CHAPTER 2

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Newspapers have occupied a significant place in the Indian history. Newspapers are considered as an important tool to link the whole world. Newspaper industry is a booming and flourishing industry in India. Newspapers play a vital role in Indian society. To understand the news coverage, one should understand the social set up in which the newspaper operates.

The discrimination of certain groups in the society is followed in terms of the media coverage too. There are many studies in the West to examine the coverage of minorities in the media particularly newspapers. On the contrary, in India, minorities’ related research is very much in its infant stage. There are only a few research works in this area. This section theoretically discusses the review of literature pertaining to media and minorities. The main purpose is to compose the manifold dimensions that are portrayed in various evidences on the subject. Thus, it will help the present research to develop its own methodological clarity.

The first section of this chapter, defines terms and concepts pertaining to the relationship between media and the society. It reviews the roles of media in the society, the sociology of news and the functions of the media. Literature reviewed in the second section relates to the coverage of minorities in the media. It discusses the status of the coverage of minorities worldwide.

The literature reviewed in the section three addresses the status of Dalits in India. It explores the conditions of Dalits in all spheres of life with special reference to Tamil Nadu. The final section contains literature linking the debate on the coverage of Dalits in
2.2 MEDIA AND SOCIETY

Michael Shudson's article, "The sociology of news production revisited" in the book Mass Media and Society edited by James Curran and Michael Gurevitch is an important study on news production. Shudson argued that three perspectives on news making are commonly employed. The first is the view of political economy that relates the outcome of the news process to the structure of the state and the economy, and to the economic foundation of the news organization. The linkage between news making and the ownership, market structure, state control, commercial organizations, powerful elites, and political parties is discussed in the political economy approach.

The second approach comes primarily out of sociology, especially the study of social organization, occupations and professions, and the social construction of ideology. This perspective tries to understand how journalists' efforts on the job are constrained by organizational and occupational demands. It deals with the organization of beats, the news sources and how the reporter uses them, the relationship between reporters and editors, recruitment of more minorities in the news room.

Third, a 'cultural' approach emphasizes the constraining force of broad cultural traditions and symbolic systems, regardless of the structure of economic organization or the character of occupational routines. The emphasis is on the human construction of news. Most understandings of the generation of news merge a 'cultural' view with the social organizational view. The organizational view finds interactional determinants of news in the relations between people, the cultural view finds symbolic determinants of news in the
relations between ‘facts’ and symbols. A cultural account of news helps explain
generalized images and stereotypes in the news media. Journalists may resonate to the
same cultural moods their audiences have even if they typically know little about their
audiences. A cultural account of news is also relevant to understanding journalists’ vague
renderings of how they know ‘news’ when they see it. The central categories of
newswriters themselves are ‘cultural’ more than structural. All the three approaches are
involved in the news making process.

Denis McQuail’s study on media roles in society seeks to explore a particular approach to
the complex problem of conceptualizing the relationship between media and the society
in which they operate. McQuail suggests that there are three main possibilities of
relationship between media and society.

They are

1. The media strongly influence the society (for good or ill).
2. The media simply reflect what is going on in society and are more an effect than a
   cause.
3. The relationship is an interactive and circular one, with no clear line of influence.

He also suggests a fourth possibility. The media are a cultural and social phenomenon of
society but not clearly caused and with no clear direction of effect. Society and media are
two independent complexes of social and cultural practice.

Mcquail selected four particular roles of media in society. They are the monitorial
(informational) role, the facilitative role, the collaborative role and the radical or critical
role. The monitorial role maintains a constant surveillance of the social world. The
facilitative role to aids democratic activity in the wider public sphere of civil society,
supports community formation and citizen participation, provides lines of communication
between citizens and government.
The collaborative role is adopted under circumstances where the wider needs of a society take precedence over profit or journalistic purpose and require cooperation of the media with other external agencies, sometime even the government, otherwise depicted as a potential adversary.

The radical or critical role of media goes beyond routine comment and opinion forming and refers to the choice of an adversarial stance in relation to authority, on clearly motivated normative grounds. The journalist in this role takes the side of a cause or belief, a minority or other victimized or deprived group. It should be noted that these roles can overlap, especially in respect of the actual tasks involved. For instance, all deal in the transmission of ‘information’.

J.V. Vilanilam’s book “Mass communication in India- A sociological perspective” discusses the linkage between Indian society and media. When examining the dysfunctions of the media, he quotes Lazarsfeld and Merton’s ethicizing function of the media. He argues that media enforce as well as reinforce social norms. The socioeconomic, religious and communal interests of media controllers may cause them to emphasize certain norms in the media and enforce them through repetition which can be a dysfunction. He also observes that the socioeconomic environment is an important determinant of mass communication activities and media institutions.

The social aspects of journalism can be approached within the twin perspective of the social structure and its effects on the media, and the social effects of the media on society. The caste and class structure of the Indian society have its influence on Indian media. The media prefer to highlight all the caste agitations but ignore the root economic causes. Media ignores development issues and welcomes sensational issues. The Indian media love controversy and indulge in statement journalism. They print or broadcast opposing statements without attempting to investigate and bring out the truth. The Indian media are
owned by the affluent and run by people whose major interest is in capturing the advertisement market (Vilanilam, 2005).

These studies were very helpful to recognize the relationship between media and society, the roles of media and the connection between Indian society and media. This formed the beginning of the present research and further exploration of media.

2.3 MEDIA AND MINORITIES

Media does not operate in vacuum. We must understand the social context to understand media power. In any multi cultural society, certain sections experience discrimination, marginalization, prejudice and xenophobia. However, the degree of discrimination might have varied from nation to nation. The people who experience discrimination by the society are the ‘minorities’, ‘the subaltern people’, ‘the indigenous’, and ‘the aboriginal people’. The discrimination in the society furthermore gets reflected in the media. The religious minorities, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes are marginalized and discriminated in Indian society.

The studies pertaining to “media and minorities” occupy a significant position in academic research all over the world. It is a world wide phenomenon. According to Oxford dictionary, the word minority means ‘the smaller number or part’ and ‘a relatively small group of people differing from the majority in race, religion etc’.

Mahtani employed the term minorities in his study to encompass a wide rubrick of racial, cultural and ethnic and linguistic groups, including “visible minorities,” “cultural groups,” “racialized peoples,” “non-whites,” “religious minorities” and “people of colour” in order to mirror the work of other researchers in this field, ‘groups do not have enough power to publicly oppose biased reporting’ (Van Dijk, 1989).
Previous studies suggest that the term minorities ‘as a group of people who are marginalized, discriminated, unaccepted, prejudiced, and bigoted by the majority in the name of race, religion, sex, ethnicity, and regionalism’. Here the word minority refers ‘a group that is associated with a lack of power’ (Lisa & Andrew, 1999). The word power implies the ability to influence people or events.

The portrayal of minorities in the mainstream media plays a significant role in the society. The media provides an important source of information through which citizens gain knowledge about their nation, and our attitudes and beliefs are shaped by what the media discerns as public knowledge. According to Van Dijk, media discourse is the main source of people’s knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, both of other elites and of ordinary citizens. Further he appends that more specifically the role of media and in particularly the news play in the reproduction of racial and ethnic equality in the multicultural societies of Western Europe and North America.

News coverage may be more significant, however, because of its role and function in society: while entertainment is “make-believe”, the news is “real”. Since news reflects what is really important to a society, minority coverage in mainstream media reporting provides insight into the status of minorities. The media plays a large part in the formation of positive and negative images and self-images of minorities.

2.3.1 REPRESENTATION OF MINORITIES IN THE MEDIA

International Encyclopedia of Communications viewed the coverage of minorities in the media as following:

1. Inadequate or non existent coverage of minorities
2. The lack of fair treatment by the media and of full participation in them results in the diminution of minorities’ rights and opportunities.

3. Stereotyping of minorities remained more persistent.

INADEQUATE OR NON EXISTENT COVERAGE OF MINORITIES

The news about minorities seldom appears in the news media. Only little attention is given to the minorities issues. Their rights and opportunities are given less prominence and they lack proper emphasis in the media. It can be understood by observing the number of appearance of news about minorities, its placement and the space allotted for the minorities in the media.

THE LACK OF FAIR TREATMENT BY THE MEDIA

The media coverage about the minorities is infrequent and insufficient in the handling of minorities’ issues, the coverage is considered unfair. The coverage is biased, sensational and negative. This can be observed by examining the usage of language, the tone used to describe and the issues discussed. The violence and crime of minorities used to appear in big headlines and prominently on the front page, whereas this is seldom the case for other news about them.

Similarly, active sentences may emphasize the responsible agency of the subject, whereas passive sentences about the same action may background agency. The same is true for verbs that are nominalized, such as using the word discrimination instead of saying who discriminated whom. Much research has shown that this is a well-known device in the coverage of ethnic issues, for instance to mitigate the negative actions of in-groups or our organizations, such as the police (Fowler, 1991).

STEREOTYPING OF MINORITIES

The minorities are always seen as a threat to the majority society. The minorities are represented as people who indulge in crime, drug trafficking and other immoral activities.
The minorities are excluded from the majority society and they are represented as rather different from others in the society. The blacks are stereotyped as criminals, drug traffickers and womanizers. The immigrants are stereotyped as invaders, economic refugees, and culturally inferior people. The sexual minorities are stereotyped as criminals, comedians and sex workers. The other aspects of the minorities are not discussed and covered by the media.

Van Dijk criticized that the news media also plays a major role in racism. The news media practice new racism. In the new racism minorities are not biologically inferior, but different. They have a different culture, although in many respects there are deficiencies, such as single-parent families, drug abuse, lacking achievement values, and dependence on welfare and affirmative action pathologies that need to be corrected of course (Van Dijk, 1989).

