

**MEDIA AND RAPE CULTURE: A Case Study Analysis about the Portrayal
of Rape Cases in Media.**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation **Media and Rape Culture: A Case Study Analysis about the Portrayal of Rape Cases in Media.**, a record of studies carried out by, Abhirami.S, Athul MS, Bijna AA, Kavya Prakash, OchaiPaulina Ene , Shilpa Sheeja raj Hari at the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Sree Narayana College, Kollam, under my guidance and submitted to the University of Kerala in partial fulfilment of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts. First Degree Programme in Mass Communication, Journalism and Video Production under CBCS System.

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DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the dissertation entitled is **Media and Rape Culture: A Case Study Analysis about the Portrayal of Rape Cases in Media** is a record of research work carried out by us at the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Sree Narayana College Kollam, under the guidance of Mr. Vaishnav.V.S and submitted to the University of Kerala in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts, First Degree Program in Mass Communication Journalism and Video Production under CBCSS system.

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to understand narratives of sexual crimes that are anchored within different medias and rape culture that prevails within the Indian society. This project is a qualitative analysis of sexual crimes reporting styles followed by medias, sensationalism in crime reporting against women and the caste influence on the reports.

Crimes against women are on rise in our country for many years. Media has the power to influence the mind-set of the society and how they report rape case control how society comprehends the issue. The rape culture is a sociological concept that normalises sexual violence's against women. The media plays a very important function of speeding up the judicial proceedings in cases that otherwise goes unnoticed by the public and in turn causes the failure of justice.

In this research we examined certain factors regarding sensationalism of news content using the caste angle bias to the news reports and also found out how Media supports the rape culture through content analysis.

Keywords: Media and Women, Rape Culture, Sensationalism, Caste angle, objectification, perpetrators , victimization

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INTRODUCTION

1.Introduction

The media in India functions as a fourth estate has an important role in giving out information to the open society. It reflects how a person views a certain issue irrespective of the cultural and regional background. From the advent of media to the present popularity it has on the society make their relationship with the audience a very complicated one. The way the media perceives a story and how they present the same to the audience impact the minds of the people. From opposing the social injustice to current scenarios of malpractice to narrow business strategies have downgraded the worth of the contents given out leading to less maintenance of ethical standards in the field. Likewise the reportage of cases related to women also seems to have a dramatic and negative appearance in publications. When women are fighting their ways to make their lives better they are facing issues which are both physically and mentally traumatizing and when the public information tool takes a toll on their vulnerability it worsens the situation .

In this research, the data collected were considerable news stories that spanned a prolonged period 2010 to 2021. Major focus were directed to some recent articles in 2018 to 2021 and did content analysis .

1.1 An Indian perspective

Rape is any form of unlawful sexual activity or intercourse which is carried out forcefully against a person without the person's approval or consent. The United States Department of Justice (2012) defined rape as "penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object or oral penetration by sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim". In most cases, the victim is threatened and then forced to comply for fears of losing their lives.

Rape culture on the other hand is a sociological setting that normalizes rape based on gender and sexuality. Behaviours such as victim blaming, slut-shaming, denial of widespread rape, refusing to acknowledge the harms caused by this sexual violence make up the entirety of rape culture. Characteristics such as sexual orientation, disability

Rape culture is a social environment that allows the justification and normalization of sexual violence, caused by persistent gender inequality and attitudes about gender and sexuality (UN Women, 2019). Characteristics such as sexual orientation, disability status or ethnicity, and some contextual factors, increase women's vulnerability to sexual violence.

It is widely known that there is an embedded rape culture that holds deep roots within the Indian society. This taboo culture has acted as a safeguard for perpetrators and total agony for the actual victims. Widespread discrimination and social isolation is a norm for any individual that suffers sexual abuse in India. The famous 'New Delhi incident' (2012) that garnered international attention when a young adult was raped and eventually succumbed to her wounds is one among the many testament of the brutality of the Indian society.

1.2 The perpetuation of rape in India

The patriarchal system that has governed India for eons has ensured women are treated as 'second class' citizens with lesser importance. Since 2017 statistics have shown that more than 30,000 incidents of sexual abuse have been reported in India. Johri (2019) points out that India is considered the most dangerous country for women and human rights activists claim that at least one woman is raped every 16 minutes in India.

Dutta (2020), observed that the gang rape and brutality of a medical student in 2012 had shocked the conscience of the entire country, with the news media giving full coverage to the protests on the streets of Delhi and cities, which also led to the setting up of a special commission and change of making punishment for rape more stringent. This new law seemed to have had no effect at all, as there were more cases of rape at the last 15 days of the year 2012.

The society has forced women to feel inferior to men by the wayward standards that are upheld for. A woman is no longer safe in her own home and the grotesque instances of child abuse have been noticed. These numbers are increasingly high and disturbing with a steep curve that ceases to slow down. Rape is not seen as a most deviant act and thus the perpetrators attempt to justify their irreversible actions.

The media plays the role of reporting stories, incidents or events in its pure, undiluted form. It is observed that media is a channel through which information is disseminated to large number of

unknown or heterogeneous people or audience. Television, newspaper and radio are one of such media channels.

According to Khullar (2017), it is the responsibility of news organization to report only vital part of a story, rather than painting unnecessary images, for example painting the victim and the accused as having an affair.

The media's huge role in rape culture is seen in its report of rape incidents, where the victim is blamed for things such as choice of clothing, choice of movement, manner by which the survivor had related with offender, the rape perpetrators are portrayed instead as the victim and the blame shame pushed on the victims. The publication of names of a victim of sexual violence in the society that discriminates and slut-shames a rape survivor takes the front line in encouraging rape perpetuation in India.

