

Description of women in print media in Tamil Nadu: Analysis on the coverage of women based news by regional newspapers

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Abstract: India, has 58,64,69,174 women according to the 2011 census. In such a vast country, it is imperative to know about what kind of coverage is given to women in media outlets. Stereotypes are created among the masses because of the portrayal and coverage. It is imperative to know what kind of news that is portrayed by the print media as print media has wider audience across the country. Newspapers were consider to be very important entity among all the communication media in terms of development, so obviously Print media being the National Media and much authentic mass media, with massive reach to maximum masses in the country with readers of all age groups, it is really expected to be effectively responsible in the development and progress of Women and nation in all its aspects. In such important phase, it is really necessary to undergo a research study to understand the significance of how media is portraying women in the newspapers which is being circulated to the wide readers of the Nation. This Research study is effectively intended to understand, the portrayal and significance given to women in the print media in Tamilnadu, by analyzing various Regional Newspapers using suitable variables and parameters.

Key Words: Print Media. women based news. Coverage. regional newspapers.

I. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Role and function of Media

The role of the media, the Fourth Estate, as an influence of public opinion has always been recognized by governments. Media freedom is generally accepted as a corner stone of modern democratic society. However there is also an acute awareness that the media should be responsible in what and how it reports and also clearly distinguish disseminating information from analysis and opinions. There is also considerable awareness that the media should be responsible in what and how it reports, and how it ought to distinguish between giving information and editorializing. (Bhama Devi Ravi, *The Hindu*, 2014). Newspapers attempt to provide the facts and analysis that allows informed citizens to make effective and responsible decision in a complex, information-saturated society. The role of newspapers has evolved in response to the changing needs of their readers and is currently going through a softening of news in reaction to other media's coverage of lifestyle, entertainment and so on.

(Dr. Malik Zahra Khalid, Dr. Aaliya Ahmed, 2014)

Vajpayee (*The Times of India*, 2000) says newspapers were destined to play a crucial role in shaping ideas and sensibilities and that the press should undertake this responsibility with a sense of mission. He says that a newspaper was not an assembly-line-production or a factory made commodity. There cannot be an alternative to a well-planned managerial strategy. The press should inform, provoke debate, and even entertain. But it should refrain from distorting facts or sensationalizing events to attract readership. Restraint is needed while reporting sensitive incidents. While, zealously guarding facts, a newspaper should have an imprint of ideas on the conscience of its readers. Such deeply- embedded ideas will inspire people to meet a crisis situation. Pointing out that language newspaper has greater and more variegated role to play, Vajpayee says the responsibility of the media is commensurate with its larger role in the socio-political milieu of the country.

The role of press in society advanced by the pro-government campaign is summarized as follows;

- a) The advocacy of a cooperative role for the press in nation building and national development.
- b) The role of the press as a catalyst for social and political change and
- c) The duty of the press to
 - i) Educate instead of merely entertaining.

- ii) Maintaining social stability and racial harmony.
- iii) Aid in economic development and nation building.

The press in developing countries, therefore, serves a multiplicity of purposes.

It is a medium of news, the source of information about world, national and local events and means of establishing mutual understanding. It is an instrument of education, contributing to the development of human resources and capital in promoting economic growth. It is a multiplier in the communication process, spreading widely and rapidly information which will aid national development (*Sommerland, 1981*). Academic American Encyclopedia (1989: 171) describes newspaper in a broad sense as “an unbound publication issued at regular intervals that seeks to inform, analyze, influence and entertain”.

A newspaper is a vehicle for transmitting news and ideas. The design is an integral part of that process. Every newspaper must be quite clear about its own role, its own priorities between news in depth, comment, interpretation and fun. (*Dr. Malik Zahra Khalid, Dr. Aaliya Ahmed, 2014*)

1.2 Media & Youngsters :

According to Research study done by *Susan Gigli, InterMedia Survey Institute, for UNICEF* in the topic *Children, Youth and Media Around the World* explains that, In many countries print media have experienced a setback from the role they once played. Several recent developments have served to further decrease the numbers of young readers of print media. In part, this is a result of the improved quantity and quality of information available from television and radio. In industrialized countries, young people are distracted by numerous media choices and technologies. In poorer countries, few youth-oriented publications exist and those that do often have limited circulation or are too expensive for most youth to afford. In the former Soviet bloc countries, youth press once played a fairly vibrant role and received significant government backing. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, however, youth press has largely disappeared and has not been replaced by a regular alternative forum for young people. Starting in the early 1990s, newspaper readership levels declined sharply throughout the region, especially in those countries experiencing the greatest economic difficulties. Many publications folded without government subsidies and could not attract sufficient advertisers or subscribers. Those that did survive had to raise their prices, making them unaffordable for many. Lastly, the distribution system was so badly weakened in many countries that it is now common for newspapers and magazines to arrive in rural areas weeks and months late, if at all. The publications in strongest demand among young people are those that appeal to their specialized interests—comic books and popular specialized magazines on computers, fashion, sports, science, business and music. Many are high quality, with slick and appealing content that cater to young people’s interests, yet are often too costly for the average young person (or adult). (*Rio de Janeiro, 2004*)

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Recent studies in western countries says press is seen as democratic institution " Why do media matter, and why is journalism important? The literature surrounding normative functions of the press in Western societies sees journalism as a democratic institution. (*Stefan Brambilla Hall, 2012*) as the previous researcher argues Journalism seen as more democratic , so when it comes to country like India, one of the world biggest democratic , the fourth estate media should also expected to be more democratic in delivering information to the masses. Where the most important group in the masses is the youth, who were always called as the pillars of the country, so the importance given by Media towards youngsters , plays a effective role in empowerment and the development of Youth and the nation.

