CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the studies, explicating their major findings. The works of several eminent social researches are mentioned below to indicate the relative importance and continuity of the research on Indian studies. The review of literature is presented under the following headings.

2.1 Journalism in Tamil Nadu – A Historical perspective

2.2 Impact of media on crime

2.3 Crime coverage in mass media

2.4 Impact of crime reporting in mass media
   2.4.1 Crime related beliefs among the public and reporters
   2.4.2 Fear of crime through mass media
   2.4.3 Behavioural responses to crime among the public
   2.4.4 Effect of mass media on crime prevention
   2.4.5 The agenda setting effect of crime news

2.5 Crime reporting in Tamil Nadu

2.6 Methodological review
   2.6.1 Mass communication research
   2.6.2 Review based on content analysis
2.1 JOURNALISM IN TAMIL NADU– A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

There are several newspapers being published from Chennai which have a national presence. With Tamil Nadu being one of the most progressive states in India and a high literacy rate there is a wide readership for newspapers published from Chennai.

Apart from setting high standards in journalism and stirring public debates through reports and strong editorial columns these newspapers continue to serve effectively as the fourth pillar of democracy.

The real pioneer of journalism in India was James Silk Buckingham of Calcutta, an intrepid Whig campaigner and a progressive thinker and writer for his times. His achievement belongs to the early 19th century. James Augustus Hicky’s Bengal Gazette, alias Calcutta General Advertiser, a two-sheet weekly was first published on January 29, 1780 from Calcutta.

The two other Presidency cities, Madras and Bombay, had newspapers within a few years. By 1772, Madras boasted of a printing press. The Madras Courier was launched on October 12, 1785 by Richard Johnson, the government’s printer. Officially recognized and patronized, it was a tame and on independent affair compared with Hicky’s colourful product. Its chief responsibility was to carry government notifications; it was borne by the postal system free of charge; and it
was priced at a rupee a copy which was very exorbitant during those days. It contained four pages and offered its readers a mixed fare of excerpts from English newspapers and letters to the Editor.

A second paper the Hurkaru (or Hircarrah) was founded in 1793 by Hugh Boyd, who had earlier edited the Courier. A third paper appeared in January 1795, the Weekly Madras Gazette at the initiative of one R. Williams. However, it was the India Herald, which surfaced in April 1795 "without the authority of the government", that made waves in colonial Madras society.

The Calcutta, Madras and Bombay ventures of the 1780s and 1790s can be considered dubious pioneers of Indian journalism. Aside from the scurrility and the unedifying tone, the concern of these newspapers had little to do with Indian society. This press was a vehicle of comment on the British administration of the day by those who were outside the privileged circle of the Company's higher officers. Nevertheless, it was these publications that the press as an institution made its debut in India.

The official attitude to the Press during this phase was a mixture of crude intolerance, patronage and manipulative intent. Journalism was an exercise indulged in by Englishmen outside the narrow circle to the official establishment and was, as a rule, submissive and servile – with certain honourable and not-so-honourable
exceptions. There were no Indian efforts in Madras – either in English or in Tamil or other Indian languages – until much later.

In India, as a whole, the period 1780-1818 represented some kind of pre-history for modern journalism, a seeding phase.

**Early Tamil and English Journalism**

Modern Journalism in Tamil is believed to have originated in 1831 with the Tamil Magazine, published by the Religious Tract Society. The next Tamil newspaper venture was the Rajavrithi Bodhini, which began publishing in 1855. A third weekly, the Dinavartamani also made its appearance in 1855, edited by the Rev. P. Percival and published at the Dravidian Press. (In addition, a Telugu newspaper, a second one in Persian and a third in Persian and English were published from Madras). “It would seem to have been the practice in Madras. Not to give the name of the Editor … In the pre-rebellion period, Tamil journalism engaged neither in social nor in political controversies. Run exclusively by Missionaries, information must have been confined largely to material approved by the Government”.

Newspapers like Dina Tanthi, Dina Malar, Dina Mani and Dinakaran made Tamil journalism get a new impetus. With their unique style each of these newspapers made a mark for themselves in the field of journalism. They continue to
enjoy a wide readership. Dina Tanthi was started in Madurai in 1942 and Dina Malar was first published in 1951 from Thiruvanthapuram.

The Madras Times, was started in 1860 and the Madras Mail, appeared in 1968, the outcome of differences between the journalists and the proprietor at the Madras Times over editorial policy towards the colonial administration.

Six young men, in their twenties, came together to found The Hindu in Madras on September 20, 1878. Before this, two other aspiring "nature" efforts, the Crescent and the Native Public Opinion, offered promise for a while but closed down. Public opposition to the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, feelings against the criticism by loyalist newspapers of the appointment of an Indian Judge, and the intention of promotion social and democratic reform along 'modern' lines combined to launch the weekly.

Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, a lawyer practising in Coimbatore and a person with a taste for public affairs and national politics, took over The Hindu. The period 1905-1923 – the years of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's leadership of The Hindu – were years of momentous change in the national and intellectual mood of the country and in Madras-based journalism. He took charge of the newspaper when its finances were floundering, quickly brought it out of the red and put it into modern organisational and professional shape. As an Editor, he consistently stood up to
intolerant authority and asserted the right or freedom of expression in various practical ways. A tribute to his role came from a distinguished adversary when the London Times, in an obituary feature, described him as “one of the most influential of Extremist journalists in India”.

The role of investigative journalism, which became significant in the field in the early part of the 20th century was brought out powerfully in the detailed areas of the fraud and wrongdoing associated with the crash of the century – old banking firm. Arbuthnot & Co., in Madras in October 1906. It was also brought out in the coverage of food crises in the Madras Province during these years.