Khullar (2017) stated a vital point that, the media possesses the ability to influence the direction a rape incident is perceived through its manner of constructing the story. It is the responsibility of the media to use that power well.

Women are often projected as weaker entities and as having little or no role at all to play in the society. This makes the woman a voiceless being and subject to all forms of violence, especially sexual violence.

Bhattacharya and Kundu (2018) reported an analysis that showed that only a very small portion of sexual violence incidents is reported to the police, bringing it to an estimated 99.1% cases of sexual violence go unreported in India. It is observed that the situation of unreported rape and sexual violence cases stem from fear of the perpetrator; the victim's life is threatened and as a result forced to keep silence and tell no one of what actually happened. Many others suffer from situations of self-blame, also there's the fear of what the society would say (victim-blaming). Some persons may not even know that they have been sexually violated because the situation may not directly fit into the definition or persons may lack proper understanding of the term in general.

The Human Rights Watch (2017) reported that in India, rape survivors faced significant barriers to obtaining justice and crucial support services in the sense that women and girls who survive rape and other sexual violence often suffer humiliation right and the police stations and even in

hospitals. Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA), pointed out that some survivors find it unnecessary to reports sexual assaults in order to be able to move forward from the experience, some also feel that the criminal justice system re-victimizes them in its processes.

Definition of Some Key Terms.

Within this project, there are some key terms that have been utilized to explain various instances, incidents and relate previous experiences. Upon this basis these ‘terms’ are defined.

Rape, The U.S Department of Justice (2012) defined rape as “The penetration no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with anybody parts or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.”

Consent, according to the Metropolitan Police (2021), consent is when two parties or individuals agree to what is happening by choice.

Gang rape, IPC Section 376D of the Indian Penal Code (2018), described gang rape as the rape of a woman by one or more person constituting a group or acting in furtherance of a common intention.

Sexual Assault, any act, whether physically, psychologically or even emotionally in the form of sexual act that is inflicted on another person without their consent. This could leave visible marks, injuries and could also cause severe distress as well as emotional harm (Metropolitan Police, 2021).

Victim, “a person who has suffered physical or emotional harm, property damage, or economic loss as a result of a crime” The Department of Justice Canada (2016).

HYPOTHESIS : The media contributes significantly to rape related propaganda, victim shaming and negative portrayal of women in India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are many incidents worldwide that discuss issues of rape, rape culture and the impact of the media. However, there are limited specific studies that deal with the role media plays towards rape victims in India. This literature review will highlight the lack of relevant information regarding this topic with the available sources. An acceptable amount of attention is placed on rape and rape culture in India, which provides studies, newspaper clippings, studies and projects around that subject matter. This review will ultimately add a different perspective to the sensitive topic. The Literature review will be expressed in two parts. The first part will review some of the previous works that surround this topic while the second part will highlight some of the incidents within India.

Krishnan (2015) discussed issues related to culture and sexism in globalising India. The 2012 gang rape of a woman in Delhi turned the world towards the rights of women in India. The article also mentions a 2014 BBC documentary that led the world to conclude that the gender based crime was an expression of Indian culture and tradition. The publication disputes these claims, suggesting that these are based on more complex forces that mainly aims at suppressing the role of women to mere housewives and sexual beings rather than social reformers. The article also argued that these acts were in no way an Indian tradition and culture but a misogynistic act. It also gave various instances of rape incidents to solidify these claims. Male patriarchal system maybe a major aggressor for violence and sexual abuse against women. This work provides an eye-opening perspective to further understanding the current situation. Krishnan (2018) discussed reasons India is the worst place in the world to be a woman. Regressive tradition has in turn led to an increase in sexual violence and gender based crimes. Despite tightened laws by Indian government to help ensure the safety of women, the desired change is yet to be seen. This led the Thomas Reuters foundation to conclude that India is the most dangerous place for women. A that survey consisted of 550 experts on women issue was conducted across the world, the survey included academics, health workers, policy makers and NGO workers Brought about this conclusion.

This author provided ample understanding for the main reasons behind women's issues in the society. It highlighted the difficulties women endured. The article also mentioned Afghanistan's and Syria's alarming domestic violence cases that were similar to India's. However, it must be noted that Afghanistan and Syria are war-torn countries.

The media's influence on Rape culture

Hollonquest (2014) discussed the media influences on perception of rape victims and perpetrators. The study focused on people's view of a rape survivor, rape myth, victim shaming, perpetrators, as well as the accepted beliefs of the instances. The major findings showed various concepts of human ideologies, when diverse conditions or experiments ensued. The study highlighted a range of differences, when humans were placed in difficult circumstances. The study utilized 191 participants for various data analysis, two hypothesis were tested to examine social media influence on the perception of rape victims and perpetrators. A meagre 17 males were utilised during the study that shows a clear female bias.

Rathnayake (2017) discussed gender stereotypes in Sri Lankan films. The film's showed negative and positive portrayal of genders. Various interpretation in role playing were highlighted as the plot unfolded. This scholarly work discusses the way the media portrays the female gender. It mentioned the use of negative features while referring to women. The work also pointed out the way media project women as weaker entities, while the men are presented as stronger beings. This work provides basic understanding in relation to gender stereotypes within south Asian societies.

Shah (2019) expressed the way Bollywood reinforces gender stereotypes through songs and dances. The article pointed out the portrayal of the male gender as stronger and female as weaker and dependent on the male, plays major roles in influencing the Indian culture. The also article listed names of movies and songs that objectified women as things that are to be possessed by men. The paper brought to light the major roles these songs and films play in building mind sets that normalize sexual harassments.