2.1 Impact of Newspaper in Society:

Newspaper Publisher *William Randolph Hearst* once said that, The force of the newspaper is the greatest force in civilization, under republican government, newspapers form and express public opinion. Newspaper really plays a predominant role in society by participating and in construction of society as *Schudson's* argues that ‘newspapers participate in the construction of the mental worlds in which we live’ (2000: 38) And also some studies says , Journalism is able to shape issue agendas, public debate, opinions, identities and social reality (*Fairclough, 1995: 2; Richardson, 2007: 13*)

2.2 Women, Society & Media :

In Research study undergone by *Arpita Sharma* ,in topic *Portrayal of Women in Mass Media* in a journal *Media Watch* she described , During the past decade, advances in information technology have facilitated a global communications network that transcends national boundaries and has an impact on public policy, private attitudes

and behavior, especially of children and young adults. Everywhere the potential exists for the media to make a far greater contribution to the advancement of women. More women are involved in careers in the communications sector, but few have attained positions at the decision-making level or serve on governing boards and bodies that influence media policy. The lack of gender sensitivity in the media is evidenced by the failure to eliminate the gender-based stereotyping that can be found in public and private local, national and international media organizations. The continued projection of negative and degrading images of women in media communications - electronic, print, visual and audio - must be changed.

Print and electronic media in most countries do not provide a balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions to society in a changing world. In addition, violent and degrading or pornographic media products are also negatively affecting women and their participation in society. Programming that reinforces women's traditional roles can be equally limiting. The world- wide trend towards consumerism has created a climate in which advertisements and commercial messages often portray women primarily as consumers and target girls and women of all ages inappropriately.

2.3 Print Media and Women :

In Research study undergone by *Arpita Sharma*, in topic *Portrayal of Women in Mass Media* in a journal *Media Watch she* described, Indian should be proud of having a free and responsible press. An investigating journalist of a leading daily newspaper proved in December '98 that women were sold in Eluru of Andhra Pradesh. The elder of Rajya Sabha were shocked to hear that women were being sold in the market place like cattle even today. Both the Supreme Court judgment on Shah Bano and the Roop Kanwar 'Sati', brought forth a spate of reportage and editorial comments. The heinous act of female infanticide was brought out only through the press. Dowry deaths moved from the confines of the home to the front page. These incidents highlight two major points. One that women are still treated only as commodities that can be sold and bought and thrown away if unwanted a reflection of the damnable discrimination and indignity that women suffer in various parts of the country. Second, it highlights the role of media in making it public, however only a few sensational issues are flashed in the newspaper. Normally, it is lamented place in the newspaper. A few newspapers carry women's page which is again the beauty tips, recipes and fashion syndromes. Most of the women's magazines consistently seek to direct women's energies into narrow channels and to define their concerns, pre-occupations and aspirations within an arbitrarily imposed 'Feminine Frame Work'. Apart from looks and dresses there is stress on development of women's mental faculties and behavior in a way that they can fit into male dominated social structure. In most of the stories in the magazines, women are depicted with the life ambition of getting a right man and keeping him at all cost. A media advocacy group study [1994] on women and Men in News and Current, Affair Programmes found that women are confined to areas traditionally associated with them. Even those women who make news are to be seen in prettified setting, giving their opinion on matters concerning the home and family.

The part of the course that appealed to me most is the area of work. However I feel to address this properly I will have also have to cut across sections on unemployment, education and class, as I believe all are relevant when we discuss youth and work. (*Larry buggy, 2011*)

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To understand the significance provide by regional Print Media towards women and women related issues in Tamil Nadu
- To study and analyze, how women has been portrayed by regional newspapers in Tamil Nadu

IV. METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for this study is Quantitative content analysis. The Analysis is done over two Tamil dailies, one is The Hindu and another one is Dinamalar and their coverage on youth related news in Tamil Nadu for a period of two months Feb 2016 & March 2016 randomly and the analysis as follows

Table 1: Women related News Appeared in the Newspaper

Newspapers	Language	Number of articles	Total Percentage %
The Hindu	Tamil	49	59.7
Dinamalar		33	40.2
Total		82	99.9

