

PRINT MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE AMENDMENTS TO THE JUVENILE JUSTICE ACT, 2015

BY MEDIA DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION



Table of Contents

	<i>Page No</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	4-13
<i>Editorial discretion of the paper</i>	14-35
Overall coverage	16-17
Placement of the story	18-21
Prominence of the story	22-23
Story type	24-27
Accompanying visuals	28-30
Location of the story	31-35
<i>Print media coverage of the amendments</i>	36-61
Overall classification of the articles	38-42
Coverage of the amendments	43-47
Age reduction for heinous crimes	48-51
Institutional source for the story	52-56
Print media's slant on the juvenile	57-61
<i>Executive summary</i>	62-68
Introduction	64
Key findings of the report	64-67
Recommendations and way forward	68
<i>Appendix-Coding sheet</i>	69-72
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	73-75

Index of Figures

- Fig 1. Overall coverage: Language wise distribution of articles
- Fig 2. Placement of the story: Overall response
- Fig 3. Placement of the story: Language-wise
- Fig 4. Prominence of the story: Overall response
- Fig 5. Prominence of the story: Language-wise
- Fig 6. Prominence of the story: Newspaper-wise
- Fig 7. Story type: Overall response
- Fig 8. Story type: Newspaper-wise
- Fig 9. Story type: Language-wise
- Fig 10. Accompanying visuals: Overall response
- Fig 11. Accompanying visuals: Newspaper-wise
- Fig 12. Accompanying visuals: Language-wise
- Fig 13. Location of the story: Overall response
- Fig 14. Location of the story: Newspaper-wise
- Fig 15. Location of the story: Language-wise
- Fig 16. Classification of articles: Overall response
- Fig 17. Classification of articles: Newspaper-wise
- Fig 18. Classification of articles: Language-wise
- Fig 19. Coverage of the amendments: Overall response
- Fig 20. Coverage of the amendments: Newspaper-wise
- Fig 21. Coverage of the amendments: Language-wise
- Fig 22. Age reduction for heinous crimes: Overall response
- Fig 23. Age reduction for heinous crimes: Newspaper-wise
- Fig 24. Age reduction for heinous crimes: Language-wise
- Fig 25. Institutional source of the story: Overall response
- Fig 26. Institutional source of the story: Newspaper-wise
- Fig 27. The print media's slant on the juvenile: Overall response
- Fig 28. The print media's slant on the juvenile: Newspaper-wise
- Fig 29. The print media's slant on the juvenile: Language-wise



INTRODUCTION

Introduction

On December 22nd, 2015, the Indian Parliament approved the new amendments to the existing Juvenile Justice Act, 2000. The amendments gained wider public attention as they were situated against the backdrop of the gang-rape of Nirbhaya (Jyothi Singh) by six men, including a juvenile, on December 16th, 2012. While the five adult convicts were awarded life sentences, the juvenile was given a three-year sentence in a special home, in accordance with the Juvenile Justice (henceforth JJ) Act. India, being a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (1992), enacted legislation in 2000 where it identified those below the age of 18 years as children and spelled out punitive measures for children in conflict with the law, in accordance with international standards. In short, the legislation refused to try children below the age of 18 as adults. The Nirbhaya case judgment with respect to the juvenile convict re-kindled the public debate surrounding the existing punitive system with respect to juveniles in conflict with the law in India.

Sitaram Yechury¹, during the Juvenile Justice amendments debate in the Rajya Sabha, mentioned that a legislation cannot be passed based on the mood and sentiments of the public. Sound principles based on evidence and facts need to be the basis for any legislation. An academic journal² in its editorial openly opined that amendments to the JJ Act were based on media outrage and public sentiments. Sanjay Hedge, a Supreme Court lawyer writing³ in *The Hindu*, questioned the moral outrage that the media created around this issue. A preliminary overview of the existing literature does indicate the role played by the media in prompting the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act.

How did the print media cover the amendments to the JJ Act? Specifically, how did national and regional newspapers cover this issue?

¹ He is a member of the Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of the Indian Parliament, from the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

² Editorial, 'Unjustified Haste,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 26, 2015.

³ Sanjay Hedge, 'Rage of the self-righteous Republic,' *The Hindu*, December 24, 2015.

Trajectory of Juvenile Legislation in India

In the pre-Independence period, juveniles in conflict with the law were dealt with in accordance with the following: the Whipping Act of 1864, Indian Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, the Reformatory School Act, the Borstal School Act and the Children's Act of 1920. All these Acts provided delinquents with some special provision with regard to their institutionalization and rehabilitation.

In post-Independence India, the Juvenile Justice Act, a single uniform law, was enacted in 1986 to deal with juveniles. According to this Act, males under 16 years and females under 18 years were treated as juveniles. The 1986 Act provided mandated care, protection, treatment, development and rehabilitation both for delinquents and neglected children. Juveniles who were identified to be in conflict with the law could be either fined or placed under supervision for a maximum of three years. However, they could not be executed, imprisoned or jailed.

In 1992, the United Nations passed a charter on child rights – the United Nations Convention on Child Rights (UNCRC) – with 193 signatories. India enacted a new Juvenile Justice Act in 2000 in accordance with the 1992 UN convention. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act was passed in December 2000 and came into force on 1st April 2001. According to this Act, all juveniles under 18 years, irrespective of gender (unlike the 1986 Act) would come under the purview of juvenile justice. Reformation, delinquent care, and rehabilitation were the main principles of this Act. This law emphasized the involvement of voluntary organizations in running observation homes and special homes. According to this Act, a juvenile could not be tried under an adult law and the maximum punishment awarded could be three years of imprisonment, which would have to be spent at observation or special homes. Thus the 2000 Act focused primarily on reformation and rehabilitation of the juvenile.

Prior to the 2015 amendments, the Indian state had always had a reformatory and rehabilitative approach towards juveniles who are in conflict with the law. It had taken the position that a juvenile who has committed a crime is not completely exercising conscious thinking and therefore must be reformed and rehabilitated to lead to a normal life. Under the 2000 Act, the maximum imprisonment was for three years, to be spent in an observation home where the juvenile would be counseled and trained in order to return him/her to society as a reformed individual rather than a criminal offender. However, in the newly amended Act, a 16 to 18 year old juvenile can be tried under adult law for heinous crimes. The final decision of whether the juvenile is to be treated under JJ law or adult law will be made by Juvenile Justice Boards across India, on a case to case basis.

Trajectory of Juvenile Legislation in India

The trajectory of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 in the Parliament was as follows: the Bill was tabled in the Lok Sabha Budget Session on 12th August, 2014 by Maneka Gandhi, Minister for Women and Child Development. However, the Bill was passed only in the 2015 Winter Session of Parliament on 22nd December. Between the Budget Session of 2014 and the Winter Session of 2015, the Indian Parliament was convened three times, and the Juvenile Justice Bill was listed for consideration and passage during this period.

The public narrative around the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act has been constrained to age reduction. However, the new amendments do not restrict themselves to punishing juveniles in the age group of 16-18 years as adults, in the case of severe crimes like murder and rape. Broadly, they focused on the following themes: The new amendments have classified crimes and their respective punitive measures under three categories – petty, serious, and heinous crimes. Not only does the legislation deal with children in conflict with law, it legally spells out details with regard to crimes against children. Further, it has modified the powers of the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) and the Child Welfare Committee (CWC). For the first time, the procedures and processes for adoption of the Act as well as the organizations involved have been elaborated in legal terms.

The amendments to the existing Juvenile Justice Act do not stand well with the international conventions and provisions in the Indian Constitution. These amendments go against the core principles mentioned in the United Nations Convention on Child Rights. The convention states that every child below 18 years should be treated as a juvenile. However, the new amendments, against the backdrop of a few cases like the Nirbhaya case (2012) and the Shakti Mills case (2013), have decided to try juveniles aged between 16-18 years under adult laws for heinous crimes like rape and murder.

Research Questions

To understand the print media coverage of the legislation, the mapping study examined two major themes for each of the newspapers studied:

1.
What was the editorial discretion of the paper with respect to the juvenile justice legislation?
How much did the print paper contribute to the coverage of juvenile justice legislation?
What percent of the coverage was news reportage and news analysis?
What was the position and location of the stories on juvenile justice legislation that appeared in the paper?

2.
How did the print media focus on the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act?
What significance was given to each amendment in the articles covered?
Did a few amendments gain more coverage over others or was there equal representation of all the amendments?

Research Methodology

For this study, two leading English dailies, *The Hindu* and *The Times of India*, and two leading Tamil dailies, *Dinathanthi* and *Dinamalar*, were studied for a period of 19 months from 15th June, 2014 to 15th January, 2016.

As the media-mapping research proceeded, major challenges and concerns emerged with regard to the methodology of the study. Earlier studies pertaining to media research have focused on broad themes – women, environment, and rural India amongst several others – and their coverage in the media. There have been hardly any media studies that have focused on the print media's portrayal of a particular legislation.

Unlike the earlier media research on women, environment etc, random sampling would not be possible for this research as we were looking at an exclusive legislation here: the JJ Act. The amendments to the Bill took 19 months to be passed as an Act by Parliament. How would we go about sourcing articles from the print media? Would we need to examine each paper for the duration of 19 months, or employ a particular sampling method through which we could identify a pool of articles that are representative of the larger sample?

Parliament session periods could be taken as an indicator to short-list articles. However, this method too had its own problems. Looking at the newspapers to identify articles only when Parliament was in session could cause our biases to feed into the research. How? The research begins with the assumption that print media carries out the coverage of a legislation only when Parliament is in session. This can be true! However, it should come as an inference of the study and not feed into the research as an assumption. Further, such an assumption does not help us analyze the entire trajectory of changes that the Bill witnessed. Rather than helping us understand the trajectory of the Bill, it would only dislocate the research from the ground reality.

The only option left with respect to research methodology was to look at the 19-month duration for each paper. We set forth to do the same as it would be a beginning in understanding the role of the media with respect to legislations in India. It took us close to six months (mid-October 2016 to April 2017) to examine approximately 2,280 days of newspaper coverage for this research.

Research Methodology

A personal overview of the articles on the JJ Act in the print media, at an informal level, reveal that adequate attention was not given to all the amendments. Further, there emerges an image of certain negative biases created by the media in the portrayal of juvenile offenders. The research needed to be methodologically sound and objective to arrive at any conclusions – whether it was the positive, negative, or complex portrayal of the amendments. The best solution available was to generate a coding sheet. Our coding sheet has a set of pre-identified questions for each article. An overall analysis of these questions with respect to each article helped us identify broad trends and patterns in the print media coverage of the amendments.

In the process of the research we arrived at a few indicators which were used for analysis. Broadly, they can be divided into two areas:

1. Editorial discretion of the paper with respect to the coverage of the amendments and
2. Analysis of the coverage of the JJ Act.

After immense discussion, deliberation, and consultation, we arrived at a coding sheet⁴. Each article was coded into a separate individual coding sheet. Later these coding sheets were transferred into an Excel sheet and imported into SPSS software to do a data analysis. Doing the analysis with SPSS software enhanced the quality and effectiveness of the research.

⁴Find the coding sheet attached as Appendix I.

Article Identification

The 19-month duration of the Juvenile Justice legislation posed several challenges with respect to article identification for the research. What articles would be finally chosen? Several rounds of discussion and discretion were used to finalize which articles would/would not be incorporated in a systematic way.

The debate surrounding the juvenile age reduction for heinous crimes was initiated in the aftermath of the Nirbhaya gang-rape case, where one of the offenders was a juvenile. The juvenile convict, aged 17 years and six months at the time of the crime, was tried under the existing Juvenile Justice Act, 2000. He was awarded a three-year sentence to be served at an observation home, the maximum punishment available under the existing Act. This judgement incited a public furor with arguments being put forward that punishment should be based on the intensity and severity of crimes and not on the age of the individual – how can an individual be tried under juvenile law when he commits crimes like murder or rape? Is it a logical argument to state that a juvenile committed such heinous crimes without understanding the repercussions? The public and sections of the media thus agitated for the punishment of 16 to 18-year-old juveniles under adult law, and not juvenile law, for heinous crimes.

Before we seek to analyze the print media coverage of the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act, it needs to be reiterated that the trigger for amendments was not related to policy solutions or implementation loopholes. Rather the amendment to reduce the age for juveniles with respect to heinous crimes emerged against the backdrop of the Nirbhaya and Shakti Mills cases. Thus any study on the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act needs to view these amendments in the context of these cases – especially the Nirbhaya case.

The current media-mapping study of the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act thus cannot exclusively look at the legislation alone. It must look at the media attention rendered to the Nirbhaya case, as the case has either positively or negatively, at a conscious or subconscious level, affected the latest juvenile legislation.

Within the Nirbhaya case, two developments majorly affected the amendments to the juvenile justice legislation: the controversy surrounding the release of the BBC documentary *India's Daughter*, and the release of the juvenile from the observation home after completing his three-year imprisonment period.

Article Identification

Articles chosen during the period of our study addressed the following themes: amendments to the juvenile justice legislation, Nirbhaya episode, cases pertaining to the existing Juvenile Justice Act, and implementation problems with regard to the Act. However, individual/stand-alone articles on juvenile crime and crimes against children were not taken into consideration as they were beyond the scope of the current study.

Thus, in the current study, the term ‘juvenile justice legislation’ encompasses news items around the theme of juvenile justice legislation, the Nirbhaya issue, implementation of the JJ Act (2000), crimes against children, or juvenile crime. All these articles discussed around the period of amendments to juvenile justice legislation would have affected readers’ perception of juvenile offenders and the subsequent legislation in either a direct or subtle way.

Thus, the study set forth to look at the trajectory of the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act at a ground level and its coverage in the print media.



EDITORIAL DISCRETION OF THE PAPER

Overall Coverage

Between 15th June, 2014 and 15th January, 2016 the four identified newspapers¹ published 267 items on the subject of juvenile justice legislation.

Featuring 228 news items, the two English newspapers comprised 85 percent of the total coverage. *The Times of India* and *The Hindu*'s total coverage stood at 40 and 45 percent respectively. With 39 news items, coverage by the two leading Tamil newspapers amounted only to 15 percent. *Dinathanthi* and *Dinamalar*'s coverage of the issue stood at 8.2 and 6.4 percent respectively.

More than three-fourths of the total coverage of the juvenile justice legislation occurred in the two English national dailies that were studied. They provided a detailed and extensive coverage of the issue. The English national dailies found it necessary to cover the day-to-day developments with respect to this theme – whether it was the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act or the Nirbhaya case. On the contrary, the Tamil newspapers reported only the major developments with respect to the juvenile justice legislation or the Nirbhaya case.

Name of Newspaper	Total Number of Articles	Percentage
<i>The Times of India</i>	107	40.1
<i>The Hindu</i>	121	45.3
<i>Dinathanthi</i>	17	6.4
<i>Dinamalar</i>	22	8.2
TOTAL	267	100

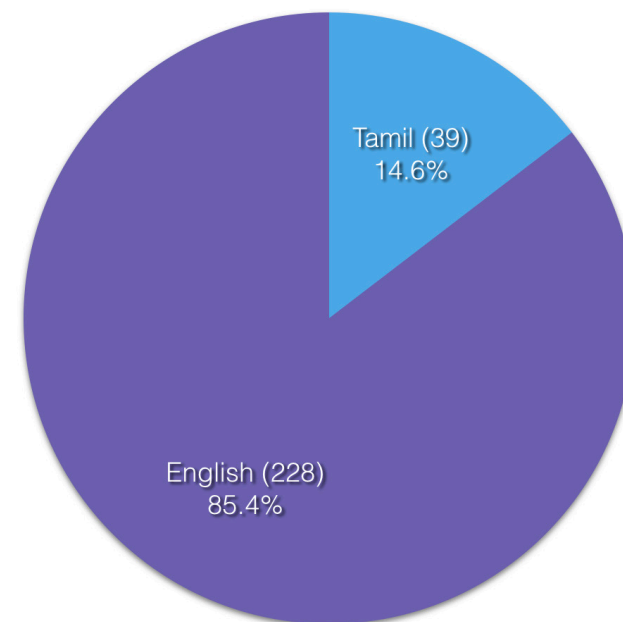


Fig 1. Overall coverage:
Language wise distribution of articles

Overall Coverage

The discrepancy in coverage between the English and Tamil dailies needs to be understood with the caveat that English dailies are national in character, with their readership spread across the country. The Tamil dailies are, in contrast, vernacular newspapers, with a limited audience restricted to a particular language and state, and here the major focus is on the state of Tamil Nadu.

A concurrent pattern existed with respect to the total coverage in both the English and Tamil dailies. The two leading English newspapers, *The Times of India* and *The Hindu*, provided similar coverage to the juvenile justice legislation with 40 and 45 percent respectively. Similarly, the two leading Tamil newspapers provided a congruent coverage of the issue, with six percent and 8.5 percent respectively.

¹For the media-mapping research study four newspapers, two in English and two in Tamil, were identified on the basis of their circulation numbers. The identified papers are The Times of India and The Hindu in the English press, and Dinathanthi and Dinamalar from the Tamil press.

Placement of the Story

Introduction

Every day, simultaneously, several new issues arise or developments take place around existing issues – all of which compete for coverage in the print newspapers. Given the constraints with regard to space, the editorial board decides the news items that go into a newspaper on any particular day.

Therefore, in a newspaper, unlike in the digital medium, placement of the story is indicative of the discretion of a newspaper towards a particular issue. In this research, placement of the story is studied to understand the editorial discretion of print newspapers with respect to the coverage of juvenile justice legislation.