Annie Besant purchased the Indian Standard and renamed it New India in 1913. She wrote inspired in support of the cause of Indian freedom and faced repression and persecution from the colonial authorities. More than anything else, Annie Besant and her journalism taught intellectuals and journalists to stand up and be counted. B.G. Horniman, another distinguished ally of the freedom struggle, observed that New India injected a new tone to the entire press in India.

Another kind of journalism was inaugurated in 1918 when the non Brahmin movement and the Justice Party started a fairly influential publication, Justice, in 1918. Politically it supported the Raj and its interests, but it also highlighted issues of social justice and social reform.
The story of the Indian Express in Madras deserves a volume to itself. The Daily Express, started by an Englishman, R.W. Brock, in 1921 went under within six years. In 1932, the Indian Express was started by the nationalist, Varadarajulu Naidu. The versatile M.A. Sadanand bought it in 1932 and founded the Tamil daily, Dina Mani, in 1934. The legendary Ramnath Goenka took over the affairs of the Indian Express during this period, expanded its organization and publishing activity remarkably, made it a powerful voice of the freedom struggle and set a major example in standing up to authority for over more than half a century.

The career graph of the Press in Madras closely follows the larger trends of politics and socio-economic and technical developments. As the movement for freedom began to gather force in the second half of the 19th century, a nationality Press experience arose in Madras. From 1878 onwards, nationalist journalism in Madras (which followed in the wake of Bengal, the originator of nationalist – Indian – owned – newspapers) proved a success story. In fact, in contrast to the experience of Bombay and Calcutta, the nationalist newspapers outclassed and outpowered the loyalist publications in Madras from the last two decades of the 19th century. The Hindu, the Swadesswamitran, the Indian review, New India, Desabhaktan, Tamil Nadu, Swarajya (founded by T. Prakasam in 1922), Ananda Vikatan (an influential weekly started in 1924),’s Kalki (founded in 1941), Dina Tanthi (founded in Madurai in 1942 and expanded to other centers, including
Kumudam, the hugely circulated weekly, which began in 1947, and various other publications have together wielded considerable weight and influence over the past century. Shaped by various stages of freedom struggle, they were steeled and tempered by it.

While recalling journalism in Madras, it must be emphasized that these newspapers, despite the limitations of their physical reach in a society dominated by illiteracy and a lack of rural purchasing power, have made a major qualitative difference to public opinion. They have also influenced policy-making and played an important agenda-setting role in public affairs. On issues such as combating famine and drought and also on questions of misrule, corruption and wrongdoing, they have played a credible-information function as well as a critical adversarial role in relation to the Government. Thus they have served society creditably.

A number of Tamil dailies and weeklies, which began after independence, have done well and these tell another kind of story. Most recently, some kind of stagnation in circulation gain has been observed in the case of Tamil dailies, while the periodicals including the latest addition, the Tamil version of the influential fortnightly, India Today-have flourished turning in very large circulations, comparable to the performance of the periodicals in the Malayalam and Bengali languages.
Newspapers based in Madras have also had the distinction of serving as the initial field for the creativity of some remarkable literary figures. If the literary genus of Rudyard Kipling was the outstanding contribution of lasting value made by the loyalist press in India, the genius of Subramania Bharati, the Tamil poet, and of R.K. Narayan, the English novelist, is associated with Madras-based journalism (the later has contributed for over four decades to The Hindu and other publications) (Ram, 2003).

Professionally, there have been major developments in the 20th century—and especially in the post-1977 years. Until the 1940s, nationalist newspapers had a reputation for neglecting the professional, economic and business side of the challenge and generally lagged behind the pro-Raj English language newspapers published from major centres. However, in this respect, Madras constituted a departure from the all-India pattern. Two of the three top-circulated dailies in India are based in Chennai and they belong very much to the freedom movement tradition. A good part of their success is accounted for by the strength of the organizations built up over the years and the attention paid to technological, business and professional matters. Some of the leaders in Tamil periodical journalism, notably Kumudam, have also concentrated impressively on modernization in a professional sense.
2.2 IMPACT OF MEDIA ON CRIME

Media effects on crime have been proved scientifically by several researchers. Definitely, the law enforcing agencies get active to prevent crime if there is a lot of news about crime. Even criminals who feel the heat from the police generally keep a low profile when the police step up their operations.

Two pioneers, Lipmann (1982) in the study of public opinion and Schramm (1955) in the assessment of mass communication process and effects provided insightful comments about information processing. Lipmann suggested, “The world outside [is different for each individual and forms] the pictures is in our heads”. Schramm proposed that “perception is the interpretative process through which we pass all the stimuli that we accept from our environment, and meaning is what comes out of this process-the ‘pictures in our head’”. Schramm’s observations suppose that an individual’s perception of an event is influenced by (1) the social world as perceived by the individual, and (2) the information the individual received from a stimulus (e.g. Mass media's rendition of an event).

Doob (1961) found only one man [among a group of adult males in a small Nigerian village] who had any knowledge about world affairs, including some recent developments in the field of atomic warfare. To all the rest it seems the mass
media had failed to communicate such information, but with him they have been successful, undoubtedly because he alone in the village had a radio.

In communication research it is axiomatic that people with more exposure to communication (mass media and interpersonal discussion) on a given topic exhibit more knowledge than those who are less exposed to information on that topic, usually, there is a positive linear correlation between exposure and knowledge. But, in a study during a political campaign it was revealed that exposure to the media's information about candidates and office holders was inversely (negatively) correlated with knowledge about them—the more exposure to the information, the less the respondents knew, and the less exposure to information the more the respondents knew (Kraus et al., 1984).

