CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.1 CASE STUDY 1: THE COVERAGE OF TIRUNELVELI MASSACRE IN TAMIL DAILIES

4.2 CASE STUDY 2: THE COVERAGE OF DALITS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS IN TAMIL DAILIES

4.3 CASE STUDY 3: THE COVERAGE OF EVERYDAY REPORTING OF DALITS IN TAMIL DAILIES

4.4 CASE STUDY 4: THE COVERAGE OF DALITS’ PARTICIPATION IN 14TH LOK SABHA ELECTIONS IN TAMIL DAILIES

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4.1 CASE STUDY 1: THE COVERAGE OF TIRUNELVELI MASSACRE IN TAMIL DAILIES

FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE OF NEWS

In *Dinamani*, out of 30 days, news appeared in 13 days. The maximum number of articles was published from 24 to 28 July. 46 news items were published during the period of study - July 24 - Aug 23. Only one editorial and 9 letters to the editors concerning this incident were published in *Dinamani*.

In *Dina Thanthi*, only 11 days news stories appeared during the study period. In *Dina Thanthi*, only on 25, 26 and 29 maximum number of articles was published. 26 news items were published during the study period.

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS OCCURRENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=30</td>
<td>N=30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dina Thanthi</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>43.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinamani</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE 1

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS OCCURRENCES

Dina Thanthi    Dinamani
SPACE ALLOTTED FOR THE STUDY

Space devoted for a specific incident is considered an important variable in content analysis. For the coverage of the incident – Tirunelveli Massacre, an average space of 225.88 col/cm was allotted in Dina Thanthi while Dinamani has allotted an average space of 97.12 col/cm for this incident.

Dinamani has published 18 one column stories. Only four news items were spread over 5 and above 5 columns. Dina Thanthi has published only five news items with 5 and above 5 columns. Remaining 21 news items in Dina Thanthi were published in 2-4 columns.

TABLE 2

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS ITEMS WITH COLUMNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Columns</th>
<th>No of news items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dinamani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 and above 5 columns</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One column and box news</td>
<td>17+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 2 – 4 columns</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE 2

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS ITEMS WITH COLUMNS

- No of news items Dinamani
- No of news items Dina Thanthi

0 5 10 15 20 25

5 and above 5 columns One column and box news Between 2 - 4 columns
The front page continues to play a key role as the showcase for the newspaper and its contents (Garcia, 1981). Front page serves as the index of the newspaper. In Dinamani, only seven times news about this incident hit the front page. In Dina Thanthi, only three times it appeared in the front page. Among 26 news items published in Dina Thanthi, 20 news items were published on the first six pages and only six items published in the pages 7 – 14. In Dinamani, only six news items were published between 7-8 pages. Remaining 40 news items were published on the first six pages.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PLACEMENT CATEGORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement categories</th>
<th>Dina Thanthi (N=11)</th>
<th>Dinamani (N=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front Page</td>
<td>27.28%</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other pages</td>
<td>72.72%</td>
<td>46.15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE 3

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PLACEMENT CATEGORIES

- Dina Thanthi
- Dinamani
PHOTOGRAPHS

Eight photographs portraying the incident were published in Dina Thanthi during the study period. Among the eight photographs, only one photo depicted procession, two of dead bodies, one of Justice Karthikeyan, one each of Moopanar, Police, fasting of representatives of TMC alliance, and meeting. No photos of police mishandling, or lathi charge was published in Dina Thanthi. Nine photos were published in Dinamani. Among them four photos revealed police mishandling. They were the photos with the followings captions: protestors shielding the leaders from the police stoning during the PT, TMC protest which turned violent, SAF indulged in pelting stone, a woman Police carrying a dead body of a child who fell into the river and died because of police attack, The PT, TMC volunteers jumped and escaped due to police Lathi charge, women police dragging a woman who jumped into the river. The other photos are one each of Justice Mohan, Moopanar and two photos of fasting of TMC alliance.
TABLE 4

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THEMES OF THE NEWS STORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Dina Thanthi</th>
<th>Dinamani</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incident related items</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Minister’s views</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moopanar</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMC and PT alliance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Security</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishnaswamy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Balakrishnan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights Report</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political parties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In regard to publishing the news stories concerning the incident, Dina Thanthi has published only three news items on reporting the event, five on Government announcements, and four each on political parties, Krishnaswamy’s statements, Moopanar’s statements and visits during the study period. Similarly two items each were on Chief Minister’s views and Police Security related themes. Dinamani has published eight news items were published with the incident theme. Six items each were on the themes of Chief Minister’s views and TMC and PT alliances. Five stories on Moopanar’s statements and four on the theme of political parties, three on Krishnaswamy’s statements, two stories each on Police Security related views and Doctor’s statement, one each on interpretation of the incident and editorial. None of the themes were concerning the basic root-cause of the issue.
FIGURE 4

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THEMES OF THE NEWS STORIES

- Political parties
- Interpretative
- S. Balakrishnan
- Doctors
- TMC and PT alliance
- Chief Minister’s views
- Incident related items

Dina Thanthi • Dinamani
HEADLINES

Hughes' (1995) study utilizes the New York Times headlines as its tool for content analysis. The Hughes study points out those headlines represent a good reduced version of longer text ideal for content analysis. In this study the terms - death, mutiny, violence, drowning - were used from Oxford Dictionary and Kriyaa Thamizhaharadhi. The words in Tamil were translated into English for the analysis.

Definitions as follows:

**Death** - the end of life, dying, the state of being dead

**Murder** – the unlawful premediated killing of a human being by another

**Massacre** – a general slaughter (of persons, occasionally of animals), murder (esp. A large number of people) cruelly or violently

**Revolt** – a rise in rebellion, affect with loathing; nauseate (was revolted by the thought of it). A mood of protest or defiance

**Rebellion** – open resistance to authority, esp. organized armed resistance to an established government

**Drown** – kill or be killed by submersion in liquid, submerge, flood, drench

**Violence** – behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage or kill. Physical or emotional force or energy.

*Dina Thanthi* described the Tirunelveli Massacre as Nellai *kalavaram*. It means revolt, rebellion or riot. In *Dina Thanthi*, 15 times among 26 headlines, it was described as Nellai *Kalavaram*. Two times it was portrayed as Nellai incident. The headlines with the
sentence *aatril moozhgi saavu* occurred 6 times in *Dina Thanthi*. It means drowned to dead in river.

*Dinamani* described the Tirunelveli Massacre as Nellai *Sambavam*. It means incident, happening or occurrence. *Dinamani* also used the term ‘Nellai violence’.

In *Dinamani*, 13 times it was portrayed as Nellai incident. One time it was portrayed as Nellai *kalavara sambavam*. Six times the term Police lathi charge were used. One time it was used Nellai *vanmurai* i.e., violence. Only once the headline was published without mentioning the police and it was “The death toll of those jumped into the river increased to 14 in Nellai”.

**EDITORIAL**

Editorial pages are traditionally associated with a newspaper’s sense of dignity and credibility (Garcia, 1981). Editorial is the conscience of a newspaper. *Dinamani* published its editorial on July 27 titled *Nellaiyil ellai meeral*. That means infringing permissible limit leading to law and order problem in Nellai. This editorial revealed that the processionists infringed the permissible limit. To prevent the protestors, the police force also attacked them brutally by lathi charge, tear gas and firing. As a sequel to this, consecutive events like stone pelting, revolt and other events took place that culminated in the death toll.

It also justified the views of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister that the Tea estate is owned by the private and there is no option for the Government except the release of the agitated workers including women. It also stressed that it is the democratic right to take a procession. It also argued that if they are arrested and released in the evening, they could continue their agitation and hence it is natural to put them in prison. Also it reminded of
the judgment of the High Court regarding the norms prescribed for the conduct of procession that the organizers are responsible for any consequences even though they are unarmed. If the organizers have followed the guidelines properly they could have prevented the loss of lives. Also it stated that despite the tight police security, this incident happened. Instead of simply relying on the strength of the police force they would have acted wisely to control the emotional protestors. The editorial gently agrees with the mistake of the police force.