2.3.2 REPRESENTATION OF MINORITIES IN THE MEDIA: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

In the United States of America, the Blacks, the Latino Americans, the Hispanics, the Native Americans, and the Native red Indians are minorities. In America these groups are marginalized in the name of racial discrimination. They were represented as third rated criminals, sexists and drug smugglers. They were excluded, seen as threatening and stereotyped by the mainstream media.

Wilson & Gutierrez in their reputed work on “Minorities and Media” established the representation of blacks in the media in the USA. This review of literature is an eye opener in the media representation of minorities. The book with ten chapters in six parts covers a number of issues pertaining to ethnic minorities including the Blacks, the
Hispanics, the Latinos, the Native Americans, and Asians. It includes introduction, entertainment media portrayals, non-entertainment media portrayals, the triple threat of minority media activism and conclusion. Part III of the book reveals the portrayals of blacks in non-entertainment media significantly the press in the title, “The Press: Minorities in and out of the news”.

News about ethnic minorities in White news media has been characterized by five stages. They are exclusionary, threatening issue, confrontation, stereotypical selection, and integrated coverage phases.

In the exclusionary phase, the author discussed the exclusion of the minorities in the news and noted that it ultimately signified exclusion from American society, because the function of news is to reflect social reality.

Threatening-Issue phase witnessed the portrayal of minorities as a threat to the existing social order. The press labeled the Indians as “savages”, the Mexican immigrant workers as “wetbacks” and the Blacks were the object of fears.

In the Confrontation Phase, American news media generally approach confrontation coverage of minority-related issues from the perspective of “us versus them”. When the Kerner Commission on civil disorders filed its report in 1967, it condemned this historical trend in news coverage by a press that “has too long basked in a white world, looking out of it, if at all, with White men’s eyes and a White perspective.

In the stereotypical selection phase, informational items that conform to existing white attitudes toward minorities are then selected for inclusion in news media and give repeated emphasis until they reach thematic proportions. The news media have served to reinforce existing stereotypes. The old stereotypes of ethnics as violent people who are too lazy to work and who indulge in drugs and sexual promiscuity are prominent. In fact, the preponderance of such reporting has lead some observers to say the news media have
offered an image of ethnics as “problem people”, which means they are projected as people who either have problems or cause problems for society. The legacy of news exclusion thus leads to the majority audience seeing minorities as a social burden – the “us versus them” syndrome carried to another dimension. Integrated news coverage is the antithesis of exclusion. In this phase, steps are taken to eliminate prejudice and racism from the gatekeeper ranks. It expected to report news from the perspective that “us” represents all citizens and increased the employment of minorities in news media professions. Moreover, it well documented the media initiatives of and the reason behind those initiatives of the blacks.

The Kerner commission was formed to look into the civil disorders occurred in America. The commission which filed its report in 1967 condemned the historical trend in news coverage by the press that “has too long basked in a white world, looking out of it, if at all, with White men’s eyes and a White perspective”. The commission noted that news was determined from a “White perspective” (Wilson & Guteirrez, 1985).

In Europe, the immigrants are seen as a problem for the majority. ‘The immigration of the Tamil refugees to the Netherlands is represented as a threat to the nation and the social status quo by the Dutch dailies’ (Van Dijk, 1988). The immigration of the Tamil refugees is described as invasion.

The Tamils are represented as terrorists who are themselves to blame for the situation in Sri Lanka, as kids of rich parents, as people who illegally enter the country, or as refugees who merely come here to live out of our pockets. In fact, they are portrayed as economic refugees instead of political refugees. He recommends critical discourse analysis methodology to study the representation of minorities and the news racism in media (Van Dijk, 1988).
Gill Palmer investigated the representation of the Albanian Immigrants in the Italian Press using social semiotics method. The study uncovered that the Albanian immigrants are seen as a threat to the *status quo* of Italian society and to its symbolic geography and identity. They are represented as politically and culturally primitive people. The study combined a critical discourse analysis approach with semiotic analysis of visuals to uncover how language and visuals interact to create meaning and thus, to represent. The Albanian minorities are excluded and other European countries are included in the news representation (Palmer, 2002).

One of the studies of Arturas Tereskinas focuses on how ethnic and sexual minorities are portrayed by the mass media in Lithuania. The author argues that the mass media helps to shape attitudes about ethnic and sexual Minorities by articulating, developing and disseminating ideas of ethnicity and sexuality. The media can also foster misunderstanding and antagonism through the repetitive stereotypical representations. This study exposed that sexual minorities are given limited credibility, related to crimes and seen as comedians. Moreover the researcher concluded that it can be argued that by virtually ignoring ethnic and sexual minorities' issues, the mass media participates in the marginalization of those groups. The media images tend to define these groups within the narrow confines of stereotypical representations. The mass media in Lithuania describes ethnicity as problematic rather than as a positive quality of multicultural society (Tereskinas, 2003).

Wolfsfeld & et al. study on the Hebrew media coverage of the Arab minority reveal that cultural and political assumptions are translated into the routine production of negative news about disadvantaged challengers. The lower the political, social, and media status of the challenger, the more difficult they find it to overcome these journalistic routines. While protests by more “acceptable” groups can sometimes lead to a public debate about
injustices, Land Day coverage inevitably centers on how to deal with “troublemakers.” (Wolsfeld & et.al., 2000)

Dilara Sezgin and Melissa A. Wall study about the construction of the Kurds minorities in the Turkish press found that the Kurds are described in a degrading tone. The findings demonstrate that the coverage was an indirect tool of oppression rather than an agency of change that challenged the prejudices and hostility towards Kurds by the country’s elites (Sezgin & Mellissa, 2005).

Ilse Devroe study on media and multiculturalism in Flanders found that the immigrant ethnic minorities are often associated with problems and conflicts and newspaper articles show general bias concerning immigrants.

Media and minorities studies in Canada confirm the absence and the negative portrayals of ethnic minorities in the mainstream Canadian media. The significant body of literature on media representation of the Blacks and the other visible minorities shows deliberate racism in the media coverage of issues and cases relating to this group of people, despite the stipulation in the 1991 Canadian Broadcasting Act that the media organizations should show the ‘multicultural and multiracial nature of Canada’ in their coverage (Ojo, 2006). The very invisibility of minority issues and minority communities in Canadian media contribute to a sense of “otherness” for minority Canadians (Mahtani, 2001).

Islamophobia is a current phenomenon discussed world wide. The Muslims are the religious minorities in the western countries. Anti-Muslim discourse is evident in western press. The fear or dread of Islam and/or Muslims is described as Islamophobia.

Sands examination of newspaper headlines on the reporting of Islam in the New York Times after post 9/11 found that the news media are placing a greater emphasis on the religion of the threats to American safety instead of the people themselves. The New Your
Times often portrays Islam as a militia and as a political force, but what seems to be forgotten in the headlines is that Islam is a religion (Sands, 2003).

In Britain too, there is a negative view of Islam. Tahir Abbas study on the representation of South Asian Muslims in the British press confirms the above statement. The Muslims are categorically regarded as threats to society, as ‘fundamentalists’, as aliens, rarely, if at all, highlighting real and distinct patterns of racial and ethnic disadvantage. The press seeks to portray incidences of ‘black crime’ and ‘Islamic political militancy’ rather than the economic, social, and educational deprivation experienced by the vast majority of British South Asian Muslims (Abbas, 2001).

UNHR declared that everyone is equal and free from any form of discrimination. The rights people are entitled to simply because they are human beings, irrespective of their citizenship, nationality, race, ethnicity, language, sex, sexuality, or abilities. However it is inferred that the media still practices discrimination in the name of race, religion, sex, ethnicity, and regionalism’. Further it also reflects the dominant ideology of the society. Various studies show that the minorities’ issues are given less space, less prominence and less attention in the media. The news media tend to form a negative identity of the minorities. It is observed that the minorities are seen as a threat to the status quo of the society.

The media coverage of minorities is uniform, similar and stereotyped. The other side of the minorities is not discussed in the media. The positive qualities, their demands and the background of the minorities problems are often absent in the media. Gill Palmer’s study on the representation of the Albanian immigrants in the Italian media confirms that the culture of the minorities is represented as primitive and inferior than the majority. The minorities are stereotyped as smugglers, criminals, comedians and immoral people. The main reason for this kind of stereotyping is that the media persons hailing from similar
background, demography and has similar experiences. They did not experience or know about the various issues of the minorities. According to Gamson’s constructionist theory, the media does not produce anything newer or forms public opinion. It only reflects the society’s culture. Media does not operate in vacuum. Media imitates the happenings of the society. Hence the discrimination of minorities in the society is reproduced through the media content.

One of the reasons for the discrimination of minorities is the lack of representation of minorities in the media. The Kerner Commission too stressed the need for black journalists in the media. It confirms the observations of Van Dijk. Minorities have less access to the media also because they do not control the many source discourses on which daily news making is based: press conferences, press releases, briefings, information brochures, documentation, interviews, and so on. Their opinions are less asked or found less credible or newsworthy, also because most journalists (and virtually all editors) are Whites (Van Dijk, 1989).

We are living in a global village where the whole world is shrinking; the cultural borders are merging. The whole world is transforming into a multi cultural society. Hence it is very crucial and urgent to consider and improve the positive representation of minorities in the media.

Van Dijk’s numerous works on media representation of minorities explore the media discourse on racism. In one of his article called **new(s) racism: A discourse analytical approach**, he critically studies the way news in the press may contribute to ‘new racism’. Van Dijk speaks about new racism in the form of news in which the racism is not shown directly but indirectly by showing the minorities as problem people and different from majority. He argues that there is subtle racism in the news media.
According to Van Dijk, media discourse is combined with a lack of alternative sources, when there is a near consensus, and opponents and dissident groups are weak, then the media are able to abuse such power and establish the discursive and cognitive hegemony that is necessary for the reproduction of the ‘new’ racism. Such power is exercised in news and newsmaking. The role of the press in the system of racism is not limited to news reports or editorials, but already begins with the daily routines of newsmaking. Minorities have less access to the media also because they do not control the many source discourses on which daily news making is based: press conferences, press releases, briefings, information brochures, documentation, interviews, and so on. Their opinions are less asked or found less credible or newsworthy, also because most journalists (and virtually all editors) are white (Van Dijk, 1989).