An issue gets front page coverage only when the paper considers it to be the significant story amongst several simultaneous developments for the day. Significant but not top-priority news items get placed in the other news pages² depending on the broad theme of the issue. The presence of news items in the other news pages indicate that the issue is of concern as a news story for the paper, but nevertheless not significant enough to be published on the front page.

The presence of news items on the opinion page³ demonstrates a particular newspaper's editorial discretion to go beyond the coverage of daily developments in order to provide an analytical understanding of the same through editorial pieces, opinion pieces, cartoons and letters to the editor.

² The other news pages include all pages excluding the front page, editorial and opinion page. It includes the city page, state page, national page and sports page.

³ The opinion page includes the editorial page and commentary page. For instance, in *The Times of India*, editorial and commentary pieces appear on a single page while in *The Hindu*, editorial and commentary pieces are spread across two pages.

Placement of the Story

Overall response

Sixty percent of the total news coverage of the juvenile justice legislation was spread among the other news pages. Coverage on the opinion page came second with 24 percent. This was followed by coverage on the front page which amounted to 16.5 percent of the total coverage: 44 news stories appeared on the front page of the newspapers.

Language-wise

Language-wise examination of the data shows that 98 percent of the front page coverage took place in the English dailies. In contrast, in the total span of 20 months, Tamil dailies had only one story reported on the front page. The front page coverage of the juvenile justice legislation reiterates that the juvenile justice legislation and the Nirbhaya issue were considered significant national issues that deserved widespread coverage only by the English press.

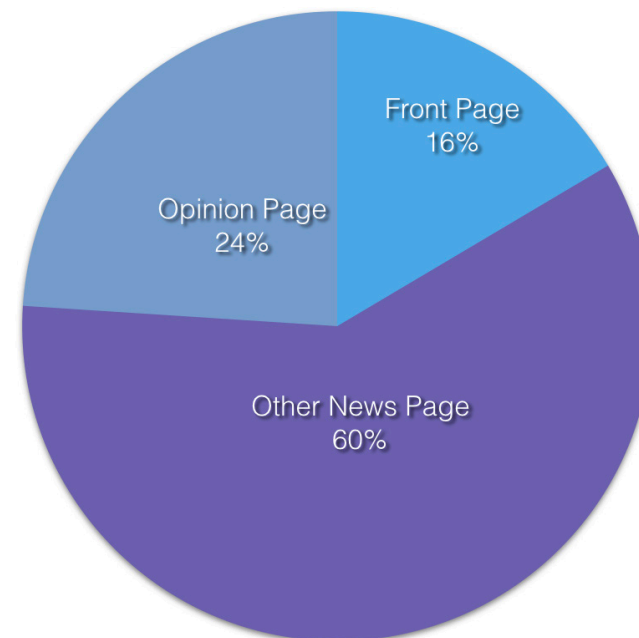


Fig 2. Placement of the story:
Overall response

Name of Newspaper	Front Page	Other News Page	Opinion page
<i>The Times of India</i>	16	72	12
<i>The Hindu</i>	22	41	38
<i>Dinathanthi</i>	6	88	6
<i>Dinamalar</i>	0	82	18

Placement of the Story

News reporting vs. News analysis

An individual break-up of the news items, paper-wise, reveals that a pattern of imbalance existed between news reporting and news analysis in *The Times of India*, *Dinathanthi*, and *Dinamalar*. This is because predominant coverage of the juvenile justice legislation has occurred only in the news reporting section, exclusively in the other news pages.

In this regard, *The Hindu* was an outlier. It attempted to moderate the coverage of juvenile justice legislation by balancing its hard news coverage with news analysis. Its coverage of the juvenile justice legislation on the front page, other news pages and opinion page was 22, 41 and 38 percent respectively.

The Hindu had the highest number of articles placed both on the front page and opinion page. Around 60 percent of the total front-page stories on juvenile justice legislation in the papers analyzed appeared in *The Hindu*.

Similarly, *The Hindu* contributed around three-fourths to the total number of opinion-page articles on the subject in the papers analyzed. The data shows that *The Hindu* took the effort to look beyond daily developments on the issue by attempting to analytically understand the issue.

Placement of the Story

Language-wise break-up of the data

The English newspapers had the highest number of articles featured in the other news page with 55 percent. This was followed by 26 percent coverage on the opinion page and 19 percent front-page coverage featuring 43 stories.

Three-fourths of the news items in the Tamil dailies were located on the other news pages. The opinion page accounted for 13 percent of the news items. Surprisingly, the Tamil dailies had only one front-page story. While *Dinamalar* had one front-page story on the issue, *Dinathanthi* did not find the theme significant enough to give it front-page coverage.

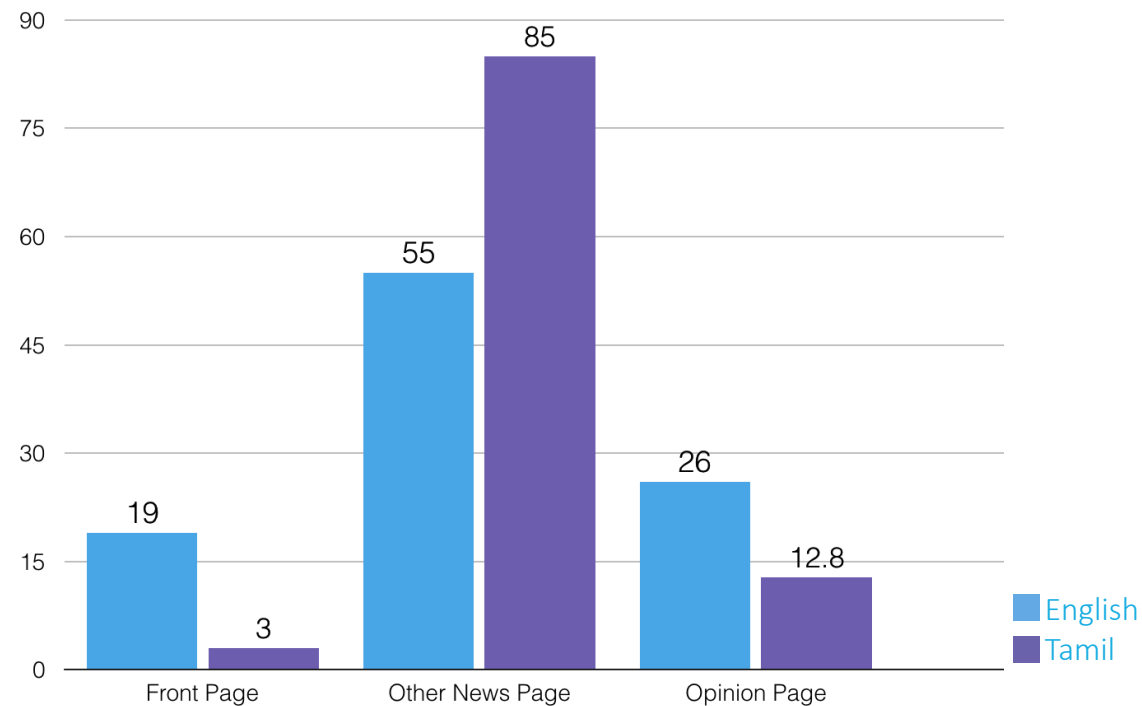


Fig 3. Placement of the story: Language-wise

Prominence of the Story

Introduction

Unlike the digital medium, the position of the news items in a print newspaper demands attention in a media-mapping study. It decides the reader's engagement with a particular news item. In all probability, a news story on the front page or a lead story in the other news pages would tend to be widely read and consumed by its audience. Similarly, a news story towards the bottom of the page or a news story with only one column is possibly skimmed through by the general audience. A systematic analysis of the position of the news items will help us to understand the editorial discretion of the paper towards a particular issue.

Three categories – high, medium and low – were used to study the position of the coverage of the juvenile justice legislation by the print newspapers. The category of 'high prominence' included the following: all news stories on the front page, lead news stories on other news pages, first editorial, and news packages with one story being the lead news story. The category 'medium prominence' was assigned to: any news story that appeared on the other news pages as the second lead story, news stories that appeared in the top or middle part of the newspaper, and second editorials. 'Low prominence' included: news articles that were located towards the bottom of the print newspaper, and those stories which had only one column.

Overall response

Overall, 60 percent of the news items on the theme of juvenile justice legislation were placed as high prominence stories, 27 percent of the news items appeared as medium prominence stories and the remaining 13 percent of the news items were situated as low-prominence stories. In total, 86 percent of the news items on juvenile justice legislation appeared as high and medium prominence stories.

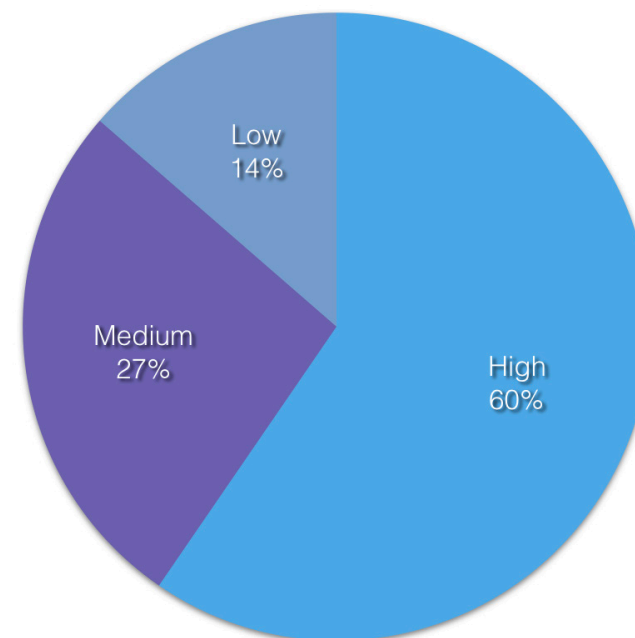


Fig 4. Prominence of the story:
Overall response

Prominence of the Story

Language-wise break-up of the data

Across the two English newspapers, 62 percent of the news items appeared as high prominence stories. Around 25 percent appeared as medium prominence stories and twelve percent of the coverage was placed as low prominent stories.

Forty-five percent of the news items in the Tamil newspapers appeared as high prominence stories. Further, 33 and 22 percent of the news items were placed as medium and low prominence stories respectively. The data shows that in the English dailies, more than half of the news items appeared as high prominence stories, while in the Tamil dailies, more than half of the news items on juvenile legislation appeared as medium or low prominence stories.

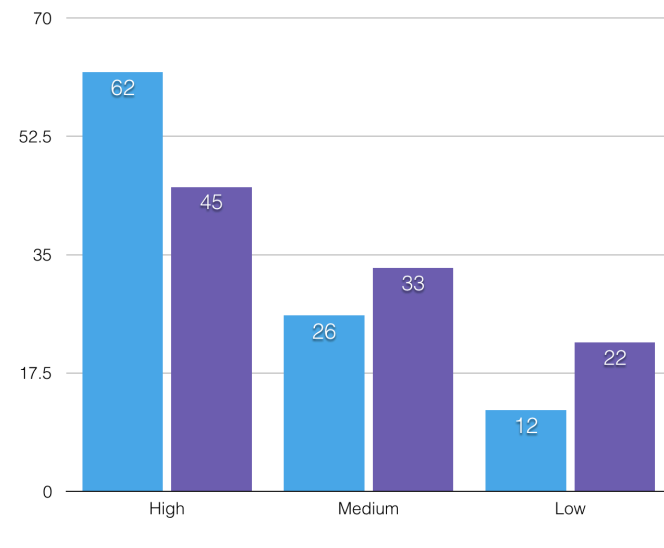
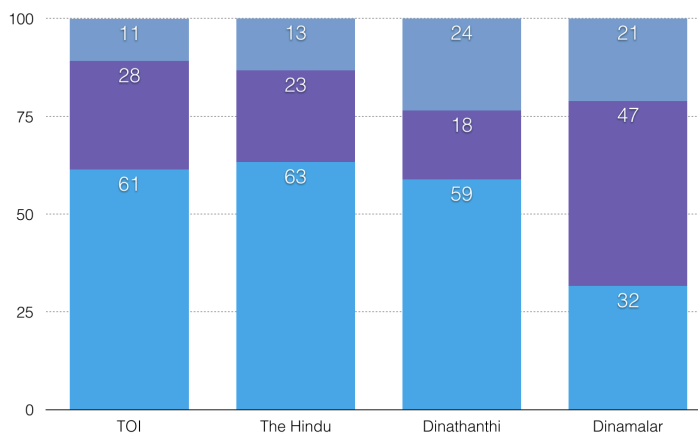


Fig 5. Prominence of the story:
Language-wise



Newspaper-wise break-up of the data

A newspaper-wise break-up of the above data concerning prominence of news items shows that an identical coverage exists between The Times of India and The Hindu. A pattern appears in The Times of India, The Hindu and Dinathanthi's coverage of the theme of juvenile justice legislation. Around 60 percent of the items in these three newspapers appeared as high prominence stories. Dinamalar is the only newspaper where 47 percent of the total coverage appeared as medium prominence stories as opposed to high prominence stories.

Fig 6. Prominence of the story:
Newspaper-wise

Legend: High (Blue), Medium (Purple), Low (Grey)

Story Type

The story types used in the study

A newspaper can engage with a particular theme either as a news story or through news analysis. It uses multiple mediums such as byline stories, bureau news, wire news, editorials, opinion pieces, cartoons and letters to the editor.

The daily developments over a particular issue, especially hard news, is reported as news stories in the print media. This can be a byline story accompanied by the name of the individual correspondent or a bureau news story. Ultimately, it is the editorial discretion of the newspaper whether to offer a news story either as an individual byline story⁴ or as bureau news⁵. In the latter case, the sourcing of news is done by one or more journalists. Also, there is a third category, where the news is sourced from a wire service. It can be a government news agency (Press Trust of India) or a private news agency like Indo-Asian News Service (IANS) or Reuters amongst others.

Important themes, as identified by the editorial board, are taken beyond the domain of daily reporting and engaged with seriously via the editorial and opinion sections. This realm acts as a forum to understand the paper's standpoint on any particular issue which cannot be clearly ascertained from the daily reportage of the same. The section 'Letters to the Editor' helps to gauge the readers' views on the new items that are published in the paper and acts as a forum to delve into the readers' mindsets and their take on issues.

⁴ A byline story raises the bar on authenticity and the author takes sole responsibility for the story.

⁵ A byline story with any label, like Times News Network, Our Correspondent, Special Correspondent, other than that of the individual correspondent name is categorized as a bureau story.

Story Type

Overall response

Overall, 35 percent of news items on the juvenile justice legislation were reported as bureau news stories. Byline stories contributed 33 percent towards the total coverage. To sum up, 67 percent of the total coverage comprised daily reportage on juvenile justice legislation. News analysis contributed 15 percent towards the total coverage of juvenile justice legislation. Opinion pieces and editorials contributed 10 and 5 percent respectively.

Story Type	Frequency	% of Total Coverage
<i>Byline</i>	90	33.7
<i>Bureau news</i>	93	34.8
<i>Opinion pieces</i>	27	10.1
<i>Editorial</i>	13	4.9
<i>Letters to the Editor</i>	28	10.5
<i>Others</i>	16	6
<i>Total</i>	267	100

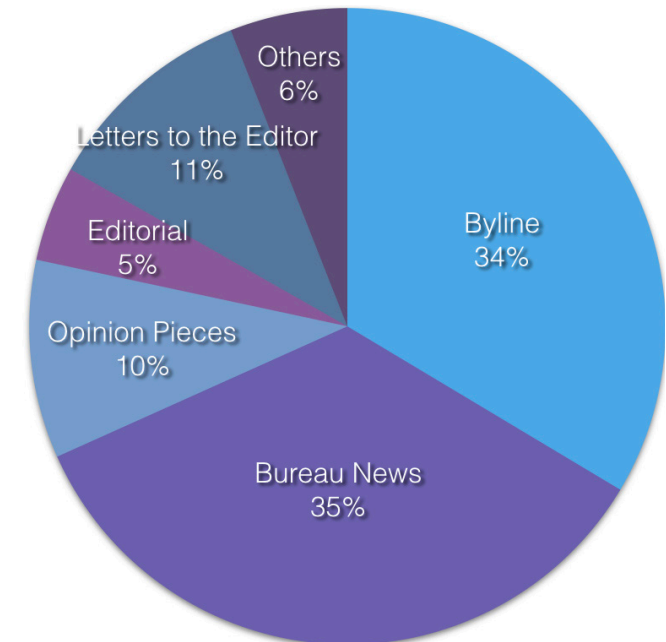


Fig 7. Story type:
Overall response

Interestingly, letters to the editor contributed 11 percent towards the the total coverage of the news-items. Discussion of the juvenile justice legislation issues in the 'Letters to the Editor' section implied that readers considered juvenile justice legislation to be a pertinent issue and engaged with the paper through expressing their opinions and perspectives. The section titled 'Others' included independent quotes on the issue, stand-alone infographics and wire stories. This section amounted to 4 percent of the overall coverage of the issue.

Story Type

Newspaper-wise break-up of the data

In *The Times of India*, hard news contributed 73 percent of the news stories, 14 percent of the coverage appeared as news analysis, and letters to the editor contributed 4 percent. Nine percent of the coverage fell into the category 'Others'.