The editorial of Dinamani echoed the Government’s stand point. “In a statement made on July 27, Chief Minister Karunanidhi charged that the marchers turned to violence and tried to forcibly enter the Collectorate. This was a crude effort to blame the workers for the July 23 massacre” (Jayasekera, 1999). The editorial also mildly pointed out the duty of the police. Although the headlines and the photographs of the paper revealed that the people jumped into the river to escape from the brutal police attack, the editorial didn’t relate the death with the police attack.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

On Aug 4 and 6, 9 letters to the editor appeared on this incident. Among them 3 feedbacks directly attacked the Police mishandling. One feedback reminded that “the tea estate is not a private property. It is a cooperative property. Government leased the land for the private owners. So the Government can take action regarding Manjolai estate workers problem” (Dinamani, August 4, 1999).

According to another reader Venugopal from Thirupathoor, this incident reminded us of the Jallianwalabagh massacre (Dinamani, August 4, 1999). In the words of Shanmugam “Police violation; the loss of lives is due to the uncontrolled behavior of the police force. The attack of Sun TV reporter and Dinamani photographer are the evidence for this.
Hurling of stones by the protestors may be violation of norms, but the retorting stone hurling of police is questionable” (Dinamani, August 4, 1999).

Udhayan from Theni said that “it is the duty of the Tamil Nadu government to find a solution for Manjolai problem. In addition, the innocent women and workers are labeled as terrorists and are jailed. We cannot accept this. It is clearly an unaccepted action” (Dinamani, August 4, 1999). Another one letter questioned why the Government did not release the workers and if they were released before this could have been averted (Paramasivan, 1999). Another five feedbacks supported the police. One reader argued that the police suffered a lot and they lost patience and hence retorted by attacking through pelting of stones. Three letters saw this procession as a caste politics.
4.2 CASE STUDY 2: THE COVERAGE OF DALITS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS IN TAMIL DAILIES

The samples collected in the year 2002 and 2004 were analyzed.

The spaced allotted to this issue in the three newspapers are given below:

**TABLE 5**

SPACE FOR THE COVERAGE OF DALITS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE SAMPLE NEWSPAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dinamani</th>
<th>Dinamalar</th>
<th>Dina Thanthi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2311.34</td>
<td>2517.03</td>
<td>3928.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1210.2</td>
<td>401.33</td>
<td>893.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE 5

SPACE FOR THE COVERAGE OF DALITS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE SAMPLE DAILIES

![Graph showing the space for the coverage of Dalits political participation in sample dailies for 2002 and 2004. The graph compares the coverage in three dailies: Dinamani, Dinamalar, and Dina Thanthi.]
TABLE 6

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS ITEMS PUBLISHED IN THE THREE NEWSPAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dinamani</th>
<th>Dinamalar</th>
<th>Dina Thanthi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of news published and the space allotted for them were comparatively low. In *Dinamani and Dina Thanthi* only 50 news items were published in 2 years. In *Dinamalar*, only 44 news items were published in 2 years.

In *Dinamani*, 3521.54 column/centimeter space was allotted for this issue. In *Dinamalar*, 2918.36 column/centimeter space and in *Dina Thanthi*, 4821.68 column centimeter space was allotted.
FIGURE 6

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS ITEMS PUBLISHED IN
THE THREE NEWSPAPERS
THE USAGE OF LEXICAL CHOICE:

Language also plays a major role in media bias. Language may also be seen as a political factor in mass media. Language may also be a more subtle form of bias. Use of a word with positive or negative connotations rather than a more neutral synonym can form in the audience’s mind a biased picture. (Dijk, )

The panchayat is the word used in the Indian constitution to refer the local body government. In Tamil, they have translated the word panchayat into Ooratchi. That means the rule of the Oor. Here Oor directly reveals the place where the dominant castes are living. Cheris are the place where the Dalits live. The cheris are ostracized from the Oor. The oppression of the Dalits is materially manifested in the physical isolation of Dalit Cheris(quarters) (Gorringe, 2005).
TABLE 7

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE TERMINOLOGY USED TO REFER
LOCAL BODY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Dinamani</th>
<th>Dinamalar</th>
<th>Dina Thanthi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Panchayat</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Ooratchi</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For 6 times, in the same story, they have used both panchayat and Ooratchi. 5 times in Dina Thanthi and 1 time in Dinamalar, they have confused these words.
FIGURE 7

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE TERMINOLOGY USED TO REFER LOCAL BODY
ACCURACY:

Accuracy is the most important ethics followed all over the world. The Press council of India also stresses the need for accuracy in the reporting. There was more confusion in reporting the names of the panchayats. They have reported Kottakachiyenthal in 7 different spellings. They reported Pappapatti in 2 different ways, Keeripatti in 2 different ways and Nattarmangalam in 2 different ways. They did not use a single style in reporting even the name of the Panchayat. Even in reporting a news item, they used one spelling in the headline and another spelling inside the news item. They have made those mistakes for 11 times.

TABLE 8

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF ERRORS COMMITTED BY THE DAILIES WHILE REFERRING THE CONSTITUENCY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dinamani</th>
<th>Dinamalar</th>
<th>Dina Thanthi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

126
FIGURE 8

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF ERRORS COMMITTED BY THE DAILIES WHILE REFERRING THE CONSTITUENCY
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Dinamani</th>
<th>Dinamalar</th>
<th>Dina Thanthi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Dalit</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Adi Dravida</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also they don’t follow a single style in reporting the grass roots. They used Dalit, SC, Adidravida in various news items.
AWARENESS

None of the sample newspaper referred about the untouchability, PCR act and Panchayat act.
FIGURE 9

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE TERMINOLOGIES
USED IN THE SAMPLE DAILIES
FIGURE 10
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE TERMINOLOGIES USED TO REFER DALITS
SENSITIVENESS

Also they show less sensitiveness to this issue. They don’t know even the difference between caste and race. Two times in Dinamalar, they reported Dalit as Dalit race.

REDUNDANCY

TABLE 10

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPETITION OF THE WORD “ELECTION”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dinamani</th>
<th>Dinamalar</th>
<th>Dina Thanthi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most of the words are repeated in all the newspapers. The three newspapers continue to report only the election news. Also it repeatedly used to report the boycott of elections by the village people mainly the dominant caste.
FIGURE 11

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPETITION OF THE WORD "ELECTION"
4.3 CASE STUDY 3: THE COVERAGE OF EVERYDAY REPORTING OF DALITS IN TAMIL DAILIES

The samples were taken for 6 composite weeks. That was 42 days. Out of 42 days, dalit issues were published only for 18 days. In that 18 days only 22 news were covered about dalits and dalit political parties. The total space devoted for dalit news was 640.5 column centimeters.

TABLE 11

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE OCCURRENCES, SPACE, PHOTOGRAPHS IN DINA THANTHI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Space</th>
<th>Photograph</th>
<th>No of stories</th>
<th>No of occurrence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>106.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>190.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>155.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>640.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE 12

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE OCCURRENCES, SPACE, PHOTOGRAPHS IN DINA THANTHI
DINAMALAR

Out of 42 days, dalit news got published only in 17 days. In those 17 days only 24 news items were covered. The total space devoted for dalit news was 523.9 column centimeters.

