

Portrayal of Women related crimes in Tamil dailies

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Abstract: *Crimes against women aren't something new in today's society. Crimes happen against women in varied forms and dimensions for many centuries. These crimes aren't restricted to a particular geography or location or a type of people, they happened quite frequently across the globe cutting across offenders from various walks of life. Women comprise 52% of the Indian population. However, they had to face umpten hardships at various places including their own homes from a plethora of people sometimes even their own parents or siblings. Print media is one of the trust-worthy outlets according to the masses. They most certainly believe that the information shared by these outlets are true. The current research study looks at the portrayal of a dalight murder of a women by the English dailies in Tamil Nadu. The study incorporates qualitative content analysis method to look at the portrayal and coverage given to women related crime news in the Tamil dailies.*

Key Words: *Portrayal, Crime, Coverage, print media, newspapers,*

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Print Media:

Best's (1990) Threatened Children comprehensively analyzes this large scale preoccupation with child victims that occurred at this time. Best (1990) recognizes the integral role media coverage played in this panic. One of the most memorable aspects of media coverage during the time period was their depiction of atrocity tales of terrible crimes used to typify the problem of threatened children. As with the threatened children preoccupation, this moral panic was fuelled by sensational typifications such as Jeffrey Dahmer, Aileen Wournos, and Joel Rifkin (Jenkins, 1994).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

2.1 Women portrayal:

Sonia Bhathla (1998) study showed that women's issues are predominantly event oriented in print media. Major percentage of new stories focused on violence and crime. Rashmi Luthra (1987) studies a general portrayal of women's issues in the print media. The study observed that the stories related to an event or an issue, was considered news worthy. It pointed out the tactics adopted by the reporters to present a women's news and story with a feminist perspective to gain prominence. Urvashi Butalia (1993) in her study said that it was no longer possible for women to be ignored with regards to preparing documents, policy decisions, electoral policies and so forth, the question of specific needs of women has to be addressed. Her study also said that it was not possible to overlook women's issues totally in today's contemporary society. Martha A. Fineman and Martha Mc Clusky (1997) in their book 'Feminism, Media and Law discussed how media power influences the popular opinion.

3. 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 January 2017 among three newspapers viz. Dinathanthi, Dinakaran and Dinamalar.

4. 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.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

Table 1: Total No. of Articles

Category/ Newspapers	Dinathanthi	Dinakaran	Dinamalar	Total
No. of articles	8	12	10	30
Women based articles	12	16	8	36

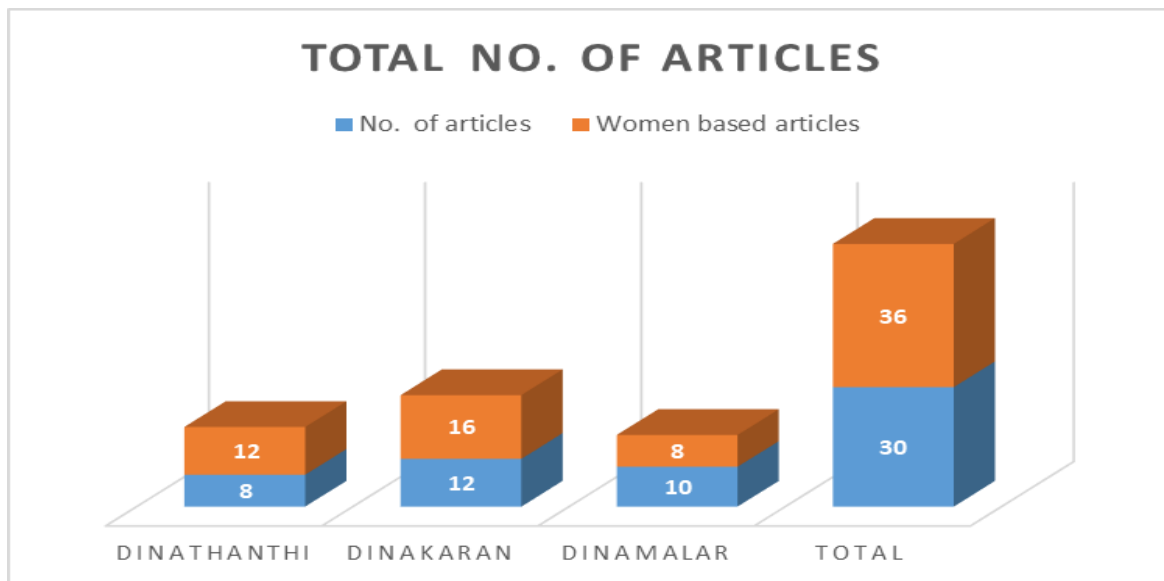


Figure 1

Table 1 and figure 1 shows that, Dinakaran (12) had more number of articles than Dinamalar (10) and Dinathanthi (8). Dinakaran also had more number of women based articles in comparison to Dinathanthi and Dinamalar.