The Hindu balanced its coverage on juvenile justice legislation across the sections of news stories, news analysis and letters to the editor. Fifty-nine percent of the coverage appeared as daily reportage on the legislation, news analysis contributed 21 percent to the paper's total coverage, and the 'Letters to the Editor' section contributed 17 percent. The remaining three percent came from the category 'Others'.

Amongst the English dailies, with respect to daily reportage, *The Hindu* had the highest number of news stories reported as byline stories. Seventy-two percent of its daily reportage appeared as byline stories and 28 percent as bureau news stories. In *The Times of India*, while 51 percent of the coverage appeared as bureau news stories, the remaining 49 percent appeared as byline stories.

The leading Tamil newspaper *Dinathanthi's* coverage of the theme comprised only of bureau news reportage. Bureau news contributed cent percent to the paper's coverage of the subject as the paper does not have a functioning byline section for its news reportage. Rather, daily reportage of news stories is published under the banner of 'Our Correspondent'. The paper did not go beyond daily reporting of the incidents around the juvenile justice legislation and had no contribution towards news analysis.

In *Dinamalar*, news reportage from the bureau news category contributed 73 percent towards the total coverage of the subject. Similar to *Dinathanthi*, this paper too does not have a byline section for news reportage. News analysis contributed to five percent of the total coverage, 14 percent of the coverage appeared as letters to the editor, and the category of 'Others' contributed nine percent.

Language-wise break-up of the data

A language-wise break-up of the data offers deeper insights into the coverage of the juvenile justice legislation by the English and Tamil dailies that were studied. In the two English dailies, 66 percent of the coverage was from the news reportage, news analysis contributed 17 percent towards the total coverage, and letters to the editor provided 11 percent of the coverage. Other news items rendered six percent towards the total coverage.

Story Type

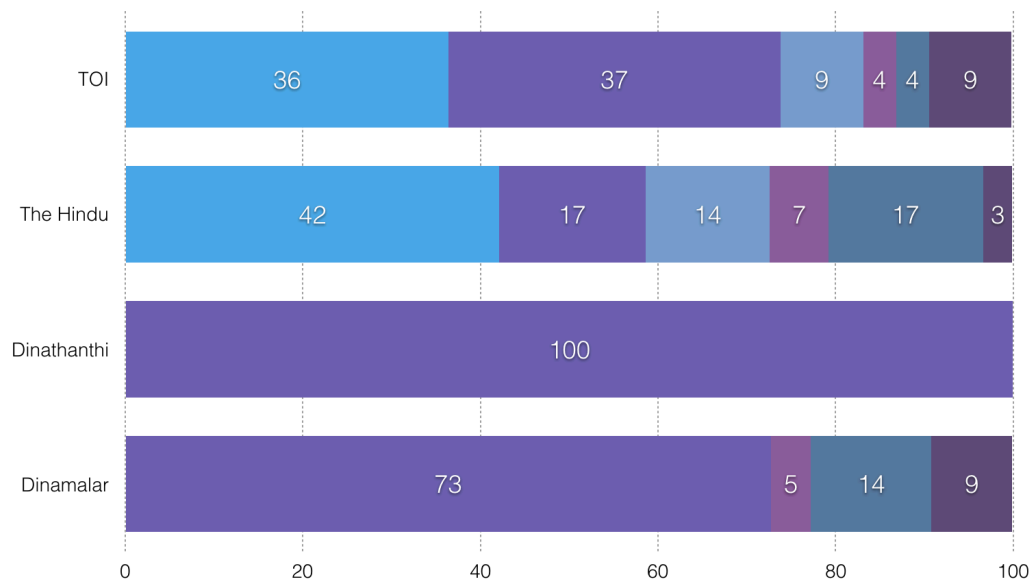


Fig 8. Story type: Newspaper-wise

- Byline story
- Bureau news
- Opinion pieces
- Editorial
- Letters to the Editor
- Others

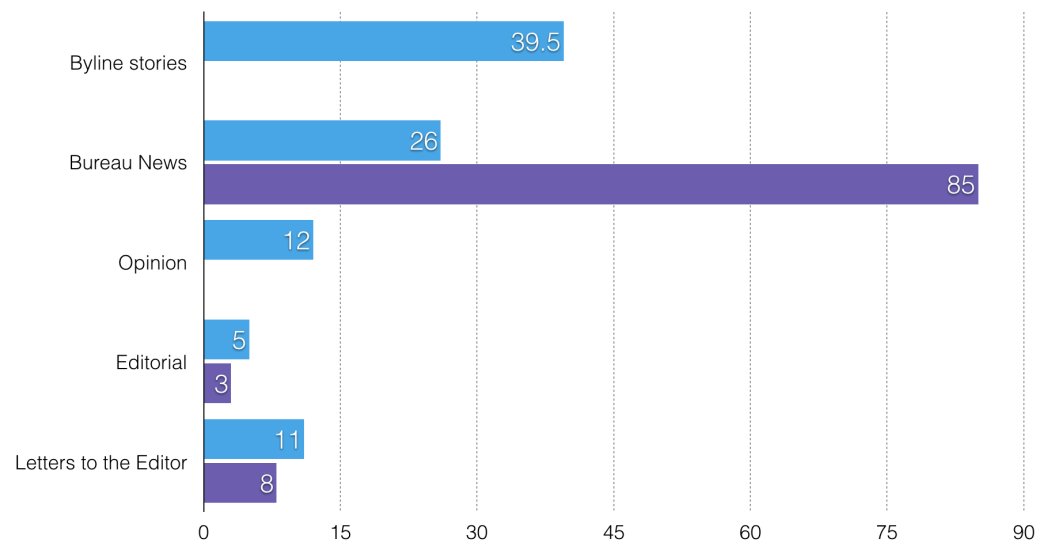


Fig 9. Story type: Language-wise

- English
- Tamil

In the Tamil dailies, 85 percent of the coverage came solely from news reportage. Only three percent of the coverage came from the news analysis section. Letters to the editor contributed eight percent while other news items contributed five percent towards the total coverage.

The Tamil papers' contribution towards the opinion section was nil. In contrast to twelve editorials in the English dailies, there was only one editorial analysis regarding the juvenile justice legislation in *Dinamalar*. It is evident that the Tamil dailies hardly engaged with the issue of juvenile justice legislation beyond daily reportage of the issue.

Accompanying Visuals

Introduction

In a newspaper, the presence of a photograph, infographic, representation or cartoon adds additional significance to the story. The existence of a visual implies a particular newspaper's decision to render a particular story more noticeable than others. Secondly, a news item accompanied by a visual grabs more attention from the readers. Towards the coverage of the juvenile justice legislation, what type of visuals did the newspapers utilize?

Overall response

Across the identified newspapers, 56 percent of the news items were accompanied by visual images. Photographs and infographics appeared alongside the text for 24.4 and 22 percent of news items respectively. Seven percent of the news items had representative images⁶ while another two percent had cartoons accompanying the text.

Newspaper-wise break-up of the data

The Times of India's coverage was an outlier with respect to accompanying visuals. Close to three-fourths of the stories carried a visual image alongside the story text. It is the only paper to have effectively utilized infographics as a visual medium to convey information. Thirty-three percent of the paper's news items on the subject were accompanied by infographics; 22 percent of the stories carried real life photo images. Unlike other newspapers, *The Times of India* frequently uses representative images alongside the story text. Thirteen percent of the news items had representative images and three percent were accompanied by a cartoon.

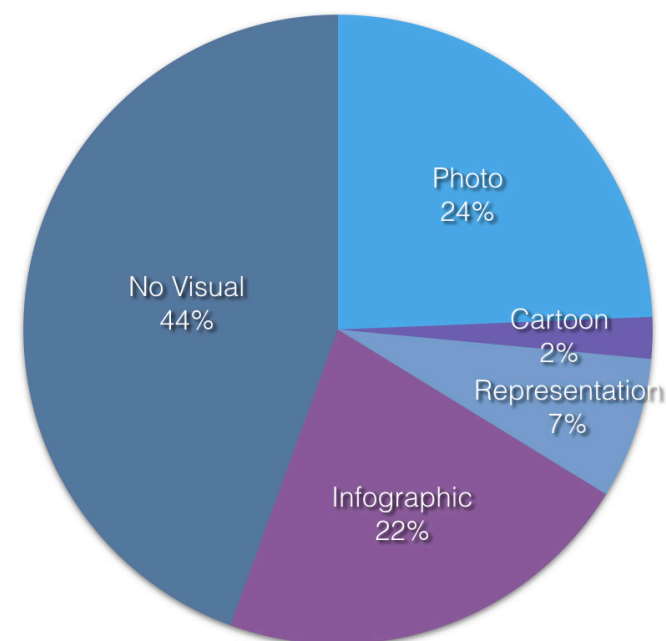


Fig 10. Accompanying visuals:
Overall response

⁶Representative images are a category of visual images which includes the representation of a theme/ subject through graphs or images rather through photographs.

Accompanying Visuals

The Hindu had visual images for 47 percent of its news items. The majority of its news items had photographs accompanying them. Seventeen percent of the stories had accompanying infographics; one percent had representative images, and two percent had a cartoon. The data shows that unlike *The Times of India*, the dominant visual medium utilized by *The Hindu* consists of photographs. However, the paper is increasingly using infographics as a visual medium unlike the Tamil dailies which still use photographs as the only visual medium.

Dinathanthi, the leading Tamil daily, had visuals accompanying the story text for 35 percent of its news items on the subject. Unlike the other identified papers, it resorted to photographs as the only visual medium accompanying the text.

Thirty-seven percent of the news items in *Dinamalar* had visuals accompanying the text. Frequently used visuals were photographs and representations which accompanied 16 percent of the news items. Only one news item was accompanied by infographics.

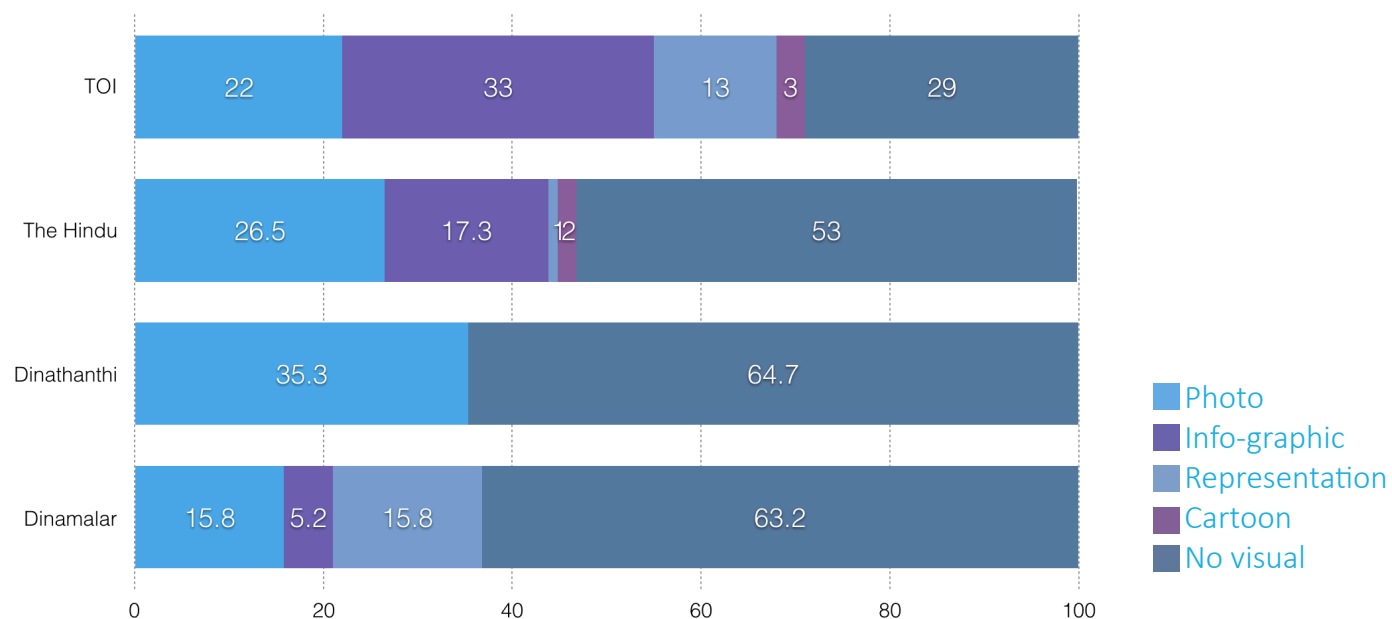


Fig 11. Accompanying visuals: Newspaper-wise

Accompanying Visuals

Language-wise break-up of the data

A language-wise break-up of the data demonstrates that 59 percent of the news items in the two English newspapers were accompanied by visual images. Eighty-four percent of the news items with visuals had either photographs or infographics accompanying the story. Fourteen percent of the news items had representative images and another two percent had cartoons accompanying them. In contrast, only 36 percent of the news items in Tamil dailies had visuals accompanying the story text. Seventy percent of the stories with visuals had only photographs as the accompanying visual.

The data clearly shows that photographs and infographics were widely used as visualization elements for the news items in the English dailies. However, in the Tamil newspapers, photographs were used as the only significant visual medium.

More than half the news items in *The Hindu*, *Dinathanthi* and *Dinamalar* used text as the primary way of communicating information. *The Times of India* was an exception in this regard. The data shows that it effectively utilized visuals along with the text to convey its news. Rather than employing visuals as a mere accompanying accessory, it treated visuals as a powerful medium parallel to the text medium.

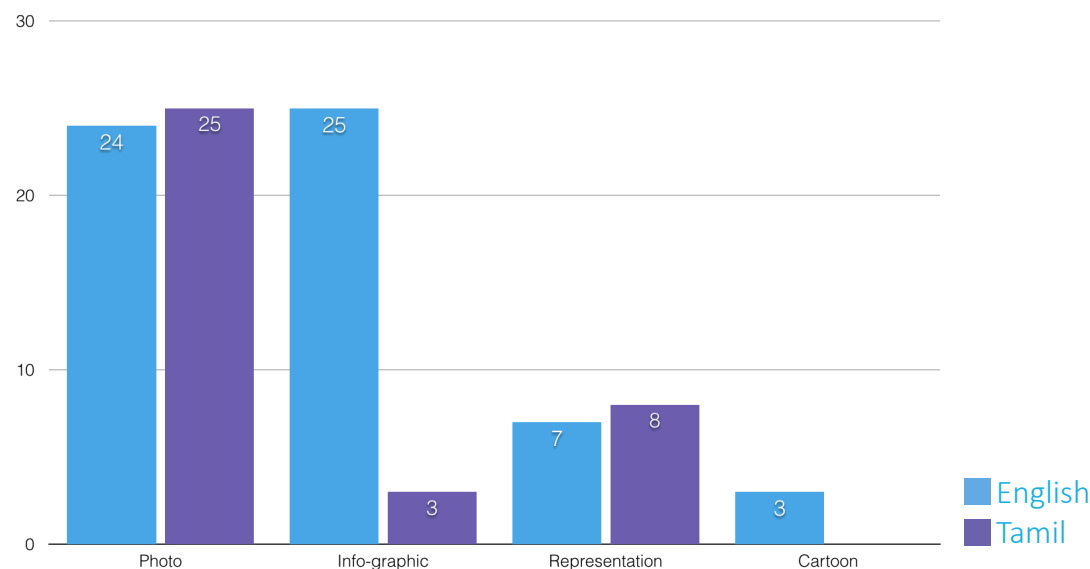


Fig 12. Accompanying visuals: Language--wise

Location of the Story

Introduction

In media studies, the place-line⁷ of a news story helps us comprehend the originating geographical location for the story. A systematic analysis of the place-line helps us notice if a particular theme appeared only from a single location or if its coverage was diversified. With regard to the current research, the place-line helps us understand whether the national coverage on juvenile justice legislation trickled down⁸ to coverage at the state and city level. In other words, from what location did the reportage on the issue emerge⁹?

Overall response

Sixty-seven percent of the news stories on juvenile legislation were reported from New Delhi. As the law amendment process took place within the institution of Parliament, widespread reportage from Delhi was expected. Further, Delhi was the spotlight for the new developments in the Nirbhaya case, whether it was the ban placed on the documentary India's Daughter or the release of the juvenile convict. Hence, it is no surprise that close to three fourths of the news stories originated from the capital city of Delhi.

Chennai was the location source for twelve percent of the news stories on juvenile justice legislation. Nine percent of the news stories came from other locations, which included Indian metro cities, Badaun (Uttar Pradesh), and London amongst others.

Interestingly, location name was not cited for twelve percent of the news stories reported on juvenile justice legislation. Within this, 86 percent of its news stories without a mention of the place-line for the stories came from *The Times of India*.

⁷ In a newspaper, place-line of a news-story indicates the location from where the story was written.

⁸ For the current research, we looked at the Chennai edition for all the identified newspapers.

⁹ This question had five options: (1) Delhi, (2) Chennai, (3) Other metro cities, (4) Others and (5) Not applicable. Editorials, opinion pieces, cartoons, letters to the editor, and quotes fell under the category of 'Not applicable'.