Fadnis (2017) discussed ways in which patriarchal values guide Indian media's rape related reporting, therefore, promoting rape culture. The rape and murder of a woman in Delhi led to widespread protests in different parts of the state. The main opposition was to the government's neglect to ensure the protection of women. The research also mentioned that the media player a huge role in victim-shaming that in turn discouraged survivors from reporting sexual assaults.

Through the use of the most circulated English newspaper (Times of India), the article tried to analyse , as well as trace the impact of a male dominated society using news reports made by both

female and male journalists. The ground work in this paper provided a much needed clarification on the patriarchal system in India.

Review of Incidents

The rape statistics in India are incredibly appalling in the last 5 years. However, taking a brief look at some of the atrocities are visible in the statistical information.

In 2012, the medical student had been gang raped in a moving bus in Delhi, by six people including a juvenile. A fast track court convicted and sentenced four of her rapists to death. The decision was then upheld in a protracted legal fight in the Delhi high court and the supreme court before their hanging was fixed for March 20 (Dutta,2020).

Singh (2018) also reported that the most recent polls by Thomas Reuters foundation had found India to be ranked as the least safe country for women, owing to its worse records of rapes, sexual harassments and violence against women.

India has been considered one of the top 4 countries in the world that is most dangerous for a woman. It has recently even been ranked higher than war-stricken countries like Syria and Afghanistan based on its unsafe nature (Krishnan, 2018). In 2013 alone, Press Trust of India reported that Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest number of rape cases, followed by Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, according, according to the NCRB report and a total of 33,707 rape cases were filed across the country (The New Indian Express, 2014).

Bhardway and Hafeez (2015), reported that the number of the rapes in 2014 had seen an increase of about 31 percent.

In 2014, the police in Birbhum district, about 120 miles away from Kolkata had arrested 12 for raping a 20-year-old woman in public on the orders of the village elders as punishment for her relationship with a man from another village and her subsequent failure to pay 50,000 rupees fine (Burke, 2014).

Aljazeera (2016) reported that more than 34,651 cases of rape was recorded in India in 2015, according to statistics by the country's National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB). The figure showed that victims ranged from female children younger than six years old to women over 60 years old,

with those aged between 18 and 30 reporting the largest number of rape attacks- totalling almost 17,000.

India recorded 106 rape cases a day in 2016, of which of 2,116 of those raped were girls were girls within the age of 0-12 years and 36,859, that is about 94.6% of the offenders were known to the rape victims including neighbours, relatives, employer/co-worker, family members, husband/live-in partner, etc. (Chauhan,2017).

According to Dutta (2020), the year 2017 recorded the lowest number of rape cases since 2012 at 32,559 or 89.2 cases daily. The rate remains alarming even at lesser number of cases per day compared to previous years. Krishan (2018) stated that almost every day, the media regularly reports young girls and women from every angle of the country; cities and even small villages are being molested, violated and raped.

In 2018, over 338 thousand cases of crime reported against women in India, 33 thousand were for rape in 2018, of which more than 93 per cent of those rapes were committed by someone known to their victim (Statista Research Department 2020).

It is observed that rape is one of the fastest growing crimes in India, with increasing records of over 30,000 cases every year. Rape remains the 4th biggest crime committed against women and girls in India. It is then safe to say that one in every hundred women in India has been molested, sexually assaulted or even raped. The increasing record of rape cases is something that should be given utmost attention. Failure to find permanent solutions in order to put an end to the rape pandemic sooner, the numbers of rape cases may triple in the coming years and the number of raped women may increase from one in every hundred women to 5 or 10 in every fifty women.

According to Ganesan (2019), rape in any context is not merely an act of sexual violence

VibhaHetu's 'Burgeoning Media's Reporting of Rape Cases in Delhi: Some Reflections

and Its Impact'(2019) research paper the portrayal of rape in media influences rape victims, police, criminal justice system, common people and society as a whole. Such reporting, however, may actually put members of society at greater risk for rape crime. The media have a social responsibility to stop their complicity in perpetuating false scenario of rape and reifying rape myths. Media must provide the public with better, more accurate information regarding rape

offense and the programmes that can be effective to understand the phenomenon of rape. Only when media acts against Dalit women.

Jyoti Diwakar (2020) describes a scenario where sex was used as a weapon against Dalits. A 'Quotidian Phenomenon' (2020) research paper points that in most cases rape becomes the consequence or the resultant end of several causal factors such as land disputes, factional rivalry, and above all caste dominance. Rather than looking into the enormity of the violence against an individual, these revealed how state institutions characterize women by their caste identity.

The notion of individuality disappears in the cases of Dalit women. Caste-biased rape is not only a mere non-consensual physical act of violence but is also a festering wound on the individual's psyche as also that of her community. Hence, rapes of Dalit women need to be tackled with the human rights approach so that their concerns are addressed more inclusively and substantially. Also, in order to prevent violence on Dalit women there is a need for 'substantive' media attention rather than a 'punitive' one. It can only be possible when the state, civil society, academia, and mainstream media collectively start to address their issues without prejudiced minds and institutional support is provided in a holistic manner. As cited by Brown Miller (1975) in 'How the media sympathises with rapists' (2019), rape is an assertion of power that is portrayed through sexual violence that has been deeply rooted in the pre-existing social inequalities. As cited by Dréze and Sen (2013), in *Uncovering rape culture* (2017), "historically in India, journalistic coverage of rape and sexual abuse has been limited and typically prejudiced against the victim. The motive is rarely sexual and violence is always involved. Forced sex is intended to abuse, humiliate, and dehumanize the victim. Rurtotoye (2012) in his research he observes women and girls bearing children from rape is

a poorly understood subject area as a majority of the people hardly appreciate the underlying causes and consequences of sexual violence, and their impact on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Rape is also seen as non-consensual sexual intercourse between a husband and wife (Bhattacharya and Kundu 2018). A report analysis showed that only an extremely small portion of sexual violent incidents is reported to the police. It was estimated 99.1% cases of sexual violence go unreported in India (Bhattacharya and Kundu 2018). It is observed that the situation of unreported rape and sexual violence cases stem from fear of the perpetrator; the victim's life is threatened and as a result forced to keep silence and tell no one of what actually happened. Many

others suffer from situations of self-blame, also there's the fear of what the society would say (victim-blaming). Some persons may not even know that they have been sexually violated because the situation may not directly fit into the definition or persons may lack proper understanding of the term in general.

