

# Counter Effect Of Media's Exposure Of Violence To The Public With Respect To Bama's Karukku And Ideology

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**Abstract:** Days are getting obsolete wherein passivity is considered as the supreme weapon of heroism. Long-suffering and tolerance towards hatred and love are seldom seen in today's society. Media – be it news channels or films or any other commercial entertainments – started focussing on numerous violent behaviours found in the society. Even this violence is seen in two phases. One is the type of violence projected by the wicked ones of society and another type is of the ones who want to bring peace and justice by using it as a weapon to fight back evil. When such horrific or gory details of the violence acted out by the evil minded people through media it automatically creates a humongous terror among the people. People are thrown into a state where they no longer find society harmless. They tend to walk with fright and horror. This creates suspicion to everyone around them. So, in an act of defensive mechanism they even violently attack people whom they are suspicious of, out of fright. This article tries to show how media can even be preaching violence knowingly or unknowingly by influencing young minds by exposing them continually to violence described in its nakedness.

**Keywords:** Althusser, Bama, Foucault, Ideology, Karukku, Media, Power of words and thoughts, Violence.

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays it has become so popular among the news and media to compete with one another among themselves. They wanted to win the attention and approval of the public. They wanted to catch their interests and moreover, anything that happens in the society they tend to compete in the way the news is projected. The more the news is narrated in the raw and clear way without any euphemism or censorship, the more it attracts the readers. In an act of being outspoken they tend to report the details of violent activities happened in the society with the gory details. Media instead of just reporting in plain terms went in to showing CCTV footages of the action caught and also warned people to be very careful of people around. Even though it did a lot of awareness among the civilians, it went into such an extreme that people were left paranoid and became very suspicious of every other person around. Human lives are nowadays considered very much of less value than before. In some cases, there were some videos that went viral among the people through social media like Facebook, Youtube, etc. Those videos are illustrations of extreme violence. Certain people were seen dragging someone all along the street and hurting him/her very violently and cursing the person all the while. They even went to the extreme of burning that person alive. This was recorded and circulated with captions stating how that particular person deserved such punishment for they have committed such a heinous crime. We live in an era, where the violence started to sway among us with justified reasons. It moves in different forms and in different disguises. Kindness is overpowered by violence.

Even terrorists claim that they show anti-social violent behaviours because of various reasons like the marginalised treatment they suffer, and the way they were downtrodden and done wrong by the society. Just on consideration of the very thought that they belong to the minority group or rather to a kind of silenced community in terms of power they suffered such ill-treatments. Some of them try to take vengeance (vendetta) and tries to avenge their cause in relation to the injustice done to them. Terrorism itself has its origin in the certain well-established motto to function thereupon. Whatever is the case, whether it is terroristic activities of protest or any act of violence, it is very clear that all such actions are grounded upon certain power structure that work to subdue certain other opposing power principles which try to oppress them. They have certain goals in their central position, be it any selfish motive or any common goodness of society. Whether for a good cause or a bad one, using violence or terrorism as weapons to attain certain patterns in the society, always demands bloodshed or hurtful consequences to human beings. It is always shocking to see how certain period in a society's history that has massive sway of such lethal violent activities. What makes it so universal? Off late any page in a newspaper is not seen without any act of violence or terrorism. Media covers them in their dailies. One might wonder what makes people behave in such ways. Arguments can be made for and against such things according to the different disciplines of studies found in the literary and philosophical societies. But the pivotal role played by Media and its effect among the audience in this present generation always stands matchless (unmatched). Media proved and proves to be very powerful. Why is that so? The question posed here is very important because it helps all to learn the root cause of many crucial elements of the society we live today. After years together of significant findings on the violent elements found on the contents screened especially in children's programmes,

... the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behaviour was formed in 1969 to assess the impact of violence on the attitudes, values and behaviour of viewers.

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The resulting report and a follow-up report in 1982 by the National Institute of Mental Health identified these major effects of seeing violence on television:

- Children may become less sensitive to the pain and suffering of others.
- Children may be more fearful of the world around them.
- Children may be more likely to behave in aggressive or harmful ways toward others.

