

The Role Of Mass Media In Creating Awareness On Female Sexual Assault

J. Deepa

Dept. of Visual Comm, Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies (VISTAS), Chennai

*Corresponding Author: Jeyaramandeepa3@gmail.com

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Abstract: The research paper analyses the sexual violence against women in Tamil Nadu. India seemed to display a contradictory picture with on the one hand, a fast growing economy and progressive indicators of development, but on the other hand portrayed as a country with increasing reports on sexual violence against women and problems with gender inequality. The objective of this study was to try to gain a deeper understanding and reflect upon underlying factors of increased reporting of sexual violence in India especially in Tamil Nadu, and to understand in what way the modernization process possibly could be put in relation to the increased reporting of sexual violence, something that was analysed with help from Durkheim's theory of anomie. The analysis above suggests that, far from contributing to the discussion and understanding on the structural conditions of violence against women and girls, traditional and new media normalise it. By doing so, media promote gender-based violence. This is why media are currently part of the problem rather than the solution to stopping violence against women. The growth of gender-based violence shows its mechanisms are more sophisticated than they were in the past, as are the forms of representing it in media content. There is a large negotiation across the world that offence against women is frequently failed to report. The report says for every twenty minutes, a woman undergoes sexual assault. There is also a belief that the reported crime data against women is twisted. According to Tamil Nadu police, the consciousness in the midst of women has improved that they confront to file complaints.

Keywords— Gender and Violence, sexual harrasment, media portrayal, discrimination, women and gender inequality

I. INTRODUCTION

India is a developing country which has shown tremendous growth in terms of economy and always has positive and progressive indicators in terms of human development index. Majority of the states in India fare well in the HDI index. However there has been instances of sexual violence that is reported across various parts of the country. You could see that the above mentioned statements contradict each other. So this creates a necessity to prove the above mentioned statements and how we look at the problems in the either way.

The objective of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of some of the underlying factors of increased reporting of sexual violence in India, especially in the state of Tamil Nadu and to understand in what way the media has given its hand in cracking these glitches.

Importance of the research

This topic has been a less spoken topic around the world and the study available to research is limited. This research can be an eye opener to the problem faced by women. This

study can be relevant to the problem around the world and addressed to multiple audience.

After all, to eradicate the crime is realistically not possible, though knowing more about the underlying factors on why it occurs and about the increases in reports in India is significant in order to decrease it.

This research paper is organised into five sections. The introduction section discusses the basic aim and objectives of this research work. Also it discusses the importance of the research. The review of literature section discusses the related research problems and solutions. The research methodology is discussed in the part III. The section IV elaborates the research findings, and output. The conclusion for the research is described in the part V.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Agenda-setting theory fits the research to know the pervasive role of the media.

Bernburg (2002:729) writes that, the interest to write about crime and deviant behavior using the perspective of anomie has increased the last decade. Using the concept of anomie

in this study seem to be an appropriate tool to describe the social phenomenon of sexual violence against women in a changing society like India, also because deviant behavior is commonly described to be a factor for rape.

The study will interpret the concept of anomie and use it in one of the research questions and, based on that it also becomes a tool in the analysis part to try to understand if the 'modernization' process can have contributed to create a state of anomie in the society which people react upon; in this case causing increased reporting of sexual violence. Anomie can therefore be seen as both a cause and a consequence, as anomie and its conditions for it to emerge as a consequence of social development which can cause social norm break down in the society then can affect people negatively and leading to violence.

Jonathan derby, (June 15, 2013 The Hindu supports that more victims and their families overcame the pressure to keep quiet about sexual abuse. They preferred justice to silence. The media plays a powerful role in changing this culture of silence towards sexual abuse. For example, the media's focused coverage on the rape and eventual murder of the 23 year-old physiotherapy student on December 16, 2012 keyed massive public outcries, which pressured the government to strengthen sexual assault laws. As a result, the government enacted the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, which broadens the definition of rape, increases protection for rape victims and makes punishments harsher. In the same way, if the media responsibly highlights the wrongs of sexual assault and the importance of acknowledging that it occurred, more victims will be encouraged to demand justice.

J Jayalalithaa, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, says in Deccan herald on Tuesday 29 September 2015, that they will execute the plan of installing CCTV in vital public places and buildings as it favours in reducing sexual harassment against women and catching the culprits. Varun Kapoor (2013), postulates that the Police authorities and media can also play an important role in sensitizing the women about their rights and the remedies available to them. The state shall regulate the working of police officials in dealing with offences relating to women. Thought the state and state authorities have been making sincere efforts to implement measures to provide a safe environment to the women in society, but the evil practice still persists and corrupts the social harmony. It is also very important to empower women through law reform and social change so that there is a sense of security.

