

VALUE DETERIORATION AS DEPICTED IN DAILY
NEWSPAPERS IN NOVEMBER 2023

Research
Paper

ABSTRACT

The present study examined the decline in values in modern society as portrayed in Tamil Nadu's daily newspapers. The researcher delves into today's phenomenon of the crisis of political corruption, educational difficulties, and social issues that expose a significant deterioration of ethical and moral standards through a thorough content analysis of renowned newspapers, such as The Hindu (English), Dina Thanthi, and The Hindu (Tamil) of 30 days of November 2023. The researcher has classified the value deterioration news from the three newspapers into seven titles: 1. Corruption and crime by the leaders (Political leaders and Higher Officials), 2. Officer's negligence of duty, 3. Suicide News, 4. Murder, 5. Robbery and smuggling, 6. Violence and fraudulences, 7. Child abuse and rape cases. The Hindu Tamil reported 38 news about corruption and crime by the leaders, including a huge amount of bribery. Dina Thanthi, Hindu Tamil, and Hindu English have reported 60, 60, and 64 numbers of violence and fraudulent news, respectively. Similarly, there are 38 murders in Hindu Tamil, 52 in Dina Thandhi, and 59 in The Hindu English have been reported. This research suggested the need for value-based education by underlining the widespread erosion of integrity, human rights, democracy, accountability, and community values.

Keywords : Value Deterioration (VD), Value Based Education (VBE)

Introduction

Newspapers continue to hold significance in modern life by serving as a convenient source of information on current affairs, promoting informed citizenship, expanding general knowledge, and presenting varied perspectives on subjects such as politics, economics, and culture. They help individuals stay informed about global events. Newspapers shape individuals by influencing thoughts, opinions, and behaviour. They enhance awareness, critical thinking, and language skills while promoting civic engagement. However, biased reporting can sway perspectives (Holman. et al., 2013). Recent research indicated that news can impact us unexpectedly, influencing our risk perception, the nature of our dreams, and even our likelihood of experiencing a heart attack (BBC, 2020). Nowadays, we frequently hear news about value degradation and deterioration. Values shape people's beliefs, character, and behaviour, influencing their interactions with society. When moral and ethical values are neglected, it leads to a breakdown in social harmony (Clear, 2018). Therefore, it is urgent to dig into everyone's core values and create open discussions about them in

classrooms and workplaces. Education should not only focus on academic subjects but integrate value-based learning into the curriculum to nurture responsible and compassionate individuals.

Values are customs or beliefs which give goodness to oneself and also to others. Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) define values as beliefs that (a) are linked to intended goals or behaviours, (b) apply across different situations, (c) guide the selection and evaluation of actions and events, and (d) are arranged in order of priority. Values influence various aspects of life, including the words we use, the clothes we wear, and how we interact with others or interpret their

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responses. They emerge from preferences, needs, choices, interests, and aspirations, which are essential in shaping one's values. Moreover, values have a guiding or selective nature (NCERT, 2012).

Value Deterioration (VD)

Deterioration is the process of becoming progressively worse in quality, condition, or value (Merriam-Webster, 2024). Human value deterioration (VD) signifies a steady decline in moral, ethical, and cultural principles among individuals and societies, influenced by globalisation, technological progress, and societal transformations (Kumar & Sharma, 2021). This decline is frequently associated with rising materialism, weakened social connections, and a diminishing regard for traditional ethical norms (Brown, 2019). Scholars suggested that the weakening of human values can have adverse effects on social cohesion, emotional stability, and interpersonal relationships (Singh, 2020).

Objectives

Realising the importance of value-based education, the researcher undertook this present study to analyse and understand how far the contemporary social system is represented with action and conditions as depicted in daily newspapers. Thus, it is highly significant that teachers, parents and curriculum planners should give utmost importance to value- based education to our future citizens.