**TABLE 12**

**FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF OCCURRENCES, SPACE, PHOTOGRAPHS IN DINAMALAR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Space</th>
<th>Photographs</th>
<th>No of News story</th>
<th>No of days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>110.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>114.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>233.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>623.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE 13

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF OCCURRENCES, SPACE, PHOTOGRAPHS IN DINAMALAR
FIGURE 14
SPACE DEVOTED FOR DALIT ISSUES IN THE SAMPLE DAILIES
FIGURE 15
TOTAL NUMBER OF NEWS STORIES REGARDING DALIT ISSUES IN THE SAMPLE DAILIES

![Graph showing the total number of news stories regarding Dalit issues in the sample dailies by month. The graph displays data for March, April, May, and June for two dailies: Dinamalar and Dina Thanthi.]
DINA THANTHI

In *Dina Thanthi*, all the 22 stories published during the six months were about the Dalit political parties. There was no news about the social and economic development of the Dalits. The newspaper ignored the human rights violation of Dalits, their educational, cultural, development and welfare interests of the socially and economically oppressed castes. Out of 22 stories, 10 stories were about the Puthiya Thamizhagam political party leader Dr. Krishnasamy. 2 stories were about the Viduthalai Siruthaigal Amaipu political party leader Thirumavalavan. One story criticizes caste based politics. 2 stories were about Bahujan Samaj Party leader Mayawathi. One news story was about Ambedkar movement’s support to ADMK. One story was about Karunanidhi.
### TABLE 13

**FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS TOPICS APPEARED IN THE TWO TAMIL DAILIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News story</th>
<th>Dina Thanthi</th>
<th>Dina Malar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total news</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political news</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ambedkar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human rights violation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative news</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalits support to other parties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Only because of the 14th Lok sabha election, there was space for dalit news stories.

We should note that in Dina Thanthi out of 22, 18 were dalit political news stories.
FIGURE 16

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS TOPICS APPEARED IN THE TWO TAMIL DAILIES

[Bar chart showing frequency distribution of news topics in Dina Thanthi and Dinamalar]
In Dinamalar, out of 24, 17 were dalit political news stories. If there is no election, then we won’t have these stories also. 3 news stories were negative. In Dina Thanthi, there was no news about education or culture.

NEGATIVE REPORTING

Both the newspapers covered the negative dalit stories. 2 stories were about a dalit leader John Pandian’s criminal case. Another one story was about the stoning of a dalit political party member in ADMK election campaign.

PHOTOGRAPHS

In Dinamalar, only 5 photos were published in 42 days. Dinamalar is famous for its beautiful photographs. But Dalit issues were not documented through photography. One photograph is worth than thousand words. In Dina Thanthi also only 5 photos were published in 42 days. All the photographs were of the Dalit political party leaders Dr.Krishna swamy and Thol.Thirumavalavan. That is because of the parliament election.

HEADLINES

Headlines are very important in lay-out designing. The headlines encourage the people to read the whole story. Dina Thanthi is famous for its banner heads. But the dalit news headlines was almost 0.5 column width. Only one headline in April had 3.2 cm width. In Dina Malar, also the headlines didn’t cross 1 cm width.

THE PLACEMENT OF NEWS

The front page news is almost the highly debated important news. The newspapers almost sell their newspapers using the front page design. It is like the face. Face is the index of
the mind. The front page is also the index of the newspaper policy. But the dalit issues got space in the first page for only one time in Dina Thanthi. In Dina Malar, the dalit issues did not get space in the first page. Only one time it came in the city edition front page.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION STORIES

Human rights are universal. The social, political, economic and cultural rights are all human rights. Those who deprived of social, political, economical and cultural rights are called Dalits. *Dina Thanthi* and *Dinamalar* did not show interest in the coverage of human rights stories. In *Dina Thanthi* and *Dinamalar*, they covered only one human right violation news story.

The news story was about the kalappatti incident. Kalappatti is a gram panchayat near Coimbatore. The violent incidents took place in kalappatti on 16th May 2004. In that 75 houses of Dalits were burnt. The affected Dalits ran away fearing for their lives. The worst affected eight were undergoing treatment in the emergency ward in the Government hospital. In kalappatti the total population is 8000. In that Dalit people are 1200 and others are 6800. The Arudhatiyars are not allowed to enter the village temple, to paste the poster of Dr. Ambedkar. They also threatened for blocking the road opposing the MLA (PUCL report, 2004). Thus they are deprived of human rights.

But the newspapers were not ready to expose these incidents. In *Dinamalar*, they covered the protest of Nellai Arudhatiyars for the Kalappatti incident. But there was no explanation about the incident. Any one reading for the first time can’t really understand. In newspapers they usually follow inverted pyramid style. Inverted pyramid style consists of lead, body and tail. The lead normally speaks about why, what, when, who, where and how that incident happens. The body is the description of the incident. But in this story
there was only answer for the name of the incident. There was no more discussion in body or tail. The newspapers excluded the real message. In Dina Thanthi, the lead of this protest story gave answer for what and to whom. They too also neglected detailed reporting.
4.4 COVERAGE OF 14TH LOK SABHA ELECTIONS IN TAMIL PRESS

DATA PRESENTATION

FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE OF NEWS:

**TABLE 14**

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS OCCURRENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the newspaper</th>
<th>Frequency of News occurrence N = 30</th>
<th>Total No of Stories</th>
<th>Percentage of News occurrence N = 30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dinamalar</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dina Thanthi</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinamani</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>56.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In *Dinamani*, out of 30 days, news appeared in 17 days. 29 news items were published during the period of study – Apr 10 – May 10. Not even a single editorial or a letter to the editor concerning the Dalit participation in politics was published in *Dinamani*.

In *Dina Thanthi*, only 14 days news stories appeared during the sample period. Among them, one day a photograph without news was published. 21 news items were published during the study period. In *Dinamalar*, out of 30 days, news appeared in 14 days. 21 news items were published during the sample period.
FIGURE 17

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS OCCURRENCES IN THE SAMPLE DAILIES
Space devoted for a specific issue is considered an important variable in content analysis. For the coverage of the Dalit issues, a total space of 1210.56 col/cm was allotted in Dinamani while Dinamalar has allotted a total space of 1718.43 col/cm for this coverage. Dina Thanthi has devoted a total space of 1790.64 col/cm for the coverage of Dalit issues particularly Dalit political participation.

### TABLE 15

**SPACE ALLOTTED FOR THE COVERAGE OF DALITS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN 14\(^{TH}\) LOK SABHA ELECTIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the newspaper</th>
<th>Total space in Col/Cm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dinamani</td>
<td>1210.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dina Thanthi</td>
<td>1790.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinamalar</td>
<td>1718.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE 18
SPACE ALLOTTED FOR THE COVERAGE OF DALITS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN 14TH LOK SABHA
SIZE OF THE NEWS ITEMS

TABLE 16

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS ITEMS WITH COLUMNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the newspaper</th>
<th>Size of the news items</th>
<th>5 columns and above</th>
<th>1 column</th>
<th>Between 2 to 4 columns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dinamalar</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dina Thanthi</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dinamani</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Dinamani* has published 18 one column stories. Only one news item was spread over 5 and above 5 columns. 8 news items were between 2 to 4 columns. *Dina Thanthi* has published only one news item with 5 and above 5 columns. 12 news items in 2-4 columns and 6 one column stories were published in *Dina Thanthi*. In *Dinamalar*, not even a single news story was spread over 5 and above 5 columns. 13 one column stories and 8 stories in between 2 – 4 columns were published in *Dinamalar*. Totally more one column
stories were published in all the three newspapers. Big size news items were an infrequent specimen regarding the coverage of Dalit issues during the sample period.
FIGURE 19

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS STORIES BY COLUMN WISE
The front page continues to play a key role as the showcase for the newspaper and its contents (Garcia, 1981). Front page serves as the index of the newspaper. In all the three newspapers, not even a single news item concerning Dalit political participation was published in the front page. All the news items were published in the inner pages other than the front page. Among 21 news items published in Dina Thanthi, only one news item was published on the first six pages and remaining 20 news items published in the pages 7 – 18. In Dinamani, out of 29 news items, 13 were published on the first six pages. Remaining 16 news items were published in the pages 7 – 18. In Dinamalar, not even a single news item hit the front pages during the sample period. All the 21 news items were published in between the pages 7 – 18.
FIGURE 20