When we consider the news structures, the topics that emphasize the bad actions of the minorities and the good ones of the majority hit the headlines. This general strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation is prevalent in most dominant discourse of immigrants and minorities.

Van Dijk also stresses the need to examine the local meanings of words and sentences. The new racism avoids explicitly racist labels, and uses negative words to describe the properties or actions of immigrants or minorities. Attitudes about groups and opinions about specific events may influence the lexical choice of such words as ‘riot’ on the one hand, or ‘urban unrest’, ‘disturbance’ or ‘uprising’ on the other hand. The violence and crime of minorities will typically appear in (big) headlines, and prominently on the front page, whereas this is seldom the case for other news about them. Systematic negative portrayal of the minorities, thus vitally contributed to negative mental models, stereotypes, prejudices and ideologies about the minorities, and hence indirectly to the enactment and reproduction of racism.
These reviews of literature on media and minorities does not relate directly to the issue of Dalits representation in media. But it provides insights about the methodology and the perspective towards which the present study could move.

2.4 DALITS IN INDIA

A publication by Human Rights Watch called, Broken People: Caste Violence Against India’s “Untouchables” in 1999 demonstrates, more than 160 million people in the “world’s largest democracy” remain at risk of systematic human rights violations on the basis of the caste into which they are born. Despite the fact that India constitutionally abolished the practice of “untouchability” in 1950, still it is practiced and violence has become a defining characteristic of the abuse. This report is about caste, but it is also about class, gender, poverty, labor, and land. For those at the bottom of its hierarchy, caste is a determinative factor for the attainment of social, political, civil, and economic rights.

This report is a critical understanding of the conditions of the Dalits in India significantly Tamil Nadu. One of the chapters of the book reveals the criminalization of Social activism in India. It documents that the State agents have acted directly and forcefully against those attempting to claim their rights. Dalit activists throughout the country face charges as “terrorists,” “threats to national security,” and “habitual offenders.”

One important interview of V. T. Rajshekar, the editor of Dalit Voice, India’s most widely circulated Dalit journal is also included in this chapter. Rajshekar has often come under attack for his writings. In 1986 his passport was impounded because of “anti-Hinduism writings outside of India.” The same year, he was arrested in Bangalore under TADA. In his words, “the police came from Chandigarh and arrested me and took me to
the Chandigarh jail for an editorial I wrote in *Dalit Voice*. Another writer who republished the editorial was also arrested. Then they came to me. After fifteen days, after much Dalit agitation, I was released with an apology”.

The 113-page report, “Hidden Apartheid: Caste Discrimination against India’s ‘Untouchables’,” was produced as a “shadow report” in response to India’s submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), which monitors implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) in February 2007. It confirms the practice of untouchability against Dalits by segregating Dalits in housing colonies, schools, relief camps and public life. This report questioned the position of the Government in the eradication of untouchability against Dalits.

The report documents India’s systematic failure to respect, protect, and ensure the Dalits’ fundamental human rights. Severe violations persist in education, health, housing, property, freedom of religion, free choice of employment, and equal treatment before the law. The report also documents routine violations of the Dalits’ right to life and security of person through state-sponsored or sanctioned acts of violence, including torture. The Dalit women face multiple forms of discrimination and are frequent targets of sexual abuse. State and private actors enjoy virtual impunity for these crimes.

The report concluded with the following lines, “Discrimination is entrenched in a number of facets of the government—from the discriminatory practices of law enforcement, prosecutors and judges, to the failure to eradicate segregation in public services, including schools, and in residential arrangements, to the failure to successfully implement programs to ensure the development and protection of the Dalits, including in particular the Dalit women. The State party has also failed to ensure that private actors, in particular upper-caste community members, observe the prohibition on discrimination. Retaliatory
violence, social and economic boycotts, and exploitative labor conditions enforced by private actors are unchecked, resulting in violation of the Dalits’ rights to personal security and other rights that are notionally guaranteed by the Constitution and various legislative measures.”

A book called “Dalit Identity and Politics” edited by Ghanshyam Shah is able to report and analyse a mass of activity, in essays by scholars and activists provide a vivid picture of the various dimensions of Dalit struggles in contemporary India. The chapters are useful contributions to the on-going debates on identity formation and political action by Dalits. Ghanshyam Shah has noted that the following four factors have contributed in bringing about the changes in the chapter Introduction: Dalit Politics.

First, there is an overall acceptance of equality as a desirable norm, thanks to the permeation of the liberal and radical philosophical discourse, capitalist and technological development, including communicational advances and changes in society. The second factor, capitalist development, though sluggish, has weakened the traditional functioning of the caste system.

Third, protective discrimination through reservations in government jobs and admission to educational institutions has paved the way for the Dalits to enter the middle class. Fourth, competitive politics within the parliamentary framework, with the provision of reservation of seats, has created political consciousness among the Dalits on an unprecedented scale. The Dalits, however, do not confine their politics to elections and parliamentary institutions. They also launch direct collective action and organize movements. Their struggles have so far successfully forced Indian intellectuals to critically review Indian traditions and culture.

This book has 52 articles on the Dalit issues which are invaluable for anyone interested in understanding the dynamics of caste in India, especially Tamil Nadu. N.Ram, Editor in chief of Frontline and The Hindu in his foreword to this book accepted that the news media rarely offer space to stories about Dalits. In his words, “To make matters worse, there are hardly any journalists in Indian newsrooms. A lack of space, or the futility of belabouring the obvious, is cited often enough as a professional excuse for not doing what should have been one of the biggest social stories of our time.

The news reports of Viswanathan dwell upon various dimensions of the issues that concern Dalits. He recorded the social, political, economical and cultural conditions of Dalits in Tamil Nadu. He documented the political violence against Dalits at panchayat level such as the Melavalavu\(^1\) murders, the Pappapatti-Keeripatti\(^2\) reserved panchayat issue and auctioning of panchayat posts to prevent grassroots democracy and the forced resignation of panchayat leaders. He even filed positive stories on Dalit panchayat leaders who lead the way as role-model Panchayat presidents in the articles titled “Rising to the challenge” and the “Signs of Change”.

This book is a witness of the birth and growth of the K.Krishnasamy-led Puthiya Thamizhagam\(^3\). He records the politics and the new social alliances that the emerging Dalit parties espoused and also documents how these alliances were broken. He exposed the political untouchability which prevents the alliance of Dalit political parties with other political parties.

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1. A Dalit panchayat president called Murugesan and five of his associates, all Dalits, were brutally murdered by the dominant caste people on June 29, 1997. He was murdered for being a Dalit president in Melavalavu Panchayat, a Madurai village panchayat which was designated as a constituency reserved for the Scheduled Castes.

2. Elections could not be held in four gram panchayats reserved for Dalits in Tamil Nadu. They were Pappapatti, Keeripatti, Kottachiyenthal and Nattarmangalam where the Dalits were not even allowed to file their nomination due to the oppression by the dominant castes.

3. Puthiya Tamizhagam was the first autonomous Dalit movement with an elected member of the Tamil Legislative Assembly in 1996. They have since lost that seat but remain a significant movement with a largely Pallar following.
Vishwanathan focuses attention on the basic economic issues concerning Dalits included Karanai Land struggle, Kilvenmeni carnage, Manjolai estate labor issue etc. His article entitled, “The roots of caste conflicts” documented a government committee report. The high level committee was constituted by the government of Tamil Nadu to find out the reason for the caste clashes in the southern districts of Tamil Nadu. Viswanthan observed that the government study reinforced the perception that recurring caste-related violence in several parts of India is predominantly a manifestation of growing intolerance among sections of the Caste-Hindu population to the upward mobility of Dalits.

He documented the police handlings of Dalits particularly the atrocities perpetrated against the people of the all-Dalit village by a 600-strong police force at Kodiyankulam on 31 August 1995 and the police excesses against Dalits at Sankaralingapuram and Challichettipatti villages in Tuticorin district. He reported that issues under the titles “Terror in Uniform” and “Police in the dock” respectively. Also in his article “Tirunelveli Massacre” he documented the brutal police action against a procession taken out in support of agitating tea estate workers claims 17 lives. The Thinniam incident, where Dalits were made to consume human excreta, went unreported in the English-language national media, except in the Frontline. He even touched the cultural aspects of Dalits especially the religious conversion of Dalits in Tamil Nadu.

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4 A struggle to reclaim land allotted to Dalits results in the police killing two Dalits.
5 the massacre of 44 people, mostly women and children belonging to families of Dalit agricultural workers, nearly 40 years ago at Keezhavenmani village, 25 km from Nagappattinam in Tamil Nadu.

6 At Thinniyam village in Tiruchi district two Dalits, Murugesan and Ramasami were forced to feed each other human excreta on 22 May 2002. Their crime was that they had stood by another Dalit, Kar uppiah, who was engaged in a prolonged struggle against a former panchayat president and her husband to recover an amount of money he said he had given them as a bribe to get a house allotted for his sister (Vishwanathan, 2005).
2.5 MEDIA AND DALITS

The constitution of India abolished untouchability and granted equal opportunities and status to the disadvantaged Dalits. However each day the Human rights organisations continues to receive grievances about untouchability and caste violence The coverage of the Dalit issues get less consideration from the academic circle. The social activists and Dalit movements raise their tone against the media for not reflecting those inhuman activities. The debates on this begin to perceptible piercingly in the media.

Dalits have long been ignored by the media similar to the society. Dalits have appeared to be unworthy of coverage except trapped in crisis or conflicts. The available literature and research confirms the exclusion of Dalits from the mainstream media coverage. The coverage of Dalits in the media is inadequate or non existent. Dalits are given least space in Indian media.