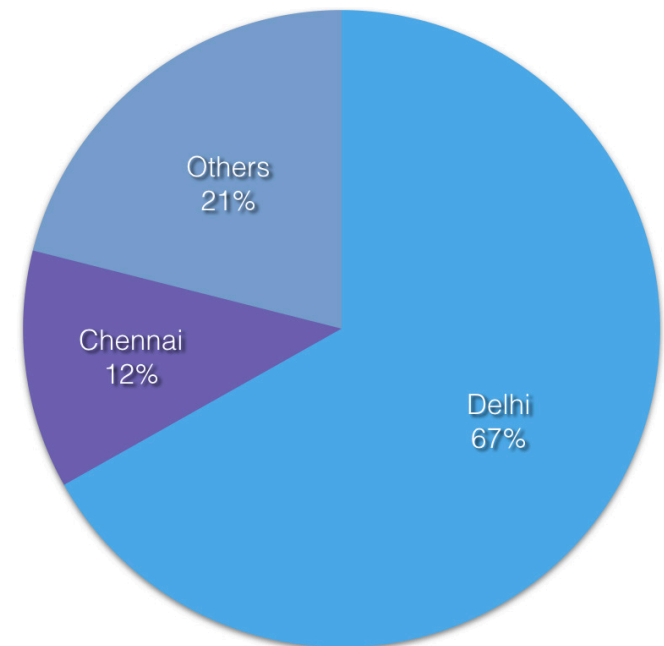


Fig 13. Location of the story:
Overall response

Location of the Story

Newspaper-wise break-up of the data

Concerning the place-line of the news stories, *The Times of India's* coverage was an outlier. Around half of the news stories were reported from Delhi. Fifteen percent of the news stories appeared from Chennai, Nine percent of the news stories came from other locations which include Badaun, London, New York, and Coimbatore amongst others. Close to one-fourth of the news stories in *The Times of India* had no reference to the originating place-line for the stories.

The Times of India contributed the maximum news stories from Chennai. With 13 news stories, the paper's coverage amounted to 57 percent of the total coverage from Chennai. An analysis of the news stories from the Chennai city page indicates that the regional desk attempted to cover the juvenile justice legislation from the state perspective. Over the identified period of 20 months, the regional desk explored the status, nature and functioning of observation homes in Tamil Nadu. Using the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, it did a story on the status of juvenile crime in Tamil Nadu. Further, the paper rendered coverage to the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by the Non Governmental Organization (NGO) CHANGE India and explored the appalling implementational loopholes existing with respect to the Juvenile Justice Act in the state.

In December 2015, when the Rajya Sabha passed the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act, the state desk carried a news story exploring the stance of two state political parties¹⁰ – the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) – towards the amendments. Another news story addressed the implementation hurdles that surround age verification¹¹ for juveniles, especially under the new Act.

In *The Hindu*, 82 percent of the news stories came from the capital city, Delhi. The data implies that the paper focused in detail on the developments of juvenile justice legislation in Delhi. Amongst the four newspapers, it had the least percentage of news stories reported from Chennai. Unlike the regional desk of *The Times of India*, *The Hindu's* regional desk did not make extended efforts to explore the status of juvenile justice legislation or observation homes at the state level.

¹⁰ Julie Mariappan and Meera Vankipuram, 'State Parties against juvenile bill,' *The Times of India*, December 23, 2015.

¹¹ Meera Vankipuram, 'Juvenile bill: Verifying age biggest hurdle, say experts,' *The Times of India*, December 28, 2015.

¹² Special Correspondent, 'Treat under-18 rape accused on a par with adults: Maneka,' *The Hindu*, July 14, 2014; Special Correspondent, 'Activists call for wider consult on JJ bill,' *The Hindu*, December 9, 2014; Special Correspondent, 'Notices to child care centres sans amenities,' *The Hindu*, March 11, 2015.

Location of the Story

Three out of four news stories that appeared from Chennai were statements given by official sources¹² in Chennai regarding the juvenile justice legislation. The remaining news story was about the PIL¹³ filed by the NGO CHANGE India regarding the abysmal implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act (2000) in Tamil Nadu. Nine percent of the news stories in *The Hindu* came from other locations like London, Badaun, Bengaluru, and Meerut. Another three percent of news stories did not indicate a location source.

In *Dinathanthi*, 65 percent of news stories originated from Delhi, Chennai contributed 23 percent of stories, and six percent of news stories were contributed from other locations. One news story did not have the place-line mentioned. Being true to its vernacular identity, the paper covered the statements of DMK leader Stalin's opinion¹⁴ regarding the amendments to the existing Juvenile Justice Act and Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) leader Ramadoss' statement¹⁵ on the increase in crimes against children in Tamil Nadu and the lack of government response. The other two news stories were around the aforementioned PIL filed by CHANGE India in Tamil Nadu and a statement by the Minister for Women and Child Development, Maneka Gandhi, about the juvenile justice legislation.

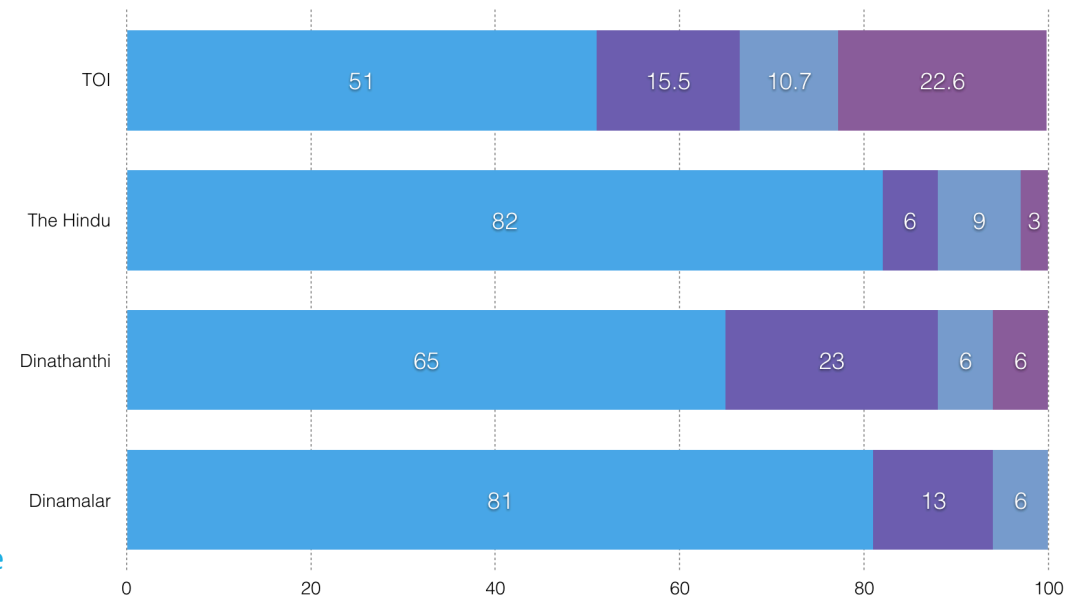
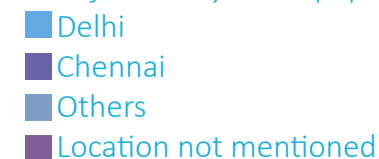


Fig 14. Location of the story: Newspaper-wise



¹³ Special Correspondent, 'PIL seeks State care for children's homes,' *The Hindu*, August 26, 2014.

¹⁴ 'Seerargalai dhandipadhai viduthu, thirundhi valzhum soolnizhaiyai uruvakka vendum Mu Ka Stalin aarikkai,' *Dinathanthi*, May 9, 2015. The title translates in English as "Instead of punishing the juveniles, reformation should be the focus: M.K Stalin issues a statement".

¹⁵ 'Kulandhaigaluku edhirana kuttrangal aandhuku 20 sadhaveedham aadhigrippu, Doctor Ramadoss Kuttrachaatu,' *Dinathanthi*, August 22, 2015. The title translates in English as 'Every year, crimes against children increases by 20 percent: Doctor Ramadoss complaints'.

Location of the Story

Eighty-one percent of the total news coverage by Dinamalar came from Delhi, while 13 percent (one news story) of its news coverage emerged from Chennai. The single story that appeared from Chennai was concerning the PIL filed by CHANGE India. In the 'other location' category, a single news story appeared from New York.

Language-wise break-up of the data

Across the English newspapers, 66 percent of the total coverage came from New Delhi. Eleven percent of news stories appeared from Chennai and other locations respectively. News stories without any location contributed to 13 percent of the total coverage on juvenile legislation.

In the Tamil dailies, close to three-fourths of the news stories appeared from Delhi. Chennai emerged as the location source for 18 percent of news stories, while two percent of news stories came from 'other locations'. In the Tamil dailies, in contrast to the English dailies, only three percent of the news-stories did not have a place-line indicated.

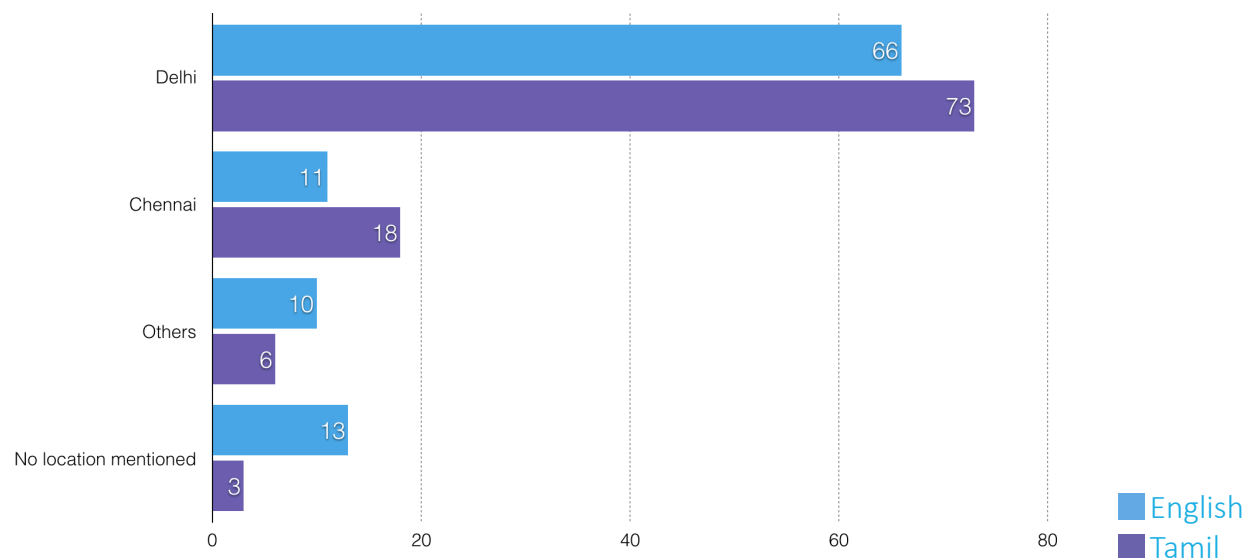


Fig 15. Location of the story: Language-wise

Location of the Story

Reportage from Badaun, Uttar Pradesh

In the 'others' category, it is worthwhile to note four news stories that appeared from the location of Badaun/ Bareilly, a district in Uttar Pradesh. Badaun is the hometown of the juvenile convict in the Nirbhaya gang-rape case. *The Times of India* carried three news stories from Badaun while *The Hindu* carried one news story around the release of the juvenile from the observation home.

In *The Times of India*, the first story from Badaun was reported on 28th November, 2015, titled '*Nirbhaya juvenile will be 'safest' in UP village home*'. Prior to the release of the juvenile from the observation home, the paper spoke to the family of the juvenile convicted in the Nirbhaya gang-rape case. It narrates the dire poverty of the family and quotes the juvenile's mother as saying that her son would only be safe back in the village. The mother further mentions that she is not angry at her son and is willing to accommodate him. She is quoted as saying 'How can one be angry at one's own child?'

The second story in *The Times of India* from Badaun appeared on 19th December, 2015, titled '*Juvenile unlikely to return home: Kin*'. The article quotes the juvenile's family and friends as saying that the juvenile might not return to the village, since he left the village because he considered his family and family responsibilities burdensome. In this article there is no clarity in sources attributed and a single quote is attributed to the entire clan of the juvenile's village and family.

On 21st December, 2015, within two days of the above article, *The Times of India* published another article from Badaun titled '*Dec 16 case: Village does not want its rapist son to return*'. The article mentions the intense media attention that the juvenile's village received in the aftermath of his conviction in the rape case. In addition, it says that 'locals' do not want the juvenile to return to the village as it has already paid a heavy price for his crime through facing discrimination from society.

Between the last two stories published by *The Times of India* from Badaun, on 20th December, 2015, *The Hindu* carried a news story titled '*Youth's past is past: villagers*'. The article stood in outright contrast to the story carried by *The Times of India*. Reporting from the juvenile convict's village, the tone of the article was that of forgiveness. Villagers were willing to forgive the juvenile and accommodate him back in the village. The former village headman is quoted as saying that Delhi made the juvenile a monster and the village would make him a better person. The article also points out the dire state of poverty that his family is in and quotes his mother, who says that they are unsure of his return but if he does return it would slightly ease their daily survival burden.



PRINT MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE AMENDMENTS

Overall Classification of Articles

Amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act (2015) : Background

As indicated in the research methodology section, the term ‘juvenile justice legislation’ inclusively covers all the ground events that directly or indirectly influenced the amendments to the Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act that were passed by Parliament in 2015. What were the events that affected the legislation and how much coverage did they receive from the print media? From the data collected, this section will attempt to provide an analysis of the same.

In this research study, the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act received 33 percent of the total coverage. Within this, 61 percent of the reportage discussed the amendments against the backdrop of the Nirbhaya gang-rape incident. Rather than being a policy move backed by data and research, the legislative move for age reduction emerged in the aftermath of the unprecedented sensationalization of the Nirbhaya episode.

In the same period, developments in the Nirbhaya case received 44 percent of the coverage as identified in this study. In the aftermath of the Nirbhaya gang-rape episode, India witnessed unprecedented protests seeking safety and freedom for women, and this episode inspired an independent filmmaker from London to make a documentary titled *India's Daughter* around the case. Leslee Udwin then gave the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) network the copyright to her documentary. Coinciding with International Women's day, the television channel decided to screen the documentary worldwide on March 8th, 2015. Controversy encircled the documentary, as it showed the statement of one of the adult rape convicts who said that the victim was to be blamed and she would have been alive today had she been silent and cooperative during the rape. Public outcry made the government step in and ban the documentary in India as it was felt that the documentary brought disgrace and dishonour to both the victim and India. With both support and criticism growing in parallel, the documentary received widespread attention and reportage. With the Nirbhaya episode already overwhelmingly sensationalized, the ban received an extensive and detailed reportage in the national dailies for over a month. The data shows that the ban on the documentary received 61 percent of the total coverage within the Nirbhaya case coverage during the 19 month period of this study.

The Lok Sabha passed the amendments to the JJ Act in May 2015. In the subsequent parliamentary sessions, the Bill was not placed in the list of business for the Rajya Sabha. The Upper House was critical of the reduction in age from 18 to 16 for heinous crimes and wanted the bill to be sent to a Select committee¹⁶ for a review. With no majority for the ruling party in the Upper House, the Bill lay idle without being considered for passage or being sent to the Select committee for review. How did the Bill suddenly get its approval from the Rajya Sabha in the winter session of 2016?

Overall Classification of Articles

December 16th is the death anniversary of Jyothi Singh, the victim of the 2012 gang-rape incident. On the 21st of the same month in 2012, the juvenile convict of this case was sentenced to three years of reformation in an observation home. On December 21st, 2016, the juvenile was to be set free as his punishment term in the home would come to an end. The government claimed that a secret report from the Intelligence Bureau indicated that he had been radicalized in the observation home and hence should not be released. Subramanian Swamy, a Rajya Sabha MP, filed a petition against the release of the juvenile in the Delhi High Court. Citing the existing provisions in the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000, the court refused to stay the release of the juvenile. Amidst these developments, the Centre expressed its stance against the release of the juvenile as there was no clear evidence of his reformation. Adding fuel to the fire, the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) entered the scene by filing a Special Leave petition in the Supreme Court against the juvenile's release. In the petition it was argued that the juvenile, if released, would be a threat to society and women at large and without proper evidence of reformation he should not be released into society. The court cited the JJ Act provisions and said that its hands were tied. Unless Parliament modified the existing legislation, the judiciary was helpless, said the Supreme Court judges – without citing adequate reasons and facts for supporting the reduction in age for heinous crimes. The release of the juvenile in the Nirbhaya incident rekindled the debate around the involvement of juveniles in heinous crimes and blew the issue out of proportion. Public outrage emerged around juvenile crimes and the menace they inflict on society.

Media houses and official stakeholders began to portray the issue of juvenile justice as being a direct threat to the issue of women's safety, and legislators were pushed by moral outrage to enact the amendments to the JJ legislation without sending it to the Select committee. With the public narrative pitting juveniles against women's safety, major opposition parties agreed to go ahead with the amendments, especially to try 16-18 year-olds under adult law for heinous crimes. With this change of position by major political parties including the Congress, it was the Left parties, Dravidian Parties and National Congress Party (NCP) who stood by their decision to send the Bill for review by the Select committee before passage. Public and media pressure ensured that the Bill was listed in the List of Business and passed on 22nd December, 2015, in the presence of Nirbhaya's parents, in the Rajya Sabha.

¹⁶ When either or both of the Houses in the Parliament feel that a bill requires a special attention beyond its engagement in the standing committee is send to a select committee for review. Select committees are ad-hoc committees appointed exclusively for a specific purpose, here to review the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015.

Overall Classification of Articles

Another 23 percent of the coverage of the juvenile justice legislation was around the broad theme of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data on juveniles crimes, on the status of observation homes and juveniles, and on the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000 – its scope, loopholes and analysis.