The Human Rights Watch (2017) reported that in India, rape survivors faced significant barriers to obtaining justice and crucial support services in the sense that women and girls who survive rape and other sexual violence often suffer humiliation right and the police stations and even in hospitals. Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA), pointed out that some survivors find it unnecessary to reports sexual assaults in order to be able to move forward from the experience, some also feel that the criminal justice system re-victimizes them in its processes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research

Research is defined as careful consideration of study regarding a particular concern or problem using scientific methods. According to the American sociologist Earl Robert Babbie, 'research is a systematic inquiry to describe, explain, predict and control the observed phenomenon'.

Research methods are broadly classified as qualitative and quantitative.

Qualitative research is a method that collects data using conversational methods. Qualitative methods include, one-to-one interview, focus groups, ethnographic studies, text analysis and case study.

Quantitative Methods deals with numbers and measurable forms. It uses a systematic way of investigating events or data.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

It analyzes how the media reports sexual crimes in different styles.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To study the role and sensitivity of the media in reporting rape cases.
- To understand how much the theme 'rape culture' influences today's media.
- To know the media ethics in reporting rape assaults.
- To clarify the trend of rape culture through the media.
- To identify the tendency of media reports to discriminate on the basis of status and caste.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is the set of methods and procedures used in collecting and analysing measures of the variables specified in the problem research. The research design is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data. This will enable them to provide authentic descriptions of the subject matter. A qualitative

research design is concerned with establishing answers to the whys and how's of the phenomenon in question.

METHOD OF STUDY

The chosen method of study is qualitative analysis. Methods of study in qualitative research including observations, textual or visual analysis. Casestudy is one of the most common method of data collection used in methods of study.

FIELD OF STUDY

This study is mainly conducted for the general public.

It is mainly aimed at creating awareness among the people about how the media handles rape culture.

PERIOD OF STUDY

The degree program encompassed a period of three years from 2018 to 2021. The year long project began in 2020 and was completed in 2021. During that span the researchers focused on data collection, viewed related news stories and news reports, read related editorials, articles and features.

SELECTION OF SAMPLE STUDYING

This study is based on how media handle a rape case.

Based on this, case studies of rape assault cases in India are included here.

A total of 19 news regarding the sexual assault on women are selected for the purpose of study and research dating from 2020 to 2021 of March.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

4.Content analysis

The Content analysis were made through analysing the reports that were published by different media outlets. Through detailed research, different news stories regarding the hypothesis were collected.

The following are the media reports that have been studied: -

4.1 The victim is framed in the news reports leaving the perpetrators invisible in the headlines and presence of sensational elements .

Case 4.1(a) – ‘Dalit minor girl was brutally killed for resisting rape bid’

The report, published on Times of India on April 5th 2021 revealed the murder of an 8 year old girl at Jhansi , Kanpur. The news gave details on how the victim was exploited by the perpetrator and reasons for the victim’s murder. The report also gave details of events that led to the arrest of the perpetrator and the charges that were filed against him. The article clearly made the victim’s details ready for the readers in the headline while the details of the offender was hidden.

Case 4.1(b)– ‘Shocking ! 16 Year- old rape victim made to parade with accused as villagers chant Bharat Mata ki Jai’

The report appeared on the ABP news on 29th March 2021, and gave out a headline with exclamation mark to report on the rape that reflected the amount of sensationalism that were aimed at the audience. The report went on to explain the incident of a 16 year old girl that was paraded with the accused by the immediate family members of the victim and the villagers, in order to shame and dishonor her while they chanted along the slogan ‘Bharat Mata ki Jai’ in the village of Alirajpur ; Bhopal in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The report also gave an account of the rescue of the victim by the police and the arrest of the accused, accompanied by the arrest of the villagers who participated in the parade . The use of the term “Shocking!” with an exclamation suggested how much elements of sensationalism the news contained and the mention of “Bharat Mata Ki Jai” in the news story suggested the religion of the survivor and the attitude of a certain community towards a crime.

Case 4.1(c) – ‘Resisted rape bid , 8 year old Dalit girl brutally bludgeoned to death in UP's Jhansi’

On 5th of April 2021, The Times Now News reported a case of the murder of an 8-year-old girl at Jhansi of Uttar Pradesh. The headline stressed more on the crime rather than the criminal and the pattern it took gave out details of the victim’s background. The sensational nature of the news could clearly be identified from the report. The report gave further detailed account of the crime, and an emotional side of the story. Accounts of the tragedy as detailed in the report included how the victim’s body was found, the publication also said that the prime suspect had been arrested following investigations by the police.

Case 4.1(d) – ‘Punjab Minor Dalit girl gang raped after kidnapping in Hoshiyarpur, ends life after consuming poison’

At Punjab a female minor was gang raped in Hoshiyarpur. The incident came to light after the girl tried to escape when the offenders tried transferring her into another place. The villagers became alert of the situation and admitted the child to the hospital, but she later committed suicide. The report also gave an account from the parents of the victim, who said that police had failed to make any arrest because of the influential backgrounds of the accused. The report gave detailed description of how the incident occurred, the staging of dramatic situation where the family refused for the body of the deceased to be cremated, unless the criminals were arrested. The report also explained more on the charges that were filed against the bereaved family after.

