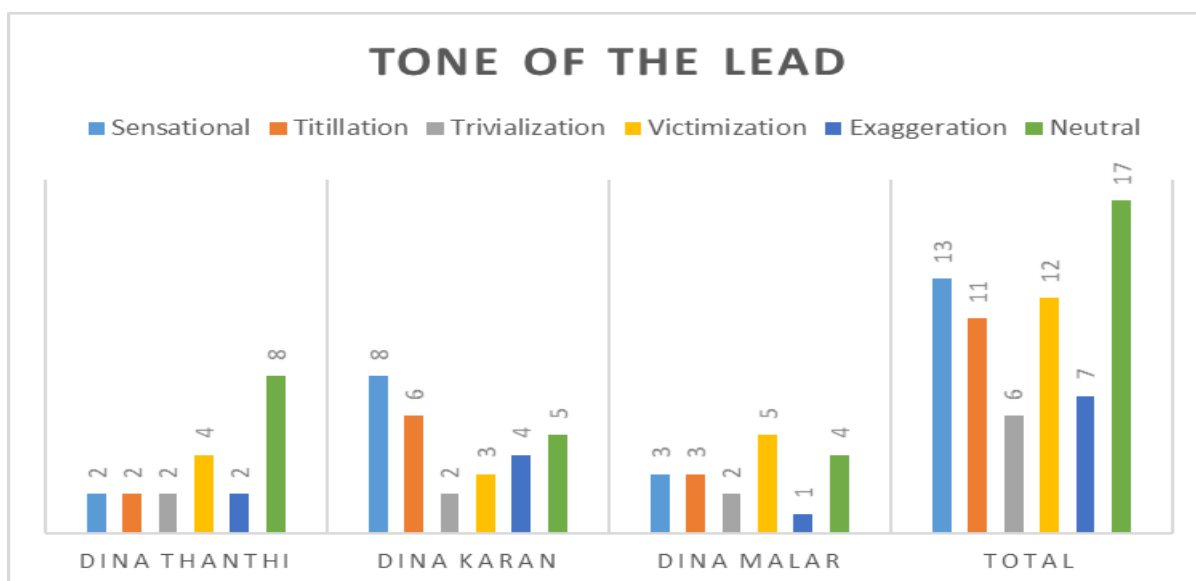


Figure 5

Table 5 and Figure 5 shows that, there are more number of leads which were sensational in Dina Karan (8) in comparison with Dina Malar (3) and Dina Thanthi (2). Leads which were titillating were higher in Dina Karan (6) over Dina Thanthi and Dina Malar. There were more number of leads which were Victimization (5) in Dina Malar over Dina Thanthi and Dina Karan.

6. FINDINGS:

- When observing the total number of articles, women based articles and articles were more in Dina Karan in comparison with Dina Thanthi and Dina Malar. There were 66 articles in total across three dailies.
- When enquired about the type of news story, news and letters to the editor were more in comparison with editorials and features across the dailies.
- Regarding articles by length, articles 400-799 words in length were the maximum followed by those which were less than 100 words over other categories. Dina Karan had more 800 word articles but the other dailies were marginally behind.
- As Regards with Tone of Headline, it was revealed from the study that Dina Karan had more exaggerated headlines and Dina Thanthi had more sensational headlines when compared with other dailies.
- Concerning the Tone of Lead, it was found that Dina Karan had more sensational leads. Titillating leads were higher in Dina Karan yet again over other dailies. Victimising leads in Dina Malar over other dailies.

7. CONCLUSION:

The primary objective of the research undertaken had been to know about the crime portrayal and reportage of news given to women based news. Dina Karan had given more coverage to the death of 17 year-old Nandini who was gang-raped and murdered by her estranged boyfriend and her friends and found in a decomposed state at a well in Ariyalur when compared with other dailies. The amount of coverage given to the murder of the teenage girl across the three dailies evoked very less coverage and reportage as all or most of the media attention was grabbed by the widespread protests over Jallikattu and its subsequent success in reversal of the ban for conducting Jallikattu. However, it has to be noted that this gruesome gang rape and murder of this Dalit girl was as serious as Nirbhaya's case in New Delhi but the coverage and protests are almost minimal and non-existent in this case. We could argue that there was lethargy on the part of media outlets in the portrayal of the crime as well as the coverage and reportage it garnered.

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