Ritu Srivastava (APC) 2014 elucidates that the media has catalysed anger among citizens and civil society groups. Following the death of the victim on the Saturday 29, December 2012, the continuous coverage of the spontaneous

protests all over the country by print and electronic media has created a momentum within society and government to focus on criminal acts and take immediate steps towards preventing such brutal crimes. She also extends that If Facebook is calling for the mass-movements, then Twitter is witnessing moment by moment reports by protestors. Twitter, which has approx 16 million users in India, has been abuzz with news of the protests

She concludes by saying that the continued efforts of media and social media have created a kind of atmosphere compelling the authorities to focus on fast process against sexual cases. Cause-based social movements need such efforts, support from media journalists, online protestors including bloggers, tweet-geekers, individuals, students, and all citizens who are outraged by the violence and experienced such crimes in their lives.

In "REPRESENT Project" (May 6, 2013) a national, multi-platform forum designed to improve media representations of women, says that media-makers have an important role to play, in shaping our understanding of sexual assault, and so do media consumers.

Sashi Kumar (Dec 27, 2013) trustee, Media Development Foundation, at a public forum on the fight against sexual crimes against women, organised by The Hindu, at Ethiraj College for Women, Chennai elucidated that media has played a crucial role in highlighting the crime in Delhi, and it has also fed into the problem. He also added up that media and films have unfortunately created archetypes and cultural stereotypes, and there should be a massive campaign to create an emergency consciousness about the situation.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction:

This chapter expounds the universe and the sample of the study. The details of the sampling procedure used in this study, distribution of sample units, the unit of analysis and the instrument of data collection are presented in this chapter. It also includes procedures followed to collect data and interpretation.

Universe:

The Universe of this study is the college going boys and Girls (youth) of both Arts and Science and Engineering colleges in Tamilnadu. The sample was chosen from 12 colleges in Tamilnadu, four colleges from each District (Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore and Chennai).

Reason for selecting the districts:

This district is purposefully chosen for this research. Chennai is a Cosmopolitan city. The life style of the people there creates lots of openings for the crime makers to make a crime. Also the students of Chennai, Coimbatore and

Trichy colleges as belonging to cities will have more exposure to media messages, so that it would be easy for tapping the ideas based on this research.

Size of the sample:

The Size of the Sample of this study is 600. College going Boys and Girls in second year were selected for and the colleges to which they belong are situated in all parts of the cities ensuring a good representation of the cases.

Sampling procedure:

The colleges, the number of students, their department and the year to which they belong were selected using Non-Probabilistic sampling procedure. Selection of the cities was done using purposive sampling procedure. It was decided to collect data from twelve colleges totally from three cities. Four colleges were selected from each city in which two were Arts and Science colleges and two were Engineering Colleges.

Sample:

The sample for this study was selected from the under graduate students of regular mode streams in Trichy, Coimbatore and Chennai. The sample was drawn from both general arts and science groups and also from professional engineering stream. four colleges from each city were selected for this study based on the convenience of access and possibility of receiving consent.

For this study sample was drawn from the second year students of department of computer Science in the arts and science colleges and from the second year students of the department of ECE in engineering colleges.

The total sample 600 was equally divided into three, so that 200 samples from each city were taken .In each city 200 samples were equally divided into two so that 100 samples were collected from 2 arts and science colleges and the other 100 samples were collected from 2 engineering colleges respectively. In Each college 50 samples were collected which included 25 boys and 25 girls.

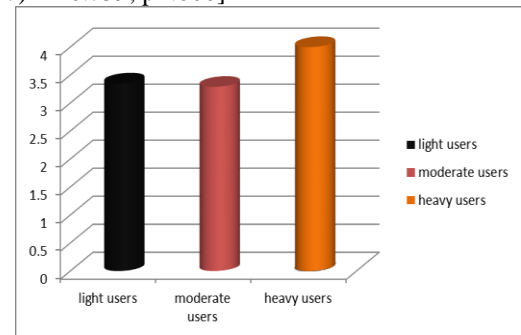
Statistical tool:

The collected questionnaires were tabulated and evaluated using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).The analysis was done employing frequency test, cross tab, correlation, t-test and ANOVA. For some analysis few variables were recorded.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Media induces violence on women the respondents of heavy users (M = 4.00) believe that “Media induces violence on women “which is significantly more than the respondents of,

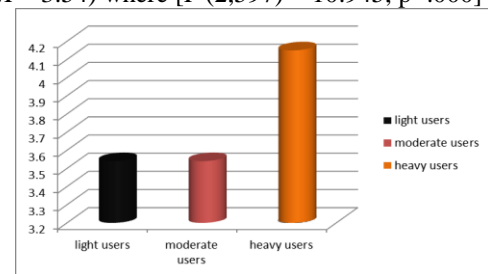
light users (M = 3.35), and moderate users (M = 3.26) where [F (2,597) = 10.759, p=.000]



Result of post- hoc Tukey test with ‘New media access ‘as independent variable and ‘Media induces violence on women’ as dependent variable.

Strong punishment is correct

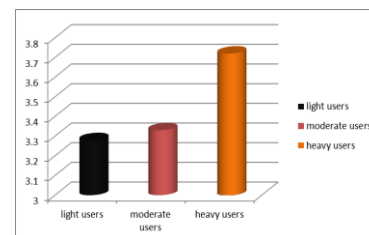
The respondents of heavy users (M = 4.15) believe that “Strong punishment is correct “which is significantly more than the respondents of, light users (M = 3.54), and moderate users (M = 3.54) where [F (2,597) = 10.945, p=.000]



Result of post- hoc Tukey test with ‘New media access ‘as independent variable and ‘Strong punishment is correct’ as dependent variable.

Participate in events on female sexual assault

The respondents of heavy users (M = 3.72) believe that “Participate in events on female sexual assault “which is significantly more than the respondents of, moderate users (M = 3.33), and light users (M = 3.28) where [F (2,597) = 9.272, p=.000]



Result of post- hoc Turkey test with ‘New media access ‘as independent variable and

‘Participate in events on female sexual assault’ as dependent variable

The study elucidates that more than half of the participants are heavy users which shows that the internet has become the main stream of media which has become a part of daily life for the students. There are also light users (25%) who use them occasionally because of lack of interest and lack of gadgets supporting internet. More than half of the participants (56.8%) regularly or very regularly use internet for social networking like WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter etc., which indicates the wide use of internet for social networking and the active participation of the students in social networking. Only those who share their ideas on social media networks most often (170) assuredly participate in events on female sexual assault like rally, meetings and counselling. More than half of the total, often and most often share their ideas on social media networks in which the students of arts are more in number for the reason that more than the engineering students the subject burden is less and they get more leisure time. This facilitates them to use the social media networks more

V. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The collected data was compiled from the material which was gathered from the secondary sources with which the study was made. It is important when relying on secondary sources to keep in mind that all research come with its own pre-understanding as well as potential biases, otherwise it can become a limitation if taking everything as the truth. The literature available for the study is limited. . Reporting of sexual violence in many districts of Tamil Nadu is limited. There are very few cases registered on sexual violence. In most of the cases the case is either withdrawn on a later stage nor the details available on the crime is very less. This happens mainly citing privacy reasons of the individual.

Therefore it is important to look at original sources for these arguments. If authors are referring to national crime reports then go back and check primary data. On the other side of this issue, rapes reported are often higher than unreported cases, due to stigma, fear and humiliation concerning such a crime (Sen, 1998:135; De Vylder, 2010:108).

VI. CONCLUSION

This research has concluded that there is a significant level of gender-based violence development exists in Tamil Nadu. Also, it shows the wide gap between the media contents and women's rights. It shows the needed responsibility and communication strategy to eliminate the violence against women and girls. There is a strong need exist in the legislative power to punish the criminals. Media act as a communicative element in the gender-based problem. It can be used as a powerful tool to eliminate the social problem. According to the right to information and communication law, everyone have the equal right to express themselves.

This legislative power is not equally applied and used in the male dominated media field. Till now women are not given equal rights to express themselves in the dominated world. The registration of cases and the reporting data is not adequate in the state of Tamil Nadu. Many criminals escape due to the gap exist in the law which requires strong proof. Many victims are not reporting due to the fear and social injustice present in the male dominated society

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Authors Profile

J. Deepa holds Master of Philosophy in Media and Communication from Bharathidasan University. She Has completed her MSc in Holy cross college (Bharathidassn Unviersity) in 2012. Her research areas are are Gender, Media and Viloence, Investigative and yellow Journalism.