(American Psychological Association, November 2013)

Media can be in any forms, like a novel, a movie, social media like Facebook, Youtube, WhatsApp, Newspapers, news channels and the list go on and on. Anyone who wants to interact with the world and its so-called 'Universal Consciousness' has one way or the other to connect with the others with any of the above-mentioned list or even some unmentioned ones too. For illustration purpose, few works of such exposures can be analysed at this juncture. Here, the great Dalit writer Bama's works, like 'Karukku', 'Sangatti' and 'Vanmam', can be taken as one such illustrative works that contain a lot of descriptions of violence in it. The author has given ample amount of descriptions of how the caste struggles in her society then had many acts of violence including gory murders. But towards the end she made it clear to her readers that violence is not the way to gain freedom and to attain empowerment. Another example, apart from the novels, examples from the movies produced in the commercial world can also be considered powerful here. Off-late many movies for example, Tamil movies has the central pivotal lead character who was titled as the hero is projected as the one who operates in the story with the core principle that evil should be repaid with evil/violence. The lead character indulges him or her in many acts of violence including killing someone which is hailed as heroic. It is viewed as an act of a saviour for those downtrodden people. Movies like 'Kabali', 'Kaala', 'Indian', 'Anniyan' etc. belong to such types. Media too tries to bring out in the casting screen very dramatically such gruesome portrayal of the horrendous acts of the so-called heroic-courage which is only filled with violence and bloodshed. Here comes the handiness and power of the development in the animation, graphic development in the cinema forecast. Either with slow-motion techniques or with graphical representation of the scenes never fail to leave the audiences with their mind's eyes been stamped with violence and terrorism. The wise statement which once proclaimed as how the thoughts become emotions and emotions, in turn, becomes actions and actions become behaviour proves to be an all time-proven truth. A person who is often filled with thoughts and ideas of negative impacts never proved wrong or powerless in the provocation of that person's behaviour in reality. Now comes the question "Why are such thoughts so powerful? Or rather "How does something controls a person's behaviour in such a way that almost all human beings more around bears or wears a cloak of influence on them? This research paper tries to answer the above questions in a persuasive manner seeking help from the Ideological

theories which caters to the need of the manifestations of the power of ideas. Such ideas are also identified in the collective consciousness of society. Later this article proceeds further in illustrating the aforesaid concepts with examples from the works of the Dalit writer Bama. Bama in her works proves well in multifarious ways how words and the thoughts that they carry proves to be so powerful which is seen in the consecutive effects described in their works themselves. One would really come into terms with the workmanship of the writings of the writers while reading their works. Words are so powerful because of the essence that it carries with them that is so powerful. Words carry Ideas. At this juncture, the researcher finds it highly crucial to bring in the supportive references of the works of the chosen writers and certain movies too to show how the ideas are being sown in the audiences which create lots of impact in the corresponding society as portrayed in the works. Moreover, the present society has a high impact on social media and commercial movies. It is sometimes so hard to separate media from the lives of the people. Either they get in touch with the media with passion or at least as a recreation from heat and burden of the day. Even when they passively listen and observe the flashing visual on the screen or the written narratives, ideas got seeded within their minds. This will be proven when the ideas result through the behavioural outcome. The movies mentioned in the previous passages when viewed or analysed carefully with such hypothetical assumptions discussed earlier will clearly illustrate how words and ideas are so powerful in the social behaviours. Movies like, Kabali, Theri, Indian, Anniyan and the likes usually have the main characters as revolutionary heroic characters whose actions and behaviours are justifiably portrayed in the screen. Moreover, they are accepted as ideal behaviours by the audience too. In the movie, Anniyan, the character who plays the lead role is portrayed as a person who has multiple personality disorder due to various social influences in his childhood. Due to a lot of hardships which he faced due to social injustice in his corruption-infested society, he fights a losing-battle with noble and non-violent efforts. So, the disorder develops and he takes up severe violent punishments as his weapon to fight the Government officers who are obsessed with corruption. The movie portrays lots of gory details of the murders which are taken up by the main role as means of vendetta. But the audience is made to accept the attitude and the behaviour of the actor as something which is an ideal solution to cure the corruption in the world. The simple psychology works very well in a way that, a person when starts to accept and admire another exulted person's attitude or behaviour as something ideal then that in turn might make the person adapt or mime the same sort of ideal behaviour. There is certain copying of the same behaviour exhibited by certain people too in the society. People started to feel that there is nothing wrong in taking the law into their hands when injustice and try to outweigh the desired just path. The media most of the time projects violence – which may be considered as 'white-violence' just like 'white-magic' which is considered comparatively good than 'Black-magic' – as something good and proper. Killing enemies or the ones who are wicked is portrayed as acts of feats on the hero's part and they are shown in gory details. This even though looks awful to the spectators, they tend to accept them as

proper acts, just because they start to believe that it is just and rightful. Similar to the media, literature also works to bear witness in penning down the bloody acts of violence in the white pages of the papers. For instance, the works of the Dalit writer Bama, namely, 'Karukku', 'Sangatti' and 'Vanmam' bear lots and lots of traces of violence. Many barbarous actions of violence are narrated which sometimes create a gaudy vision in the reader's eyes. Too much of murders are recorded in the narration. Details of how the upper-caste people and certain inter-class struggle lead into many riots. In those riots, how many choose the path of violence like murdering the rivalling community people is recorded in the work. In Karukku, there is an incident is narrated where certain men from the community named Chaaliyar was said to have stabbed a person from another community unnamed husband of Izhava. The incident was narrated as follows:

"Such a stout man, that Izhava's husband. Yet those Chaaliyar boys stabbed and felled him."