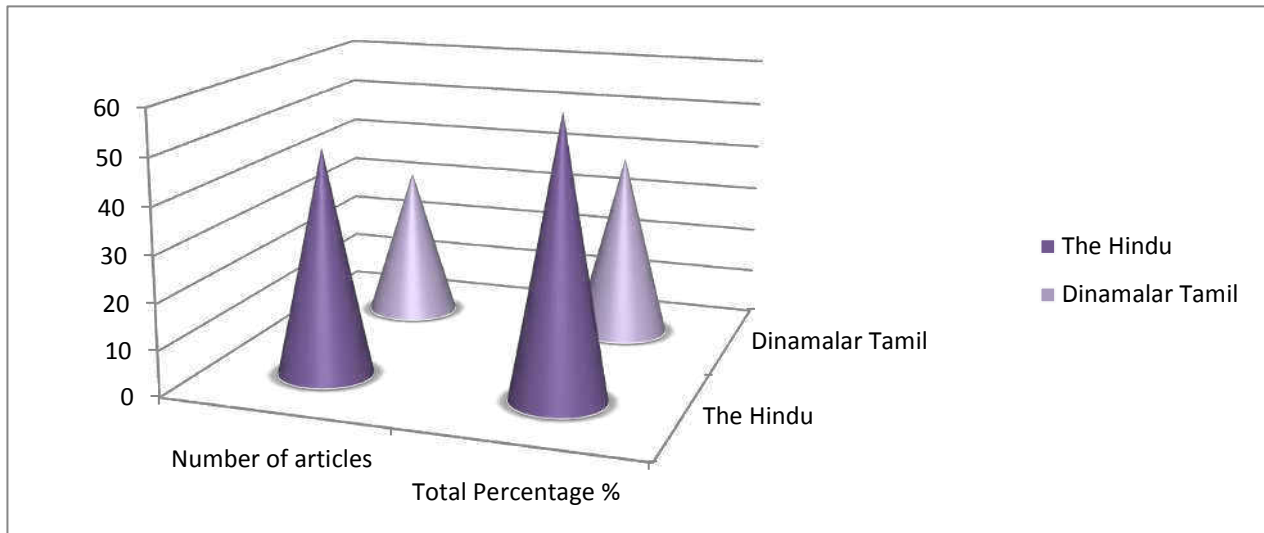


Figure1

From Table 1 and Figure 1 it is identical that more number of women related news are being covered by The Hindu with about 59.7% , and the least amount of news have been covered by Dinamalar of about 40.2% in total

Table 2: Women based News covered in the First page Newspaper

Newspapers	Number of articles	Total Percentage %
The Hindu	13	61.9
Dinamalar	08	38
Total	21	99.9

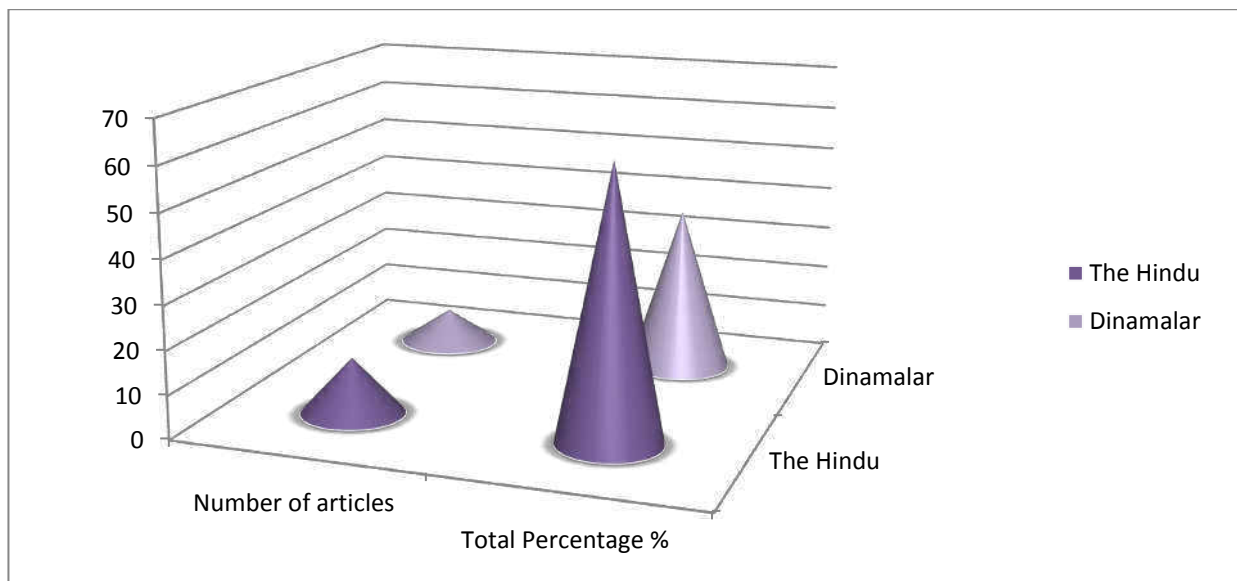


Figure2

Table 2 & Figure 2 provides the details of women based news covered in first page of newspaper, which shows The Hindu has maximum coverage of women related news in first page with 61.9% and Dinamalar has least coverage of front page news of about 38%.

