

An Empirical Study on Media Portrayals and its Effect on Heinous Crimes with Special Reference to Chennai

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YEAR OF STUDY: 3rd Year

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Abstract: *This study explores the significant impact of media portrayal on public perception, particularly in the context of heinous crimes. The objective of the study is to examine the correlation between media coverage and the public's fear of crime, the research seeks to understand how variations in the intensity and nature of such coverage influence public attitudes towards crime and criminal justice policies. The study delves into the role of sensationalism in media reporting and its potential to undermine public trust in the criminal justice system and law enforcement agencies. Moreover, it aims to investigate how different types of media contribute to shaping public perceptions and attitudes, considering potential biases in the portrayal of heinous crimes. Factors such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status of victims and perpetrators are critically analyzed to uncover their influence on public perception. The study further investigates the role of sensationalism in media reports, particularly how exaggerated or emotionally charged coverage of heinous crimes may erode public trust in the criminal justice system and law enforcement agencies. Sensationalism, often driven by the media's need to attract and retain audience attention, is scrutinized for its potential to distort public understanding of crime rates, the effectiveness of law enforcement, and the fairness of judicial processes. The study evaluates the long-term effects of media portrayals of heinous crimes on public behavior, including fear-driven behaviors such as avoidance of certain areas or support for more stringent criminal justice policies. The findings are expected to contribute to ongoing debates about media responsibility, public safety, and the ethical considerations of crime reporting in the media.*

Keywords: media portrayal, public perception, heinous crimes, public behaviour, sensationalism