Newspaper-wise break-up of the data

In *The Times of India*, the actual amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act occupied 24 percent of the total coverage on juvenile justice legislation that was studied. Within the reportage on the amendments, 56 percent of the coverage always referred to the Nirbhaya episode in the context of juvenile justice legislation. The Nirbhaya incident comprised 42 percent of the coverage while ‘other’ news items on juvenile constituted 23 percent of the coverage.

Thirty-seven percent of the total studied coverage of the juvenile justice legislation in *The Hindu* was around the actual amendments to the JJ Act. With 48 percent, the paper had the highest coverage given to the Nirbhaya incident, across the identified newspapers. ‘Other’ news item on juvenile received 15 percent of the total coverage. In *Dinathanthi*, 35 percent of the total studied coverage of the juvenile justice legislation issue addressed the actual amendments to the JJ Act, with 50 percent of this reportage being placed in the context of the Nirbhaya episode. Developments in the Nirbhaya case contributed to 47 percent of the coverage; 18 percent of the coverage appeared as new items on other themes concerning juveniles’.

In *Dinathanthi*, 35 percent of the total studied coverage of the juvenile justice legislation issue addressed the actual amendments to the JJ Act, with 50 percent of this reportage being placed in the context of the Nirbhaya episode. Developments in the Nirbhaya case contributed to 47 percent of the coverage; 18 percent of the coverage appeared as new items on other themes concerning juveniles’.

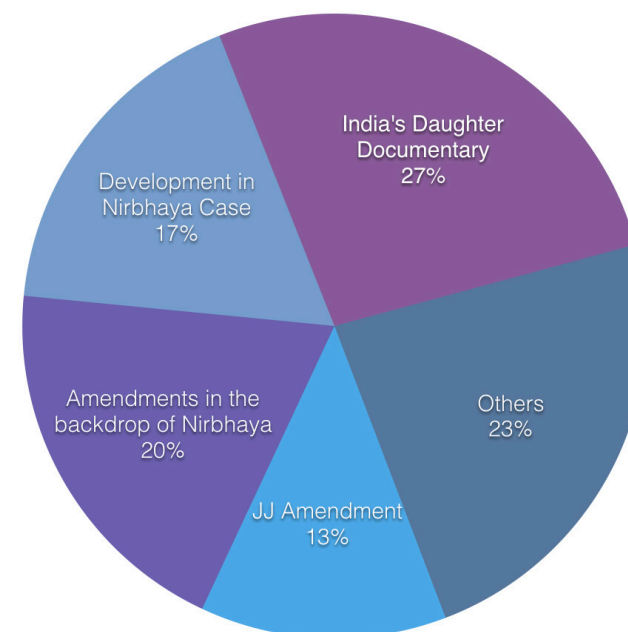


Fig 16. Classification of articles:
Overall response

Overall Classification of Articles

Amendments to the JJ Act received 47 percent of the total coverage studied on the juvenile justice legislation in *Dinamalar*. Sixty-seven percent of this reportage on the amendments cited the legislation in the exclusive context of the Nirbhaya gang-rape incident. Thirty-two percent of the coverage addressed developments in the Nirbhaya case.

With regard to the overall coverage, a trend appeared in *The Times of India*, *The Hindu* and *Dinathanthi*. Coverage of the Nirbhaya episode superseded coverage of the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act. With the Nirbhaya case being already sensationalized by the media, it was further utilized to create moral outrage with respect to amendments to the JJ Act. The data reiterates that the amendments, especially the provision for age reduction in the case of heinous crimes, were viewed in the limited context of the Nirbhaya and Shakti Mills gang-rapes, rather than being discussed from a wider perspective with foresight.

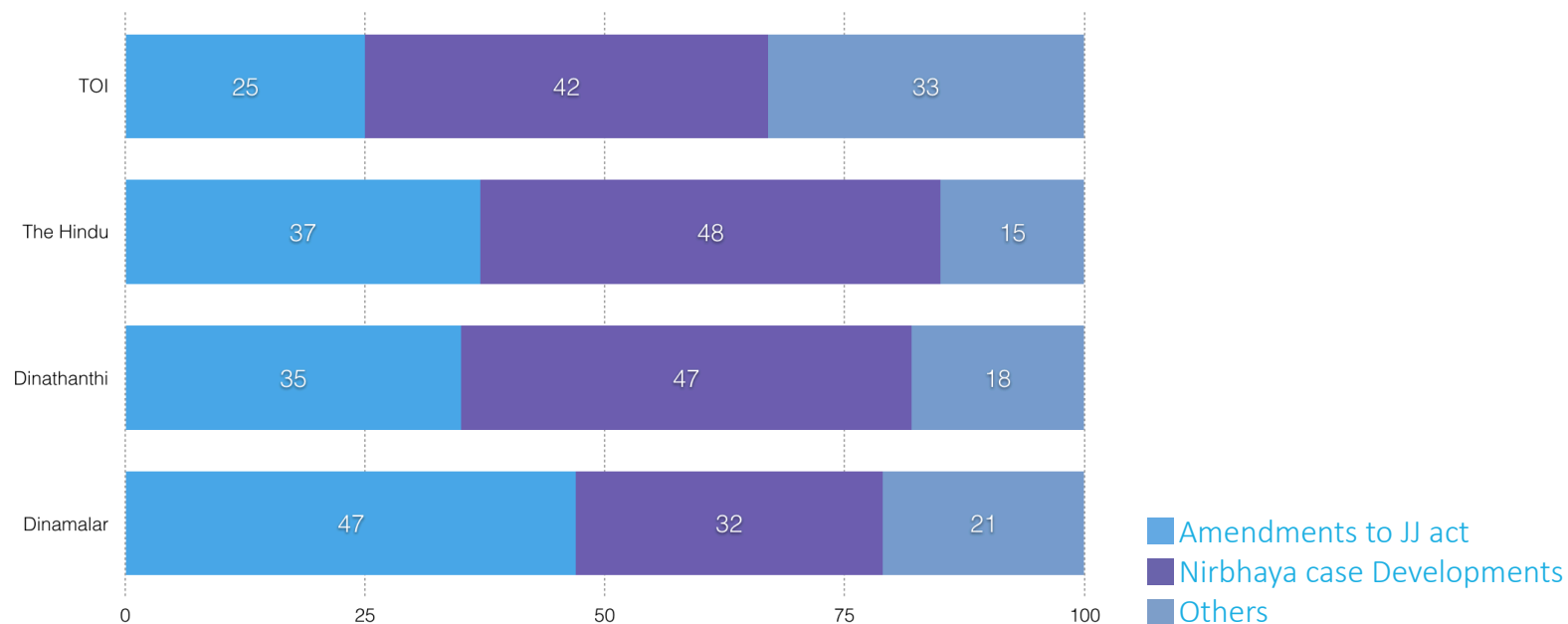


Fig 17. Classification of articles: Newspaper-wise

Overall Classification of Articles

Language-wise break-up of the data

A language-wise break-up of the data shows that 31 percent of the reportage on the juvenile justice legislation issue in the English dailies was on amendments to the JJ Act; the Nirbhaya incident contributed 45 percent, and 24 percent of the news items were around the broad theme of other juvenile issues. In the same period, the coverage in Tamil dailies was 42 percent on the theme of amendments to the JJ Act and 49 percent on the Nirbhaya case in the context of the juvenile convict. Nine percent of the news items in the Tamil papers addressed issues concerning juveniles but pertaining neither to the amendments nor the Nirbhaya episode.

Coverage in the English papers of developments in the Nirbhaya case exceeded the coverage on the amendments and probably influenced the readers' mindset, affecting their perspective on the juvenile legislation.

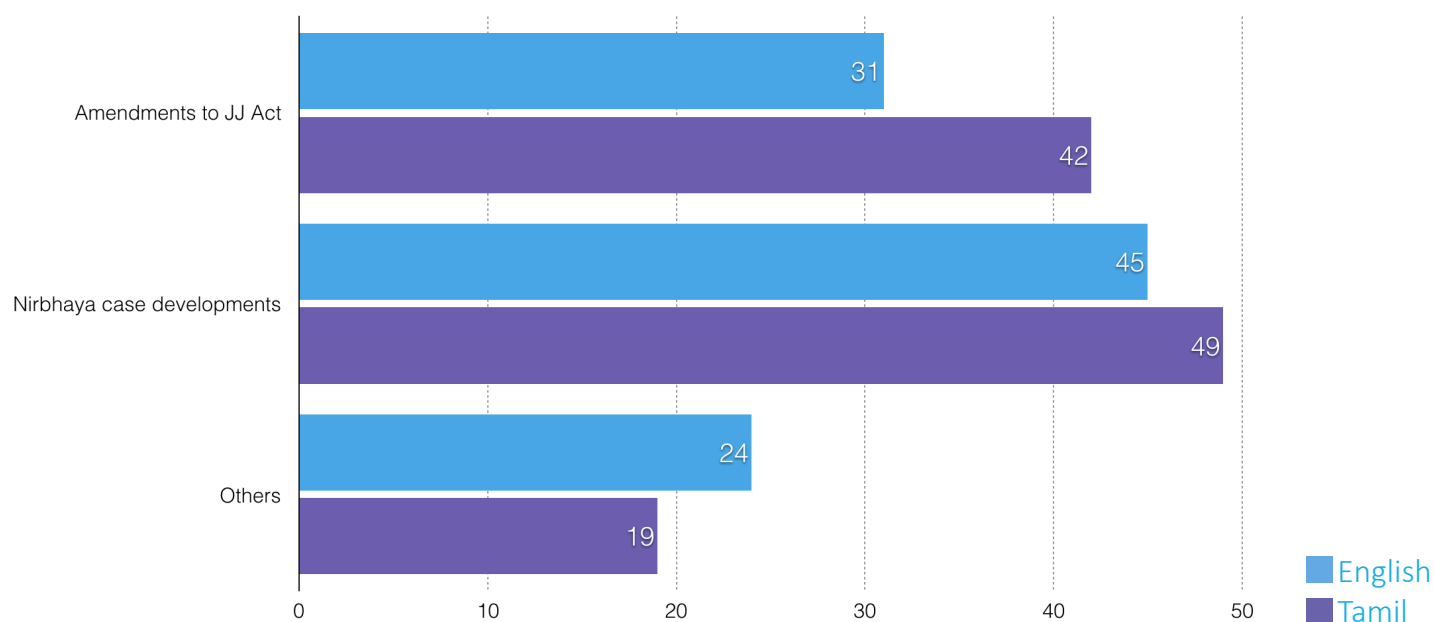


Fig 18. Classification of articles: Language-wise

Coverage of the Amendments

Introduction

Out of the 267 news items studied, 105 items discussed the amendments to the JJ Act. How did they portray the amendments? Did the newspaper render a comprehensive coverage of the legislation? In its discussion, were adequate space and coverage provided towards all the pertinent amendments or were they skewed towards any particular amendment?

Overall response

Sixty-seven percent of the news stories on juvenile legislation were reported from New Surprisingly, only four percent of the reportage on the amendments rendered a holistic and comprehensive picture of the new legislation. Sixty-five percent of the discussion pertaining to the amendments in the print newspapers was regarding the reduction in liable age from 18 to 16 years for heinous crimes. The Juvenile Justice Board (JJB)s' enhanced power to decide a juvenile's punishment for heinous crimes on a case to case basis was talked about only in two percent of the coverage. Eighteen percent of the news items discussed the provisions regarding crimes against children. The child adoption issue received only 4 percent of the print media coverage in news items that discussed the legislation.

In a span of three years – 2012 to 2014 – crimes against children has been doubled from 26 to 89 thousand¹⁷. However, in the same period, the percentage of children in conflict with the law remained constant with respect to total crimes recorded, i.e. 1.2 percent. Existing government data signifies that crimes against children have become a grave offence which requires pressing attention and coverage. The print media coverage, however, depicted a perspective different from this ground reality. More than half of the coverage was given to the reduction in juvenile age for heinous crimes. Broadly, the print media portrayal rendered an image that the new amendments to the JJ Act were synonymous with age reduction for heinous crimes.

¹⁷Rukmini S, 'Sharp rise in crimes against children,' The Hindu, August 20, 2015.

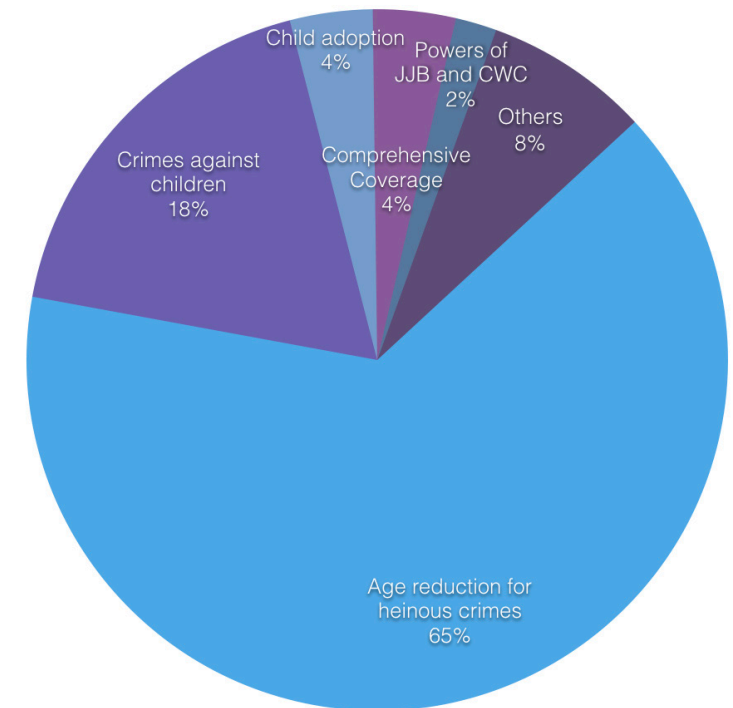


Fig 19. Coverage of the amendments:
Overall response

Coverage of the Amendments

Newspaper-wise break-up of the data

Twenty-five news items in *The Times of India* engaged with the theme of amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act. Surprisingly, only one news item provided a comprehensive coverage of the legislation. The reduction in juvenile age for heinous crimes received 55 percent of the coverage. While crimes against children got 21 percent of the coverage in the newspaper, not a single news item discussed the enhanced powers of the Juvenile Justice Boards.

Forty-eight news-items in *The Hindu* covered the amendments to the JJ Act. Six percent of the same – three news-items – provided an all-inclusive coverage of the legislation. Sixty-nine percent of the coverage revolved around heinous crimes and juvenile age reduction. Seventeen percent of the news items covered provisions introduced towards crimes against children. Outside of the comprehensive coverage of the legislation, the issue of child adoption in the new amendments was not discussed elsewhere.

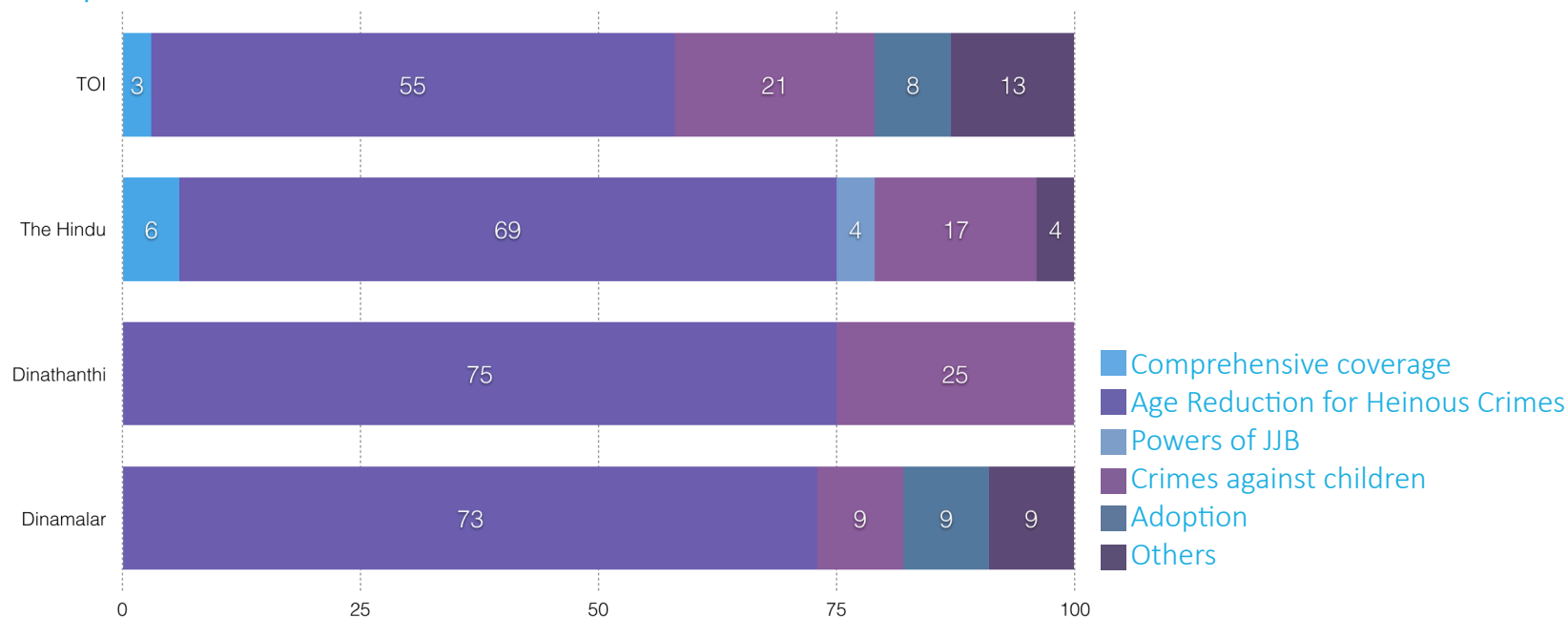


Fig 20. Coverage of the amendments: Newspaper-wise

Coverage of the Amendments

Dinathanthi, in its coverage surrounding the legislation, only discussed the subjects of age reduction for heinous crimes and crimes against children. Out of the six news items discussing the amendments to the JJ Act, 75 percent of the discussion was surrounding the juvenile age reduction debate. The remaining 25 percent of the coverage in the newspaper focused on the provisions regarding crimes against children.