Table 2: Articles by Story Type

Newspapers	Dinathanthi	Dinakaran	Dinamalar	Total
News	8	12	10	30
Features	5	4	3	12
Letters to the editor	4	8	2	14
Editorial	3	4	3	10

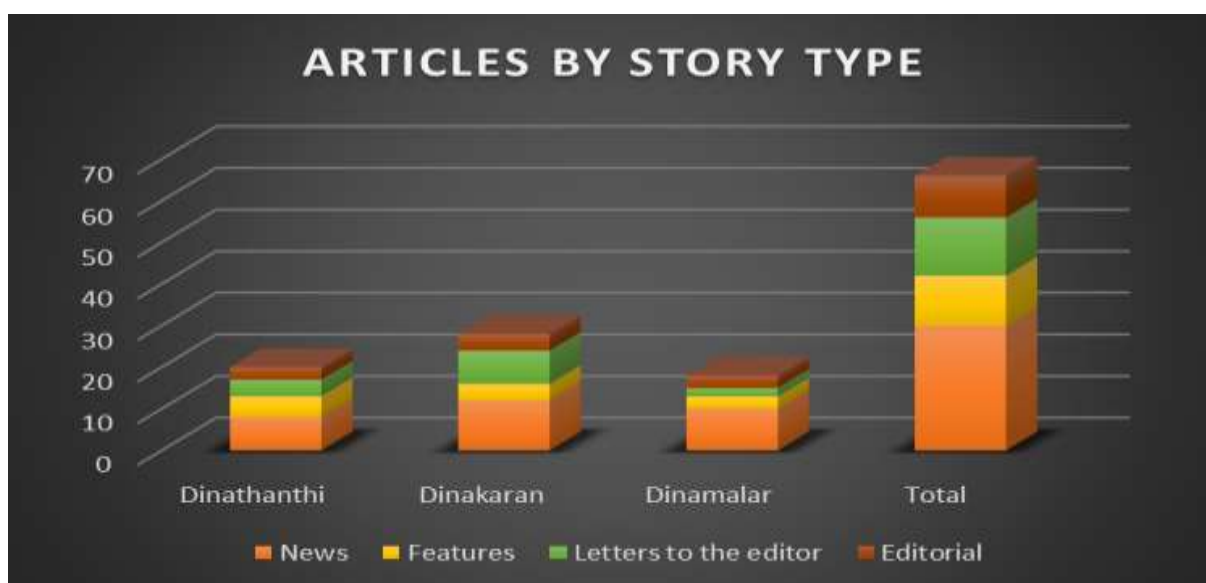


Figure 2

Table 2 and figure 2 shows that, Dinakaran (12) had more news articles than Dinamalar (10) and Dinathanthi (8). Features were higher in Dinathanthi (5) followed by Dinakaran (4) and Dinamalar (3). Letters to the editor and Editorials were higher in Dinakaran.

Table 3: Articles by Length

Newspapers	Dinathanthi	Dinakaran	Dinamalar	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