One of the dominant psychological predispositions of individuals that accounts for learning from mass media sources is interest. Graber who had collaborated with Weaver and others in an agenda setting study during a presidential election in the United States suggests, "Usually, interest spurred by a specific goal, such as the need to become informed about candidates just before an election, results in a greater impetus to learning than occurs when interest is unfocussed" (Granber, 1984; Weaver, 1977; Weaver et al., 1981).
Kinder and Sears (1985) tested some psychological explanations for the agenda-setting effect of newspaper with a sample of New Haven, Connecticut, residents. They found that (1) newspaper alters the public's sense of national priorities, (2) newspaper coverage of a particular problem such as crime tends to be more powerful among readers personally affected by the problem and (3) reports tend to be specifically influential if sensationalized.

Hovland (1988) suggests that in the order of presentation, what is presented first (primary) may be more persuasive than what is presented last (recently) given a certain set of conditions; especially when a "point [made by the communicators] is sympathetic to [the audience's] own".

According to Thandavan (1983), it is not likely that national policy campaign against crime will filter down to the individual such that he or she will adopt personal protections behaviours. He suggests that the processing of the national crime message may prompt the individual to believe that crime is a social problem requiring some household protection behaviour, but evidently will not convince the individual to engage in personal protection behaviours.

With general concern about the crime problem, however, the influence of media reports is quite different on the general level. Research generally has suggested a major media influence. Several studies have found for example that
judgments of the rate of crime are influenced by the media (Doob and Macdonald 1979; Skogan and Maxfield, 1981; Tyler, 1980), and the media have also been found to influence beliefs about who the victims and perpetrators of crime generally are (Doob and Macdonald, 1979). More generally the media is widely credited with an important role in spreading general information about the world (Roberts and Bachen, 1981). Similar influences on general judgments have been found when the experiences of friends, neighbours and relatives are considered.

Citing several studies about media effects and crime, Tyler (1980) and Lavrakas et al. (1983) conclude: (1) mass media do not influence personal fears about crime; (2) judgments of the rate of crime are influenced by the mass media; and (3) amount of crime reported in newspapers correlated with readers fear of crime in areas other than their neighbourhoods.

O'Keefe (1985) suggests that recent research on campaigns lacks consistent “conceptual or theoretical perspectives”. He argues that it is critical for future investigations of campaigns to consider “contingencies under which different media messages result in different effects [at different times].”

Several studies suggest either that media have effects on individuals and social behaviour or that public information campaigns have significant salient effects on audiences (Atkin 1979; Chaffee, 1981; Douglas et al., 1970 Hanneman

Thus media impact on the crime coverage has several salient features.

2.3 CRIME COVERAGE IN MASS MEDIA

Crime reports dominate coverage in any mass media. The wide spectrum of news, which comes under the fold of crime, is wide and large. Most headlines of newspapers even spark alarm among the readers. The visual impact on the readers is more when stories are published with photographs.

Crime is a major concern among members of the public and that it has a significant influence upon public behavior, the general quality of life in local communities, and the quality of life in the nation as a whole.

Hart (1970) studied the use of foreign news in Ohio metropolitan dailies, used eighteen issues to represent a three-month period. Hartman et al. (1972) in their analysis of The Times, Guardian, Express and Mirror have found that crime along with immigration and race relations were the most frequent subjects in these newspapers.

Dijk (1990), in his study on the Racism and the Press has stated that based on studies and on his own research on content analysis of tens and thousands of news
items in many newspapers in several countries, covering several decades, has
concluded that the category of crime or violence was always among the five most
frequent issues in ethnic coverage.

A study of "Sex and violence on the American Newstand" by a sociologist
Ottorson (1963) provides a comparison of different segments of the print media.
The researchers analysed issues of 55 representative magazines and found a total of
2524 incidents of violence and 1261 incidents dealing with sexual themes. Police
and detective magazines contained an average of 77 incidents of violence per issue
and 15 involving sex.

The researchers also studied 10 representative metropolitan newspapers. The
researchers found that on the average they devoted five per cent of their news space
to stories dealing with incidents of violence, including accidents and war as well as
crime. One, the New York Daily News, used a third of its news space for such
stories; the other nine used from 2 to 8 per cent. The Daily News devoted 3.3 per
cent of the space to subjects dealing with sex, the other nine less than 1 per cent.

Lazarsfeld and Katz (1985) suggested that the course of public debate on
social issues and the emergence of spokespersons and leaders on those issues may
depend in large part on the media’s choice of news sources. Abernethy and Franke
(1996) in empirical studies there is strong support for that best part of the 'primary
definition' argument which stresses how the media's use of 'authoritative and efficient sources' leads to a 'cumulative pattern that determines availability and suitability' and makes the public official the most frequent and regular source. As explained elsewhere research is "a careful critical enquiry or examination in seeking facts by diligent investigation".

Sigal (1973) found that 78 percent of 2,850 domestic and foreign stories that appeared on sample dates over twenty years in the New York Times and the Washington post involved official sources. This is a little tricky, because official sources are often inescapable: if a crime is committed, a reported pretty much has to talk with the cops, and that makes his story one with an official source. And the cumulative total is deceiving.

Gans (1979) observed that “unique crime stories are sought after by journalists to the extent that a 'journalistic crime wave' may be established. Gans suggestion that, “Even if journalists continue to emphasise dramatic crimes, they can 'tag' stories by reporting the rates for such crimes, thus providing a balance to the exaggeration that accompanies highlighting."
2.4 IMPACT OF CRIME REPORTING IN MASS MEDIA

2.4.1 Crime related beliefs among the public and the reporters

Though crime reports is bound to kindle human interest, the lives of the victims of crime will never the same. Thus media plays a pivotal role in crime related beliefs among the public. Even reporters who give crime reports take necessary precautions and there have been instances of reporters playing the role of a social activist at the crime spot by helping victims.