2.5.1 UNDER REPRESENTATION OF DALITS IN MEDIA CONTENT

The under-representation of Dalits in Indian media has been suggestive of their unimportance or their non-existence. The existing literature gave adequate evidences for under representation of Dalits in Indian media. A number of articles in the newspapers and magazines written by reputed journalists like Sainath, Siddharth Varadarajan, Kalpana Sharma, Anand and the reportage of S.Viswanathan in the Frontline magazine are authenticated observations on the caste matters in the Indian media.

The Dalit issues were ignored by the Press similar to the Indian societal set up which abandon Dalits. “The press in India has rarely documented, in any detail and with any
sensitivity, the grinding poverty, the day-to-day deprivations and discriminations and the all too frequent atrocities faced by the Dalits in this country” (Nagaraj, 2005).

The exclusion of the Dalits in the newspaper content is not a recent phenomenon. It existed in India even before its independence. Dhananjay Keer’s book on Dr. Ambedkar: *Life and Mission* is an appropriate evidence for the poor coverage of Dalits and Ambedkar obtained from the colonial media. Kesari newspaper refused to publish the advertisement about Mook Nayak. Not only touching the oppressed people was considered untouchability, publishing the advertisement about their newspaper in their paper was also considered untouchability.

Robin Jeffrey provided a similar examination from a news angle by looking at the editorials published in two major Indian newspapers. Robin Jeffrey, in his well-known book called *India’s newspaper revolution*, pointed out that the poor coverage of Dalits in the newspapers and the invisibility of Dalits in the news rooms. His Analysis of the editorial pages of the English-language *Times of India* and *The Hindu* for the first nine months of 1996 found that each had carried only four articles about Dalits out of 717 articles in the *Times of India* and 478 in *The Hindu*. He further observed that the coverage of the Dalits reflected the coverage of the Blacks in the United States (Jeffrey, 1996).

The Dalits in India do not see themselves reflected in the Indian media and they consider it as a form of untouchability enforced on them by the casteist Indian society. Chandra Bhan Prasad, a Dalit columnist wrote a number of columns in the newspaper *The pioneer* and he acknowledged the under representation and misrepresentation of Dalits in the Indian media and even referred Indian media as *Varna* media which means casteist media. He is of the view that the exclusion of Dalits from the (*Varna*) media is an extreme form of untouchability. The weekly columns published in *The Pioneer* were compiled into a book called “Dalit Diary: 1999 -2003: Reflections on apartheid in India”.

56
80 columns from 1999 to 2003 discussed various aspects of Dalit issues. Among them six columns reveals about media and Dalits. It is the first time that a Dalit has had a regular space in a significant daily newspaper.

In one of his columns, he interpreted the failure of Indian media to cover Dalit issues. In his words, “The number of Dalits killed in caste violence in India may not be less than the number of people killed in the Valley. But has the Indian media ever paid similar attention to the question of internal peace, where over 20 crore Dalits, many times more than the combined population of Jammu & Kashmir, are subjected to brute violence, segregation, humiliation, exclusion and discrimination? Has the Varna media given the same attention to the forth coming UN-sponsored Durban Conference on race-based discrimination, from where the "caste" clause was omitted because of opposition from the Indian Government? The Varna media has greatly enhanced the face value of militancy and legitimised the cult of violence! What do they seem to be telling Dalits and other aggrieved groups? "You will not be heard till you persist with democratic methods!" Isn't there a need to discipline the media, the sharpest vehicle of the Varna mindset?”(Prasad, 2001).

The Dalits are vulnerable to caste atrocities in India. The Indian media is not paying its due attention in exposing those inhuman caste atrocities against Dalits. The Thinniam incident, where Dalits were made to consume human excreta, went unreported in the English-language national media, except in Frontline. According to Anand, in Tamil Nadu, the Thinniam incident was not considered as an important issue by the government, media, civil society or the mainstream intelligentsia. Most newspapers and television channels ignored this inhuman incident. Even the most reputed newspaper like The Hindu, ran shy of seeming scatological and referred to it as simply “a heinous incident”. This neglect led to another Thinniam. (Anand, 2002)
The Hindu newspaper faced severe criticisms from its readers regarding the poor coverage of Khairlanji incident. One of the readers, Balaji from Chennai accused The Hindu for not covering Khairlanji. “The news of the Khairlanji massacre should have made it to the front page of newspapers, including The Hindu. It is the media’s responsibility to expose critical issues because politicians raise a hue and cry only when they have something to gain. Only the media can help readers and viewers become aware of brutal incidents taking place in the name of caste (Balaji, 2007).

Another one letter demanded that the media and the judiciary that come to the help of the downtrodden. The media should publish unbiased reports and should not downplay such barbaric incidents (Sethu Mahendran, 2007). Several incidents of crude oppression that take place all over the country do not even find a mention in the mainstream media (Sekar, 2007). Ramakrishnan from Chennai blamed the insensitivity of the media that the Khairlanji issue is not even the main news in many newspapers.

Reader’s Editor of The Hindu, K.Narayanan responded to the readers and gave explanation in detail, In that he confessed that, “the issue of reservations hogs media space; for Dalits there are more fundamental questions — social, economic and empowerment, which cause simmering tensions and trigger attacks, but these do not attract as much media attention as they deserve” (Narayanan, 2007). He also revealed that proximity as a major factor influencing news selection. Khairlanji issue was published delayed because Khairlanji is over 700 km away from Mumbai and much more distant.

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7 The Khairlanji massacre refers to the 2006 lynching-style murders of a Dalit family by members of Kunbi OBC caste. The killings took place in a small village in India named Khairlanji, located in the Bhandara district of the state of Maharashtra. On September 29, 2006, four members of the Bhotmange family belonging to the Dalit underclass were slaughtered in Kherlanji, a small village in Bhandara district of Maharashtra. The women of the family, Surekha and Priyanka, were paraded naked in public, before being murdered. The criminal act was allegedly carried out by assailants from the Kunbi for "opposing" the requisition of their field to have a road built over it. Initial reports suggested that the women were allegedly gang-raped before being murdered.
from Delhi, and so out of range and interest for the TV channels. And when an event draws their attention, it gets reflected in the print media.

Dalit leaders too acquired little space in national media. Kanshi Ram, a prominent political leader who led the Dalit Bahujan politics was given less prominence. His death was of little importance to media. Ravikumar’s feedback to The Hindu expressed his anguish after seeing the news about him published in The Hindu. “I read with dismay this morning’s Chennai edition of The Hindu (10 October 2006). I was saddened to find the news of BSP founder-leader Kanshi Ram’s death buried at the bottom of Page 14. Not only was it relegated from Page 1, it was given the lowest status on Page 14, perhaps symbolic of the status Dalits are meant to enjoy in "The Hindu social order" (RaviKumar, 2006).

For this letter too, Reader’s editor replied. He said that the complaint had some basis and an error too. “Kanshi Ram, and his picture, did find a place on Page 1, at the very top in the promos indicating the most important news inside. But the paper erred in not carrying an obituary note (the long report contained only tributes) and in placing the story at the bottom of a page. I made this point both to the Chief News Editor and Ravikumar. But The Hindu more than made up for this the next day with a highly appreciative editorial and an assessment of the Kanshi Ram saga by Harish Khare.

Indian media was not attracted towards the Tsundur massacre too. It was downplayed by the media. The Best Bakery trial has rightly been in the media focus given the backdrop in this case of the genocide in Gujarat. Unfortunately, however, there is virtually no media attention on the August 1991 massacre of Dalits at Tsundur in Andhra Pradesh, where the trial finally commenced in December 2004 only to be postponed by two months. (Rawat, 2004).

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8 On August 6, 1991, the Dalit men of Tsunduru were chased out of their colony in the village by the police to nearby paddy fields and eight Dalits were massacred by the high-caste Hindus. The bodies were stuffed in gunny sacks and thrown in a canal. Tsuduru is a village in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh state.
Gorringe also quoted a study by Corbridge and Hariss. Corbridge and Hariss highlighted the partiality of the press in their discussion of the Tsunduru massacre in Andhra Pradesh. They note that the media downplayed upper-caste violence and exaggerated the violence of the Dalits.

S. Anand's article, "Covering caste: visible Dalit, invisible Brahmin" in the book Practising Journalism Values, Constraints, Implication edited by Nalini Rajan is an important literature regarding media coverage of Dalits. This article examines the connections between the absence of Dalits in the print media and the structure and nature of 'coverage of caste issues' by such exclusionist media.

In the urbanized space of the newsroom, then, where 'beats' are allotted to reporters to cover crime, political parties, education, power, health, environment, gender issues, cinema, foreign affairs, information technology, the stock market, different kinds of sport, etc; none is allotted to 'caste', though indeed caste as a category has the potential to operate in almost all the 'beats'. This denial of space, or rather the selective manner of offering space for 'caste issues', by the Dalit-free media owes a great deal to the tendency to treat caste as a pre-modern category.

He emphasized that even if violence against Dalits is the only kind of reporting we see in terms of 'coverage of caste issues', this, too, is grossly under-reported. The reporters and stringers based in small towns file stories that deal with caste. These reports, again, invariably, involve Dalits in some kind of distress or conflict. These reports are usually of single-column length and are used only in local edition pages, and how they are placed on the page would depend on a non-Dalit news editor/subeditor's prejudice and mood. The reports would gain in prominence if the violence is of some magnitude and involves the death of Dalits or non-Dalits in conflict (Anand, 2005).
Kenneth Cooper’s article published in the Washington Post entitled ‘India’s Majority Lower Castes Are Minor Voice in Newspapers’ recorded that “India’s 4,000 daily newspapers publish in nearly 100 languages, but one voice is largely absent in the press of the world’s largest democracy: that of the lower castes, which account for more than 70 percent of the country’s 934 million people” (Cooper, 1996).