The following are the objectives

1. To categorise the value deterioration depicted in selected local newspapers of November 2023.
2. To compile the number of value deterioration news published by these newspapers.
3. To compare the value deterioration news published by the three newspapers.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research approach, employing a concept analysis. There are different approaches to carrying out the concept analysis introduced by (1989) Rogers, (2005 1995) Walker and Avant (1995) Morse (2000) Swartz-Barcott and Kim (1995) Hugh McKenna (1997). The researchers used the concept analysis model of Hugh McKenna (1997).

i. Selecting suitable concept for concept analysis onset

The researcher determined to analyse the concept in the newspapers from value deterioration point of view. For this, the researchers chose three newspapers in India: two were state newspapers, and another was the national newspaper, which was collected from 1st to 30th November 2023. Totally 90 newspapers had been taken for the analysis.

ii. Determining and Defining the Purpose of Concept Analysis

All the newspapers were screened by reading three times, and the value of the deterioration-related news was marked. Subsequently, the researchers noted the name of value deterioration while reading the headlines and omitted other news not related to value deterioration. All the noted items should be grouped in different titles to quantify the number and types of value deterioration.

iii. Identifying and Specifying the Meaning of Concept

The grouping has been done carefully under seven titles, such as i). Corruption and crime by the Political leaders and Higher Officials. Researchers have found many news articles related to corruption and crime committed by political leaders. Despite there being separate titles for the crime, this title has been chosen because they are the custodian of the laws of the nation, but when they commit the crime, indicating the value deterioration of this study. ii) Officers' negligence of duty: this news indicated the different types of negligence and the consequences faced by the lay people iii). Suicide news, 4. Murder, 5. Robbery and smuggling, 6. Violence and fraudulences, 7. Child abuse and rape cases. Thus, the selected concept is identified in seven aspects.

iv. Determining the attributes that define the concept

Corruption can be described as bribery or the unethical use of one's official position or power to serve personal interests or gain undue benefits. It is also understood as the improper exercise of authority driven by personal advantage, which does not necessarily involve financial gain. From a legal perspective, corruption refers to the exploitation of public power for personal benefit in violation of established laws or regulations (JKC College, 2020).

According to the law of torts, negligence is the breach of a legal duty to the care which results in damage (Usha, 2002). Suicide is the intentional taking of one's own life(Kernallawschool, 2021).Under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), murder is defined as culpable homicide that is intentional, premeditated, and without provocation (Indian Penal Code,1860). “Fraudulent Practice” means any action or omission, including misrepresentation, that knowingly or recklessly misleads or attempts to mislead a party to obtain a financial benefit or to avoid an obligation (Scribed, 2024). Robbery may be defined as the unlawful, forcible taking of a victim's property from the person of the victim (Scott, 2008).The World Health Organization (WHO) defines child maltreatment as “all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that result in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, development or dignity” (Gonzalez et al., 2023). Smuggling is the act of carrying goods or people illegally and hidden, like out of a building, into jail, or through the border, Contrary to the law or other regulations (Akmam & Yuslan, 2019). Thus, these attributes alone define the concept of value deterioration.

v. Identifying and implementing a model case

Crime reporting in newspapers has been a subject of extensive research, particularly in examining how media portrayals influence public perception and reinforce stereotypes. Various studies have employed content analysis methods to explore the frequency, nature, and impact of crime news coverage across different media platforms.A study analysing crime reports in the Radar Malang newspaper (March 1–30, 2009) found that theft was the most frequently reported crime, appearing 20 times (50%), followed by deception (27.5%), robbery (10%), maltreatment (7.5%), and murder (5%). This research utilised a quantitative content analysis method, applying Klaus Krippendorff’s approach to assess the frequency of criminal news reports (Warren-Gordon et al., 2010). Crimes were categorised into five types: murder, robbery, theft, deception, and maltreatment, providing insights into how crime is framed within a newspaper’s reporting structure.

The role of linguistic biases in crime news reporting has also been critically examined. Another research determined the presence of such biases and their role in

activating crime stereotypes toward racial/ethnic minorities. Their findings underscore how media narratives can contribute to shaping public perception by reinforcing harmful stereotypes through selective language choices. (Vaes et al., 2019).Further analysis of two local Omani newspapers (Oman and Al-Watan) and Al-Ain Al-Sahirah magazine (The Watchful Eye), issued by the Omani police, highlighted issues in the linguistic expressions and styles used in security media reporting. The study found that these media sources failed to persuade recipients effectively, as their language did not align with contemporary crime developments. The research emphasised the need for security media to integrate moral and Islamic values in crime reporting to enhance their psychological impact on readers (Al Khayari et al., 2024).