Case 4.1(e) – ‘Gang raped & tortured, Dalit teen dies after 15 days battle’

The incident mentioned above took place on September 14th of 2020 at Hathrasin the state of Uttar Pradesh. The report was published on Times of India on September 30th 2020, days after the incident. The report gave highlights on the entire incident, from the first day until the day the victim died. The news story also added the last statement given by the victim and her sister. Furthermore, the publication also clarified the doctor’s point of view on the incident, as well as answers to the allegations the family had put forth. The report goes further to explore the incident with the addition of terms that had emotional appeal and documented the arrest of the suspects, giving readers the opportunity to understand the charges pressed against them. The

story's headline exposed how the victim was exploited by the predator. The language used in reporting the incident shed light on sensational words that were used, words like "tortured", "battle" etc. The absence of the mention of the predator and the location of the crime was for the sole purpose of creating curiosity in the mind of the readers, a technique that was used in order to gain more readership.

Case 4.1(f) – 'Rajasthan rape victim dies of burn injuries'

On 6th March 2021, The Hindu newspaper published a report on the murder of a raped victim by the accused who was out on bail. On the day of the unfortunate incident, the accused left to the house of the victim at Honumangarh district of Rajasthan. The accused was under court proceedings for the rape charges filed by the victim, it was during the same time that the perpetrator went to the victim's residence and set her ablaze. The victim with 90% of burns was then admitted at hospital nearby and later referred to Government hospital at Jaipur and had died due to the burns. The report further added that actions were taken by the state government in response to the incident and funds were given to the victim's family. In this news the details regarding the victim including her age and the place of incidents were mentioned, but the story never included the identity or age of the rapist. This sets the tone for the victim framing in the story.

Case 4.1(g) – 'Woman carrying 'kanwar' allegedly raped in Aligarh'

The report appeared on March 14th 2021 edition of The Indian Express which reported the rape of a woman at Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh. The woman who was raped was carrying out her 'kanwar' yatra which is a pilgrimage done by the devotees of Lord Shiva. The woman reported that the accused picked her up when she lost track of her husband during the festival. The report also mentioned the BSP legislature party leader's demand for a debate regarding the rise in crime against women in the state, to which the state government responded that they had appointed five committees to track down the suspects in cases such as this. The report also included certain data on rape statistics of the state. In this news story, there were even details about the "kanwar" to induce the sensationalism and but skipped to mention any details regarding the perpetrators.

Case 4.1(h) ‘UP: Girl returning home from tuition gang raped commits suicide’

On April 2nd 2021 the Times of India reported a case of sexual assault of a minor girl at Meerut. The girl was on her way back from tuition from where she was abducted and raped by the suspects. After the incident the girl narrated the scene to her parents and later consumed poison, she died at the hospital while receiving treatment. She left a suicide note stating the names of the accused. The report also shows that among four of the accused, the police were only able to nab two and had started a manhunt to find the rest. The report gave out the details of the incident regardless of the fact that the newspaper had already reported that the police had put out a manhunt to nab the other two men, but no details of them were given. The news story gave details about what happened on the victim’s way back home from tuition and her death but didn’t mention the time or any details regarding the criminals. This in turn takes away the headline’s neutrality.

4.2 The caste angle in reporting in rape news stories

Case 4.2(a) ‘Another gang rape shames Hathras : 3 men brutalise 16- year old Dalit girl on Holi’

The incident was reported by the Mirror Now news on April 2nd 2021. A 16 years old female was out of her home when the victim was abducted and taken advantage of at some unknown location. The very next day, the culprits drove back to drop the victim at the village, the then told her family about what had happened. The report also stated instances where the victim had opened up about being prohibited and threatened by the police to stay silent. The report further explained that the girl took the DSP’s help to file case against the culprits, and that the case had been booked under different sections of Indian penal code. There was no information regarding the perpetrators in the report. The headline on the other hand gave an insight as to how the caste of the survivor was projected, but gave no trace of the people who committed the crime other than the number of people, place of incident, the day, and the age of the abused mentioned.

Case 4.2 (b) ‘Minor Dalit girl dies by suicide after gang rape’

On April 2nd 2021 the Hindustan Times reported a case of sexual abuse from Meerut of Uttar Pradesh. The report gave out information about the victim including when victim was kidnapped

and accounts of how the girl committed suicide by taking poison. The report also stated that the victim left behind a suicide note with the names of the suspects in it. The reports further clarified the incident in details. And also the report had quoted certain words of politicians of the state on the incident in regards to women safety in the state. Statistics of the crime rate against women in Uttar Pradesh was mentioned as well. The report then gave account of the crime including the age group of the victim, how she died. One important thing to notice is the headline's statement that started with "Minor Dalit girl" which stresses more on the caste angle in report.

Case 4.2(c) 'UP horror ! 16-year – old Dalit girl dragged to terrace, pushed off building after failed rape bid'

The report was published on Mirror Now news on February 14th of 2021 from Pilibhit of Uttar Pradesh about the 16 year old that was pushed off the terrace when the victim's father came looking for her upon finding out the daughter was missing. The child had faced several injuries and narrated the incident to her father who filed a case against the criminals. The reports stated that the duo had been insulting the family's caste for too long. The sections pressed are also mentioned and the names of the criminals were given in the story. The story gave in depth insight of the incident and also quoted from the father of the victim's statement. The headline began with "UP Horror!" exclamation sign and made mention of the term 'Dalit' in the report. A sight of sensationalism was clearly visible with an alignment towards the caste angle in the reporting style.