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PLACEMENT CATEGORIES
TABLE 18

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF PLACEMENT UNDER THE GEO HEADER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the newspaper</th>
<th>Geo header</th>
<th>Not under any header</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinamalar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dina Thanthi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinamani</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the news items regarding the Dalit political participation were published in the election page which was in use during election period. In Dinamalar, 5 news items published under the election page, 15 had no specific geo header and only one news item in the local page. In Dina Thanthi, 11 under election page, 6 with no header and 4 in the local page. In Dinamani, 12 under election page, 3 under local page, 5 under state page and 8 under regional page. Totally 26 news items had no specific geo header in all the three dailies during the sample period.
FIGURE 21

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF PLACEMENT UNDER THE GEO HEADER

- Dinamalar
- Dina Thanthi
- Dinamani

- Local
- State
- District Election
- Not under any header
In Dinamani, out of 30 days, only 4 photographs regarding Dalit political participation were appeared. 8 photographs were published in both the dailies Dinamalar and Dina Thanthi during the period of study – Apr 10 – May 10. Also most of the photographs were passport size and less space is devoted to the photographs accompanying Dalit political participation.
FIGURE 22

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

[Diagram showing frequency distribution of photographs among Dinamalar, Dina Thanthi, and Dinamani.]
In regard to publishing the news stories concerning the Dalit political participation, there was no editorials and letters to the editor was published in all the newspapers within the sample period. Interpretative pieces were rarely published in the sample newspapers. Three interpretative pieces in Dinamalar and two in Dinamani were published. Dina Thanthi not at all carried an interpretative piece. All the 21 news items were general news items. General news items only dominated in all the three newspapers during the one month sample.
FIGURE 23
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS CATEGORIES
TABLE 21
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE TERMINOLOGY USED TO REFER DALITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the newspaper</th>
<th>Terminology used to refer Dalits</th>
<th>Unidentified</th>
<th>Dalit</th>
<th>Adi Dravida</th>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Oppressed people</th>
<th>SC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dinamalar</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dina Thanthi</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinamani</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also they don’t follow a single style in using terminology to refer Dalits. They used Dalit, SC, Adi Dravida, oppressed people in various news items. In majority of news items, they were not identified as Dalits. They normally used the terminology Dalit. Dina Thanthi and Dinamani have used the terminology Adi Dravida for once. Dina Thanthi have used SC once.
Most of the news items were event based. In *Dinamalar*, there were 16 event based news items and 13 and 14 in *Dina Thanthi* and *Dinamani* respectively. *Dinamani* have used the quotes of Dalit political leaders for ten times. In *Dinamalar* only 4 times they have published news items with quotations of Dalit political leaders. In *Dina Thanthi*, 6 news items were with the quotations of Dalit political leaders.
FIGURE 24

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF THE SOURCE OF THE QUOTATIONS USED IN THE NEWS
TABLE 23

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF POLICE/ CRIME RELATED NEWS ITEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the news paper</th>
<th>Police/crime</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Untouchability Act</td>
<td>Crime -FIR filed by police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinamalar</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dina Thanthi</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinamani</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among 9 Police/ Crime related news items, only once they have noted about untouchability act. Other news items were based on the FIR filed by police.
FIGURE 25
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF POLICE/CRIME RELATED NEWS ITEMS

Dinamalar
Dina Thanthi
Dinamani

F.I.R
untouchability act
Law
4.4  FOCUS GROUP STUDY

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: PERCEPTIONS OF DALIT SCHOLARS AND JOURNALISTS WITH REGARD TO COVERAGE OF DALIT ISSUES IN TAMIL NEWSPAPERS

2. A. WHAT ARE THE DALIT ISSUES THAT GET DUE COVERAGE AND WHAT ARE THE ISSUES THAT GET NEGLECTED BY TAMIL PRESS?

The participants, in general felt that most of the Dalit issues were neglected by Tamil press. Most of the research scholars felt that Dalits are under - represented and misrepresented in the Tamil dailies. Participants articulated that Dalit issues that get a coverage were only caste conflicts and reservation issues. Meanwhile, issues that cry for attention of the world, like human rights violation, deprivation of education to Dalits, education, Dalit literature and more serious problems like manual scavenging were neglected by Tamil dailies. Tamil dailies never tend to highlight social problems like land reformation, labor welfare, unemployment and bonded labor. These are the areas where the economic rights of Dalits are neglected by the society.

RAGUPATHY, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

Dalit issues seldom appear in the front pages. Even if any news item pertaining to Dalits finds a place in the front page, it happens to be a violent clash or a wild outburst. Even in the quota issue, Tamil media took an anti-reservation stand. Tamil dailies, weeklies and monthlies should come forward to highlight untouchability and social oppression.

VIJI, REPORTER

I reported a story about a Dalit woman from Manjolai who underwent a surgery in Government Hospital. After the surgery she suffered a severe pain in her abdomen. When
she approached a private hospital for treatment, the doctors detected a incision knife in her body. Once again she went to the government hospital, where she was operated upon and got the knife removed. I broke the story in Dinakaran. However, when I wanted to do a follow up, the newspaper was not interested just because the woman was from Manjolai and it would create some problem.

I reported another story about the sufferings of women, mostly Dalits, employed in Tirupur textile industries. They work for stretched shifts for a paltry pay. These hapless women suffer mental, physical and even sexual tortures. This story too did not have any follow-up. The editorial was not interested in giving follow up.

The media is not interested in Dalit issues, particularly when it comes to women. Dalit women continue to get neglected by mainstream media.

M.VELSAMY, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

Outlook magazine termed smokers as ‘paraiyahs’ in an article. Only Dalit movements and Dalit magazines protested against this misleading terminology. Tamil dailies did not intend to question this. Mass media believes that caste issues and Dalit issues should be covered only by the Dalit media. Caste issues and Dalit issues are neglected by the mass media particularly Tamil dailies. How can we call it a mass media if it neglects minorities and marginalized communities?

MUPPUDATHY, REPORTER

I was a witness to Tirunelveli massacre. I covered it for my newspaper. I will not accept the criticism that non-Dalits are not interested in Dalit issues. As a non-Dalit, I am still giving follow up stories of this massacre. I am still paying homage to the Tirunelveli
martyrs on July 23. I reported the incident as another Jalianwala Bagh on its first anniversary.

Dalit movements do not understand the thinking of the reporters. They are not aware of the significance of media contacts. We are not properly informed about events and issues. For instance, Puthiya Thamizhagam founder Krishnasamy does not bother to invite me for his press meets. I voluntarily attend his press meet. But few other community movements have constant touch with media personnel. I have contacts with few NGOs working for Dalit rights. I came to know about an issue through one such NGO. In Reddiyarpatti, a dalit boy was ordered by his teacher to run around the school, a punishment for snoozing off in the classroom. When the boy was running around, he was hit by a speeding lorry. The boy lost both legs in the accident. I was the first to report the atrocity in the Tamil newspaper.

If one newspaper covers a Dalit issue, then others will automatically follow up.

JEROME SAMRAJ, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

Media has no sensitised public about caste inequalities and the prejudice prevailing in the society is reflected in media reports. Stories concerning manual scavenging are reported in a sympathetic tone. Media never question caste brutality.

ARE DALITS STEREOTYPED IN TAMIL PRESS?

Many participants were of the view that Tamil dailies engaged in stereotyping Dalits. They pointed out that while covering caste conflicts, Dalits were portrayed as either victims or instigators of violence and immoral people. When Dalits, who experience cruelty of untouchability retaliate it is portrayed as crime. The retaliating Dalits are represented as criminals and immoral people. If Dalits do not react to the violence
perpetrated by dominant castes and accept the pain, they are represented as victims. Their pain and sufferings are converted into items for consumption of commercial media.