According to Raja Sekhar Vundru, Dalits and Dalit issues are largely absent in the Indian media. He analyzed the coverage of the golden jubilee of Dr. Ambedkar’s conversion to Buddhism. He found that it was largely absent in the media. Despite of more television channels, only one local cable television covered this Nagpur ceremony. He questioned why the Indian electronic media ignored this event and reduce it to a local event fit only for a local cable network. He deduced that the media suffers from ignorance if not outright casteist sentiments. This event did not figure as a newsworthy event for the Indian media (Vundru, 2006).

Teesta Setalvad, the editor of Communalism Combat observed that the Indian media turns a deaf ear to issues of caste and mass mobilization. She also pointed out that the national media skipped the golden jubilee celebration of Dr. Ambedkar’s conversion to Buddhism. On the coverage of the death of Kanshi Ram, she evaluated that the consequent coverage by the media (barring a few exceptions) reflected a dismissive upper caste bias (Setalvad, 2006).

The very invisibility of Dalit issues and Dalits in Indian media contributes to a sense of “otherness” for minority Dalits. The absence of Dalits in the newspaper pages could be compared with the Ammu Joseph’s thoughts on the coverage of women issues. Ammu Joseph named the absence of women from the newspaper pages as “symbolic annihilation”. So we could also call it as symbolic annihilation of Dalits in media.
Dalits have insisted that media portrayals of their constituents reveal an unrelenting negativity in their portrayal. Media researchers, in a variety of studies, have pointed to the negative depictions of Dalits. The enduring debates on the media representation of Dalits in India discuss the stereotyping. However, stereotyping of Dalits has not been given the priority among the academic scholars. The Dalits are excluded and they are represented as rather different from others in the society.

The observers on the media coverage of Dalits argue that the minimum space is devoted for the Dalits issues. Even that coverage of Dalits issues is uniform, similar and stereotyped. The other side of the Dalits is not discussed in the media. The positive qualities, their demands and the background of the Dalit's problems are often absent in the media.

Stereotypes are generally about person or group of people—usually relating to their class, ethnicity or race, gender, sexual orientation, social role or occupation. But stereotypes can be problematic. Stereotypes reduce a wide range of differences in people to simplistic categorizations. They transform assumptions about particular groups of people into "realities". Stereotypes are being used to justify the position of those in power. Stereotypes perpetuate social prejudice and inequality.

In the mass media stereotyping has become very familiar to minorities. Perry (2000) explains the term stereotype as following. A stereotype has three main components. First, a group of individuals are identified by a specific characteristic. From those characteristics, the media then set additional characteristics to the group as a whole. These additional attributes would be the portrayals of minorities in the mass media.
Identifying a person as having the identifying meaningful characteristics (we discover someone is English), so we then attribute the stereotypical characteristics to them.

Taylor & Willis (1999) define stereotype as the selection and construction of undeveloped, generalized signs which categorize social groups or individual members of a group. The crude selected signs used to construct stereotypes usually represent the values, attitudes, behaviour and background of the group concerned. Implicit within the stereotype is the fact that the signs chosen make common assumptions about the group in question.

The existing literature shows that the stereotyping in a negative manner does have an effect on the society. The media have been found to perpetuate stereotypes and misperceptions more often they create them, and they also tend to be more influential when reinforcing rather than attempting to alter public opinion (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1985).

Stereotyping reduces people to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by nature. As such, stereotypes are important carriers of society’s dominant racial (and other) ideologies (Paek & Shah, 2003).

Yuki Fujioka (2005) study found that negative Black images in the media predicted perceived lower public perception of Blacks, which was related to Black respondents’ greater endorsement of affirmative action.

Implicit within the stereotype is the fact that the signs preferred create common assumptions about the group in question. It is assumed that the readers were not offered with various interpretations focusing on different aspects of the same event but with basically the same interpretation of the same limited aspect. For commentators and critics of stereotypes, one of the more worrying aspects about them is that for those who gain no
further knowledge about the group being represented, limited and potentially damaging assumptions remain intact and unquestioned.

In the words of Lester, Media messages that stereotype individuals by their concentrations, frequencies, and omissions become a part of our long-term memory. The media typically portray members of diverse cultural groups within specific content categories—usually crime, entertainment, and sports—and almost never within general interest, business, education, health, and religious content categories. The reason this issue is of such vital importance is the fact that history has shown that stereotyping leads to scapegoating that leads to discrimination that leads to segregation that leads to physical abuse that leads to state-sponsored genocide. The media provide many messages and one of the most prevalent messages is that we are the media.

Indians have a stereotyped image of the "standard" Dalit: ill-fed, dry skinned, sunken eyed, half bent, with a broom in hand, or a piece of farm equipment. Affirmative action through government jobs has produced about five million Dalit/tribal households, or about 25 million Dalit individuals, who spend over Rs 300 billion annually. Most of them, therefore, have transcended the stereotyped Dalit image—they are now well dressed, fairly well fed, and have a glitter in their eyes. But in the eyes of others, these are "unusual" Dalits (Prasad, 2005). These stereotypes in the minds of the people get reflected in the media.

The Kilvenmani massacre of December 25, 1968, by landlords and their henchmen, which was all but ignored by the mainstream press, is poignantly brought to life in a documentary film. Strangely, however, the coverage of the incident in the mainstream newspapers was inadequate. The reports were even misleading in certain respects. For instance, many newspapers described the incident as a clash between two sections of kisans, or between two groups of agricultural workers, all for a wage hike of just half a
measure of rice. The incident was apparently seen in isolation of the developments during the preceding months. The larger socio-economic aspects of it were by and large ignored (Viswanathan, 2005).

Hugo Gorringe, a sociologist, in his book Untouchable Citizens: Dalit Movements and Democratisation in Tamil Nadu has presented the development of the Dalit Panther movement, an organisation of Paraiyars in Madurai region. In that work, he questioned the treatment of Dalit political participation in the newspapers.

He observed that the media is crucial to get the movement’s message across to a wider public. Whilst DPI activists were critical of media coverage, they were also acutely aware of it. But they boycotted the media since the media continued to portray the DPI as extremists, so their moral arguments was often reversed. The state and the media are in a privileged position to marginalize the movement and the Liberation Panthers lack the communication infrastructure to contest these dominant definitions.

Gorringe gave an example of media coverage of DPI protest. On 12 June 1999, Thirumavalavan broke the ban on holding public meetings in Perambalur. He and 200 others were arrested when they staged a road blockade to protest against police violence and bias. Between the 12 and 13 of June, atleast five government-owned buses were pelted with stones and set alight and another five had their windows smashed in as traffic was brought to a halt in several areas. It was reported in the newspapers. But the newspapers depicted those engaging in violence as thugs who were to be condemned, the destruction of government buses is an established form of protest that all parties in Tamil Nadu engage in.

Gorringe observed the media coverage of Tirunelveli massacre. In his words, “Media reports struggled to rationalize the events and painted harrowing portraits of protestors being truncheoned as they cowered in the water”.
Dalit issues which receive space in the media are often the issues which revolve around violence. Dalits are portrayed as instigators of violence or victims of violence. According to Thankappan, “Invisible Dalits also live in this country. They do dream, love, romance, dance, marry, make babies, use cell phones, read newspapers, watch television, listen radio and surf Internet. They too use television, DVD player, computer and go to PVR halls to watch Big B and Co re-imagining popular cultural lessons. They also know the spelling of Mass Communication and could function as better players in the long run. In fact many affluent Dalits are helping the corporate world boom by burning their brain. And yet, Dalits could make their presence visible in the national media whenever some caste atrocities occur. Dalit burnt to death; Dalit women raped and paraded naked; Dalits denied civic rights; Dalit students humiliated and harassed. Dalits always appear standing passively at the receiving end of development, atrocities or crimes. They are not allowed to break away from this framework. Else they become invisible” (Thankappan, 2007).

Sengupta expressed that the media ignores Dalits and their problems until they turn violent. We can realize consequence of the stereotyping of Dalits as instigators of violence and victims of violence from the coverage of Kharilanji issue. In the words of Hoskote (assistant editor, The Hindu), they do not cover Dalit issues unless there is an incident or the coverage revolves around reservations, law and order problems or social fragmentation.

As regards media coverage of Dalit rights, Prakash Louis of the Indian Social Institute said the media projects Dalits as victims and the assertion of their rights is portrayed as aggression and anger. The mainline media, he said, must set an agenda for Dalit assertion (The Hindu, 2006). Ravish kumar, NDTV reporter criticized reporting on Khairlanji killings in his blog. In that he asserted that the media forever presents Dalits as the
oppressed rural citizens, overloading us with bleeding heart images, but it rarely interrogates upper caste savarnas, who perpetrate atrocities on Dalits.

Soli Jehangir Sorabjee, Sub commission Expert, said that out of the human rights and fundamental freedoms which were the most violated, those related to racism and discrimination ranked the highest. One of the main causes was prejudice and stereotypes. Unfortunately, some sections of the media propagated these stereotypes. Mr. Sorabjee said he was an ardent believer in the freedom of the press, but he opposed the trend of the press being subverted for such practices (UN press release, 2000).

2.5.3 EXCLUSION OF DALITS FROM NEWSROOM

On 25 October 1996, news reports emerged from Uttar Pradesh suggested that Bahujan Samaj Party Leader, Kanshi Ram, and his supporters had assaulted at least five journalists outside the BSP leader’s house. While the exact sequence and severity of the event was disputed, the incident at the press conference prompted Kenneth Cooper, a foreign correspondent for The Washington Post, to ask his friends in the Indian media fraternity for the contact details of a Dalit journalist. The query sparked off a chain of events that began with the publishing of an editorial by B.N. Uniyal titled “In search of a Dalit journalist”, in which Uniyal concluded “Suddenly, I realized that in all the thirty years I had worked as a journalist I had never met a fellow journalist who was a Dalit; no not one. And worse still was the thought that... it had never occurred to me that there was something so seriously amiss in the profession...”