Case 4.2(d) 'UP : Five minor held for raping Dalit woman in Badaun, 1arrested for sharing video'

The report narrated the story of a sexual abuse that had occurred and kept hidden by the victim due to the fear of the video footage being aired, the woman later found out that the video of the assault had already been spread on the internet, so the woman filed a complaint in the police station. The culprits were five minors and one adult. The adult was arrested and sent to jail while the minors were moved to juvenile home by the court.

Case 4.2(e) 'Eight Year old Dalit girl raped by septuagenarian in UP's Banda'

The report appeared on the Outlook magazine on March 3rd 2021. The report narrated the rape of a minor girl child by a man of about 70 years old. The incident took place while the child was

playing outside her home. The 8year old was said to have vision problems in the report. There was also a narration of another similar incident of a 14- year old boy that was sodomized by an older teenager.

4.3 The use of images in the news reports that depicts women as powerless and helpless.

Case 4.3(a)



Case 4.3(a)– ‘ Shocking! Almost 40 men allegedly raped, sexually harassed Kerala teenager over past few months’

The images were followed up by the report on the National Herald on 19th January 2021. It stated that a teenager was raped and sexually harassed by 40 men in Kerala over past few months. Almost 29 rape cases have been filed against the suspects according to the girl’s statement. The mother had complained about the abduction of her daughter in November 2020 after which the daughter was then traced from Palakkad. The report described the past experiences of the victim and as well as the actions taken by the police, report on the accused current status and the mentioned child’s welfare committee was also stated. The report was a triggering one as the incident can be sighted as terrifying. The image portrays the perpetrators as more superior while the abused looked helpless and weak. The created an understanding about how women feel around men. It showed the power of the male over the female in the society as a whole.

Case 4.3(b)



Representational Image.

Case 4.3(b) –‘NHRC study recommends protecting rape accused from ‘false cases’ till found guilty’

The report was published on the Hindustan Times on 27th October 2020. It reported the study that was commissioned by NHRC and was conducted by the Centre for Women’s Development Studies to understand crimes against women from the perspective of the perpetrators. The study recommended that the accused be protected until proven guilty, just as the identity of the victim is kept hidden from the public, same should be done with the accused until the crime is justified. This was recommended for saving the accused from false accusations. Even though the report was meant as a study, the image used by the publication was a disturbing one.

Case 4.3(c)



Case 4.3(c)‘Eight Year old Dalit girl raped by septuagenarian in UP's Banda’

The report appeared on the Outlook magazine on March 3rd 2021 . The report narrates the incident the rape of a female by a man around the age of 70. The incident took place while the child was playing outside her home. The girl was said to have suffered vision problems in the report, while the narration of another similar incident of a 14- year old boy who was sodomized

by a teenager was mentioned in the article as well. The image terrifies the audiences and shows a seriously negative portrayal of women as puppets in such crimes.

Case 4.3 (d)



Case 4.3(d) ‘Badaun gang rape case: 50 years old raped by three men, cops unresponsive for 18 hours |10 points

The report was published on India Today, the article reported the gang rape and murder of a 50 year old woman at Badaun district of Uttar Pradesh. The incident was reported on January 6th of 2021 . The woman had gone missing, and the case was reported to police but the police remained silent and later on the body was dumped the accused. Even after the death, the police still failed to take necessary actions. The report explained the incident in 10 points detailed in the section. The representational image used in the report was also an intimidating one.

Case 4.3(e)



Case 4.3(e) ‘Judiciary’s response to rape cases suffers from colonial hangover’

The report appeared on The Leaflet which was an opinion piece published. The report gave insight on how the Indian judiciary system handled cases that were related to violence against

women. The image used with the report was little of importance to the report as it scattered the actual purpose of the report. The report was published on July 30th of 2020.

Appendix (section 4.1)

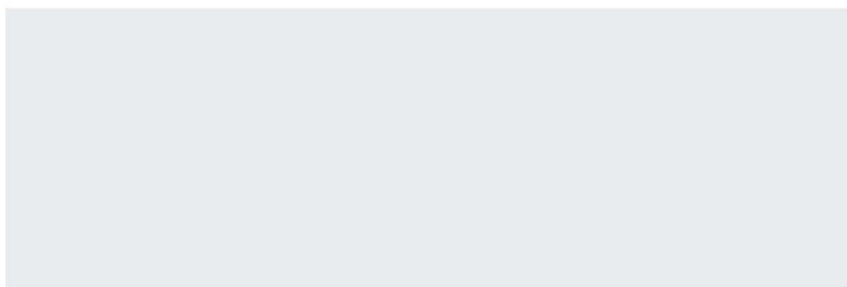
Case 4.1 (a)



Jhansi: The postmortem report of the eight-year-old [Dalit](#) girl has revealed the brutality inflicted on her by the killer who murdered her on failing to rape her.

Case 4.1 (b)

SHOCKING! 16-Year-Old Rape Victim Made To Parade With Accused As Villagers Chant 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'



By: [ABP News Bureau](#) | 29 March 2021, 2:25 PM (IST)



Among those who forced to parade the victim her were her own family members to shame her. Police rescued the victim and have held 6.