M. STEPHEN PACKIA DURAI, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

Most of the Dalit issues are reported only with a commercial motive. Human rights violations concerning Dalits fail to get adequate coverage. Sometimes they are not even reported. Caste conflicts are reported in the perspective of violence, while the actual issue of oppression is ignored.

JEROME SAMRAJ, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

Caste conflicts are seen as law and order problems. Attitude of newspapers while covering Dalit issues seems to be neutral but contextually unfavorable.

RAGUPATHY, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

Tamil dailies tend to stereotype Dalits as law breakers and violent people. Newspapers should not go by the First Information Report recorded in the police station, but report what actually happened. Caste conflicts are recorded as Dalit violence in F.I.R. which is followed by most of the dailies. Only weeklies report in favour of Dalit. An act of self defence by a Dalit is portrayed as instigation of violence. Though social scientists refer self defence as assertion of one's right, it is not followed by the media. The dailies should come forward to discuss about untouchability with a more open mind. If they begin to discuss all sides of the story, then stereotyping of Dalits may end.

M. VELSAMY, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

In Kairlanchi issue, a Dalit family was tortured; a girl was sexually harrassed; 3 persons were murdered. A communist friend filed a case in the local police station. But it was not
taken seriously by the media and it was not reported in the local newspapers. If it was reported and given follow up, the Dalit movements or Government would have taken action and the problem would have been solved. But the media did not worry about the murders, the sexual harassment and the crime. Hence it was neglected by all. Only after Dalits came to the streets to protest and burnt a bus, the issue was taken note of by the world media. BBC reported that Dalits are becoming violent.

Dalits don't even have democratic right to express their sentiments. They protested only because they were neglected. Media misses out the cause of the incidents. They show very little social concern towards Dalits.

In a well known social science research institute, a Dalit professor demanded for implementation of reservation. As it was ignored by the institute, he filed a case seeking reservation. To highlight the issue, we contacted a reporter from a popular Tamil magazine. He came and interacted with us. But the report was completely distorted. He had reported that the Dalit professor raised the issue only for his power play.

Even if a Dalit fights for justice, it was misrepresented and distorted by the media. Dalits are also humiliated by the media. The reporter interviewed both the Dalits and non-Dalits from the institute. But he took an anti-Dalit stand and chose to report from the angle of the dominant castes.

A discussion with a reporter exposed his attitude towards Dalits. He commented that the Dalit movements and activists did not care about the Kairlanchi issue. They were ignorant and not worrying about the Dalit situation in the neighbour states. Actually Tamil media did not give due prominence to Kairlanchi issue. But media people were accusing Dalit leaders, activists and movements of being ignorant.
DO NEWSPAPERS ENGAGE IN A CONSPIRACY ON REPORTING DALIT ISSUES?

Most of the scholars opined that the Tamil newspapers engage in a conspiracy while reporting Dalit issues. Tamil dailies never mention about Cheris (slums) where the dalits are physically isolated.

RAGUPATHY, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

_Tamil dailies stay away from reporting untouchability. They attempt to conceal the worst form of untouchability that prevail in the society. For them it is not an issue worth reporting._

BALA SUBRAMANIAN, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

_Media is a public space. That is why we Dalits are demanding adequate space for our issues. But Tamil dailies remain silent about prevention of untouchability and Protection of civil rights act._

SELVARAJ, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

_Dalit issues never appear in the front pages of Tamil dailies. It is a form of conspiracy. They have no guts to expose human rights violations perpetrated against Dalits._

VIJI, REPORTER

_I watched one discussion program in CNN television channel. The theme of the discussion is which part of the India is best - North India or South India. For South Indian side, they interviewed Tamil actress Suhasini and reputed journalist Cho.Ramasamy. They both declared that there was no caste problem in South India. According to them, Dalits in_
South India face no difficulties and problems. One should note that both of them are from upper caste and it is natural that they fail to reflect woes of Dalits.

KANNAN, PHOTOGRAPHER

I agree that some of the Dalit issues were not exposed by the Tamil dailies. For instance, we all know that double tumbler system still prevails in some of the villages. Media will not report it until a police case is filed. Media people fear that if they report it before a police case is filed, it would create problems for them. These are very sensitive issues and hence they feel that it is safe to report a story after F.I.R is filed.

HOW THE DALIT POLITICAL PARTIES AND DALIT POLITICIANS ARE PORTRAYED IN THE TAMIL PRESS?

Almost all the participants maintained that Dalit political parties and Dalit politicians were not given due importance by Tamil dailies. Dalit political parties were portrayed as caste outfits and Dalit politicians as caste leaders. They are misrepresented by the entire Tamil media. The attitude towards the coverage of Dalit leaders is unfavorable. The tone of the coverage of Dalit political parties and Dalit politicians is negative in general.

M. VELSAMY, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

We can compare two criminal cases in which two political parties are involved. The cases are Dharmapuri Bus burning case and a murder case in Manjolai. In a murder case in Manjolai, Krishnasamy the leader of PT was included as the first accused in the F.I.R. As PT involved in this issue, case was filed against Krishnasamy. But in Dharmapuri bus burning incident, 3 girls were burnt to death. In this case, a major political party of Tamil Nadu was involved and case was filed against the members of the party and not the leader of the party. Tamil media seems to be very clear about criticizing political parties.
They distinguish between the party to be criticized and not to be criticized. Dalit political party is not viewed as a political party and it is viewed as a group of violent people. The leader of PT is portrayed as violent and the party as violent party.

We all know about Pappapatti Keeripatti issue. Dalits were not allowed to contest in the reserved seats of Panchayat. Even if they contested, they were murdered or forced to commit suicide. Also if they were elected, they were compelled to resign their post. Tamil media showed their true face in this issue. The TamilNadu Chief Minister organized a very grand ceremony to honour Dalit presidents of these panchayats and offered 20 lakhs to them. It was covered by all the media and it was published in the front page with banner headlines and colourful photographs. But the resignation of the very same Dalit presidents was published in the inside pages only as a box news item. The efforts of Krishnasamy and Thol.Thirumavalavan were concealed by the Tamil Press and they were illustrating a picture that DMK is only safeguarding social justice. If the Tamil media covered the resignation of the Dalit presidents as the Government function, we can agree that media are safeguarding and upholding social justice and protecting human rights.

Casteism is the reason for all these issues and inappropriate coverage. If Krishnasamy is viewed as a criminal rather than politician, the same yardstick should be applied to other politicians also. But media refuses to do this. This is because of the casteism prevailing in the media.

RAGUPATHY, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

Newspapers show bias towards Dalit issues in the usage of language. In Tirunelveli massacre, thousands of unarmed people were attacked by armed police. It was reported as a 'revolt' by Tamil newspapers. How can we call the attack against the unarmed people as a revolt? I came to know that the first day reporting of the Tamil media on
Tirunelveli massacre supported the Dalit movements. But in the next few days, they changed their style and tone. I do not know the reason behind this.

PERACHI KANNAN, REPORTER

I attended a meeting on reservation issue convened by Dalit leaders in Chennai. Only 5 or 6 journalists attended the meeting. Chennai is the headquarters of all media in the state. Major television channels and newspapers ignored this meeting. They were not interested about Dalit leaders.

JEROME SAMRAJ, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

Dalit political parties are not given due prominence by the Tamil newspapers. The tone used in the coverage of Dalit political parties and leaders are negative and it also depends upon political alliance.

KANNAN, PHOTOGRAPHER

I wont agree that Dalit politicians are not given due prominence in Tamil dailies. The newspaper in which I am working usually gives importance to Dalit issues. In some cases, it differs. It is because of fear of losing advertisements from those behind the atrocities. News selection seldom depends on caste of politicians.