Table 3: Women News in the reader friendly page (Odd Page)

Newspapers	Number of articles	Total Percentage %
The Hindu	26	56.5
Dinamalar	20	43.4
Total	46	100

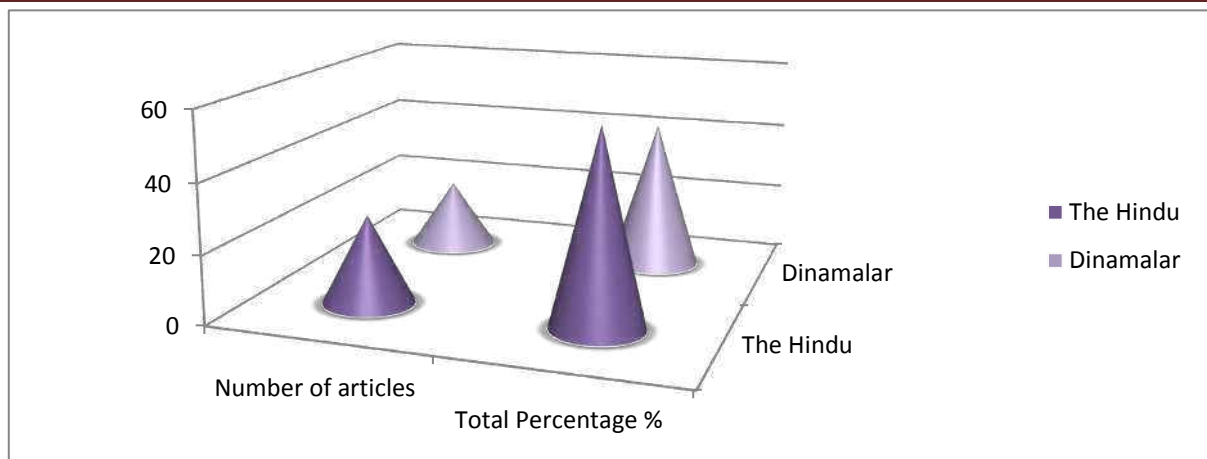


Figure 3

According to Table 3 & Figure 3, The Hindu gives more space for women news in odd page (reader) friendly page with 56.5 %, whereas Dinamalar provides least importance on women news in odd page ,with a coverage of about 43.4 %

Table 4: Types of Women related Articles

Newspapers	The Hindu	Dinamalar	Total	Percentage %
Achievements	8	2	10	12.1
Education	4	5	9	10.1
Culture /tradition	3	1	4	4.87
Sex / Relationship	6	4	10	12.1
Celebrities	12	3	15	18.2
Crime/violence	5	8	13	15.8
Health, Fitness & beauty	3	2	5	6.09
Projects	-	-	-	-
Business / Employment	-	1	1	1.21
Social Service	1	2	3	3.65
Lifestyle / Nightlife	6	3	9	10.9
Matrimony	1	2	3	3.65
Total	49	33	82	99.7