Case 4.1(c)

Haryana

Maharashtra

Jharkhand News

Bihar

West Be

News > India News >

Resisted rape bid, 8-year-old Dalit girl brutally bludgeoned to death in UP's Jhansi

Resisted rape bid, 8-year-old Dalit girl brutally bludgeoned to death in UP's Jhansi



Mirror Now Digital

Updated Apr 05, 2021 | 16:44 IST

Case 4.1(d)

Haryana

Maharashtra

Jharkhand News

Bihar

West Be

News > India News >

Punjab: Minor Dalit girl gang-raped after kidnapping in Hoshiyarpur; ends life after consuming poison

Punjab: Minor Dalit girl gang-raped after kidnapping in Hoshiyarpur; ends life after consuming poison



Mirror Now Digital

Updated Mar 30, 2021 | 14:00 IST

Case 4.1(e)

INDIA

Gang-raped & tortured, Dalit teen dies after 15-day battle

Anuja Jaiswal | TNN | Updated: Sep 30, 2020, 09:44 IST



Case 4.1 (f)



OTHER STATES

Rajasthan rape victim dies of burn injuries



Image for representational purpose only.

Special Correspondent

JAIPUR: 06 MARCH 2021 21:19 IST
UPDATED: 06 MARCH 2021 21:20 IST

Case 4.1 (g)

Case 4.1(h)

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LATEST NEWS | **Detention despite bail: Why District Magistrates love the NSA**

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Woman carrying 'Kanwar' allegedly raped in Aligarh

Aligarh SSP Muniraj G on Saturday said the woman couldn't keep up with her husband while carrying 'Kanwar' in Harduaganj. Two men known to her offered to drop her home on their bike but took her elsewhere and raped her, he said.

By: **Express Web Desk** | New Delhi |
Updated: March 14, 2021 9:51:28 am

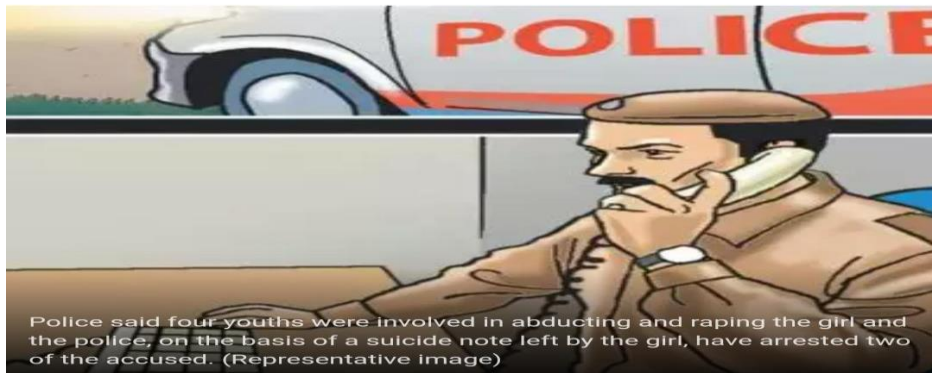
☰ **TOI** **OPEN APP** 🔍

CITY

UP: Girl returning home from tuition gang-raped, commits suicide

PTI | Updated: Apr 2, 2021, 18:48 IST



Appendix (section 4.2)

Case 4.2(a)



The screenshot shows a mobile browser interface. The address bar displays 'timesnownews.com/mirror-n'. The website header is red with 'MIRRORNOWNEWS.COM' and 'LIVE TV' icons. Below the header are navigation tabs for Business, Tech, Budget, Education, India, and Sports. The article breadcrumb is 'News > Mirror Now > Crime >'. The main headline is 'Another gang-rape shames Hathras: 3 men brutalise 16-year-old Dalit girl on Holi'. The sub-headline is 'Another gang-rape shames Hathras: 3 men brutalise 16-year-old Dalit girl on Holi'. The author is 'Mirror Now Digital' and the update time is 'Updated Apr 02, 2021 | 06:41 IST'. The article text reads: 'A 16-year-old Dalit girl was allegedly gang-raped by three men in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh on March 29.'

Case 4.2(b)

INDIA NEWS

Minor Dalit girl dies by suicide after gang rape

MEERUT A 16-year-old Dalit girl died by suicide hours after she was raped by four teenagers in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh, police officials said on Friday

By [HT Correspondent](#)

PUBLISHED ON APR 02, 2021 11:55 PM IST

OPEN APP

 **Hindustan Times**

Case 4.2(c)

News > India News >

UP horror! 16-year-old Dalit girl dragged to terrace, pushed off building after failed rape bid

UP horror! 16-year-old Dalit girl dragged to terrace, pushed off building after failed rape bid



Mirror Now Digital

Updated Feb 14, 2021 | 07:15 IST

Two youths in Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh, allegedly pushed a 16-year-old Dalit girl off the terrace of a building after a failed rape bid.

Case 4.2 (d)



[Home](#) / [Cities](#) / [Lucknow](#)

UP: Five minors held for raping Dalit woman in Badaun, 1 arrested for sharing video

They were held on Thursday night, hours after the woman complained to the police as the video went viral.

Written By [Asad Rehman](#) | Lucknow |

Updated: January 29, 2021 9:53:21 pm

Case 4.2(e)



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

Two men rape Dalit girl in Uttar Pradesh's Mahoba

PTI | Published: 22nd February 2021 12:46 PM



For representational purposes (Express Illustrations)

Case 4.2(f)



Outlook

Magazine India Opinion Videos Photos World Entert

Eight-Year-Old Dalit Girl Raped By Septuagenarian In UP's Banda

The incident took place in the Baberu area in Banda district in Uttar Pradesh around 6 pm.

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Findings and interpretation

From content analysis:

4.1: The victim is framed in the news reports leaving the perpetrators invisible in the headlines and presence of sensational elements .

The first section of the study dealt with the newspaper headlines that hid the details of the perpetrators . From the study we were able to produce solid justification to the section by sighting reports that used similar styles in reportage of such crimes . The general agenda of the news media are clearly evident to the audience the persuasive nature of the headlines to attract attention by creating a sense of emotional appeal to the story by using words that are sensational in nature and using the exclamation sign while writing such stories are all examples of the case. Eight cases have been taken into account to study the section from different publications.