In considering the origin of crime related beliefs past research has emphasised the role of personal victimisation in the formation of citizen beliefs about crime (Dubow et al., 1978). Although it is natural to focus on the influence of direct victimisation experience on crime related beliefs and behaviours, social psychologists have noted that direct experiences are only one of two potential influences on such judgments and behaviours. The other potential influence is socially transmitted information about crime acquired through social networks and mass media. Social psychologists have argued that beliefs about the environment—such as crime risk judgments or estimates of the rate of crime—are determined through the integration of personal and socially transmitted experiences (Campbell, 1961; Ross, 1977; Tyler, 1980).
There are two types of indirect experience that might relied upon in forming risk judgments-informal social contacts with neighbours, family, or friends or mass media exposure to crime through television, radio, newspapers, and so on. Both reflect the aggregation of experiences with crime across people (Tyler, 1980; 1984), and hence, provide information about greater potential value in risk assessment than the experience of any particular individual.

Furstenberg (1971) noted that citizen reactions to crime could occur on two levels- personal and social. On the personal level citizens were concerned about their own vulnerability to victimisation-being the victim of a crime. Such concern typically has been labelled “fear of crime” and separated into two distinct, but related, aspects; a cognitive estimate of estimated future risk and an affective “worry” about victimisation (Baumer 1980; Fowler and Mangione, 1974).

On the social level crime risk concerns reflect a belief that either in the neighbourhood, city, or at the national level, crime and violence are problems that need to be controlled or reduced.

Studies of public opinion consistently have found that both fear of crime and concerns about crime as a social problem are high. Large proportions of the public are– especially city dwellers- expressed fear of personal crime victimisation (Skogan, 1981) and many Americans also view crime as an important social
problem requiring a local (neighbourhood or city) or national response (Furstenberg, 1971; Garofalo, 1977).

In an examination of citizen views about crime conducted in Baltimore, Furstenberg (1971) found that fear of crime and concern about crime as a social problem were distinct. More recently, Tyler (1980) found that judgments of personal crime risks were not related to judgments of the frequency of crime in samples of citizens in Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and San Francisco. Similarly, Gordon et al (1980) found that estimates of the risk of rape among women were not related to estimates of the number of rapes occurring. Furthermore, this separation of personal and social judgments is not confined to beliefs about crime. Tyler and Cook (1984) have shown that beliefs about personal risks and about the seriousness of social problems are distinct across a range of social and natural risks.

There is also evidence for the separation of personal and social level beliefs about crime and citizen beliefs on why crime occurs. Kidder and Cohn (1979), distinguishing between the two types of casual judgments (person-based and society-based), suggest that citizens will blame crime on either criminals or underlying social conditions. Tyler and Rasinski (1983) found that casual judgments on the personal and societal levels were unrelated—citizens blaming crime on social conditions did not draw the personal level conclusion that criminals
or victims were not to blame for crime nor did those who blamed criminals and victims not blamed social conditions, instead the types of judgments were independent.

To the extent that individuals are motivated to have accurate beliefs about risks such as crime, or about the nature of society, more generally, they should rely upon their knowledge, about the general nature of social problems such as crime. This is the case because crime victimisation is a low-probability high-consequent event—an event that has major consequences when it occurs but does not happen very often to any particular person. Consequently, citizens are unlikely to have enough personal crime experience with which to form accurate knowledge about personal risks. As a result citizens should rely on their general knowledge of the world. On the other hand, to rely on others, citizens would have to see others and their experiences as germane to their situation. This required an acceptance of a sense of similarity to others that violates important protective cognitions about personal uniqueness.

Recent research in social psychology suggests that people generally exaggerate their uniqueness, seeing themselves as more unique than actually the case Funder (1980) in particular people exaggerate their abilities to perform tasks and avoid risks that befall others (Einhorn and Hogarth, 1978). The research has shown that drivers exaggerate their abilities relative to their other drivers (Slovik et
al, 1977; Svenson, 1981) and that people generally exaggerate their health (Larwood, 1978) and intelligence (Wyle, 1979). Also people unrealistically discount the likelihood that negative events would happen to them (Perloff, 1983; Weinstein, 1980), thinking that they will in some way avoid the misfortunes that befall others.

Most people think they are not vulnerable to crime. That blinds them to their own crime risks (LeJeune and Alex, 1973). For example when asked to assess their chances of becoming robbery and burglary victims in their own neighbourhoods, compared to the chances of their neighbours, 75 per cent of the respondents who felt that their chances differed from their neighbours viewed themselves as less likely to be victimised than their neighbours (Lavrakas et al., 1983).

Brickman (1972) stated that although it might initially seem strange that citizens would separate their personal and social judgment, in fact this separation illustrates the interplay of two basic psychological motivations that guide the formation of personal beliefs, the desire to have correct beliefs about the world and the desire to preserve personally comforting illusions about oneself and the environment.

Lane (1962) suggested that citizen “morselize” their experience, failing to build from their experiences to larger conclusions about the political and social
systems. These findings support the suggestions that citizens are not drawing social or political implications from their own experiences and fears. Instead, they are reacting to those experiences and fears in personal ways, by altering their own behaviour to reduce the risk of crime victimisation.