Uniyal’s article and findings were condensed into a memorandum by Chandra Bhan Prasad, President of the Dalit Shiksha Andolan and Dr Sheoraj Singh Bechain, Convener
of the Dalit Writers Forum, and was submitted, with no avail, to the Editors Guild of India and the Press Council of India.

Recently a survey jointly conducted by Yogendra Yadav (CSDS), Anil Chamaria, and Jitendra Kumar reveals that India's 'national media' lacks social diversity and does not reflect the country's social profile. It also noted that Dalits and Adivasis “are conspicuous by their absence among the decision-makers. Not even one of the 315 key decision-makers belonged to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes.” (The Hindu, 2006). The following table revealed the share of SC and ST in Key media personnel.

### CASTE-COMMUNITY PROFILE COMPARED TO POPULATION SHARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste/community group</th>
<th>Share in India’s population</th>
<th>Share in key media personnel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Twice born’ Hindus (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, others)</td>
<td>16 %</td>
<td>85 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Intermediary’ Hindu castes (Jat, Reddy, Maratha, Patel, etc.)</td>
<td>8 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu OBC</td>
<td>34 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>13 %</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhs</td>
<td>2 %</td>
<td>1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>16 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>8 %</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chandra Bhan Prasad questioned “Why is it that from a population of over 205 million Dalits, roughly equivalent to the combined population of France, UK, and Germany, there is not a single Dalit with a press card in the main stream media?”

Prasad in his column entitled, “Untouchability and its hidden agenda” questioned the media practice of untouchability. If there is not a single Dalit who is an editor of a national daily, an anchor on TV channels, or a member of FICCI or CII, it is not by accident, but because of the doctrine of untouchability. Untouchability is such a doctrine
that it does not fully liberate even the most rational, most emancipated, progressive mindset person from practicing it, howsoever unconsciously. Contrary to the popular perception that untouchability is a ‘social evil’, it is in essence a doctrine of exclusion. Anand examined the caste composition of media. The percentage of Brahmin journalists will doubtless be higher in Brahmin-owned establishments such as The Hindu, as will be percentage of nadar journalists in nadar-owned newspapers such as Dina Thanthi and Dinakaran in the Tamil language. In both the cases, however the absence of Dalits does not become an issue (Anand, 2005).

Also Dalit journalists who are in the media are discriminated and marginalized in the name of caste. Jeffrey’s interviews with various newspaper proprietors, editors and journalists confirmed the invisibility of Dalits in the newsrooms. The interviews with the proprietors and Editors of Tamil Newspapers like Dinakaran, Dinamani, and Dinamalar confessed that there are hardly any Dalits in the newsrooms. He also observed that the absence of Dalit reporters, sub-editors and editors, much less owners, meant that stories involving Dalits lacked the insights that Dalits themselves could provide. This is the same situation in English language newspapers and regional language newspapers. He identified media ownership as one factor for this crisis. It was the similar situation in the newspapers run by backward castes in the south India.

Jeffrey’s interview with V.T. Rajashekar, Editor, Dalit Voice revealed that the owners of the backward castes joined the elite and forgotten their roots. They are very much commercial dailies. Jeffrey’s work details more on the absence of Dalits in newsrooms but little bit on the absence in the news coverage. He concluded with a question whether Dalit stories likely are treated any better on copy desks around India.

A Dalit journalist from Andhra Pradesh responded to Chandra Bhan’s query. He recorded his experiences as a Dalit journalist as following. “When I joined the mainstream
journalism as stringer in one of the Telugu dailies, the caste journalists ignored me and caused several problems to me. They said, "A wrong person in the right place." They said Dalits were allowed to join the media but not in the editorial. They said Dalits are expected to work in the printing and packing sections or the canteen. But I was alone working among three Brahmin bosses and four Brahmin colleagues in the paper. There were many Brahmins and other caste Hindus working in other papers. All of them had one mission: to send me out of the profession" (The story of a Dalit journalist, 2002).

One of the reasons for the stereotyping of Dalits is the inadequate number of Dalits in the newsroom. According to Shyam Babu, the elite consensus that the media is simultaneously a facilitator of, and party to, only serves to increase Dalit isolation and alienation from the mainstream media. The absence of a truly Dalit voice in the media results in the perpetration of stereotypes and the frequent denial of legitimate claim (Sethi, 2007).

The enquiry into the motive behind the less number of Dalits in the media is the same stereotyping. The Dalit and the OBC suffer from stereotypes of talent. "It is presumed that a candidate won't be talented because he is Dalit," says Dewan. About this tricky issue of talent, Kumar of Jawaharlal Nehru University says: "This is exactly the same as in reserved jobs for backward castes. First it was 'candidate not available' and now it is 'candidate not suitable'. And who decides a candidate's suitability? The upper-caste editor" (Vij, 2007).

Discrimination manifests itself in the form of marginalisation. Backward caste journalists say they are marginalised not only in places like the Press Club but also inside the newsroom, where upper caste journalists may form a closely knit community.
If television and newspaper coverage of the anti-reservation agitation was indulgent and one-sided, the lack of diversity in the newsroom is surely a major culprit. (Varadarajan, 2006).

The various articles published in the website “The Hoot” uncover the invisibility of Dalit issues in the media. Moreover, it reveals the misrepresentation and the stereotyping of Dalits in the media. But to the researcher’s knowledge there is scarcity of comprehensive explanation of coverage of Dalit issues and Dalit political issues in Tamil newspapers. The present study is an attempt on this line.

2.5.4 AMBEDKAR AND MEDIA

The history of the press in India is the history of the freedom movement in the country. To a great extent, the Indian National Congress owed its popularity and position to the Indian press (Mazumdar, 1993). The history of the freedom movement is happened to be the history of the congress men. Hence the history of the press in India is the history of the newspapers run by the Congressmen. The history of the oppressed community is being neglected and the history of the upper caste is celebrated in India. The majority which accepts Mahatma Gandhi as a great journalist declines to speak about the journalism of Ambedkar or the newspapers run by Ambedkar.

AMBEDKAR’S JOURNALISM

Dr. Ambedkar was also a successful journalist. He provided a platform for social revolution through his papers. It is important to note that Gandhi started Harijan in 1933 to propagate the cause of untouchables. He started that only after the Poona pact. The Indian media which admire Gandhi’s efforts to start a newspaper for the untouchables never address Ambedkar’s labors that are responsible for running four newspapers for his
people. While the pro congress media refuse to speak about the oppressed people, Ambedkar’s struggles, his ideology, Ambedkar required a media, a mouthpiece. Ambedkar strongly believed that the newspapers could bring about a change in the lives of the millions of the oppressed people. Dr. Ambedkar's Marathi newspapers announced a new politics and ethics and anticipated a just social order (Bezwada Wilson, 2005). Ambedkar published a series of newspapers namely Mook Nayak (weekly newspaper), Bashiskrit Bharat (half-monthly newspaper), Janta (weekly magazine).

The newspapers actively involved in constructing a nation and mobilizing the mass to participate in freedom movement. Around the same time, B.R. Ambedkar started propagating a different vision of Dalithood through his newspaper Janata, which stressed the Dalit’s difference from the mainstream ‘nation’. Ambedkar demanded a separate Dalit-space, rather than a submersion of the Dalit cause in the Gandhian agenda of building a coherent, homogeneous nation-space. The editor of the weekly Janata was Bhaskarrao Kadrekar.

Ambedkar started Mook Nayak on January 32, 1920, a fortnightly paper with the help of Maharaja of Kolhapur. Although Ambedkar was not its official editor, he was the man behind it and it was his mouthpiece. Kesari newspaper refused to publish the advertisement about Mook Nayak. How violent and unfavourable were the times can be seen from the fact that the Kesari refused even to announce its publication although solicited to do as a paid advertisement. And this happened when Tilak was yet alive! Not only touching the oppressed people was considered untouchability, publishing the advertisement about their newspaper in their paper was also considered untouchability. The media history of American Black’s and the oppressed people of India have many similarities.
In the 1840s a Black man, Willis A. Hodges, took exception to editorials in the Sun opposing voting rights for Blacks. So, he first tried the access approach, writing a reply to the editorial, which the newspaper published for a fee of $15. However, when the newspaper published his message it was modified and carried as advertising. Hodges protested, but was advised, “The Sun shines for all White men but not for Colored men.” Told that the mass circulation newspaper would be closed to the views of Blacks, he started the Ram’s Horn in 1847.

The names chosen by Ambedkar for his newspapers very evidently confirmed the aim of his newspapers. Mook Nayak (The leader of the dumb), The Janata (The People), Bahiskrit Bharat (Excluded India) were directly related the oppressed people. The oppressed people marched to Chowdar tank in Mahad led by Ambedkar asserted their right to water by drinking water from that tank in March, 1927. For doing that, the caste Hindu groups attacked the unarmed people. That was the first big, open depressed classes conference. This topic became an important news-item all over India. In Maharashtra newspapers arrayed themselves in two camps. Some denounced this bold step on the part of the Depressed Classes, some took shelter under the law, a few shed crocodile tears saying what took place in the city at the end of the conference was not good and others congratulated the Untouchable Hindus on their courageous act in vindicating their right. Ambedkar had to face now a flood of criticism. So he felt the need for a mouthpiece as never before. So Ambedkar started his fortnightly Marathi paper, Bahishkrit Bharat, on April 3, 1927, in Bombay. Explaining the aim of the journal, he observed that he had taken to the profession of a lawyer because he felt that one’s attempt at conducting a newspaper for the welfare of the people, should always be backed up by an independent profession for one’s personal livelihood.
REPRESENTATION OF AMBEDKAR IN INDIAN MEDIA

Ambedkar is a national leader. But he is projected as a Dalit leader (Venkatesh, 2006). The media plays a major role in the formation of social identity. Ambedkar is always identified as a leader of the Dalits and nothing else. Right from his struggle towards social justice and till now after his 100\textsuperscript{th} birth anniversary, Ambedkar receives less attention from the Indian media. Ambedkar felt that his views were marginalized in the Indian media.