Dinamalar had eleven news items talking about the amendments to the JJ Act. 73 percent of the coverage was restricted to the discussion of heinous crimes and juvenile age reduction. Crimes against children and the child adoption issue were referred to in one news-item, each contributing 9 percent towards the total coverage.

Not a single news item in both the Tamil dailies comprehensively covered the amendments to the Act. Rather, more than three-fourths of the amendment coverage was restricted to a discussion on heinous crimes committed by juveniles.

Amongst the four identified papers, only *The Hindu*, across two news items, discussed the enhanced powers of the Juvenile Justice Boards (JJB) under the 2015 amendments. In the case of heinous crimes, the Juvenile Justice Board will decide, on a case to case basis, if the identified juvenile should be treated under juvenile or adult law. This controversial provision has been questioned by child rights activists as it may lead to the criminalization of young love.

Coverage of the Amendments

Language-wise break-up of the data

A language-wise break-up of the data shows that the English newspapers had 86 news items covering the amendments to the juvenile justice legislation. Four news items provided a comprehensive coverage, constituting 5 percent of the total coverage. Sixty-three percent of the coverage was given to the discussion on age reduction for heinous crimes and two percent was on the modified powers of the JJB. Crimes against children received 19 percent of the coverage; four percent of the news items mentioned the institutional legalization and streamlining of child adoption.

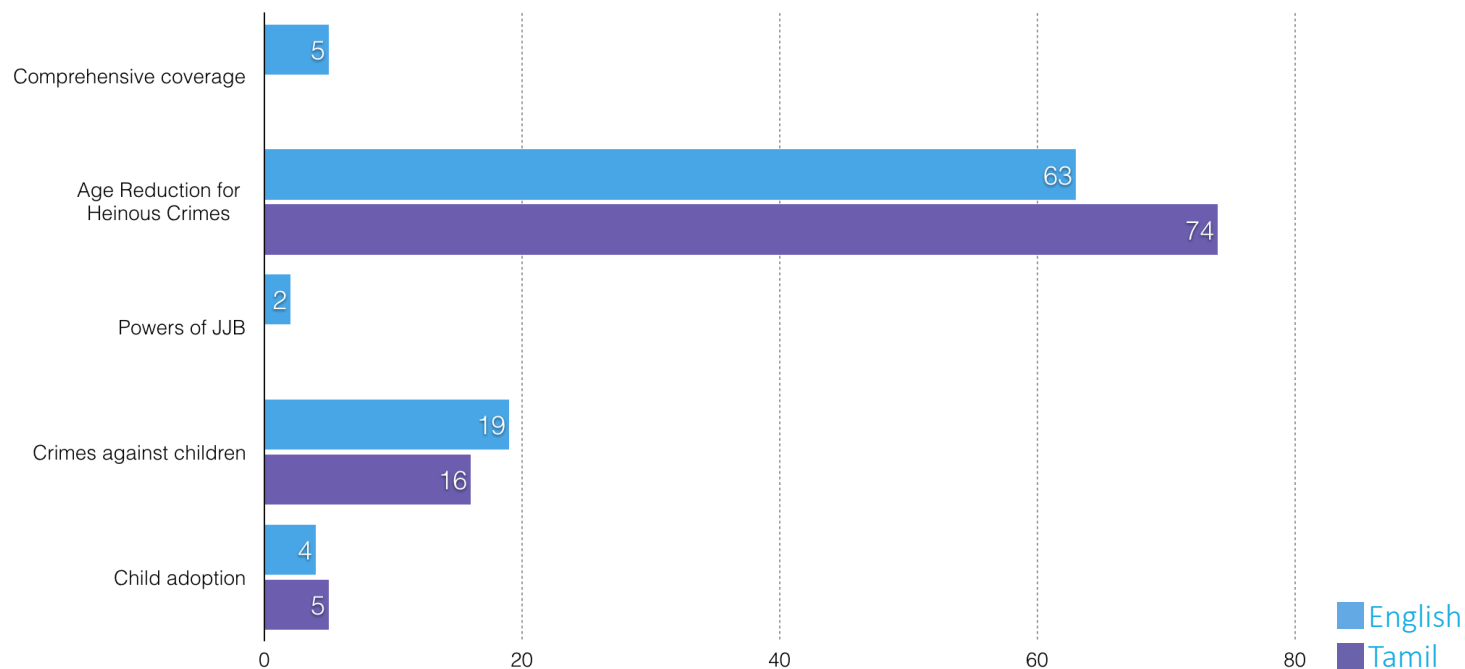


Fig 21. Coverage of the amendments: Language-wise

Coverage of the Amendments

The Tamil newspapers were an outlier with respect to coverage of the legislation. Not a single news item, across *Dinathanthi* and *Dinamalar*, comprehensively discussed the amendments to the juvenile legislation. Three-fourths of the news items focused on the theme of heinous crimes committed by juveniles and the need to reduce the juvenile age from 18 to 16. Sixteen percent of the coverage dealt with the provision regarding crimes against children in the legislation, while the issue of child adoption was cited in five percent of the total coverage.

The language-wise analysis of the data provides an overall picture of the coverage in national and regional dailies. Across the English and Tamil dailies, more than 50 percent of the identified news items focused on the provision of reduction in juvenile age for heinous crimes. There was an absence of media coverage in terms of a comprehensive portrayal of the new legislation. Surprisingly, the print newspapers were skewed towards coverage of the age reduction debate for heinous crimes. The data shows that significant issues like crimes against children and child adoption did not receive the attention they deserved.

Age Reduction for Heinous Crimes

Introduction

The last section of the research showed that print media reportage of juvenile justice legislation in the period studied was skewed towards the subject of reduction in juvenile age for heinous crimes. Around three-fourths of the news items, i.e. 71 percent, dealt with the subject of age reduction, making their readership believe that the JJ Act amendments were only about reduction in age for heinous crimes.

What was the newspaper's position on the age reduction debate? Did they rally in support of age reduction or were they critical of the proposal to treat juveniles in accordance with adult laws for heinous crimes?

Overall response

In total, 75 news items engaged with the question of age reduction. Fifty-three percent of the total 75 news items were supportive of the age reduction, i.e. to punish 16-18 year-olds under adult law for heinous crimes. Thirty-two percent were critical of age reduction while 15 percent of the news items did not have any outright tone of either support or criticism regarding age reduction for heinous crimes.

Around 50 percent of the news items supported the reduction in age of juveniles for heinous crimes. It was, they argued, incomprehensible that juveniles who committed heinous crimes should not be aware of the consequences, and the nature of the crime should decide the punishment and not the age of the convict. The papers failed to agree with the 1992 UN Convention on Child Rights, which pledges to consider everyone below 18 years as a child. Thus, the print newspapers rallied in favour of reduction in age from 18 to 16 for heinous crimes.

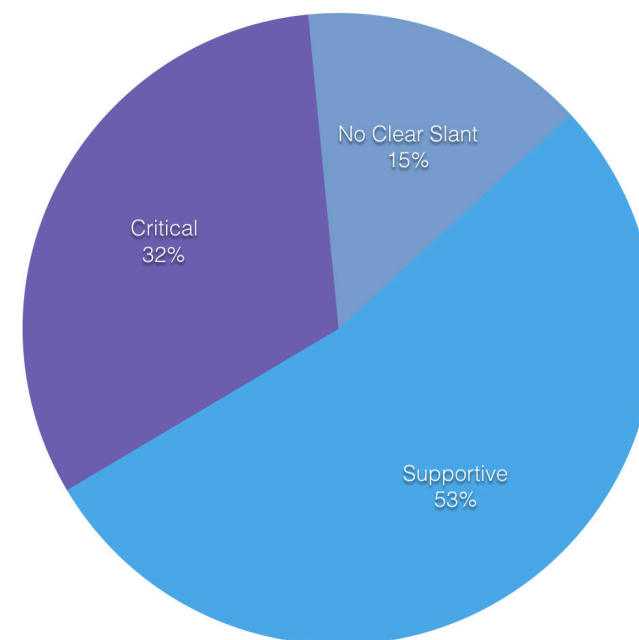


Fig 22. Age reduction for heinous crimes:
Overall response

Age Reduction for Heinous Crimes

Newspaper-wise break-up of the data

Across three newspapers – *The Times of India*, *Dinathanthi* and *Dinamalar* – close to three-fourths of the news items were supportive of the age reduction. In contrast, the fraction of news items which were either supportive of age reduction or those without any explicit position was less than 20 percent.

The Hindu's coverage of the subject stood as an exception to the general pattern. With 53 percent of the total coverage, the overarching tone of the paper was critical of age reduction, in contrast to the general trend in other newspapers which was supportive of the age reduction. Secondly, there was a moderate balance maintained between the positions of being supportive and critical of age reduction. Why is this significant?

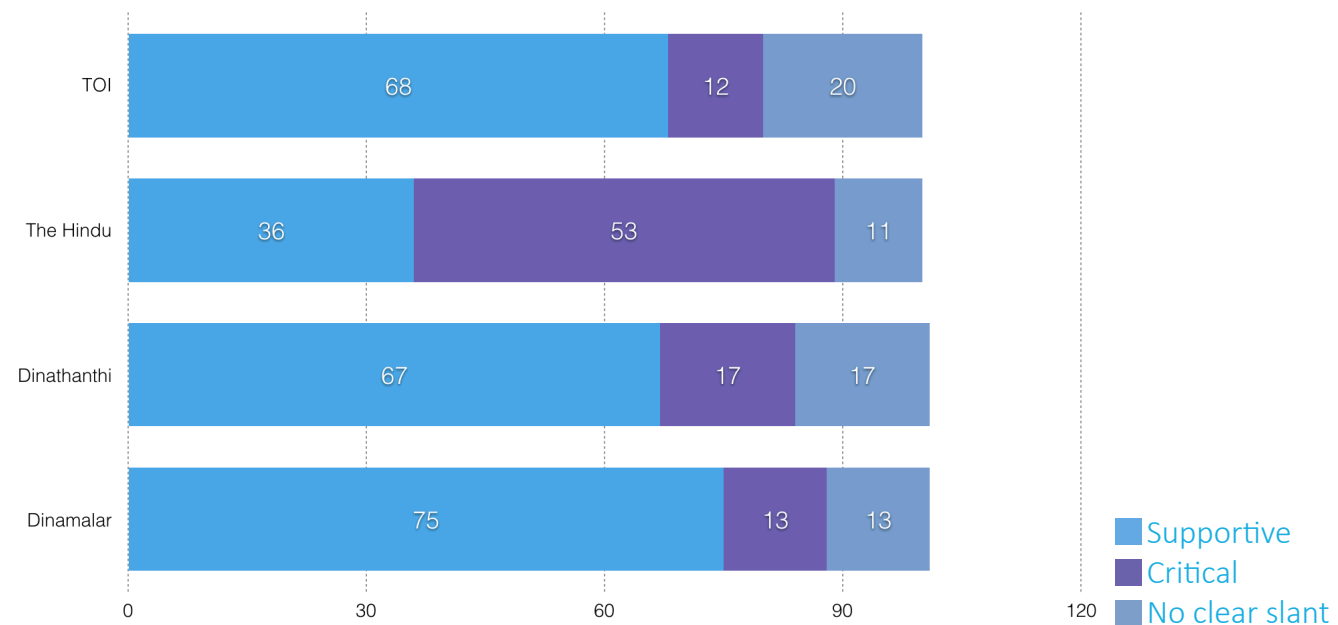


Fig 23. Age Reduction for heinous crimes: Newspaper-wise

Age Reduction for Heinous Crimes

The balance in coverage between the positions of being supportive and critical of age reduction in *The Hindu* primarily comes from the types of coverage, which were balanced between news articles and opinion pieces. The hard news items and the sources from where the stories emerged rallied towards age reduction. Thus the news articles' portrayal was more in favour of age reduction. The newspaper's stance of being critical towards age reduction comes from a restorative and rehabilitative justice perspective. Thus the paper balanced its news coverage by engaging with the issue critically in the opinion section using editorials and opinion pieces. The paper's stance of being critical of age reduction emerges after due consideration of the Articles cited in the Indian Constitution, Child Rights Convention, and arguments from science amongst others.

Thirty-two percent of the 75 news stories in the four identified newspapers were critical of the age reduction. Was this evenly spread across the identified newspapers? No. Out of the 24 articles which were critical of age reduction, 80 percent of them appeared in *The Hindu*. The remaining 20 percent were spread across *The Times of India* (12.5 percent), *Dinathanthi* (four Percent) and *Dinamalar* (four Percent).

The research further shows that *The Hindu* is the only newspaper which critically engaged with the theme of age reduction with respect to the Juvenile Justice Act. Further, it carried articles which were critical of the age reduction from 18 to 16 for heinous crimes from the perspective of rehabilitative and restorative justice.

Language-wise break-up of the data

In the Tamil dailies, disparity existed between news items that were supportive and critical of the age reduction. Close to three-fourths of the news stories, 71 percent, were supportive of age reduction. Only two news items were critical of the age reduction, while another two news items did not have a stated position on the subject of age reduction.

In the English dailies, there was a moderate balance between the news items that were supportive of and those that were critical of the age reduction for heinous crimes. While 49.2 percent were supportive of the age reduction, 36 percent of the news stories were critical of the age reduction. Another 15 percent of the stories did not have any clear position with respect to the subject in their news items.

A pattern emerged with respect to both the English and Tamil newspapers' portrayal of age reduction, with the exception of *The Hindu*. Predominantly, the news items were supportive of the age reduction and there was no balance in portrayal between the two strands of being supportive or critical of age reduction.

Age Reduction for Heinous Crimes

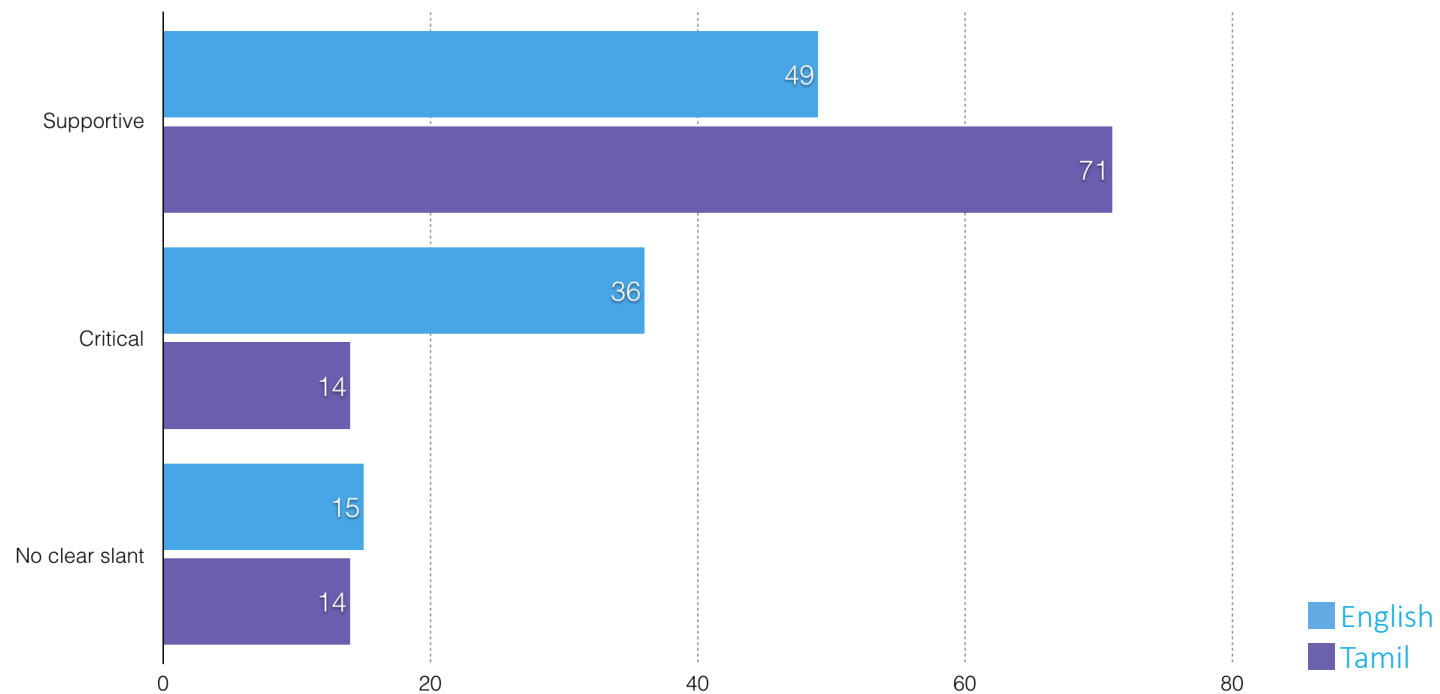


Fig 24. Age reduction for heinous crimes: Language-wise

Institutional Source of the Story

Introduction

What is the originating source for the news items that appear in a newspaper? Do official sources feed a story to the media or is a story an outcome of the individual newspaper's initiative to go beyond official sources to report an issue from a wider perspective? It is pertinent to examine the originating source for a news item as it provides deeper insights into the news that appears in a newspaper.