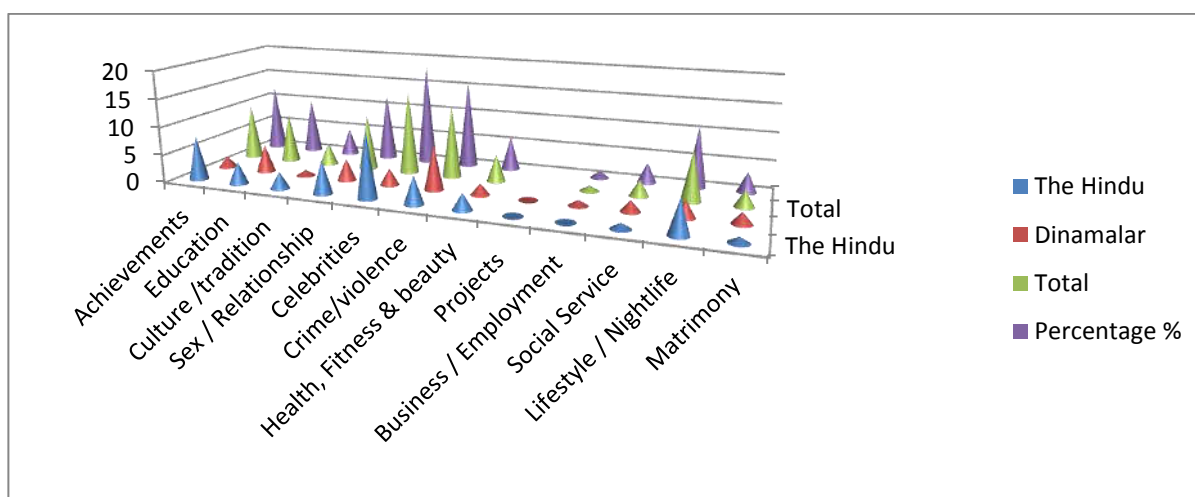
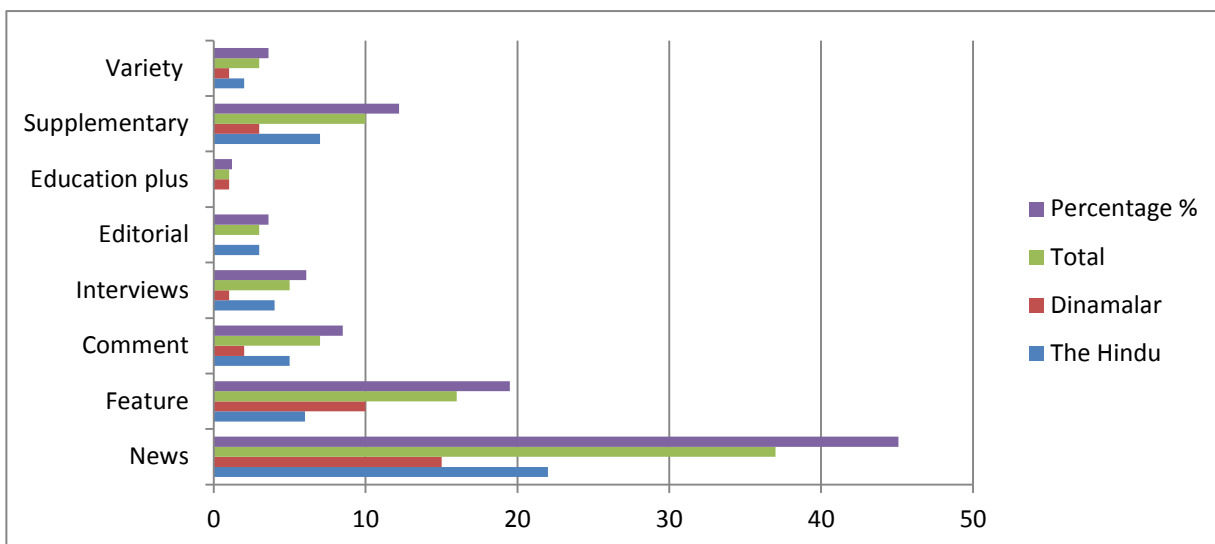


Figure4

Table 4 & Figure 4, helps to understand the different types of news articles related to women ,it reveals that maximum number of women news are based on Achievements with about 12.1 % and women sex/relationship news with about 12.1% the third maximum news are based on women lifestyle/nightlife with 10.9%, followed by lifestyle & Nightlife with 10.9 % Education news of about 10.1 % coverage and the least number of articles are culture /tradition 4.8 % and Business & Employment 1.2 %

Table 5: No of Articles by Story Type

Newspapers	The Hindu	Dinamalar	Total	Percentage %
News	22	15	37	45.1
Feature	6	10	16	19.5
Comment	5	2	7	8.5
Interviews	4	1	5	6.1
Editorial	3	-	3	3.6
Education plus	-	1	1	1.2
Supplementary	7	3	10	12.2
Variety	2	1	3	3.6
Total	49	33	82	99.8



From Table and figure 5, it is identical that, a maximum of 45.1% of women related articles in newspaper are of news type, followed by Feature types articles of about 19.5%, followed by supplementary type articles of about 12.2%.

Table 6: No of Articles By Length

Number of words	The Hindu	Dinamalar	Total	Percentage %
>800	-	-	-	-
400-799	14	8	22	26.8
150-399	9	7	16	19.5
100-149	16	11	27	32.9
<100	10	7	17	20.7
Total	49	33	82	99.9