Tamborini et al. (1984) found that “exposure to a television documentary on crime influenced certain perceptions while leaving other associated judgments unaffected”. They concluded the following: with regard to the societal versus personal - level distinctions, the demonstrations of an effect on general perceptions of crimes and or fear for one's mate (without influencing personal fear) supports the notion that information associated with societal level judgment is segregated in processing and does not influence personal perceptions.

Tyler and Rasinski (1983) offer one explanation for differential media effects on personal and society levels. They suggest that “citizens may adapt less effectively to crime because they see themselves as unique;” they do not internalise mass media experiences but instead “may be compensated by other psychological benefits”.

2.4.2 Fear of crime through mass media

It is commonly believed that media reports of crime are important in maintaining public fears. Certainly the volume of crime reporting in the media is
quite high (Gordon and Heath, 1981; Grabber, 1977). None the less recent studies suggest that media reports about crime are not an important influence on personal fears. Instead, personal fear is generated primarily with crime and experiences within ones social network, their research stated.

A survey of residents of Los Angeles (Tyler, 1980) and of residents of San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Chicago (Skogan and Maxfield, 1981; Tyler, 1980) drew similar conclusions – no relationship was found between the number of mass media crime reports recalled and fear of crime. Those who were aware of more crimes reported in the media were not more afraid of being victimised by crime. Instead, fear of crime was determined by personal victimisation experience and knowledge of experiences of friends, relatives and neighbours.

Studies examining the relationship between the amount of television watched and fear of crime suggest that, when background differences associated with heavy television viewing are controlled for, those who view more television are not more afraid of crime victimisation (Doob and MacDonald, 1979; Hughes, 1980).

Heath (1984) and Heath and Petraitis (1984) examined the effect of newspaper reading on crime judgments and found that the amount of crime presented in the newspapers the respondents read was related to the fear of crime in areas outside their neighbourhood. In this work the media was found to influence
personal fears, but only personal fears about remote areas with which subjects have little personal experience. In the case of personal neighbourhood fears, no media effects were found.

Heath (1990), a university psychologist, analyzed crime content in 36 newspapers and assessed attitudes about crime in interviews with readers. She concluded readers devour crime for something more than titillation. She wrote: “The more newspapers print articles about criminals in other places running amok, picking victims at random, and trampling social norms, the more secure readers feel in their own environments. In essence, readers like the grass to be browner on the other side of the fence, and the browner the better. Far from frightening, reports of grisly, bizarre crimes in other cities are reassuring. Readers are still exposed to some reports of crime that occur locally, but the severity and outrageousness of such crimes appear to be judged in comparison with crimes from other places”. When crimes are occurring on the local turf, however, the tables are turned. ... Readers do not appreciate criminals choosing their victims at random (or, at least, media accounts that make it appear so). Reports of crime that lack rhyme or reason are frightening. If the victim apparently did nothing to precipitate the crime, then the reader can do nothing to avoid the crime. If, on the other hand, the victim took some action that made him or her more vulnerable to the victimization, then the reader can avoid that action and presumably remain safe. The unexpected, the
quirky, the heinous crimes that are reported in newspapers increase fear of crime among readers in that crime locality, even if the reporting style itself is nonsensational”.

At the center of Heath’s theories is the sociological concept known as ‘perceived control’. For peace of mind, we must perceive the authorities have the upper hand on lawlessness. Police reporters provide the public with stories that serve as updates about the degree to which police are able to maintain control.

That fear of crime does not have political implications are similar to the conclusion of several recent studies that personal experience and concerns have limited political impact. In contrast to fear, concern about crime, as a social problem has been found to influence neighbourhood group based activities (Barnes, 1979).

Considering direct personal victimisation experience generally has been found that personal experience with crime, influences fear of crime (DuBow et al., 1978; Lavrakas, 1982; Skogan and Maxfield, 1981; Tyler, 1980). On the other hand, victimisation has not been found to be linked to estimates of the crime rate (Tyler, 1980), or to beliefs about the seriousness of the crime problem (Furstenberg, 1971).

Studies of social networks suggest that increasing informal social communications about crime can influence personal fears (Skogan and Maxfield,
1981; Tyler, 1980). Evaluations of mass media campaigns on the other hand suggest that they have only a weak impact on personal fears. For example, Mendelsohn et al. (1981) found that only 13 per cent of respondents indicated attitude change as a result of the national media campaign.

2.4.3 Behavioural responses to crime among the public

Several researchers have proposed categorisations for differentiating among various behavioural responses to crime. These include distinctions between “public-minded” and “private-minded” behaviours (Schneider and Schneider, 1978); “avoidance” and “mobilisation” behaviour (Furstenberg, 1972); and “crime-prevention” and “victimisation-prevention” behaviour (Kidder and Cohn, 1979). Each of these categorisations as such develops from differentiating among various motivational states that lead citizens to engage in different types of behavioural responses to crime. Although theoretically reasonable, these distinctions have not, in practice, reliably differentiated various behavioural responses to crime (Lavrakas et al., 1981; Lavrakas and Lewis, 1980).

An alternative approach to classifying behavioural responses has been empirical, examining the actual relationship of various behavioural responses within natural settings. Based on a number of such studies (Lavrakas et al., 1980; Lavrakas and Lewis, 1980; Lavrakas and Hertz, 1982; Lavrakas, 1982; Lavrakas, 1985) a
reliable set of behavioural categories has been developed. This set of categories divides behaviours into three types; personal protection behaviours; household protection behaviours; and neighbourhood / community anti-crime responses.

Personal anti-crime responses include all behaviours used by citizens to protect their own person. Although such behaviours clearly include the purchase of self-defense aids and other active self-defense strategies, the most pervasive personal anti-crime response used by citizens is that of restricting ones owns behaviour (eg. Not going out alone at night, avoiding certain places, driving to nearby destinations rather than walking etc.). Thus, behavioural restrictions are the prototype of personal anticrime responses (Lavrakas, 1982) with moving out of a neighbourhood being one of the most extreme variations.