Overall response

Within the overall media coverage on juvenile justice legislation that was studied, 40 percent of the news items were sourced from official sources¹⁸. One-fourth of the stories – 58 news-items – emerged from non-official sources. Close to one-fourth of the stories – 20 percent – did not contain a clear reference to their originating story source. For a detailed tabulation of the official sources, paper-wise, please refer to the table.

Newspaper-wise break-up of the data

The Times of India, excluding six letters to the editor, had 101 news items. Thirty-six news items came from official sources. Seven news items had interviews, documentaries and court petitions as their sources. Twenty-five news items did not have any definitive originating source indicated for the story. Thirty-three news items had non-institutional sources for their story, which included twelve pieces from the opinion section. The remaining 21 news items appeared in the news articles section.

Interestingly, in *The Times of India*, ten out of the above mentioned 21 news articles appeared in the 'city page' section (Chennai). This section investigated the status of observation homes and juveniles at the state level as part of the paper's coverage of the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act.

¹⁸An official institutional source includes a press release, press conference, legislative and judicial proceedings, social, political and cultural events and published reports.

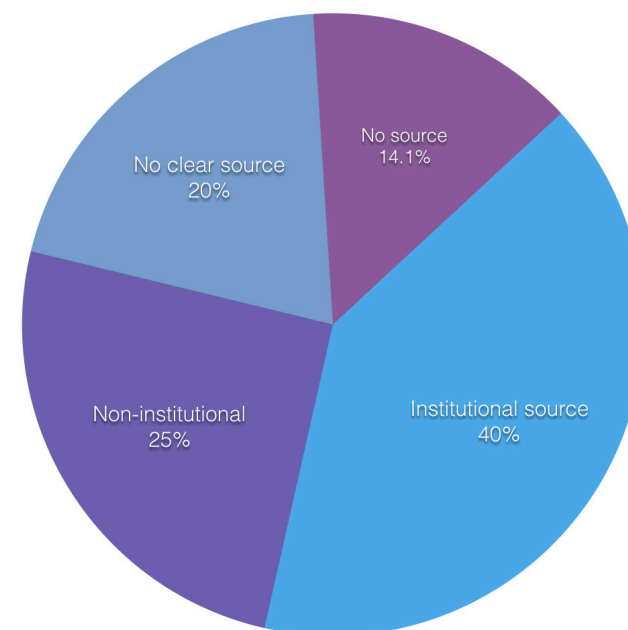


Fig 25. Institutional source of the story:
Overall response

Institutional Source of the Story

Newspaper-wise classification of official sources used in the research

<i>Name of Newspaper</i>	<i>Press release/ Press conference</i>	<i>Legislative proceedings</i>	<i>Judicial proceedings</i>	<i>Events</i>	<i>Published report</i>
<i>The Times of India</i>	4	9	9	2	12
<i>The Hindu</i>	11	4	16	3	8
<i>Dinathanthi</i>	12	6	24	6	0
<i>Dinamalar</i>	5	16	26	5	0

Note: Numbers shown as a percentage of the total news items identified in the respective newspaper.

Surprisingly, the paper's city-level coverage rendered a more holistic perspective of the issue. It highlighted the complex position of children in conflict with the law and the lack of reformation in observation homes. This was in sharp contrast to the same paper's portrayal of juveniles in its national news. The national coverage rallied for reduction in age from 18 to 16 for heinous crimes, using the linear argument that punishment should be based on severity of crimes and not on age. Further, it also pitted the issue of women's safety against juvenile crimes.

For example, in August 2014, *The Times of India's* Chennai edition produced a package story in its city page on the abysmal status of child care institutions in Tamil Nadu. It addressed the question of children in conflict with the law in the context of the poor functioning of existing institutional structures that are supposed to implement the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act.

In December 2015, the national media rallied for what they portrayed as the urgent need to treat juveniles under adult laws for heinous crimes, without highlighting a holistic picture of the existing state of juveniles and juvenile institutions in India. The same paper (*The Times of India*) which systematically called for reduction in age in its national coverage provided a different but much needed coverage on the status of child care institutions in its city page¹⁹.

¹⁹ Manish Raj, 'HC PANEL PUNCHES HOLES IN TN'S JUVENILE REHAB SYSTEM,' *The Times of India*, December 21, 2015; *Times News Network*, 'When Correctional homes don't get their act right,' *The Times of India*, December 21, 2015; Siddharth Prabhakar, 'Once a minor offender, now a feared thug,' *The Times of India*, December 21, 2015.

Institutional Source of the Story

The Times of India also carried news articles from non-institutional sources, especially when the convicted juvenile rapist in the Nirbhaya case was to be released from the observation home after serving his allotted punishment for 3 years. For instance, it sought the now ex-juvenile rapist's comments²⁰ with respect to age reduction and the opinion of family members of the convicts in the Nirbhaya case about the release of the juvenile²¹ amongst several others.

Of the 98 news items that appeared in *The Hindu*, excluding the 23 letters to the editors and cartoon(s), 42 news items were sourced from official sources. Fourteen news items had their stories based out of exclusive interviews, petitions filed in the courts and *The Hindu's* exclusive research conducted on the sexual assault cases taken up by a district-level court in Delhi. Another ten news items did not clearly mention the originating source²² for the story.

Thirty-two news items in *The Hindu* had non-institutional sources. In this category, 19 news items appeared in the opinion section and the remaining 13 news items came from the news article section. Thirteen stories in the news articles section were mostly around expert/non-official stakeholders' opinions and perspectives.

For example, on 10th May, 2015, the paper carried an article titled '*Experts dispute premise of juvenile law amendments*' after the passage of the amendments to the existing Juvenile Justice Act in the Lok Sabha. The article dealt with experts' opinions pertaining to the new amendments.

Similarly, on 20th December, the paper's correspondent reported²³ from Badaun, the hometown of the juvenile convict in the Nirbhaya case, to gauge the prevailing mood surrounding the juvenile's release. The report was published against the backdrop of the juvenile's release after spending three years in an observation home as prescribed by the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000.

²⁰ Nitisha Kashap, 'Even minors need to be punished, says rape accused,' *The Times of India*, December 19, 2015.

²¹ Anvit Srivastava, 'Convict's kin seethe against juvenile,' *The Times of India*, December 15, 2015.

²² The reader was not in a clear position to understand if the news came from an official source or the paper's initiative to address a particular theme.

²³ Kirtika Sharma Sebastain, 'Youth's past is past: villagers,' *The Hindu*, December 20, 2015.

Institutional Source of the Story

Over this study's time span of 20 months, *Dinathanthi* had 17 news items on the theme of juvenile legislation. Eight news items had been sourced from official sources. Six news items did not clearly indicate the originating source of the written story. Three articles in the paper came from non-official sources. Amongst these three, two of the stories were sourced from social media. Against the backdrop of the ban on the documentary *India's Daughter*, the paper had run a story sourcing Bollywood stars' responses to the ban from their Twitter accounts.

Excluding three letters to the editor, *Dinamalar* had 19 news items on the subject. Ten of these news items were sourced from official sources. Seven news items did not clearly mention the originating source for the story. Two news items had originated from non-official sources, among which one news item was an editorial piece while another was a quote citing the statements of Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien with respect to rape.

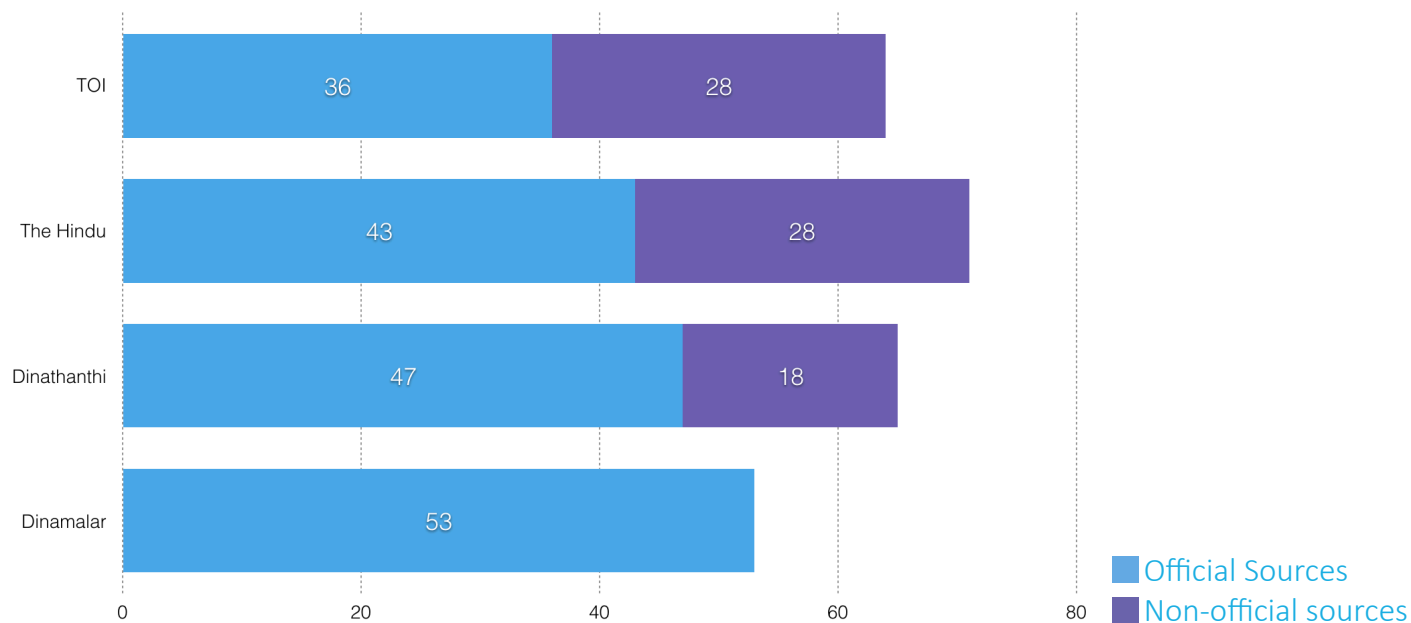


Fig 26. Institutional source of the story: Newspaper-wise

Institutional Source of the Story

Language-wise break-up of the data

A language-wise break-up of the data shows that the English newspapers had 86 news items covering the amendments to the juvenile justice. Around 40 percent of the coverage in the English newspapers came from official sources while 27 percent of news stories originated from non-official sources. The Tamil papers had a majority of news stories coming from official sources, with *Dinathanthi* standing at 41 percent and *Dinamalar* at 32 percent thereof. The Tamil newspapers, as seen earlier, focused only on the major developments in their coverage of the juvenile justice legislation, and this section of our study indicates that close to half the stories came from official sources. The Tamil dailies reported on the issue only when official sources provided significant updates regarding juvenile legislation. Non-official coverage of the issue was close to non-existent. While *Dinathanthi* rendered 17 percent of its coverage from non-official sources, *Dinamalar* did not have a single story in this category.

To sum up, the English dailies moderately balanced their coverage of news items between official and non-official sources, while coverage in the Tamil dailies was skewed towards official sources. Despite the minimalistic priority given to the issue in the Tamil newspapers, the majority of the stories emerged only from official sources when significant developments in the issue took place. Otherwise, there was a lack of initiative from the Tamil print newspapers to go beyond the official sources and address the theme of children in conflict with the law and children in need of care and protection.

Newspaper-wise break-up of the data for no clear originating source

It is of great concern that more than one-fourth of the stories in the Tamil newspapers did not have a clear indication of their story source. On an average, 37 percent of the news stories in the Tamil dailies did not contain any clear indication of their story source. Amongst the English dailies, *The Times of India* in one-fourth of its stories did not have a clear reference towards its story source, while the same in *The Hindu* stood at ten percent.

Name of Newspaper	No clear source for the story*
<i>The Times of India</i>	25
<i>The Hindu</i>	10.2
<i>Dinathanthi</i>	41
<i>Dinamalar</i>	32

(*as a percentage of individual papers total news-items)

The Print Media's Slant on the Juvenile

Introduction

In general, how does the print media depict juveniles? Is there any recurring pattern around the depiction of the category of juveniles? We tried to examine the print media's slant on juveniles in the current study using three categories:

Extensive research and studies have shown that juveniles are a vulnerable category. Especially children in conflict with the law require intervention through reformation rather than being convicted and punished. For instance, with reference to the crimes committed by juveniles, research tries to highlight the vulnerability that this age endures and refuses to treat them on par with adults. Given that brain development attains completion around 25 years of age, research on this topic seeks to understand 16-18 year-olds as children using arguments from neurology and brain development, and from the UN Convention on Child Rights, amongst others. News items that depicted the category of juveniles with their associated vulnerability were treated as having a '**positive**' slant in this research study.

The '**negative**' category encompassed those news items which resorted to painting juveniles as serious criminal offenders and characterized them as a grave threat to society. By default, these news items tended to attribute a negative character to juveniles.

The third category of '**no clear slant**' incorporated all news items where there was no outright slant – either positive or negative – in the character attributed to the category of juveniles. These items seemed to be a mixed bag without any outright categorization. The 'not applicable' category included all news items that didn't engage in a discussion of juveniles.

Out of the 235 news items identified by this study, 60 percent engaged with the subject of juveniles. What was the characterization of juveniles in these articles?

The Print Media's Slant on the Juvenile

Overall response

Thirty-six percent of the news items depicted juveniles in a negative light. Another 39 percent did not have any outright slant towards juveniles. Thus the dominant tone of the news items in the print media was negative towards the category of juveniles. Less than one-fourth of the news-items showed juveniles as a vulnerable category requiring careful consideration, without blindly identifying them as serial offenders causing a serious threat to society.

Newspaper-wise break-up of the data

With the exception of *The Hindu*, there existed a normative pattern with regard to the slant on the juvenile in print media reportage. Some relative coverage was found, in which the position moved from the portrayal of juveniles in a negative light towards the portrayal of juveniles in a not-so-explicit way. Similarly, in the above mentioned newspapers, a nuanced portrayal of juveniles, associating them with their vulnerability, received less than ten percent of the coverage.

With 46 and 44 percent of news items respectively, *Dinathanthi* and *The Times of India* portrayed juveniles in an exceedingly negative light. *The Hindu* topped the category of nuanced portrayal of juveniles, amounting to 40 percent of the total coverage.

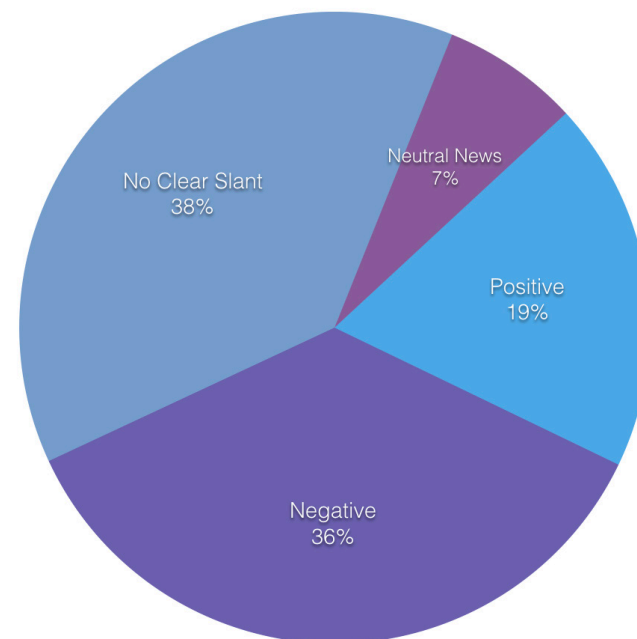


Fig 27. The print media's slant on the juvenile:
Overall response

The Print Media's Slant on the Juvenile

Name of Newspaper	Nuanced portrayal of the juvenile as of total coverage of the newspaper
<i>The Times of India</i>	5.3
<i>The Hindu</i>	39.3
<i>Dinathanthi</i>	7.7
<i>Dinamalar</i>	6.3

Secondly, *The Hindu* was the only newspaper in which the three categories – portraying juveniles as nuanced/positive, negative and with no outright characterization – received similar coverage, in contrast to other newspapers which were skewed towards a negative picturization of juveniles.