"It seems that the spear with which they struck his thigh pierced it right through and came out the other side."

"It seems there was blood everywhere. It seems the old boy just sank down right there." (Karukku 30)

Immediately after that the conversations were seen how the Paraya people started to seethe with so much of anger and they were incensed to avenge the death of their fellow neighbour. The men who were standing about in the street were beside themselves with fury. Maama Paralokam spoke up with a frenzied show of heroics, "What sort of low-down louts these are! It's shameful that men of their sort should come and strike down our fellows, Chi, it's a disgrace, it stinks. Never in history has it been known for a Paraya to die at the hands of a Chaaliyar." And he spat out his betel juice in a stream....

... "If you are a truly men of our caste, you'll kill ten men in place of the one they took, and garland them with their guts. It's the only way to bring down their pride." (31)

But thankfully, in the third work in the triumvirate work of her, called 'Vanmam', the author has chosen the work as her medium to propagate on her ideology, which condemns such acts of violence to fight injustice done to them. She says how killing and shedding of blood is not the ultimate weapon to win the battle against the social evils of the then society. But rather, education and empowerment alone might bring salvation. Thus, that particular ideology has become the takeaway gift by her readers. That became the antidote for the poisonous violence portrayed in the earlier pages of her works. Ideology, by itself, proves to be so powerful either to construct or destruct a society by affecting the social behaviour itself. Althusser and Foucault propagated such theories that bring into limelight the power bestowed by ideology. Althusser speaks Ideology in terms of RSA (Repressive Social Apparatuses) and ISA (Ideological State Apparatuses), whereas, Foucault does that in terms of knowledge/Power. Althusser in one hand proves how a society can be colonised and dominated by factors such as RSA and ISA. He thereby goes on to say, how a society can be influenced by altering the Ideological side of the people through literature and written statements given by the ruling authorities to the people. And such ideas

which are imposed by the authorities are in turn reinforced by repressive actions manifested by many social institutions like, Police, schools and the like. Foucault, on the other hand, argues how knowledge about something bestows enormous power that can make a person or society to control or execute authority over those who don't possess such knowledge. This is shown in instances, where, certain governing authorities or upper class exert so much of domination over the so-called low-caste people, so much so, they sometimes appear to be the gods of the subjugated ones. In Bama's Karukku, one can find how the basic ideas of the existence of this caste system work in the minds of the people which are then taught to the younger generations too. This is made possible by them by proving themselves more knowledgeable concerning the things necessary to survive in the society than the oppressed. They even go to the extent of hindering the subjugated ones to enter their realm of knowledge, so that they can reign over them from generations to generations. When Bama on questioning her grandmother on the Untouchability issues which she suffer, she was answered by her grandmother as follows:

"...These people are the maharajas who feed us our rice. Without them, how will we survive? Haven't they been upper-caste from generation to generation, and haven't we been lower-caste? Can we change this?" (17)

Such introspections were there in the minds of the people which were strongly established by the ideological influences. That is why, Bama, advocated, Dr B.R.Ambedkar's motto, "Educate! Organize! Agitate!" (Vanmam 61) too in her works. Althusser, too astoundingly proclaimed how the reality is falsely manipulated by the oppressors to the oppressed ones so that they can make use of their ignorance. Now, a question might arise here: What has the media to do with these theories discussed this while here? But the very fact is that media is a very powerful tool in the digitalised millennial age we live in. Media nowadays takes many different forms that cater to the appetite of the eyes and hearts of the people. In many ways, they bear or rather encapsulate different form of ideas within them which gets engraved in the receptive minds of the audiences which affect the thought process and behavioural process of the society. Hence, this article tries to deduct the strong belief that, the power of ideas that is contained within the very words and other communicative methods like social media that are used nowadays are highly influential. They can be used to be an effective source of constructive changes in the society. It can either break or make things in society. Projecting extreme violence can, in turn, promote the same rather than eliminating it. There are many powerful positive and white things found which can be spread by media among the people. Once the great American activist Malcolm X has rightly said that, "The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses." This can bring a nice picture of the society or a positive attitude towards it, instead of presenting only the ugliness of society. Instead of only terrorizing the public with all the evils of the society alone, media can do the favour of tinting the news with

positive attitudes that might give some hope of survival strength.

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