The overrepresentation of racial minorities in crime reports has been a recurrent theme in media studies. Research by Tripathi and Srivastava (2021) found that violent crimes were more frequently reported than white-collar crimes due to the availability of dramatic visuals. The study further revealed that the race and ethnicity of media professionals influenced news content, shaping the way crime was depicted in the media landscape.

The media’s agenda-setting role in crime reporting was also examined through a content analysis of the front pages of three national English dailies over one week. The findings indicated that crime and terrorism dominated news coverage, surpassing political issues, which have traditionally been a focal point of media interest. This research suggested that developmental issues were often overlooked due to organisational policies that prioritised sensational content (Subramani & Rodrigues, 2012). Additionally, it was noted that news stories on sex, crime, and violence are major revenue sources for media organisations, as they are relatively inexpensive to produce and effectively capture audience attention.Overall, these studies highlightedhow crime news was framed, the linguistic and racial biases present in crime reporting, and the broader influence of media in shaping public perception. They emphasised the need for a more balanced and ethical approach to crime journalism, where human values and fundamental rights were reinforced rather than undermined.

vi. Identification of antecedents, facts and consequences

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has published its crime rate report for India for the year 2024, offering valuable insights into the prevailing trends and patterns of criminal activities across the nation. The overall crime rate stands at 445.9 incidents per 100,000 people, reflecting a marginal decline of 0.56% compared to 2023 (NCBR, Ministry of Home Affairs, India, 2025). However, one alarming trend is the sharp rise in cybercrime. Despite the crime rate being in continuous decline

Cyberattacks have been increasing at an unprecedented rate worldwide. In 2021, the volume of cyberattacks surged by 125% compared to 2020, and this upward trajectory persisted in 2022, posing significant risks to both individuals and businesses. The long-term trend in cybercrime is particularly concerning. Since 2001, the number of victims per hour has escalated from 6 to 97, marking an astonishing 1517% rise over the past two decades (Griffiths, 2025). Studies showed that 39% of Indians are increasingly avoiding news due to its repetitive and overly negative nature (NDTV, 2024). According to NCBI, approximately 26.7% of people exposed to distressing news develop anxiety (Holman et al., 2013). Additionally, 63% of children aged 12–18 report that watching the news makes them feel unhappy. Sensationalist stories now dominate 95% of media headlines, and around 90% of all news coverage is negative (Pengue, 2023).

Data Analysis

S. NO	News on Value Deterioration	The Hindu Tamil	Dhina Thandhi	The Hindu English
1	Crime News on Leaders, Officials	38	7	8
2	Negligence of Duty by officials	20	11	9
3	News of Suicide	16	37	2
4	Murder	38	52	59
5	Robbery and smuggling	48	47	23
6	violence and Fraudulences	60	60	64
7	News on child abuse and rape	16	27	12
8	Accidents	57	125	50

Crimes Committed by Government Officials :

The first concept selected is crimes committed by political leaders and Government officials; the said three newspapers are first analysed on this concept. Leaders are role models to the young generation. According to the Hindu Tamil Newspaper, 38 news articles regarding crimes committed by government officials have been reported. The government officials in this news include the Minister, Enforcement officer, Registrars, IAS officers, IPS officers, Temple administrators, Revenue officers, bill collectors and party leaders. All this news about the huge amounts of bribes, holding black money, and illegal possession of gold. Hindu Tamil reported the highest number of related crimes committed by leaders in 30 days of November 2023; the other two have reported 8 and 7 news on this.

Negligence of duty : The officer has to exercise his duty as he is directed, but there are 20 news reports about the negligence of duty in Hindu Tamil, 11 in Dinathanthi, and nine news in The Hindu. This news includes administrating Ganja inside the jail, purposefully not filling the vacancies, distributing rotten eggs in the mid-day meals scheme at schools, demanding to exercise the duty by asking for bribes, not conducting the proper interview, and not following the proper norms to fill the vacancies, but decided by the bribe.