The Indian media, too, takes its cues from the temple of Brahminism before it projects somebody as an acceptable man or woman for the highest position. The Indian media used to hate Ambedkar (Kancha Ilaiyah, 2000).

We can identify the ideology, the bias, the partiality of the newspaper towards any issue, by observing the placement, the space and the usage of language of that content. If we investigate the news about Ambedkar by using the above variables, those newspapers had not given importance to him.

An editorial published in the 17\textsuperscript{th} issue of Samathuvam, a Dalit magazine condemned the bias of the newspaper swadeshamitran. It alleged that Tamil newspaper took a massive effort to publicise congress leaders and their visits to Madras Presidency. But they were not interested in the visit of Dr.Ambedkar. They didn’t publicise even his full speech. Here the space given to Ambedkar speech was very minimal and hence it is inferred that he was not given due prominence in the newspapers.

The kind of response Ambedkar received from colonial and post-colonial national media reminds one of the poor coverage that renowned Black American spokesman Booker T. Washington lamented that his successful speeches before large crowds that were normally expected to receive front-page attention would be relegated to the last page and given an inch or so of space. Instead, the front page would
invariably be given to considerable reporting of a Black person involved in a minor criminal offence.

At that time, the newspapers in no way stand beside Ambedkar’s struggles. They didn’t cover his struggles honestly and objectively. When Ambedkar was arguing for the political rights for his people in the round table conference, the newspapers portrayed him as a trait. They didn’t correlate this with the problems of the oppressed people. They refused to analyze this issue with the oppressed people’s perspective. The news was determined from the upper caste perspective. It explicitly reflected the caste Hindu attitude. This reminds us of the coverage of civil war in America. The Kerner commission on the civil disorders in America, while filing its report in 1967, condemned that the press “has too long basked in a white world, looking out of it, if at all, with White men’s eyes and a white perspective”.

The vernacular press imitated the English Press in dealing Ambedkar. When Ambedkar succeeded in receiving separate electorates and double vote for the depressed classes, the congress, the Press and the patriots condemned Ambedkar. The Tamil press condemned Ambedkar’s role in the round table conference. An editorial in Vikatan cursed Ambedkar. It accused Ambedkar that he was responsible for spoiling the round table conference. It also added that Ambedkar betrayed the majority. It also criticized Ambedkar for propagating that Gandhi was the biggest enemy for the untouchables.

In the same issue, an article titled “Kadhambam” written by Sethjamnawal was published. It commented that Ambedkar was digging a new well for the untouchables. It was not for getting water, but for sinking the untouchables upside down. The name of that well is separate electorate.

Ambedkar was called a monster, a traitor and a hireling. The main object of the Award, in the words of the Bombay Chronicle, was to turn the national majority of the Hindus into a
minority. They echoed Mahatma Gandhi’s view. B.G. Horniman wrote a furious article in the *Bombay Chronicle* on the eve of the Bombay conference, saying that the Doctor had to reckon with his countrymen and should not therefore stick up to his superior aloofness as though he were in a position to dictate to the country.

When Gandhi supported temple entry movement soon after the Poona pact, Ambedkar opposed it. Ambedkar in his statement said that the Untouchables were not inclined to support it because the Bill was based on the principle of majority and did not regard untouchability as a sin. Ambedkar argued that even though the majority accepts untouchability, it should be abolished without any concern.

In this statement, which he sent to Gandhi, questioned Gandhi if Ambedkar accept the temple entry now and agitate for the abolition of Chaturvarna and caste system, on what side Gandhi would be. If he will be in the opposite camp, I cannot be in his camp now. Gandhi replied that he cannot be in his camp because he believes Varnashram to be an integral part of Hinduism.

What was the reaction of the Press to Ambedkar’s statement? Infuriated at the statement of bitter facts made by Ambedkar, the whole hierarchy of the national press relapsed into a campaign of hatred against Ambedkar, and some of them described him as Bhimasur, a devil. A Bombay Marathi daily painted him as a Brahmadveshta (Keer, 1954).

A Study of the Scheduled Castes Federation and Dalit Politics in U.P., 1946-48 reveals that in 1946 when the nation is looking ahead to partition, Ambedkar wants the scheduled castes to form a third nation. Ambedkar supported the separate nation demand of Muslim League. The newspapers in U.P dismissed Ambedkar’s speech. The editorial in *Vartman* described Ambedkar’s speech as ‘reactionary and against the ideals of Indian nationalism. For the press, the Congress symbolised nationalism and national unity, and editors were clear about what constituted nationalism, and consequently, ‘Indian’ politics, and what
was ‘anti national’ or ‘communal’ politics. Ambedkar was described as potential Qaid-e-Azam, and this despite the fact that he did not raise the SCF’s demand for a separate electorate, always the bane of Ambedkarite politics for the nationalist. Ambedkar recommended Satyagraha for Scheduled Caste Federation. The very same newspapers which admired Satyagraha of Gandhi criticized Ambedkar’s Satyagraha. *Vartman* (Hindi daily). 22 July, 1946. It was argued, in the editorial of *Vartman* that the Gandhian Satyagraha was used to legitimize a political farce and to satisfy the personal ambitions of Dr Ambedkar. They never accepted Ambedkar’s non-violent protests as Satyagraha. The Mahad struggle and the Nasik temple entry movement which are led by Ambedkar were not considered as satyagraha by the mainstream.

The usage of language and the tone used to describe Ambedkar was undignified and it reveals the humiliation faced by Ambedkar from the media for his struggles.

The media has not changed even after his 50th death anniversary. The man who drafted the constitution of India still faces discrimination in the media. The one who fought for all forms of discrimination and the prime motto is to achieve equality and social justice yet to receive justice from the media.

The 50th death anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is a time to remember that the larger society ignores or distorts the Dalits’ struggle for their rights at its own risk.

Interviews in the run-up to the Ambedkar anniversary were mostly with people whining that Shivaji Park had been turned into a toilet. Or who spoke only about pollution and traffic jams (Sainath, 2006). The media seems to create panic among the people. It advised not to step anywhere near Dadar. The interviews in the newspapers tend to construct the Dalits union to pay homage for Ambedkar as a nuisance. The report did answer the last question. Apart from the park and roads being full ("I can’t take my evening stroll, nor can I walk my dog, no one can reach my restaurant/clinic"), the main
problem seemed to be the sight of people bathing in the open. Ironically, it was a 21-year-old medical student who found this sight "upsetting". (Punwani, 2006)

AMBEDKAR’S OBSERVATIONS ON MEDIA

Ambedkar cited about the newspapers in his works. He observed that the oppressed people were under represented in the newspapers. He also exposed that the newspapers were silencing his and his people’s views.

“It was depressing that we don’t have enough resources with us. We don’t have money; don’t have newspapers; Through out India, each day our people are suffering under authoritarian with no consideration and discrimination; those are not covered in the newspapers. By a planned plot the newspapers are involved full fledged in conspiracy to silence our views on socio political problems”.

No news about the oppressed people was published in the newspapers. Ambedkar exposed to the world that the Indian newspapers were not prepared to represent the caste conflicts, the reason for those conflicts and the sufferings of the oppressed people due to untouchability. Dr. Ambedkar in his 17th volume said that everyday in each village there is conflict between Hindus and Dalits. But nobody knows that. The media are not ready to focus those issues.

Further more Ambedkar found the reasons for the under representation and the discrimination of the oppressed people in the media. He notified that “The untouchables have no press. The congress press is closed to them and is determined not to give them the slightest publicity. They can not have their own press and for obvious reasons. No paper can survive without advertisement revenue”.

Ambedkar understood that another source for discrimination in the media was due to the upper caste domination. He said that “the staff of the Associated Press of India, which is the main new distributing agency in India, is entirely drawn from Madras Brahmins –
indeed the whole of the press in their hands and, who for well known reasons for entirely pro-congress and will not allow any news hostile to the congress to get publicity. These are reasons beyond the control of the untouchables”.

**INTERPRETATION**

The newspapers of that time were not ready to publish about the oppressed people or the leaders who are striving hard for that people. The oppressed people, who were excluded, segregated, oppressed from the society experience the same from the media. Ambedkar, who tried to abolish the untouchability, was portrayed as bhimasur against the Indian society. The space, the placement, the usage of language and the tone in the news about Ambedkar proved that he was given less attention, less prominence and negative representation.

Ambedkar was very thoughtful about the media ownership and the social composition of the media. Most of the newspapers during the freedom movement were under the ownership of congressmen and caste Hindus. So obviously they were against any views which oppose Hinduism and Congress party. The very same newspapers which represented Dhandi yatra of Gandhi as a satyagraha refused to accept Ambedkar’s Mahad struggle as a satyagraha. Moreover, they portrayed that struggle as a betrayal and insulted the struggle. As it was not possible to rely on the pro congress mass media to publish his news and views, Ambedkar decided to run newspapers.

In Marxist media analysis, media institutions are regarded as being 'locked into the power structure, and consequently as acting largely in tandem with the dominant institutions in society. The media thus reproduced the viewpoints of dominant institutions not as one among a number of alternative perspectives, but as the central and "obvious" or "natural" perspective' (Curran et al. 1982: 21). The Indian newspapers too reproduced the viewpoints of the caste Hindus. They are locked into the Caste hierarchy.
It is also inferred that Indian media did not identify the oppressed people who were the minorities in the Hindu society. Indian media observe only the congress movement, correlate with the freedom struggle and gave importance to that only. They were not interested about the living standards of the oppressed people, the untouchability brutality imposed upon them or Ambedkar who was being the voice of the voiceless.