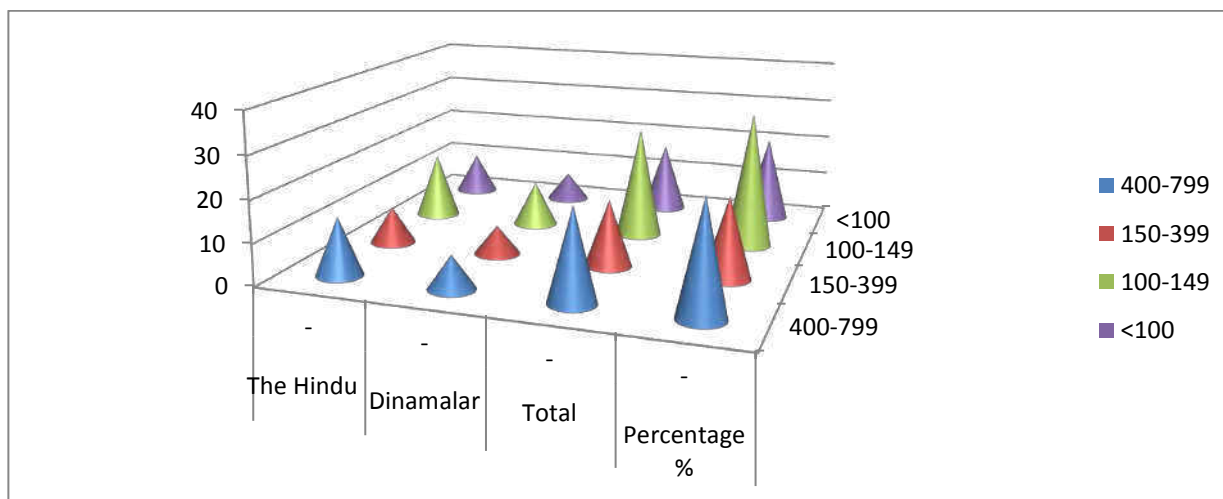


Figure 6

It is evident from table 6 & Figure 6, The Hindu has the most lengthy articles related to women from (400-799), of about 14 articles from total 49 articles, whereas Dinamalar has least lengthy articles of about 11 articles from (100-149) words.

Table 7: Tone of the News Coverage

Tone of News	The Hindu	Dinamalar	Total	Percentage %
Positive	37	24	61	74.3
Negative	12	9	21	25.6
Total	49	33	82	99.9

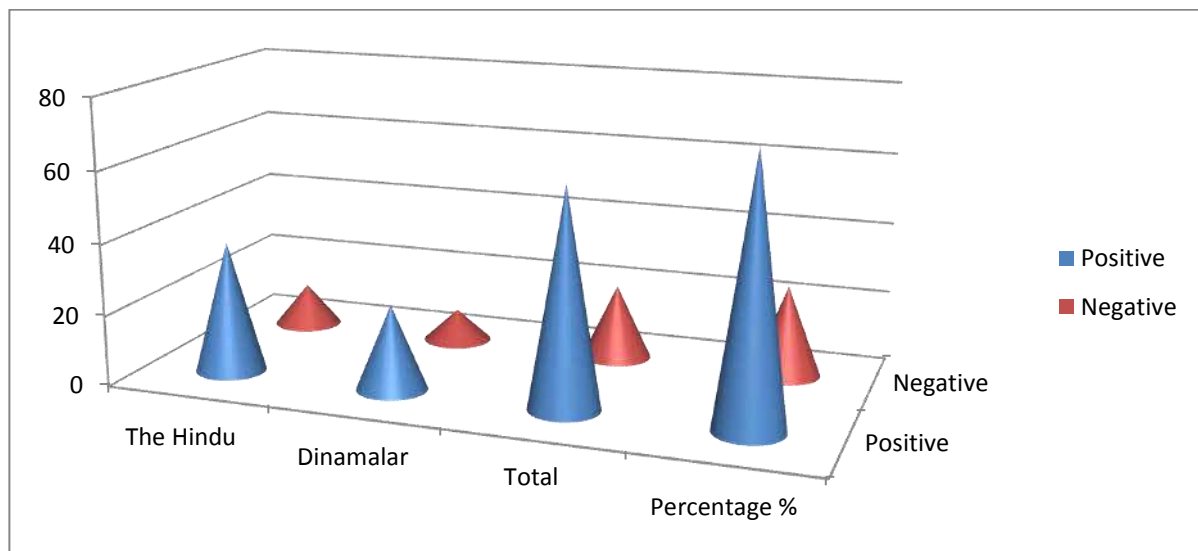


Figure 7

Table 7 & Figure 7, describes the tone of coverage in women based news, the tone of women based news in both the newspapers is highly positive with about 74.3 % and tone of news with negative coverage is about 25.6 %.

Table 8: Tone of the headline

Tone of News headline	The Hindu	Dinamalar	Total	Percentage %
Informative	17	13	30	36.5
Educative	6	2	8	9.7
Titillating	5	6	11	13.6
Sensationalizing	11	6	17	20.5
Motivating	2	3	5	6.1
Criticizing	8	3	11	13.4
Stereotypic	0	0	0	-
Total	49	33	82	99.8