Household anti-crime responses include all behaviours and strategies used by citizens to prevent illegal entry into their homes. Most of these specific responses come under the rubric of “access control” (Lavrakas, 1981) and include responses aimed at creating physical barriers that would be intruders (eg. Double-cylinder deadlocks, window bars, alarm systems, etc), and those that strive to create a psychological barrier by giving a home a lived-in appearance (eg, the use of timers on indoor lights and radios, stopping newspapers and mail deliveries having once grass mowed and sidewalks shoveled during vacations, and getting a “house-sitter” when away).
Finally, neighbourhood/community anti-crime responses include behaviours and strategies that strive to prevent crime from occurring in some specific geographical area by reducing criminal opportunities or by attacking the supposed "root causes" of crime. Those responses aimed at reducing the opportunity would be that a criminal has to successfully complete a victimisation within some given locale range from passive responses (e.g., Whistle STOP and Block Watch programmes) to quite active responses (e.g., citizen patrols and escort programme). Those responses directed at the root causes of crime may include citizen participation in employment, educational and recreational programmes, and most often directed at youth.

In theory citizens could engage in all three types of anti-crime behaviour, in any combination of behaviours, or they could do nothing in response to the problem of crime. There is evidence, however, that citizens tend to engage primarily in personal protective behaviours, with some accompanying home protection responses and some neighbourhood-or community-based responses (Lavrakas et al., 1980). In other words, the various types of behavioural response to crime are relatively independent of each other.

This separation is particularly true in the case of personal protective responses to crime and neighbourhood/community responses. These tend to be
quite different and mostly independent anti-crime responses (Lavrakas et al., 1980). Because citizens groups often encourage the use of anti-crime measures for the home, there is a weak positive relationship between home protection and neighbourhood/community protection. Similarly, because those who strive for personal protection often retreat to their homes for safety, there is a weak positive correlation between some home protection measures and some personal protection measures. This does not extend, however, to the relationship between community participation and personal protection. In fact, research suggest that citizens tend to participate in neighbourhood or community-wide programmes due to "public minded" or "civic" motives that are related to social class or to general participation in groups, rather than to any special concerns about personal crime risks.

Bordiga and Brekke (1981), in his study have stated that individuals often do not draw implications about how a particular individual whether themselves or someone else will behave from general knowledge about the frequency of behaviours in the population.

Although citizens may adapt less effectively to crime because they see themselves as unique and as a result, do not draw personal conclusions from general beliefs of mass media experiences, this loss in adaptive effectiveness may be compensated for by other psychological benefits.
Figure 1

The antecedents of behavioural responses of crime

Beliefs about personal risk (i.e. fear)

Personal victimization experience

Social networks

Mass media reports about crime

Beliefs about the social problem of crime (i.e. concern)

Household protection behaviours

Personal protection behaviours

Neighbourhood/community responses to crime

The model presented in above Figure is a description of the general relationship between personal and societal beliefs and behaviours, it is no doubt true that there are circumstances under which people do draw personal implications from social information and circumstances under which people's general beliefs are influenced by their personal experience and belief (Tyler and Cook, 1984). One example is the influence of such concerns on household protection behaviour.

2.4.4 Effect of mass media on crime prevention

The threat of violent action and the dangers inherently involved in violent acts conveyed by the media ought to provide the motivation for individuals to adopt personal protection behaviours.

Media messages about crime fill the printed page and news broadcasting. Gans (1979) comments on “highlighting” of crime notwithstanding creating a realistic sense of danger may prove useful to promote remedial legislations and personal protection behaviours.

The Advertising council conducted a national campaign to promote crime prevention as a result of crime reporting in mass media. Produced under the sponsorship of the Crime Prevention Coalition, televised public service announcements (PSAs), radio spots, magazine and newspaper advertisements used an animated dog. The campaign was conducted in three phases: (1) suggesting tips
about protecting homes and property; (2) urging audiences to observe and report suspected criminal behaviour; (3) Organising neighbourhood and local groups to support community crime prevention activities.

O'Keefe (1985) examined the effects of the campaign with data collected from a national sample survey and a three-city panel survey. He found "that the campaign had marked influences on individuals' cognizance, attitudes and behaviours regarding crime prevention". Specifically, he found that individuals exposed to the campaign knew more about crime prevention, more about how effective citizen's prevention efforts were, and were more confident about being able to protect themselves, than those not exposed to the campaign.

O'Keefe (1985) observation about media effects on cognition, "among the less threatened and at risk, the campaign appears to have done a better job of stimulating cognitive and attitudinal changes, along with some action-taking as well."

In another study, O'Keefe (1984) found that the amount of time spent viewing televised crime entertainment programmes was unrelated to nearly all of the crime perceptions and attitudes examined however, the extent of attendance to crime related television news content was significantly associated with certain kinds
of citizen orientations towards crime, perceived likelihood of being a victim of violent crime, and the extent of worry over being victimised.

Einhorn and Hogarth (1978) offer an explanation; "an exaggeration of one's own ability to deal with danger of crime may reduce the impact of information about threat to others on fear of one's own safety".

2.4.5 The agenda setting effect of crime news

The notion that the press may influence prosecutorial decision making has clear parallels with the familiar agenda-setting hypothesis, which suggests that the relative prominence of an issue in the news media will influence how salient that issue is to members of the audience (McCombs and Shaw, 1972; McLod et al., 1974; Becker et al., 1975; Shaw and McCombs, 1977).