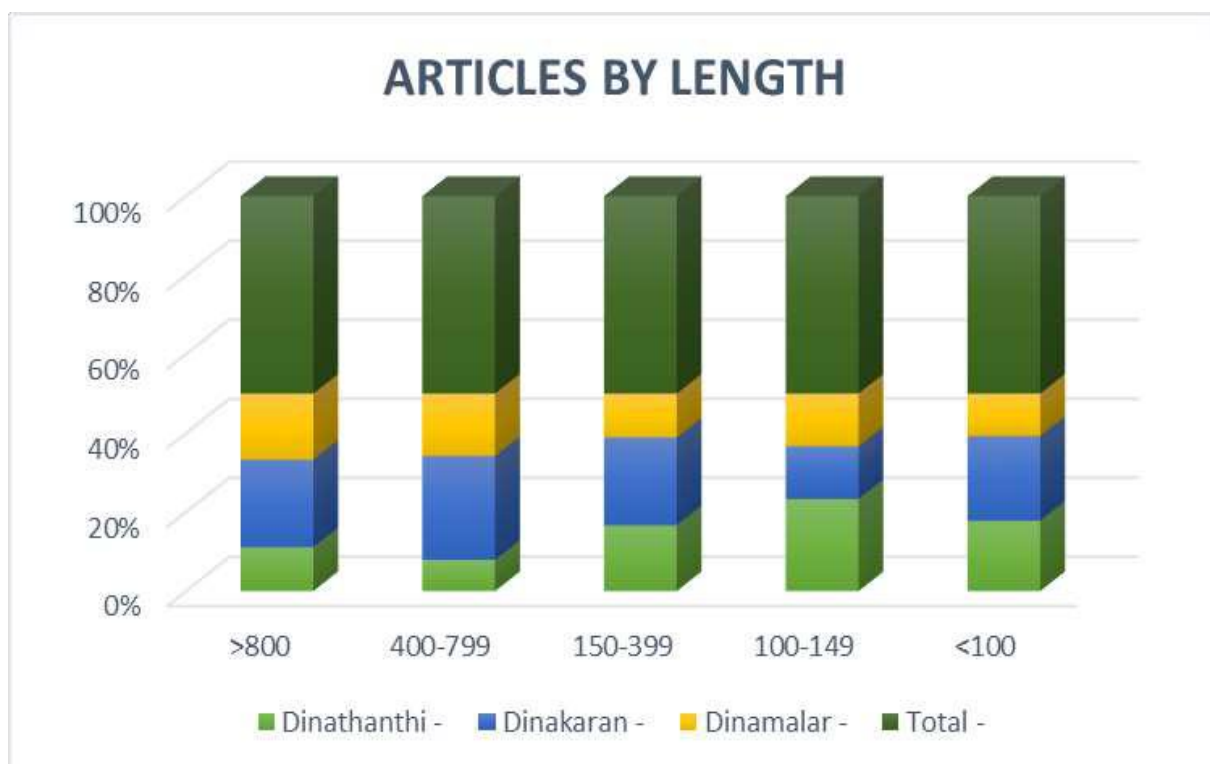


Figure 3

Table 3 and figure 3 shows that Dinakaran (4) followed by Dinamalar (3) and Dinathanthi (2) which were more than 800 words in length. Dinakaran had more articles which were 400-799 words in length (10) over Dinamalar and Dinathanthi. Dinathanthi had more articles which were 100-149 words in length. Dinakaran had more articles which were less than 100 words in length.

Table 4: Tone of the Headline

Tone of News Headline	Dinathanthi	Dinakaran	Dinamalar	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, Dinathanthi (5) had more sensational headlines over Dinamalar (3) and Dinakaran (2). Dinamalar (8) had more tititing headlines over Dinakaran (6) and Dinathanthi (2). Dinakaran had more trivializing headlines (8) over Dinathanthi (6) and Dinamalar (2). Dinakaran had more exaggerrated headlines (12) in comparision with Dinathanthi (7) and Dinamalar (5).

Table 5: Tone of the Lead

Tone of Lead	Dinathanthi	Dinakaran	Dinamalar	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

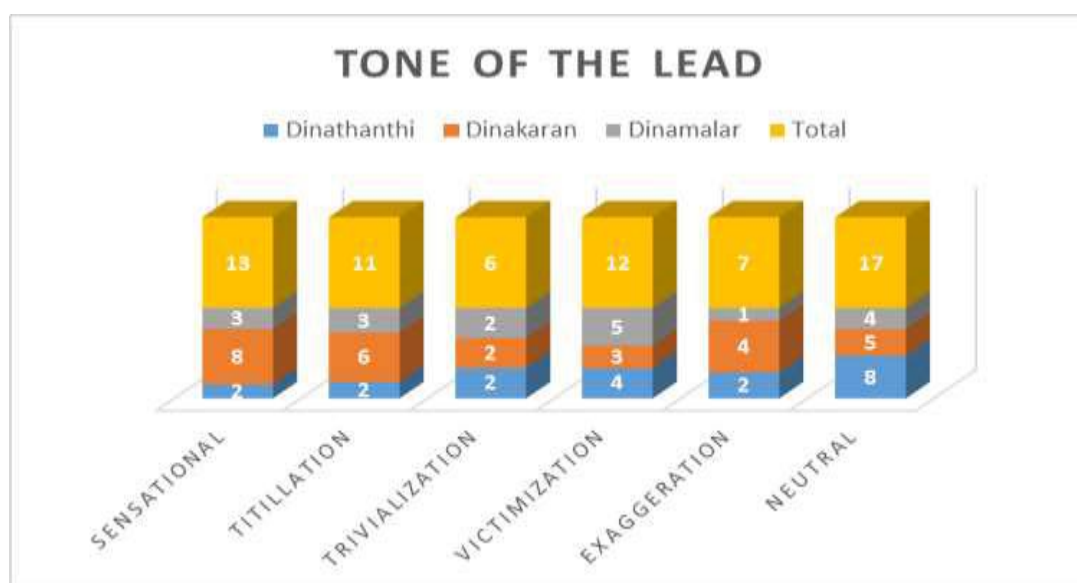


Figure 5

Table 5 and figure 5 shows that, Dinakaran (8) had more sensational leads over Dinamalar (3) and Dinathanthi (2). Dinakaran (6) had more titilating leads over Dinamalar (3) and Dinathanthi. There were more victimizing leads in

Dinamalar (5) over Dinathanthi (4) and Dinakaran (3). Dinakaran (4) had more exaggerrative leads over Dinathanthi (2) and Dinamalar (1). Dinathanthi had more neutral leads (8) over Dinakaran (5) and Dinamalar (4).

6. 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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