Suicide : Dhinathandhi has reported 37 suicide cases in 30 days. Hindu Tamil 16 and The Hindu English have reported two news on suicide. In these three newspapers, 20 suicide committers were students, including the 9th standard and 10th standard adolescents.

Murder : 59 Murder news have been registered in Hindu Tamil, 52 in Dinathandhi and 38 murder news in The Hindu English newspaper. Most of the news was elaborated in detail; in each case, 1 to 5 persons were murdered.

Robbery and Smuggling : There were 48 and 47 cases of robbery, and smuggling has been reported in Hindu Tamil and Dina Thandhi. The Hindu English marked 23 Robbery and Smuggling cases. This includes robbery of rice bags, and smuggling of gold, Ganja, endangered animals, and drugs; most of the news was about drugs smuggling on a smaller level to a mass level.

Violence and fraudulence : Violence and fraudulence cases have been reported in almost the same way in all

three newspapers. The average number of cases is 61. This included a variety of violence, including war and terrorism. Killing, bomb blasts, casteism, refugees attack, killing endangered animals, hunting, counterfeiting of coins public nuisance etc.,

Child abuse and rape : Dinathandhi reported the highest number of cases of Child abuse and rape. Hindu Tamil reported 16, and Hindu English registered 12 cases of Child abuse and rape. Also, it reported 125 accident cases by Dhina thanthi, 57 by Hindu Tamil, and 50 news by Hindu English. In most cases, due to the fast, drunk and driving, also by the care less.

Findings of the Study

This study reveals that, in The Hindu Tamil, over a span of 30 days, 38 news reports highlighted the crimes related to national leaders and officers, while incidents of officers neglecting their duties averaged 10 per month in these three newspapers. Dhinathandhi reported 37 news related to suicide, it was the highest among these three newspapers. English Hindu reported 59 news related to murder in 30 days. An average of 39. 33 news have been reported in these newspapers in a month on robbery and smuggling. Child abuse and rape news in Thandhi was 27, 16 in Hindu Tamil and 12 in Hindu English. Meanwhile, Dina Thanthi reported 125 accident cases within the same period, excluding those caused by natural calamities. Newspapers play a crucial role in shaping public opinion by influencing thoughts, beliefs, and behaviour. However, excessive exposure to negative news can severely impact mental well-being. It reflects the current situation of society.

Conclusion

The deterioration of values can have profound consequences on both individuals and society. When a person's actions diverge from their true values, it can lead to unethical behaviour, moral compromises, and an overall sense of dissatisfaction. This internal conflict not only affects personal well-being but also weakens one's integrity. On a societal level, a flawed value system fosters systemic injustices, contributes to moral decline, and erodes trust among individuals and institutions. As ethical principles fade, corruption, dishonesty, and social instability become more prevalent, ultimately disrupting harmony and progress within a community. As the literature review reveals that newspaper

reports are often framed with racial bias, prioritising crime and terrorism over political issues. The race and ethnicity of media professionals influence crime portrayal, reinforcing stereotypes through selective language. Additionally, news on sex, crime, and violence serves as a major revenue source, as it is cost-effective and attracts audiences. A newspaper's ideology plays a crucial role in shaping news content and influencing public perception by instilling its beliefs in readers. Even while acknowledging these factors, researchers focused on quantifying the number of news reports highlighting value deterioration in society. By analysing 90 newspapers from November 2023, they aimed to present an overall picture of the current state of society. The findings raise serious concerns about education, emphasising the need to shift from mere knowledge transmission to value-based learning. Rather than prioritising marks, education should instil values that shape students into responsible leaders and good citizens. By fostering a curriculum centred on ethics and morality, we can curb rising crime rates, safeguard humanity, and build a society rooted in love, equality, and brotherhood. Education without character building and morality is rising nowadays. It is high time to concentrate on Value-based education (VBE).

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