Most agenda-setting research has focused on possible effects on ordinary citizens. Only a few studies have explicitly tested the hypothesis that the press may help set the agendas of public officials. Gormley (1975) found mixed evidence for an agenda-setting effect of newspapers on state legislators. Lambeth (1978) concluded that the press helped set energy policy makers' agendas. In a study notable for the fact that it used a direct, rather than a self-reported measure of public – official behaviour, Golberg et al. (1980) found that press content set the agenda for Jimmy Carter's 1978 state of the union speech. Swank et al. (1982) suggested,
but did not test, the hypothesis that newspapers contribute to the salience of crime on local political agendas. Cook et al. (1983) found that a televised investigative report changed the agenda not only of citizens but also of elected officials.

On the other hand, Walker (1977) concluded that for three safety-related issues, the agenda of the U.S. Senate set the agenda for the New York Times. And Protess et al. (1985) found that the only agenda affected by a newspaper investigative series was future press coverage of the subject of the series.

In addition to the agenda-setting literature, research into reporter-source interactions contains considerable speculation (and some anecdotal evidence) suggesting that journalists’ decisions about which stories to play up can influence the behaviour of public officials (see, e.g., Matthews, 1960; Cohen, 1963; Dunn, 1969; Weiss, 1974; Miller, 1978; and Peters, 1980).

2.5 CRIME REPORTING IN TAMIL NADU

Crime reporting has a history in Tamil Nadu. Though it is hard to imagine now a newspaper or satellite channel not having a specialised crime reporter, until a few decades ago newspapers did not think it important enough to have specialised crime reporters.
Reporters themselves were basically stenographers and selected on their typewriting and shorthand skills. Apart from covering political meetings and major issues they did not think it important to have reporters for the crime beat. Investigative journalism did not figure in their main agenda of newspapers in Tamil Nadu (Sadasivan, 1964).

However, the need for specialized crime reporters was slowly felt during the late sixties. The growth of the Dravidian parties, the change in the political arena, political agitations and arrests gave a new dimension for reporting.

No longer could reporters sit at meetings with their shorthand books and report about meetings in their newspaper columns. There was a growing need for more information about specific events, especially those which involved prominent personalities. The growth of magazine journalism and the interest in reading among the public added to the pressure on newspaper editors to give more coverage on sensational crimes.

Apart from the report itself there was a need for give more reports on the crime itself. For instance the shooting incident involving matinee idol M.G.Ramachandran, who later became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu occupied large newspaper space.
The fierce competition among especially Tamil newspapers and the need to give suitable coverage among the English newspapers again brought the role of crime reporters into focus. However, it was only in the early seventies that newspapers took at crime reporting in the real sense. That is reporters were asked to concentrate on issues which affected the common man.

Reporters were assigned to cover the City Police Commissioner's office, hospitals to gather information about accident deaths, visit police stations and metropolitan courts for news coverage. The increase in the number of pages and the need for human interest stories, forced newspapers to ensure there were reporters who had regular contact with the police, as crime news was good fodder for any newspaper given its human interest value.

The reporters who regularly assembled at the City Police Commissioner's office had a room allotted for them to share and gather news. The police also found the pressroom an easy window to reach newspapers with their views.

It became a habit for the city police commissioner to regularly meet the press and give briefings. While initially the briefings were in case of an emergency situation such as a bandh call, election exercise or give information about the detection of a sensational case, soon it became a weekly briefing. Even now the city police commissioner invariably meets the press every Thursday at the press room.
This could also be seen as a historic event with crime reporters being given a special status among the police force. As invariably, police personnel refuse to share details about crimes with the media.

Custodial death, sensational murders including the one involving Jayaprakash who was involved in a multiple murder case, killing a whole family and the exploits of an autorickshaw driver, Shankar in the eighties forced newspapers to have a regular person to cover police stories. This was the beginning of reporters being recognized as crime reporters. Shankar was involved in several cases of kidnapping young girls and later murdering them after physically exploiting them. The victims were buried and buildings were constructed above them.

Even as crime reporters were making their presence felt in the newsroom and they were becoming an integral part of the reporting team, the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the former prime minister of India at Sriperumbudur in the outskirts of Chennai, had the place of a crime reporter firmly saddled in the newsrooms of all newspapers and magazines in Tamil Nadu.

Rajiv Gandhi was killed by a human bomb in May 1991 in one of the most dastardly crimes in modern times. The world had not heard of a ‘human bomb’ assassination till the death of Rajiv Gandhi. The role of a crime reporter changed
dramatically overnight. He was suddenly the most wanted person in the newsroom. Even small information such as the post-mortem report of Rajiv Gandhi had an international audience. The eyes of the world media was on Tamil Nadu and the crime reporter took the centre stage.

Crime reporters who received a special status also competed with their rivals in giving ‘exclusive crime reports’. It signaled a new era for crime reporters. Their roles were cemented in newspapers and no newspaper or magazine could imagine doing business without a crime reporter.

The exploits of notorious forest brigand Veerappan who hides himself in the dense forests bordering Tamil Nadu and Karnataka also focused the need for crime reporters in districts. Though, most newspapers have specialized crime reporters in big cities where they have a newsroom, in districts invariably only one correspondent has to gather all news.

However, reporters in the city give adequate support for the district correspondents. Reporters manage to get news from the control room or senior officials who usually are stationed at the capital.

Crime reports now form the integral part of any newsroom. Apart from its news value and high readership, the mushrooming of ‘investigative journals’ and
fierce competition from satellite channels have all made crime journalism an important aspect of daily journalism.

Now most newspapers even have a crime team to handle sensational cases, realizing its huge potential among the readers.