2.5.5 MEDIA RUN BY DALITS

Many social movements across the country fought to eradicate the arrogance and rigidity of caste system and to liberate the grass-root people mainly the Dalits. The Dalits are suppressed in the name of caste. These social movements which enabled a social change and thereby they lifted the grass-root people.

There are evidences that these movements use media to communicate within the community. Thus it helped for the grass-root networking. The Namasudra movement in West Bengal, the Ad-dharm movement in Punjab and Kerala’s social revolution used the media mainly the print media to catalyze the movement and for networking.

The Namasudra movement in Bengal is the movement organized by untouchable caste the chandals. This movement used their community media to communicate within itself about their principles and ideals. It transformed itself from an amphibious peripheral multitude into a settled agricultural community, protesting against the age-old social disabilities and economic exploitation it suffered from, entering the vortex of institutional politics and trying to derive benefit out of it through an essentially loyalist political strategy. This movement had published newspapers. *Pataka* is a Namasudra paper, published in 1916. It carried editorials, poems and news, which supported their ideals (Sekar Bandhopadhyay, 2005).
The Ad-dharm movement in Punjab aimed at securing a separate and respectable space for the scheduled castes through cultural transformation, spiritual regeneration and political assertion, rather than seeking equality within the Hindu fold. This movement laid the foundation for the Dalit consciousness in Punjab. They published souvenirs, journals and weekly news bulletin to glorify various aspects of the movement. They aimed to gain political assertion through social transformation. This movement published *Adi Danka* in 1920s, *Ravidass Patrika* in 1970s and a Punjabi monthly *Kaumi Udarian* in 1985 (Ronki Ram, 2004).

The social revolution in Kerala is catalyzed by the increase in literacy and the print media. Sree Narayana Guru, Ayyan Kali brought out a social change in Kerala by opposing the caste system and liberating the Scheduled caste people (Aloysius, 2000). We got evidences for the bond between media and Dalits.

The Dalit movement started in Maharashtra around 1877 through the efforts of Jyotiba Phule, Gopal Baba Balankar and Ambedkar. And from the very beginning, publication and propaganda received top priority. Phule started a Dalit newspaper called *Deenbandhu* on 1st January 1877, which subsequently, proved to be quite influential. Between 1910 and 1930 there were nearly 50 newspapers published by Dalits all over Maharashtra of which *Bital Vidhwansham*, *Son Vanshiya Mitra*, *Nirashrit*, *Hind*, *Nagrik* etc., are well-known examples. Dr. Ambedkar himself edited important Dalit newspapers like *Janata* and *Mooknayak*. In the Hindi region, Swami Acchutananda was the first to publish a Hindi newspaper called *Achhut* in 1917. In 1928 he launched another newspaper called *Adi Hindu Mahasabha*. In 1934, a Hindi weekly newspaper called *Samta* was launched from Almora by Munshi Hariprasad Tamta. After independence a flood of newspapers were started all over Uttar Pradesh by the Dalits themselves. From Aligarh, a fortnightly newspaper called *Parivartan* was started under the editorship of Ajudhyanath Dandi. In
In 1957 a newspaper called Sinhnaad was launched by Dayanand Vyas, who appointed Sunderlal Sagar, an eminent Dalit writer, as the editor.

From the 1960s onwards, dozens of small, locally based newspapers started coming out. *Zamin ke Tare* was started by Shri Sewaram Mahashaya, a freedom fighter from Aligarh in 1962, edited by Mishrilal Deepak, who also started a printing press in 1966 called Bhim Printing Press. In 1966, a newspaper called *Shoshit Pukar* was started from Bulandshahar with a print order of 1000 copies. In 1968, Swadheen Bharat, a weekly newspaper was published from Aligarh. In 1972, *Samta Shakti*, a weekly newspaper, and in 1981, *Bahujan Adhikar*, a fortnightly newspaper, were started from Meerut, both edited by Mohandas Naimish Rai. In 1978 Dr. R.S. Azad started a 6-page weekly from Bulandshahar called *Lok Chinta*, priced at only 40 paise. In 1982, another weekly called *Bheembhumi* was started from Bulandshahar. *Nirnayak Bheem*, a monthly newspaper was started from Kanpur, edited by Dr. Kawaldhari. Many famous Dalit activists of the seventies and eighties such as Periyar Lalai Singh, Dr. R. Kamal, Dr. Motiram Shastri, Chandrakumar Varathe etc., wrote for these monthly magazines.

The first daily newspaper of the Dalits was started in 1985 under the editorship of Sri Durga Prasad. By the 1990s, the market was flooded with numerous daily, weekly, fortnightly and monthly newspapers, magazines. This phenomenon was an offshoot of the (in)famous Mandal commission, through which the Dalits used their own mouthpieces to express their views and counter views. Some of the newspapers that still exist today are: *Bahujan Digdarshak* (Lucknow), *Ananya Bharat* (Mainpuri), *Bhim Sainik*(Meerut) and *Dalit Chetna* (Lucknow).

Some other Dalit papers were: *Mookbharat, Dalit Kesri, Dalit Jan Udgar, Lokshya Sandhan, Apana Abhiyan, Adhikar Bharti, Baudh Bandhu, Nag Times, Shoshit Samta, Shoshit Darpan, Kalyan Kutumb, Apni Rae, Guruvani, Durbal ki Awaz, Garima Bharati,*
Dalit Asia Today, Samaj Gaurav, Priya Sampadak, Kailash Bharti (Lucknow), Nidar, Savdhan, Kiranon ka Basera (Saharanpur), Samta Sandesh (Ghaziabad), Bheem Bharti (Ghaziabad), Arjak (Lucknow), Jhalkari Sandesh (Agra), Aitihasik Chhalang (Saharanpur), Prajapati Tarang (Kanpur), Rajat Bandhu (Jaunpur), Balmiki Prakash (Allahabad), Dard ki Duniya (Ghazipur), Dalit Prakash (Kanpur), Utthan (Lucknow), Budh Updesh (Moradabad), Bahujan ka Bhaichara (Badaun), Republican Inqalab (Hapur), Ambedkar Vikas Patra (Vilari), Bahujan (Lucknow) and Pragya Sahitya (Farookhabad).

These newspapers, magazines and other printed literature were the making of a microscopic literate section of the Dalits. They were the opinion makers, community leaders and social activists. These newspapers were published daily, weekly and monthly with print orders varying from 1000 to 10,000. The newspaper Bahujan Sangathak is the party organ of Bahujan Samaj Party and plays an important role in constructing popular perceptions among Dalits. The number of readers is much larger than the number of subscribers since one copy is read and often read aloud to many people. Ram Baran of Shivpuri village pointed out that the two newspapers subscribed by him, namely Majhi Janata and Bahujan Samaj, are borrowed, read and discussed by many of the Dalits living in that village.

Before Independence, Dalits own some newspapers and magazines. Irattai Malai Sreenivasan published a Newspaper named Paraiyan from 1893 -1900. Iyotee Thass Pandit ran a magazine called Oru pica Tamilan (Ravi Kumar, 2004). It was a four pages magazine in tabloid size. In 1918, a magazine called Valikattuvone was published from Nagapattinam during 1918 (A.R.Venkatachalapathy, 2004). A weekly magazine called Samathuvam was published from Namakkal. (Stalin Rajangham, 2004) These newspapers and magazines were interested in the progress of Dalit community.
Iyothee Thass Pandit was the pioneer of Dalit media in Tamil Nadu. In 1907, Iyothee Thass started *Oru pica Tamilan* in Chennai. Later, the name was changed into Tamilan. After his death, his son A.Pattabiraman run this magazine till 1915. Pandit G. Appadurai runs this magazine from 1926 to 1934 at Neyveli. Iyothee Thass discovered that the Dalits were the followers of Buddhism. They were the true sons of this soil. The Aryans invaded Tamil Nadu and created caste system. The Dalits who refused to accept the caste system were compulsorily turned out to be as untouchables. Through his newspaper, he redrafted Dalit history.

He keenly observed the misrepresentation of Dalits in other Tamil newspapers. On 1\textsuperscript{st} April, 1908, there was an article published in *Oru Pica Tamilan* regarding the coverage of Tirunelveli revolt by a Tamil newspaper called "India". In the revolt, a muslim and a paraiyah were dead. That newspaper referred the Muslim with respect but disregarded the Paraiyah. They referred Paraiyah as Paraiyan. Iyothee Thass questioned the insolence of that newspaper. He concluded that we could not call it as a composing mistake and it surely reflected the casteist reaction and hostility towards Dalits.

*Paraiyan* was started by Irattai Malai Seenivasan in 1893. He run this newspaper till 1900. This was first started as monthly and later converted into a weekly. In those days, Indian Administrative Service examinations were conducted only in England. The congress party demanded the British Government to conduct that examinations in India since Brahmins were not allowed to cross the seas in Hinduism. Seenivasan opposed this move and recorded it in his weekly. He opposed Brahminism and Hinduism through his weekly.

In 1918, a magazine called *Valikattuvone* was published from Nagapattinam. The front page was bilingual and the flag contained ‘Valikattuvone, The Guide and Organ of the South Indian oppressed classes Union’. The editor of this magazine was S.A.S.
Thangamuthu. This bilingual magazine was published by the South Indian oppressed classes union. Only three of the issues were available in British Archives. The content illustrated the emergence of political attitude even in the beginning of 20th century.

The magazine named *Samathuvam* which was assumed to be published from 1945 was a weekly. P. Muthusamy is the editor of this weekly magazine. Above the name of the magazine, the three slogans of Dr. Ambedkar, EDUCATE! AGITATE! ORGANIZE! were printed. All the news of this magazine were recorded with sincere Ambedkarism. There was no news regarding Indian freedom struggle.


At present, there are few Dalit magazines. They are *Dalit Murasu*, *Puthiya Kodangi*, *Thaai Man*, *Marudha malar* etc.