4.2: The caste angle in reporting in rape news stories

The section was about the usage of caste while reporting rape cases in India. This section gives a deep understanding of how much the Indian society gives importance to the casteism . Even when one says that the new Indian society is a fast developing one, we still face situation where the caste plays an important part in deciding certain things. The Indian journalist argue the need for caste angle in reporting such crimes because they feel such usage guarantees the readers to give more stress to the report and they feel such usage helps in gaining mass attention as mention of caste will create a havoc that the minority of the society is affected. And this feeling shall call for immediate action from the public which in turn will speed up the process of justice. But the real factor is that the report makes the minority feel inferior from the others of the society and keeps them at bay from the rest.

4.3. The use of images in the news reports that depicts women as powerless and helpless.

This section used different representative images that were used by different publications to report crimes that are generally against women and also report that shows statistics. But the conclusion we arrived from this section is of vast importance that the use of certain images portrayed women as very intimidating objects. The pictures shall surely evoke the emotions of reader by terrorizing them. But the potential of images to create a feeling of helplessness in minds of women and gives a indirect negative influence over men that women are subjects that can be over powered by them and they can never resist them.

From the above mentioned news stories and reports it is clearly visible how much the media houses enjoy sensationalising events through indulging in framing victim's details , the importance that our society given to the mention of Caste due to which the media houses still find mentioning of it causes excitement in audience and also the images that are mainly used for representation of such cases in almost all media houses seems to have a negative projection of women as helpless being rather than giving images which gives out emotions of rejection of such a crime . Media being the fourth estate of the democracy has a role more than just being a business industry. The main function of media being information providers so do they hold the responsibility to avoid sensationalism and biased stand in reporting crimes that are often related to women.

DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION

The media has the power to influence the society in a much larger context . The rape cases that were reported especially during the 2020- 2021 in India showed a hike as the Covid19 pandemic hit the country adversely . Studies have shown a higher increase in crime against women and have justified them by saying the unemployment and work from home has affected the male counterparts negatively which has caused the hike. The cases that have been studied is from the same period and most of the cases reported during this period has not caught much public attention. A very few incidents caught the eyes of the public including the Hathras gang rape case which caused a lot of controversy. The same case is a good example of how the media is affected by the political power as a journalist from Kerala was arrested by the Uttar Pradesh police while he was on his way to report it.

The main reason behind this study is that media has always played a prominent role in India right from the freedom struggle . The agendas and objectives of the media have been deemed very badly during past few years which has turned them into a fully business sector. They always run behind a 24 hour news cycle rather than helping to achieve their main aim. The crimes against women are reported in a delayed manner as it hardly takes centre stage. Many incidents that may be deemed grotesque and tragic doesn't receive attention within India unless it garners international attention. The media is extremely important for disseminating information and can shape the way information is viewed by the public. Special attention should be place towards sensitive topics when reports are published. In order to ensure the information presented to the public is accurate yet careful, media outlets must be tactful in their approach.

The importance that a caste angle can get in such crimes can get have always given them in a brighter spot. Like wise the use of images in reports that have a negative projection in such cases have also demonstrated how the media use the news to create a bulk in readership . All these reasons has influenced us in taking on this study. Even though some argue on the effectiveness on how much a report in a news media can help the survivors of such crimes by speeding up the justice .At certain times these sensational nature of report draw a lot of attention on the survivors and make it very difficult for them to survive in this world as people can easily identify them. Their relationship with the society will never be same after that. The main reason for this that the

victim's details will be given in a broader range but a very few details of the criminal shall be added up on the report. The victim shaming nature that is persistent in the reports make them feel isolated from the rest of the society .

The media should be made more responsible in reporting crimes against women. There are a set of guidelines that should be made to report such incidents to the public. Even though the caste angle in stories can give them a chance to be heard more by the public but that usage represents how the Indians still hold tight on to these old beliefs.

CONCLUSION

Media plays an important role in life of every citizen who believe in democracy of a country. India being the largest democracy in the world media holds a vital role in informing the public , creating opinions, and withholding values of the society etc.

From the study conducted on “Media and Rape culture” following inspections on headlines and news stories from different media houses have been taken into account and arrived at a conclusion that media plays an important role in delivering the crimes to public in which sensationalism is evidently present and the victim framing is an open way of media expressing their side on a crime against women . Also the use of images which create a tremendous fearful image in the minds is to degrade women as a powerless and a depict them as a prey for these criminals. The caste angle when subjected to a debate it can arise both arguments that the need of the caste angle in reporting because it reflect the caste system that is still prevailing in India and how the reference of a particular caste can cause the crime to attract a lot of attention to news. when we consider the other side of the story the fact that caste angle seems to show how oppressive a certain community in India , even though we are testifying the caste system have been eradicated in our society .

The events of the reporting of these kinds of crime have made the relevance of these crimes to be lost and eventually audience will define them as a casual happening around the world rather than important news story .

The case studies done have given us a clear understanding of bringing up some more regulations in how the crimes regarding a women should be presented. The need for the media to look back at the ethical aspects of reporting these kinds of crimes and also how they need to change their perspective on such cases. The regular sensational angle of the news story requires a complete make over and a new unbiased and neutral angle should be made available for reporters to follow. How far a media can go for attracting attention was visible to us during the reporting of the Kathua rape case. Many media houses were fined by the High Court of Delhi for the disclosure of the victims identity and the images of the victim.

These studies have given insight on how important it is for the ethical standards to have a specific objective and stand while reporting these events. Ethics and certain level of code of conducts should be made relevant to media houses for reporting especially while reporting these kinds of crimes.

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