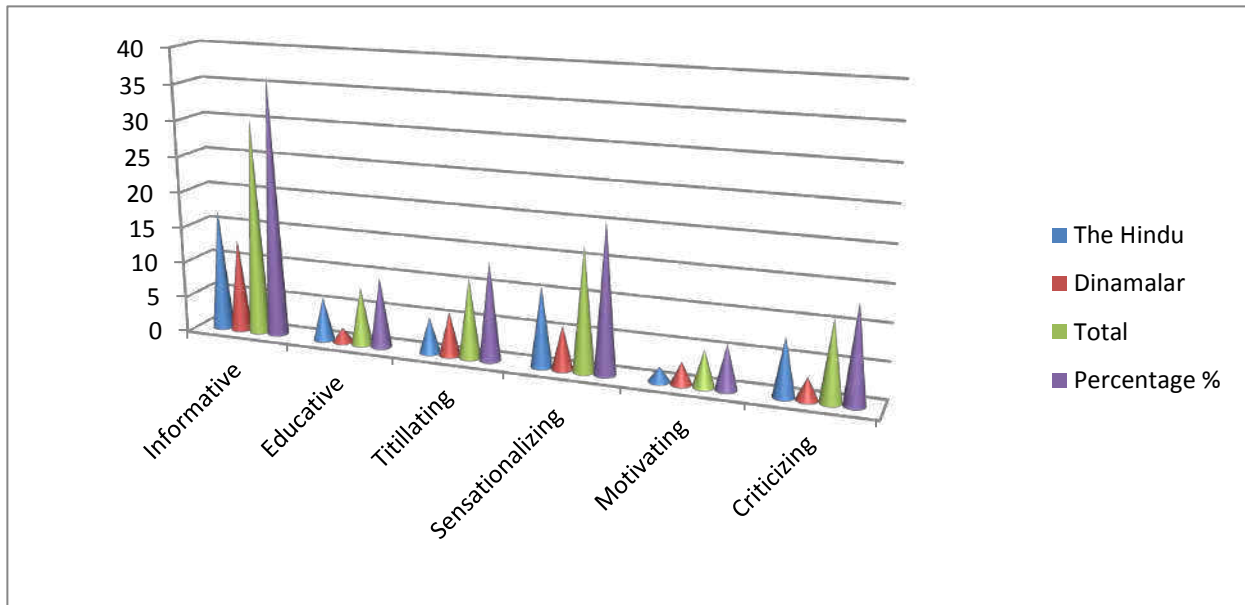


Figure 8

As Table 8, indicates the tone of headline in the women based news, it shows the tone of headline of maximum news are informative with about 36.5 % , the next high number of tone of headline are sensationalizing with 20.5 % , the next maximum tone of headline are titillating with 13.6 % and the least tone of headline were educative and motivating .

Table 9: Number of Pictures & Graphics in Women related News

Newspapers	Pictures	Graphics	Total	Percentage %
The Hindu	18	9	27	52.9
Dinamalar	21	3	24	47
Total	39	12	51	99.9

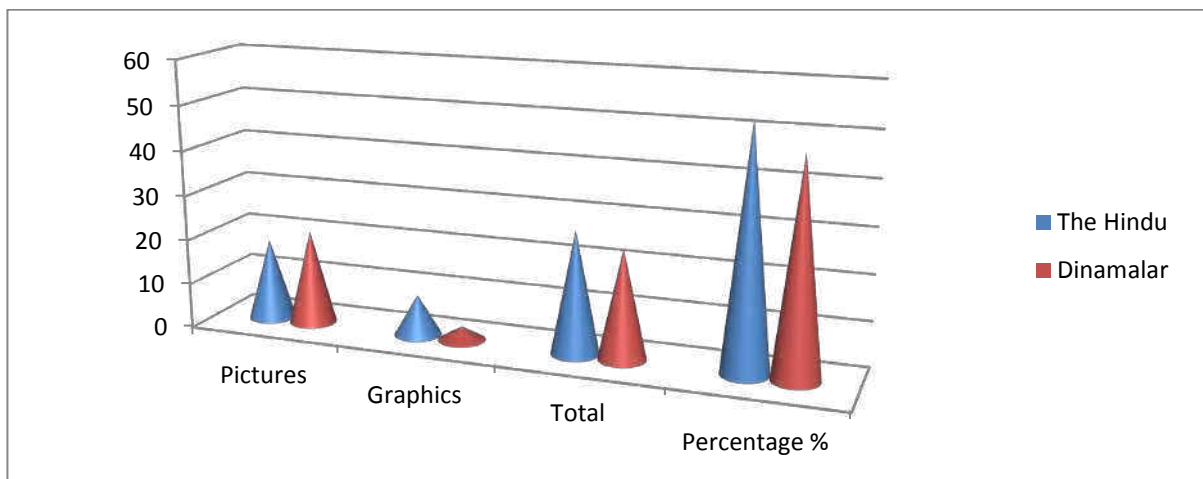


Figure 9

Table 9 & Figure 9 gives the details of the number of pictures and graphics used in women news, it shows, The Hindu uses more number of Pictures & Graphics of about 52.9 % compared to Dinamalar which is about 47 % .

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

- Women related articles appeared, is high in The Hindu newspapers with 59.7 % and about 49 articles about youngsters in the total of 82 articles, provide maximum coverage of news and Dinamalar covered least amount of news about women with 40.2 % and about 33 articles of total coverage (Table 1 & Figure 1)
- It's Basically the first page articles that carries heavy weight age compared to other pages and attracts readers attention comparatively, in such case The Hindu give more news coverage of women in the First

page of about 61.9% when compared to Dinamalar which gave only 38% of first page coverage on women related news, giving less news value for women related news in first page of its newspaper (*Table 2 & Figure 2*)