Same yardstick is followed for all politicians. If they give full page advertisement or atleast a smaller advertisement in the newspaper, they will definitely get an attractive coverage. If they do not issue advertisements, then the newspaper will not bother to cover the meeting or conference of those politicians.
EXPLANATION FOR THE MISREPRESENTATION

In addition to their views, they cited examples of media misrepresentation of Dalits. They emphasized the societal factors other than caste for misrepresentation. They were the absence of editorial in Tamil dailies, the media ownership, and social composition of newsroom and the thorny position of the journalists.

RAGUPATHY, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

No Tamil newspaper has editorial except Dinamani. Dinakaran carried editorial before the change of ownership. But after the shift in the ownership, the editorial was converted into a gossip item titled “Peter Mama”. Dinamalar too publishes a gossip column titled “Tea Kadai bench”. Editorial is the soul of the newspaper. It is the index of the newspaper policy. But Tamil media are diluting this sacred space. They are silent about their policies and stand in every issue confronting the society by not publishing editorials.

Dalit journalists are very rare in newsrooms. Journalists are mostly non dalits in Tamil Nadu. Other important reasons for negative coverage of Dalit issues are media ownership and Commercialism.

MUPPUDATHY, REPORTER

Tamil Press is more interested in sensational issue rather than development issue. They are helpless. There is no scope for in-depth analysis.

PERACHI KANNAN, REPORTER

Media ownership plays a major role in news selection. If they think that if any issue would be a problem to their ownership or profit making, they would not allow us to report. In the coverage of Shankaracharyar issue, Dinamalar continued to refer him as
Sri Sri. Only when other newspapers started referring Shankaracharyar without the honorary term, Dinamalar stopped using Sri Sri.

JEROME SAMRAJ, RESEARCH SCHOLAR

Readership is insensitive and there is no compulsion for the reporters to be sensitive.

Ownership and social composition of the newsroom is a serious issue when the public/social space remains insensitive.
4.6 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: POINT OF VIEW OF DALIT POLITICIANS, NEWSPAPER REPORTERS AND EDITORS ABOUT COVERAGE OF DALIT POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BY TAMIL DAILIES.

a. DO DALIT ISSUES REQUIRE SPECIAL SPACE IN NEWSPAPERS?

RAVIKUMAR, MLA, VIDUTHALAI CHIRUTHAIGAL

We are not claiming special space for Dalit issues content wise. We demand only fair reporting and fair representation. We further demand representation of Dalits in newsrooms. If they appoint Dalits in newsroom, then it will be reflected in coverage and result in fair reporting and fair representation. What we demand is reservation in news space, but impartial representation of Dalits in newsrooms.

They are not giving due importance to untouchability and caste based discrimination. Media believe that such issues do not have news value. For instance, child marriage is a prohibited and is illegal. But when there is any occurance of child marriage, media still gives detailed reports considering that there is news value. Likewise untouchability is legally abolished and the practice of untouchability is a crime. If any one practices it, then it could be reported because atrocities and discrimination of Dalits definitely has news value. But newspapers fail to give due importance.

MOORTHI, EDITOR IN CHARGE, DINAMALAR

I cannot decide on allotment of special space for Dalits. It is the prerogative of the management. If the management decides to give special space, we can allot. But according to me, it is practically impossible.
DHAMODHARAN, EDITOR, *DINAMANI*

We will never give special space to Dalits because it is a communal issue. We can give exclusive space, but we will not do this because it would lead to unwanted problems.

ESAKKI, REPORTER, *DINAMANI*

We cannot give special space to Dalit issues. It is not practically possible. We have limited space. We can give due coverage depending on the significance of the issues, but cannot give special space. It is a mass media, we have to satisfy all sections of the society.

EDITOR, *DINA THANTHI*

I don't think Dalit issues need separate space. If we give any separate space, it will create inferiority complex among Dalits. We should give equal space for all communities. We are neutral and unbiased. Our newspaper is not a party based newspaper.

B. WHAT ARE THE ISSUES ON DALITS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION THAT ARE COVERED IN TAMIL NEWSPAPERS?

RAVIKUMAR, MLA, *VIDUTHALAI SIRUTHAIGAL*

We have to differentiate between Tamil dailies regarding the coverage of Dalits political participation. In Dinamani, they give more importance to state level issues. Dina Thanthi gives more importance to local issues. Dinamalar is known for its negative coverage of Dalits political participation. In Dinamalar, they used to accuse Dalit political parties. Also, they deliberately blackout efforts and achievements of Dalit political parties. Dalit political leaders are portrayed in poor light. Dalit politicians personal matters are also linked with party politics.
Some Dalit issues receive positive coverage. Kandapatti temple issue received positive coverage from the media. But there are some issues which go unnoticed by the media. They are mostly the atrocities against the Dalits. If a particular atrocity has a political value, then it gets noticed. For example, Suresh Rajan issue. We agree that daily reporters have some constraints in reporting Dalit issues. They usually follow F.I.R. In depth reporting and interpretative reporting is absent in daily reporting. In most of the instances police complaints are not registered. Hence the atrocities go unnoticed.

In Tamil Nadu, there is no Brahmin domination now. There is only non-Brahmin domination in Tamil media. But the intensity of discrimination prevailing now is more when compared with the coverage hundred years before. The Hindu newspaper gave indepth portrayal of Dalits in 1895. But reporting of dalit issues is absent now in The Hindu. The media is so intolerant and biased against Dalits.

Besides, Dalits opinions are never included in the news reports. Dalit leaders are never asked for opinions and views. The coverage of Dalits political participation also depends upon the alliance. They give more importance to the leaders of alliance parties. For instance, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal organized a meeting in which the Janata Party leader George Fernandes was invited. The newspapers give more importance to George Fernandes and the tone of the coverage was in a manner that Viduthalai Chiruthaigal attended the meeting organized by George Fernandes.

I will not accept that the proximity plays a major role in news selection. If there is religious violence in any corner of India, then it is national news. Also if a Muslim or a Christian was attacked, then it becomes front page national news. But if a Dalit was murdered, it has no value.
When I was attacked in a procession taken out to condemn the murder of a Dalit youth near Cuddalore, Tamil newspapers did not consider it as an issue worth reporting. Even though I am a member of legislative assembly, they consider me as a representative of a particular caste rather than people's representative.

MOORTHI, EDITOR IN CHARGE, DINAMALAR

_Dinamalar_ is famous for its local issues. We are giving more space to local issues. The important issues of the day are reported in our newspaper. We are giving enough space for Dalit issues.

We are giving due importance to Dalit issues and Dalit political participation. The murder of Gangaikondan Panchayat president who was a Dalit got special attention from our newspaper. He was instrumental in the protest against Coca-Cola Company. We gave in-depth reporting and follow-up for that issue.

We focus mainly on daily reporting. We have limited time. So we cannot do in-depth analysis of any issue. Weeklies can do that. But we can't. We rely on F.I.R for crime reporting. Because it is an authenticate source of information.

DHAMODHARAN, EDITOR, DINAMANI

We give thrust on issues that facilitate uplift of Dalits. We also report caste discrimination and domination of Dalits by upper castes. But we will not report inflammatory speeches of Dalit leaders which directly attack members of other caste or community. However, development works of Dalits are highlighted in our newspaper.

We also cover conferences, public meetings and speeches of Dalit political leaders.
I agree that there is lack of in-depth reporting regarding the atrocities against Dalits including the murder of Dalit panchayat presidents in Tirunelveli. There is no analysis, interpretation or follow-up for this issue. This is because, we fear that detailed reporting would lead to a caste conflict. We do not fear any other external forces. We restrict the coverage ourself. But we cover that issue very fairly and take enough measures to get the report published in all the editions of Dinamani. Another reason for absence of detailed coverage is because other newspapers too do not attempt to give such coverage.