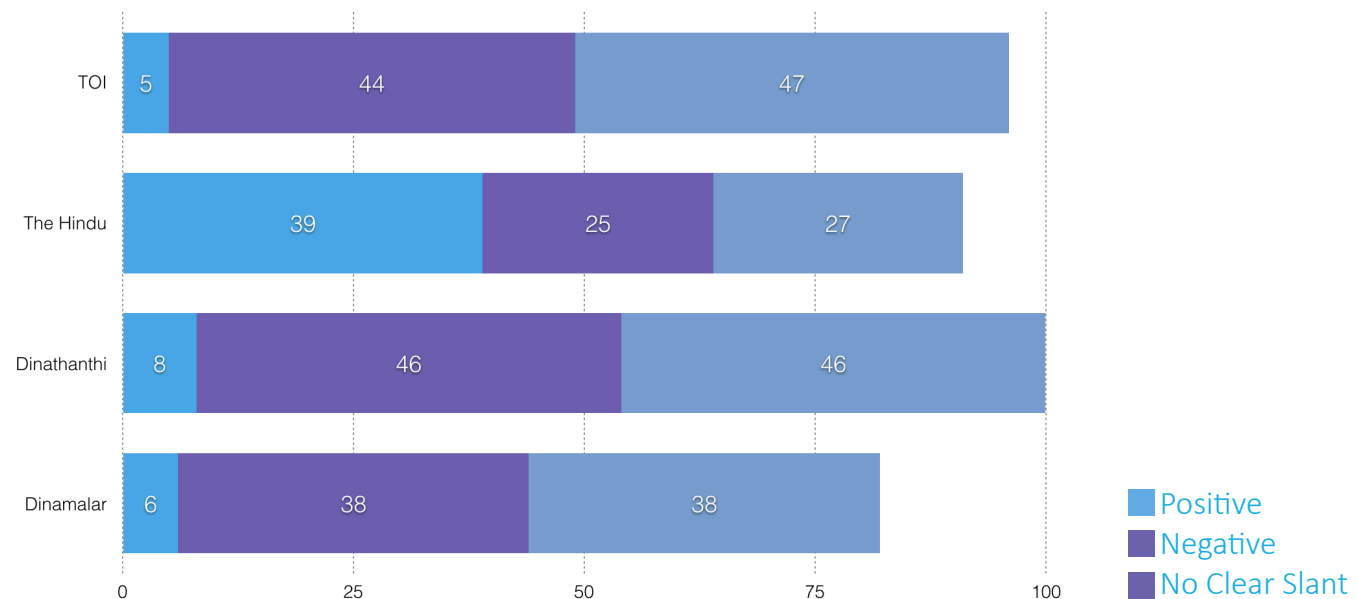


Fig 28. The print media's slant on the juvenile: Newspaper-wise

The Print Media's Slant on the Juvenile

Language-wise break-up of the data

Across the English and Tamil newspapers, a negative portrayal of juveniles and a neutral portrayal of juveniles (portrayed neither as victim nor as villain) gathered similar coverage. In the English dailies, 39 news items associated juveniles with a negative character while 42 news items did not have any outright character slant. Similarly, in the Tamil dailies, twelve news items showed juveniles in a negative light, and another twelve news items had no stated slant towards juveniles. In contrast, five news items (22 percent) and two news-items (seven percent), in the English and Tamil newspapers respectively, depicted juveniles in a positive light.

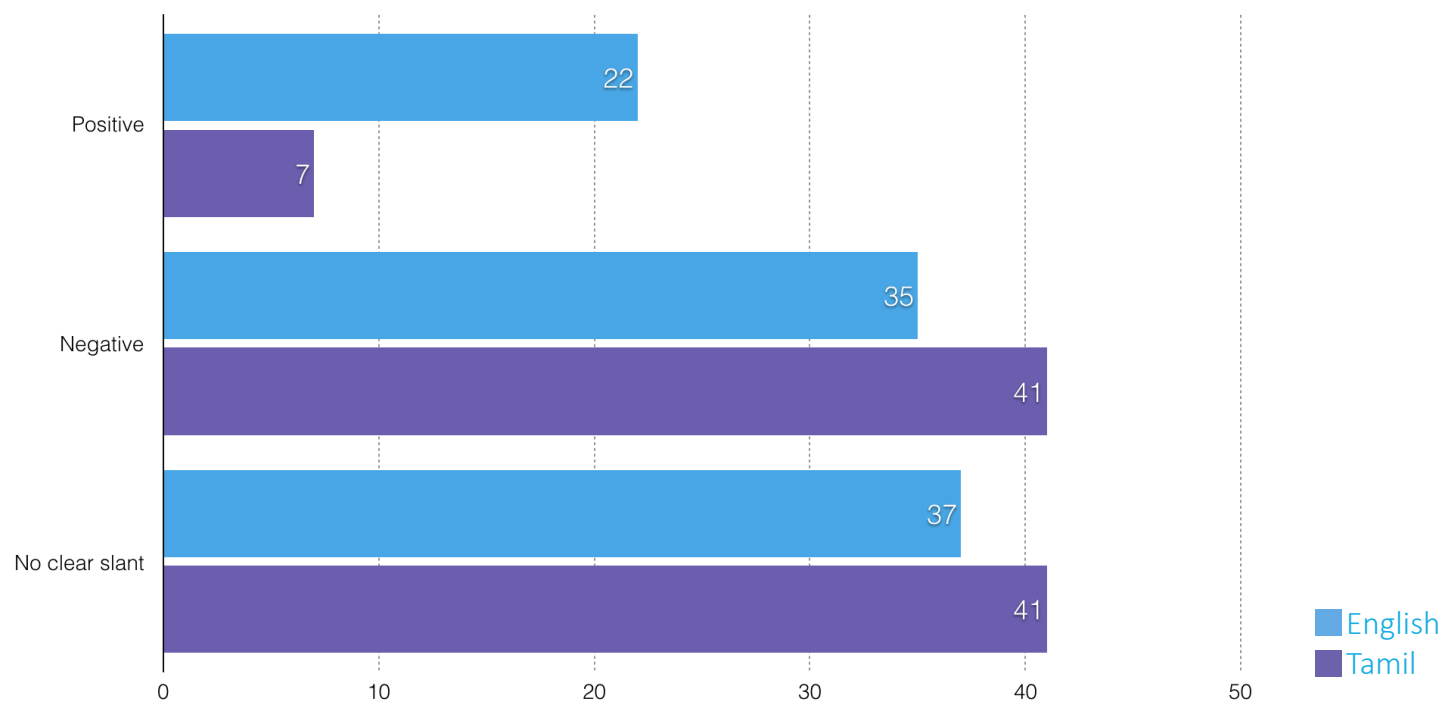


Fig 29. The print media's slant on the juvenile: Language-wise

The Print Media's Slant on the Juvenile

More than one fourth of the news items, in both the English and Tamil dailies, characterized juveniles negatively. Thirty-five percent of news items in the English dailies and 41 percent of news items in the Tamil dailies rendered a negative image of juveniles.

The Tamil dailies' depiction was biased towards a negative portrayal of juveniles. While twelve news items showed them in a negative light, only two news items attempted to characterize them in a positive light. In the English dailies, out of 25 news items portraying juveniles in a positive light, 22 news items appeared in *The Hindu*. *The Times of India* contributed three news items to the 'positive' category.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

UNICEF and Media Development Foundation commenced a media-mapping research to study the print media coverage of the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act. The purpose of the research was twofold: to study

- (1) The editorial discretion of the paper with respect to the juvenile justice legislation.
- (2) Print media coverage of the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act.

For this study, two leading English dailies, the Chennai editions of *The Hindu* and *The Times of India*, and two leading Tamil dailies, *Dinathanthi* and *Dinamalar*, were studied for a period of 19 months from 15th June, 2014 to 15th January, 2016. The study used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to study the print media coverage.

Key Findings of the Report

Between 15th June, 2014 and 15th January, 2016, the four identified newspapers published 267 news-items on the subject of juvenile justice legislation.

Featuring 228 news-items, the two English newspapers comprised 85 percent of the total coverage. They provided detailed and extensive coverage of the issue. The English national dailies found it necessary to cover the day-to-day developments with respect to this theme – whether it was the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act or the Nirbhaya case.

With 39 news-items, coverage by the two leading Tamil newspapers amounted only to 15 percent. They reported only the major developments with respect to the juvenile justice legislation or the Nirbhaya case. The limited coverage has to be seen in the context of the nature of the regional language newspapers, their editorial policies and practices which are said to be dictated by the reader demographic.

Executive Summary

Placement and prominence of the story

The placement and prominence of a story in a way points to the relative importance given to the issue vis-a-vis other issues of national importance. It also gives insights into how a newspaper used its opinion columns to examine the issue from different perspectives and take a stance in its editorials.

Sixty percent of the total news coverage of the juvenile justice legislation was spread among the other news pages. Coverage on the opinion page came second with 24 percent. The front page coverage, which signifies the paper's perception of the importance of the story for its readers, was 16.5 percent of the total coverage.

A pattern of imbalance existed between news reporting and news analysis in *The Times of India*, *Dinathanthi*, and *Dinamalar*. This is because predominant coverage of the juvenile justice legislation has occurred only in the news reporting section, exclusively in the other news pages. In this regard, *The Hindu* was an outlier. It attempted to moderate the coverage of juvenile justice legislation by balancing its hard news coverage with news analysis.

When it comes to the front page coverage, 98 percent of the front page coverage took place in the English dailies. In contrast, in the total span of 19 months, Tamil dailies had only one story reported on the front page (in *Dinamalar* and none in *Dinathanthi*). It shows that only the English newspapers considered the twin issues as significant national issues that deserved front page and widespread coverage.

Overall, 60 percent of the news-items on the theme of juvenile justice legislation were placed as high prominence stories. 27 percent of the news-items appeared as medium prominence stories and the remaining 13 percent of the news-items were situated as low prominence stories. In total, 86 percent of the news-items on juvenile justice legislation appeared as high and medium prominence stories.

The data shows that in the English dailies, more than half of the news-items appeared as high prominence stories. While in the Tamil dailies, more than half of the news-items on juvenile legislation appeared as medium or low prominence stories.

Executive Summary

Story type and location

67 percent of the total coverage comprised daily reportage on juvenile justice legislation. News analysis contributed 15 percent towards the total coverage of juvenile justice legislation. Opinion pieces and editorials contributed 10 and 5 percent respectively.

The Hindu newspaper had a balanced coverage. It provided facts through reportage (59%) and helped readers understand the issue through analytical articles (21%) and the readers in turn could engage with the newspaper through letters to the editor (17%).

The Tamil newspapers, in contrast, largely carried news reportage (85%). The rest were a stray editorial and a letter to the editor.

Location wise, most of the news stories (67%) have emanated from New Delhi, the capital of the country, where the Parliament and the Supreme Court are located.

Accompanying visuals

Newspapers have been focusing on adding visual elements to important stories, partly to attract the reader's attention. Overall, 56 percent of the news-items on this issue were accompanied by visual images. Photographs and infographics appeared alongside the text for 24 and 22 percent of news-items respectively. Seven percent of the news-items had representative images while another 2 percent of the news-items had cartoons accompanying the text.

The data clearly shows that photographs and infographics were widely used as visualization elements of the news-items in the English dailies. However, in the Tamil newspapers, photographs were used as the only significant visual medium.

More than half of the news-items in *The Hindu*, *Dinathanthi* and *Dinamalar* used text as the primary way of communicating information. *The Times of India* was an exception in this regard. The data points out that it has effectively utilised visuals along with the text to convey the news effectively. Rather than employing visuals as a mere accompanying accessory, it has handled visuals as a powerful medium simultaneously with the text medium.

Executive Summary

Print media coverage of the amendments to Juvenile Justice Act

The research study looked at the relative importance given to the Nirbhaya episode, which had a major impact on the debate revolving around the amendment to the juvenile justice legislation. In this research study, the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act received 33 percent of the total coverage. Within this, 61 percent of the reportage discussed the amendments against the backdrop of the Nirbhaya gang-rape incident.

Rather than being a policy move backed by data and research, the legislative move for age reduction emerged in the aftermath of the unprecedented sensationalisation of the Nirbhaya episode. This was evident in the Nirbhaya case getting 44 percent of the overall coverage. Thus, coverage of the Nirbhaya episode had superseded the coverage and reportage on the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act.

Given the complexity of the subject, one would expect the newspapers to provide a holistic and comprehensive picture through articles. Surprisingly, only four percent of the reportage on the amendments rendered a holistic and comprehensive picture of the new legislation. The Tamil newspapers failed to provide articles which gave a comprehensive account of the multidimensional, complex issue.

Instead, much space was devoted to the discussion pertaining to the amendments regarding age reduction. Thus, the new amendments were reduced to the issue of age reduction, at the cost of other aspects. Less than one-fourth of the news-items showed juveniles as a vulnerable category requiring careful consideration, without blindly identifying them as criminal offenders causing a serious threat to society. Thirty six percent of the news-items depicted juveniles in a negative light. Another 39 percent did not have any outright slant towards juveniles.

Even on age reduction, only *The Hindu* had articles which looked at it critically, while the *The Times of India* and the two Tamil newspapers published more articles/news favoring age reduction. Similarly, when it came to nuanced treatment of the subject, only *The Hindu* fared better (with 39%). The Times Of India and the two Tamil newspapers were under 8 percent.

With regards to the sourcing of the story, the choice of sources has implications on the credibility of information on the one hand and the toeing of the official line on the other. Forty percent of the news-items were sourced from official sources. One fourth of the stories emerged from non-official sources. Close to one fourth of the stories, 20 percent, did not have a clear reference towards their originating story source. The English dailies moderately balanced their coverage of news-items from official and non-official sources, while the coverage in Tamil dailies was skewed towards official sources.

Recommendations and Way Forward

The study has brought out significant findings on the nature of coverage and the huge disparity between the coverage in English and the regional (in this case, Tamil) newspapers. More studies need to be done to probe the reasons for the differences and their implications on agenda-setting and opinion-making roles of the regional media.

There is an acute need to do advocacy with the regional media, in particular, the print media, so that they devote adequate space to disseminating information and providing analysis and opinion on substantial development issues for their readers.

How did the readers respond to the coverage on juvenile justice legislation? What has been the impact of the balanced or skewed coverage on public at large? This has not been studied. A study could complement the present study.

The study brought out how the media got swayed by the dramatic events and it skewed the coverage between substantial legislative and legal issues vis-a-vis the sensational Nirbhaya episode and the protests that followed, which shaped media coverage, and consequently, policy making. This issue too needs to be studied further.

This study was restricted to print media only. The television and internet (including social media) played a major role in shaping the public discourse on this issue. A detailed study is called for to explore and unravel their role.

Another aspect which was not studied in detail here was the professional skills and capabilities of journalists who covered the juvenile justice legislation. Sensitization programmes and mid-career training for reporters could be considered so that they could report and write in a balanced and informed way.

APPENDIX- CODING SHEET



Media representation of Juveniles: A study of the print media portrayal of the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act (2015)

CODING SHEET

V1. DATE OF PUBLICATION:

V2. Name of the Newspaper

1. The Hindu
2. Times of India
3. Dinamalar
4. Dinathanthi

V3. Placement of story

1. Front page
2. Other news page
3. Edit page/ Op-Ed
4. Other (specify)-----

LOCATION OF THE ARTICLE:

V4. Story type

1. Byline story (Go to V4a)
2. Opinion/ Comment (Go to V4a)
3. By Paper's correspondent/ bureau (No individual named) Go to V5
4. Editorial
5. Wire service
6. Letters to the Editor (STOP WITH question V4)
7. Cartoon (STOP WITH question V4)
8. Other (specify)-----

V5. Place/ Location

1. Delhi
2. Chennai
3. Other metro cities
4. Others (Specify)-----
9. N.A

V6. Accompanying Visuals

1. Photo
2. Info-graphic
3. Graphic/ Sketch/ Representation
4. Cartoon
5. No Visual
6. Others (Specify)-----

9. NA

V7. Prominence of the story

1. High Prominence
2. Medium Prominence
3. Low Prominence

SPECIFIC INFORMATION:

V8. Classification of the article:

1. Amendment to the act (go to V7a)
2. Nirbhaya case and Amendment (go to V7a)
3. Nirbhaya case (go to V7b)
4. Documentary- India's daughter (go to V7b)
5. Others----- (go to V7b)

V8a. If 1 or 2, which amendment does the article focus upon?

1. Reduction in age from 18 to 16 for heinous crime (Go to V7aa)
2. Comprehensive coverage of the legislation (Go to V7aa)
3. Powers of Juvenile Justice Board and Child Welfare Committee
4. Crime against children
5. Adoption
6. Others-----

V8aa. If 1 or 2 in V7a, with respect to reduction in age, is the article

1. Supportive of the reduction in age
2. Critical of the reduction in age
3. No clear slant

V8b. If 3, 4 or 5 what is the primary theme of the story

1. Nirbhaya case- progress
2. Documentary- India's daughter
3. Observation Homes
4. Inadequacy of existing Juvenile law
5. Rehabilitation of Juveniles
6. Others (Specify)-----

V9. Normative slant of the story with respect to Juvenile:

1. Positive
2. Negative
3. No clear slant
4. Neutral news

9. NA

V10. SOURCES USED IN THE STORY:

	Yes	No
1. Minister/Ministry for Child and Women Development	1	2
2. Other Government Sources -----	1	2
3. Police	1	2
4. Judiciary	1	2
5. Political Actors	1	2
6. NGO's / Civil Society	1	2
7. Domain Experts (specify)	1	2
8. Family members of the Victims	1	2
9. Accused/ Family members of the accused	1	2
10. No source	1	2
11. Ambiguous source	1	2
12. Other sources (specify)-----	1	2

V11. Information for the story emanated from:

1. Press release/ Press Conference
2. Legislative proceedings
3. Judicial proceedings
4. Events (Protest/ Civil society meeting/ Social event/ cultural event)
5. Published report (Mention)-----
6. No institutional source
7. Other (specify)-----

REMARKS:

(1) General Remarks:

(2) Treatment to amendment:

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