2.6 METHODOLOGICAL REVIEW

2.6.1 Mass communication research

The definition of mass communication research is generally the scientific study of mass communications behaviour of human beings, usually in current situations requiring the gathering of primary quantitative information. It also includes the study of the communicators, their media, and the content of their messages (Emery et al., 1971).

Communication research may be categorised generally within the four aspects of the communications process, the communicator, the message, the channel, and the audience. Extensive research has been done in each area, with the ultimate goal being the explanation or the determination of communication effects.

Communication research

Hovland (1958) studies on the effects of prestige of the source and order of presentation of persuasive arguments are classic examples of communicator
research. Communicator research may compare different methods of a single communicator, one individual with another, or one institutional sour, such as a magazine with another source.

Message Research

The effects of different forms of the same message may be compared through variations in style, length, degree of difficulty and the like with attention paid to comprehensibility, interest, and attention value. We often vary our personal conversations as to complexity and word usage in terms of some determination of the sophistication of the intended receiver. With scientific content analysis we can easily determine the relative degree of difficulty of any message, and we can make inferences about the intent of the communicator as well.

Channel research

The channel through which a message is transmitted is highly related to the effectiveness of the message. Advertisers are especially interested in determining which media can best deliver their messages and in knowing something about the people who comprise the potential audience of a medium.
Audience Research

All communications research, in the end, attempt to determine something about audiences. Communicators need to know the behaviour, interests, habits, potential, wishes, tastes, attitudes, and opinions of the people whom they seek to reach. Of great interest is the extent to which the messages about products or ideas change the opinions of people. Knowing the number and description of people in a medium's audience is especially useful to advertisers to help them to reach the right kind of person for their products.

The object of mass communication is to affect human behaviour and attitudes. The object of communications is to find out how and to what degree human behaviour and attitudes are affected by mass communications.

Hachten (1960) studied Sunday Newspapers published from 1939 through 1959, employed Stempel's reasoning. Hachten drew only three issues to represent each year in the study, reasoning that if 12 issues are an adequate sample of a universe of 312, three issues should be adequate sample for a Sunday paper with 52 annual editions. This study exemplifies the study of small sample.

Markham (1965) in his study of foreign news in the United States and South American press employed a sample of 30 issues of each publication studied to represent a three-month period. Scientists and humanists, content analysis has been
marked by a diversity of purpose, subject matter and technique. It has been used for purposes as different as inferring enemy intention from wartime propaganda and settling questions of disputed authorship.

Stemple (1980) attacked the problem of determining adequate sample size for the classification of subject matter published in daily newspapers. To investigate this question, a single subject matter category for a single newspaper for an entire year was studied, thus getting a universe parameter to compare samples.

2.6.2 Review based on content analysis

Berelson (1971) has provided an extensive outline on the uses of content analysis in communication research. It is far more concerned with conveying a critical approach to current literature on the subject. It deals with various techniques to be adopted by researchers of content analysis.

Budd et al. (1967) work although published in 1967, the decision of the authors to focus on recent trends in content analysis keeps their insights relevant even to modern audiences. The book focuses on specific uses and methods of content analysis with an emphasis on its potential for researching human behaviour. It is also geared toward the beginning researcher and breaks down the process of designing a content analysis study into six steps.
Carley (1992) has done tremendous work in comparison techniques of content analysis. His expertise coding choices for textual analysis: A comparison of content analysis and map analysis. Carley has compared the coding choices necessary to conceptual analysis and relational analysis, especially focusing on cognitive maps. He has also discussed concept coding rules needed for sufficient reliability and validity in a Content Analysis study in his book, Coding Choices for Textual Analysis. In his other work he has given way for computer based approach to content analysis, which is of great relevance in the computer era.

Carney (1972) introduces and explains in detail the concept and practice of content analysis. Carney defines it; traces its history; discusses how content analysis works and its strengths and weaknesses; and explains through examples and illustrations how one goes about doing a content analysis. Duncan (1989) proposes using content analysis as a research technique in health education. A review of literature relating to applications of this technique and a procedure for content analysis are presented in his work.

Krippendorf (1980) work is one of the most widely quoted resources in many of the current studies of Content Analysis. Recommended as another good, basic resource, as Krippendorf presents the major issues of Content Analysis in much the same way as Weber (1975).
Moeller (1963) has done tremendous research on content analysis. His works are good reference for basic content analysis. He has discussed the options of sampling, categories, direction, measurement, and the problems of reliability and validity in setting up a content analysis. Perhaps better as a historical text due to its age. Weber (1990) has given a good introduction to basic content analysis. The techniques are good and time tested. It is ideal for researchers pursuing studies in this area to adopt his techniques.

Sahu and Biswanath (1965) has compared the news and views concerning India in the New York Times and the News and Views Concerning the United States published in the Times of India". In his unpublished thesis at the University of Iowa, he has employed a rotating sample for selecting issues of the two newspapers to be studied over an eight-month period (first month, first week, second month, second week; and so on). He also employs a modification of Buds attention score in addition to space measurement. The attention score involved size of headline, number of lines in the headline, size of headline type among other measures including tag lines and any accompanying pictures.
Conclusion

For the past several years, social scientists have conducted a number of studies directed towards understanding the nature of citizen beliefs about the social problems of crime and violence and citizen behavioral responses to these problems. This interest is reflected in studies based on public opinion polls.

Several researches have been conducted in the area of the influence of mass media specially television on the audience which includes its impact on children, teenagers and even parents. Studies on newspapers have proved that crime stories have not only dominated newspapers in India but around the world. Many of these studies have mainly focused on crimes relating to racial tensions.