If we smell any discrimination or atrocity against Dalits, we do not ignore it. There is no restriction from our management or editorial board. We only decide the significance of the news, the treatment and the placement of the story.

ESAKKI, REPORTER, DINAMANI

I report only issues that have news value. I will not report if there no authenticate information and evidence. As I am from this area, I am aware of the problems Dalits are facing everyday. For instance double tumbler system and oppression of Dalits by dominant caste are problems widespread here. I will highlight these atrocities.

When it comes to reporting anything new and novel has more news value and I will prefer reporting such news rather than repeating issues that are frequently written about.

Further, I would give importance to news that aim at finding solutions for age old social problems. I will not give importance to politics that diverts the masses. At the same time, I will highlight welfare schemes for Dalits.

In dailies, day to day happenings are considered news. Dailies have limited space and limited time. News value of an issue changes with every passing minute. If we plan a story to be published in the front page, the decision may change even at the last moment.
There may be some other development and the story considered important may be replaced by another story that would emerge as more important. It is common in a daily newspaper.

We are daily newspapers. So we have some limitations. We cannot go for detailed in-depth reporting. It is the work of the weeklies which specialize in investigative journalism. That does not mean that daily newspapers neglect the issues. We do report the incident; the motive behind the crime and court proceedings till the judgement is given in the particular case.

For daily reporting we rely on F.I.R, because we cannot report without a strong evidence. So we depend on F.I.R for authenticity. Also it is the first information report regarding the incident. But if anyone is trying to dilute the case or if there is any injustice, we will report it.

**DR.KRISHNASAMY, LEADER, PUTHIYA THAMIZHAGAM**

The attitude of Tamil Press is not very encouraging. They are sidelining and marginalizing Dalit political parties and Dalit issues at critical periods. Criticism is always welcome, but they are not even able to perceive real issues. They always see Dalit issues with a narrow mindset. They reveal their real faces by their criticisms on Dalit political parties. For example, Tirunelveli massacre – it is not just a labour issue. It’s a more serious issue. None of the press covered the fact behind the issue. In many countries like America and Russia workers’ struggles were in the form of violence. Tamil Press was not emphatic towards victims of Tirunelveli massacre. They saw it as just violence. The Tamil press always show animosity towards Dalit. They are not sympathetic. They saw it as a violent outburst. They could not see the agitators’ view. The Tamil press was hand in glove with the police. They reflected only from the
perspective of the police. 17 people were killed due to Police mishandling. Even then Tamil press was not ready to be emphatic towards us.

EDITOR, DINA THANTHI

We give equal importance to all political parties. We are covering the issues of all communities. There is no bias. We are giving importance to all Dalit political parties like Ambedkar Makkal Iyakkam, Puthiya Thamizhagam, Marumalarchi Puthiya Thamizhagam and Viduthalai Chiruthaigal. Some parties are working only for the uplift of their community. But we give importance to political parties that fight for issues pertaining not only to their community but also for Tamil and Tamilians. We cover their agitations.

We give importance to issues common to all communities. We normally neglect communal issues as it will lead to untoward incidents. We are concerned more about problem solving rather than creating problems. We do not name castes while reporting communal problems. We refer as just a caste issue. Because, naming the caste may fuel the conflict.

We give more importance to development issues. We do not have any caste perspective. Caste based violent incidents usually don’t have any follow-ups. This is because, interpretation of the cause of violence will further incite violence. We try to give solutions to existing problems. We are interested in minimizing violence rather than igniting it.
C. HOW IS DALIT POLITICAL PARTICIPATION DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGNS PORTRAYED IN TAMIL NEWSPAPERS?

RAVIKUMAR, MLA, VIDUTHALAI SIRUTHAI GAL

During election campaigns, *Dina Thanthi* gives unbiased coverage. *Dinamani* too gives positive coverage, but it allots very few pages for local news. They give more importance to political agenda, alliance and seat allocation which are mostly of state relevance. *Dinamalar* has local editions, but gives less space for such news. If Dalit political parties give advertisement in these newspapers, they will be given coverage.

We cannot deny the fact that casteism exists in Journalism field. There are two kinds of biases. One is reporter’s personal bias and the other is ownership bias. Surely there is caste bias in newspapers.

MOORTHI, EDITOR IN CHARGE, DINAMALAR

I am responsible for the selection of content and placement of news. If I think an issue is important, then I will place it in the front page. Significance of the news story is the key factor. We are not consciously neglecting Dalit issues.

DR.KRISHNASAMY, LEADER, PUTHIYA THAMIZHAGAM

Coverage of campaign by Dalit political parties is nil. Even when Dalit political parties get coverage, it’s not positive. They are neglected even if the Dalit political parties have mass support. The Tamil press is shadowing the strength of Dalit political parties. They are biased even while reporting our success in elections.

The Tamil press practices political untouchability. Cine actors enter and leave politics without any agenda. Even if Koundamani comes to politics, the Press is ready to give undue coverage to an actor. The Tamil press shies away from studying the values of political parties', their strength and weaknesses. They are ready to highlight film actors...
who enter politics rather than Dalit politicians. It’s a known fact that all political parties in Tamil Nadu cannot win without any alliance. Even without alliance, *Puthiya Thamizhagam* has emerged second or third in constituencies it contested. But no press is ready to acknowledge their strength. We don’t have any popular TV to publicize our success. Besides, Tamil Press tends to give negative news like *Puthiya Thamizhagam* party is splitting. Even if one criminal or an unwanted person leaves the party, the media reports that the whole party is going to split.

They are continuing to throw a bad light on Dalit parties rather than attempting to study reality. They are not creating a good atmosphere for the Dalit political parties. For them, Dalit issue is not a social issue. According to them Dalit political parties are not parties but are criminal groups. Dalit political leaders are reported Tamil press as criminal or violent individuals.

Even a minor incident will be blown out of proportion as a violent activity of *Puthiya Thamizhagam*. If anybody indulges in stone hurling in any public meeting, it will be reported as an act of *Puthiya Thamizhagam* party member. If there is a quarrel between a bus driver and a passenger, it would be reported as a clash between *Puthiya Thamizhagam* party member and the driver. It is common that most of the citizens belong to some political parties. But not everyone’s actions are linked with their party.

Even without mobilizing, people are voluntarily participating in the annual event to pay homage to Tirunelveli massacre victims. Thousands of people participate in the procession. But this will not be covered in other editions. It will not even reach beyond Tuticorin. Dalit issues are localized in Tamil press. They see it as local issue and not a state wide issue. But if Vijaykant went on a fast in Vilupuram, it will be covered throughout Tamil Nadu. It will find a place in all editions. But Dalit issues are considered to have less news value.
EDITOR, DINA THANTHI

We give importance to political parties based on their activities. Political parties earn significance based on the issues they deal with and whether they belong to ruling party, opposition, second or third front. Viduthalai Chiruthaigal and its leader Thol.Thirumavalan is functioning with a broader perspective rather than confining within Dalit issues. They are unbiased and raise their voice for Tamil and Tamil people.

If any movement takes up such issues, we welcome them. But some Dalit political parties exaggerate Dalit problems for gaining political mileage. It will create law and order problem.

We are not doing investigative journalism. Hence we depend on official sources like F.I.R. For daily reporting, we need concrete evidence. If we report based on evidences other than official sources, we will be called for trials to provide witness. F.I.R. may be true of false. It may contain contradictory facts. In such cases we give alternate views through statements of Political leaders and victims. We give the views of the both sides. Police activities may be biased sometimes. We bring it out such contradictions in police versions by visiting the spot of occurance of an incident and through interviews and photos of victims. Other than F.I.R. we also get versions of revenue officials like sub collector and Tahsildar.