- Odd pages in newspaper are the one that is described as reader friendly pages, out of the total number of women based articles the Hindu has about 26 articles covered in reader friendly page with about 56.5 %, which states, it gives more space for women in Reader friendly page (odd page) and the Dinamalar has about 43.4 % news coverage, which really seems to provide less space for women in odd page compared to The Hindu. (*Table 3 & Figure 3*)
- The maximum type of women news articles were education type, both The Hindu & Dinamalar covers more on Celebrities with about 18.2% in total, and The Hindu covered 8 Achievements based news articles from 49 total articles, which portrays that women are more academic oriented and Crime and Violence based women news are totally 13 articles with 8 from Dinamalar and 5 from The Hindu, showing newspapers giving more focus on the crime and violence based news among women, the least preferred news coverage is one Business and Employment with 1.1 % coverage (*Table 4 & Figure 4*)
- 45.1% of women related articles covered by both the newspaper were of news type, in which maximum of 22 articles in the total of 82 articles were covered by The Hindu which is maximum news type, Dinamalar and The Hindu attempts to cover women related news in different types like, news, feature, comment, interviews, etc (*Table 5*)
- The length of the news article tells us how deeper and informative the news is covered and portrayed to reader, The Hindu has more lengthy articles with words about 400-799, providing women related news more description, The Hindu and Dinamalar has 17 articles which are less than 100 words, provide news more like snippets, instead of detail explanation (*Table 6 & Figure 6*)
- The tone of news coverage by both the newspapers were highly positive with 74.3 %, seems both newspaper attempts to portray women related news more positively (*Table 7 & Figure 7*)
- The tone of headline of news articles were mostly informative, by both the newspaper with 36.5%, were most often newspapers wishes to deliver youth news just as piece of information, 20.5 % news headline were Sensationalizing, 13.6% headlines were Titillating in nature (*Table 8*)
- Pictures and Graphics has more values to news, more than bold headlines, pictures and graphics are the one that really and quickly gather reader attention and curiosity, So the usage of pictures and graphics plays vital role in news coverage, in such aspect The Hindu has used more number of picture & graphics with about 52.9 %, to attract readers towards women news, and Dinamalar comparatively attempts less to attract readers on news based on women, comparatively using less picture & graphics with about 47 % (*Table 9 & Figure 9*)

FINDINGS:

- The Tamil daily The Hindu give more importance to women by providing a maximum coverage of women related news with 59.7 % and Dinamalar show less importance on Women comparatively with a coverage of about 40.2 % (*Table 1 & Figure 1*)
- The Hindu provides maximum news coverage on women and it also gives more importance for women in First page coverage 61.9 %, elevating more news value for women in front page, comparing to Dinamalar (*Table 2 & Figure 2*)
- In total of articles 10 articles by The Hindu and Dinamalar on women were completely based on Achievements and Sex & Relationships, regarding Lifestyle and Celebrities based news The Hindu shows more coverage with 12 and 6 articles on each, both newspapers didn't give importance to entrepreneurial & business aspects of women, which is highly essential to this generation women for their growth and also Nation's development. (*Table 4 & Figure 4*)
- In both the newspapers, the total news articles were 82, in which 37 articles with about 45.1 % were completely news type, means maximum number of coverage were given just as news, which shows these Print media didn't attempt to provide more information regarding youth than usual news. (*Table 5*)
- The Hindu has attempts to give detailed coverage on women with about 14 articles with words (400-799),

providing more information regarding women and maximum number of articles in Dinamalar were less in words, 11 articles (100-149), 7 articles (<100), seems to allot less column for women in media coverage (Table 6 & Figure 6)

- The satisfactory factor in coverage of both the newspapers is, the portrayal of women in these print media were less negative 25.6 % and even if there are negative news of women like (crime, violence, sex, etc), those news were just covered as general news, among both the newspaper more than objectifying women with reference to, so the portrayal of women in these Regional print media is relatively positive with 74.3 % (Table 7)

CONCLUSION:

Mass media plays a vital part in the growth of the Nation & women empowerment. In such aspects the importance given by print media towards women, depends on the news coverage of media in all women related information & issues. India's population is occupied equally by women, were the most influential tool of the country is media, so the media should look through and provide vital support for women in terms of safety, justice, development & empowerment.

According to the study the Tamil Daily of The Hindu gives importance for women in its newspaper by providing more number of news related to women in various aspects, making people frequently informed about the activities and issues of women, but disadvantage is most of the news were like snippets form, less in description, and Dinamalar has less number of news in description nature. The Hindu gives more significance to the different aspects of women on Achievements, Crime and Violence and lifestyle covering a wider aspects of women based news, Where Dinamalar attempts to promote wide variety of parameters like education, health, fitness, awareness, lifestyle, there by portraying women involvement in all different aspects of social life. Both the newspaper Dinamalar and The Hindu failed to provide importance on Business aspects of women, the news coverage of women related to business /employment seems very less, which is actually very essential for today's generation, since research studies says that Indians are lacking confidence in Entrepreneurship /business parameters, So print media could show more involvement in such aspects. And one major factor is that both the newspaper attempted to portray women in Tamil Nadu in positive way, negative news were moderate in number related to women in these newspapers, concluding that print media The Hindu & Dinamalar in region of Tamil Nadu serves adequately providing news value & importance to women, but to a major development process and empowerment factor involvement of Print Media in respect to women is expected in surplus.

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