During the Kodiyankulam revolt, more than 62 persons were killed in a month long conflict. We gave on the spot coverage and published detailed reports and photos. Government closely watched the reports because people are active readers of the newspaper. People would respond to the newspaper report. They would give their views through newspaper reports. We stayed neutral. We published unbiased and objective reports.
d. WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE DALIT JOURNALISTS IN TAMIL DAILIES?

RAVIKUMAR, MLA, VIDUTHALAI SIRUTHAIGAL

I know one or two Dalit journalists. They shared their experiences with me. They are discriminated in the media industry. They are in lower level positions and some are employed in contract basis. There are two types of discrimination in media industry. There are some district level reporters. They face discrimination from other castes. If a dalit journalist reports about PMK, then he faces threaten from a particular caste. If a journalist other than a Dalit reports the same issue, they do not face any such threat. The management also discriminate Dalit journalists. They give less important assignments and most Dalits are placed in insignificant position.

MOORTHI, EDITOR IN CHARGE, DINAMALAR

Here there are only four journalists and the rest are area reporters. Area reporters are from all caste and creed. There is no discrimination. Dalits are employed in printing and packing sections also. We select reporters based on their talent. Caste is not a deciding factor.

DHAMODHARAN, EDITOR, DINAMANI

I will not agree that caste discrimination exists in newsroom. Caste and community is certainly not a criterion while appointing reports or sub editors. We recruit based on their merit. I have appointed more than ten persons after I came to this seat. But till now I am not aware of their caste identity. I am not interested in it. We select people on the basis of their work experience and talent. We do not ask the caste identity of the applicants.
EDITOR, *DINA THANTHI*

Most of our employees are from backward caste. There is no particular ratio.

ESAKKI, REPORTER, *DINAMANI*

We do not have any caste perspective. I am not interested in knowing the caste of fellow journalist. I feel it is unnecessary. To my knowledge casteism is totally absent in newsroom.

PERCEPTIONS OF DALIT JOURNALISTS

JEYARANI, DALIT JOURNALIST, *SUN TV*

The status quo of Dalit journalist is not good. There is zero percentage of Dalits in the higher postings of media. Dalits who are in the media are reporters or sub editors. They are also in countable digit. If we compare the growth graph of the upper caste and the Dalit journalists, there we can see major difference. The growth rate of Dalit journalists is very slow when compared with other caste journalists. Dalit journalists have to face a very immense struggle to come up in this field of journalism. Social background plays a major role in this. The first enemy of the Dalits is the inferiority complex which was developed as a result of years of experiencing untouchability, caste based discrimination and worst treatment from others. Caste is a disease and it is omni present. It is also dwells in the minds of the Dalits. They feel inferior because of their caste and color. So the hesitation of them plays a vital role. If they put up 100% hard work and talent, they too can come up in the media world. First we should break the obstacles in our mind.

From my personal experience, I gain this confidence. I had a very good opening because of the journalism degree, excellent writing skill and a hard working performance. I got a job in a Tamil magazine by showing the two stories authored by me. But I was there for
only 3 months. I gave excellent cover stories in that magazine. Although I quit that as I have no friendly atmosphere. I am not sure whether it was caste politics.

Soon after my quitting, another one leading magazine comes forward with a job offer. I worked there for three years without any difficulties and troubles. I enjoyed full freedom there. There was no caste restriction and discrimination from the management. But these good old days come to an end after a sexual harassment complaint. I launched a sexual harassment complaint against my senior colleague. I was transferred from that division to another one magazine run by the same management. Every one considered that a promotion but for me it is a depromotion. That media house formed a committee to enquire the sexual harassment charges. It took 2 years of enquiry. That is the worst period of my career as well as my life. Most of the colleagues passed comments about me on caste basis. They mocked me a lot. They commented that my character is worst as I belonged to a lower caste. They associated my character with the caste. For the first time in my twenty five years of life, I felt very badly and could feel the exclusion and the discrimination. The management never pressured me up to leave the institution. The other caste colleagues created the working atmosphere which is very unfriendly, unbearable and inhospitable that pushed me voluntarily out of that media house.

I have nine years of experience as a journalist. I have worked in a daily, two magazines, an online magazine and in a production team. I have earned a good name but I am not in a good position which I deserve for my hardwork and reporting skill. Dalits are at a low level as they are in the society. Dalits are involved in the physical work of Media but not included in the gatekeeping process. We can come across a number of Dalits in the printing, packaging and circulation sections of dailies. There is also more number of local reporters but not as editors or anything like this.
Media houses normally check out the community of the applicants before employing. I can say that language act as a barrier for the Dalit students since they are from government schools and colleges. They are also the first generation literates. Hence they face some difficulties. However the media houses can train them to overcome those shortcomings. Many media houses are promoting student reporters and they can encourage Dalit students by initiating reservation for them. If an upper caste person with less efficiency enters the media, he receives better training and encouragement from the upper caste higher officials. On the other hand, Dalits are not welcomed and placed in an uncomfortable environment. Even if the applicant concealed his identity, the colleagues judge his caste at first sight by the skin color.

Jeyarani had nine years of media experience. She is regularly contributing articles for a Dalit magazine. She a multifaceted personality glitters as an excellent photographer, writer, cinema critique, media watcher, awardee of international federation for journalist’s commendation prize for best article. She was chosen as one among the top 50 women in Tamil Nadu by India Today magazine.

ILAMATHY, JOURNALIST, ZEE TAMIL

I was selected for a Tamil women magazine through an interview. I never faced any discrimination based on caste. But as a woman, I felt the rejection. I was given unimportant beats. I was not given any responsibilities. Otherwise I am not conscious about the discrimination on the grounds of caste. My skin color is main reason for that. I won’t appear like a Dalit girl. Most of them mistakenly judge me as a girl from Nadar community because of my Tirunelveli nativity. Also I think that for reporting levels, they would not bother about caste. But for higher posts like gate keepers they might consider
our caste and religion. I am sure that caste plays a major role in the appointments of senior editors, programming heads and news heads.

Coverage of Dalit issues is very meager. The media houses are avoiding caste based issues. They have no social responsibilities. They are not empathetic towards the human rights violations and caste based discrimination of Dalits. Yet the media reports any Dalit issue, they would focus on violence and the real issue is concealed. The journalists look into the dramatically elements of the issue for sensationalizing that particular issue. For example we can check the Uthapuram incident. Most of the media glorified only the sensational elements like the migration of upper caste. Dalit voice was entirely absent in the news coverage. Dalit news with positive angle is regularly covered. If any Dalit political party acknowledge the government initiatives or arrange function admiring government initiatives which is supportive and encouraging for Dalits find space in the mainstream media.

The journalists from other castes are uninterested in attending the press meets of Dalit political parties. If there are no other significant political party meetings, we attend the press meets of Dalit political parties.

When I was in a television channel, I was interested in reporting about a Dalit woman Panchayat president who faced severe discrimination from the upper caste. But I was not permitted to cover that issue since it was mentioned as a Dalit issue. However if they report any other Dalit issue, they would present it with weak elements and irrelevant spokespersons. The journalists never take a Dalit stand. Although if the journalists report a conflict between Dalit and other caste, there would be minute discrimination by taking a anti Dalit stand. Ownership is a significant factor for the discrimination of Dalits in the
coverage. Most of the media are run by Brahmins or Backward castes. The ownership was not supportive to Dalit issues and it was reflected in the news coverage.

Very few Dalit journalists are in the media field. We don’t have any exact figures as many of them are not prepared to expose their identity as a Dalit.

KANNAN, PHOTOGRAPHER, DINAKARAN

I am working in a Tamil daily. I was selected on the basis of the quality and content of my photographs. I face no discrimination from my colleagues and senior officials. The newsroom atmosphere is very friendly. I am not sure whether someone is interested about my caste identity. I haven’t seen any Dalit journalist except a photographer. But a many number of Dalits are working as rural reporters.