

The Gendered Disparity of Societal Backlash and Moral Outrage against Female Offenders in Kerala

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Abstract- This study focuses on the gendered divisions and moral outrages in society against criminals in Kerala, especially regarding how female criminals are perceived by society and the media compared to male criminals. The study utilises the qualitative comparative case study analysis on the famous cases where one can identify the gendered outrage and perception against female criminals who break the gendered norms. Grounded in the framework of double deviance theory and framing theory, this research will help one understand how the female criminals are stigmatised twice for being women and criminals and how they are framed in society. The analysis focuses on media and societal responses to the selected cases, identifying specific linguistic terms and themes used to distinguish male and female offenders, respectively. It also furthers studies how the term “Malayali Manga” or “Ideal Woman” creates a pattern of public shaming, moral judgment, and outrage. Women who are engaging in crimes are often portrayed as deviants who are breaking gendered norms or the morality of society. Through qualitative comparison analysis of such cases, news reports from Kerala will help the study to show the underlying biases in representation, like the actions of making a sensational news report over the female criminals rather than the “criminals” themselves. By comparing these reactions along the gender lines, the study will help to discover the patriarchal mindset in Kerala and how it continues to dictate the feminine values or behaviour, even within the context of the criminal justice system. Setting the findings in the position of the socio-cultural context, the study contributes to gender studies and media discourse, ultimately revealing the patriarchal norms and their influence on the people.

Key Words: Gender, Disparity, Criminals, Patriarchy, Ideal Women

I. INTRODUCTION

Crime and its delineation of society have already been shaped not only by the legal frameworks but

also by how it's deeply embedded in the social norms, cultural expectations, and moral values. In modern society, or the present-day society, people's discussions or reactions regarding the crimes are seldom neutral; they are influenced by various factors such as gender, cast, race, ethnicity, religion and media portrayal respectively. Among these factors, gender has a major role, especially regarding how an offender is prejudiced, discussed or judged by the people. This study, “The Gendered Disparity of Societal Backlash and Moral Outrage Against Female Offenders in Kerala”, discusses how the moral outrages are directed at the criminals, with a focus on female gendered criminals by comparing them with male gendered criminals.

Kerala, a state in India, is also known as “God's own Country”, a tag line coined by Walter Mendez, then creative director of an Indian marketing agency, in 1989 (Yadav,2021). It was a term introduced for marketing Kerala Tourism, which later became the epitome where every person lived harmoniously, no matter where you're from, your gender, caste or religion, it doesn't matter. Kerala is a southern state in India, which is considered one of the most literate states in India. As literacy increases, the mindset of the people changes, and it influences a person's behaviour, but as one skims through social media or media reports, one can see how gendered biases or disparities are made for the criminals, even though they just should be considered as criminals, not female or male or any other gender for that matter.

1.1 The Ideal Woman of Kerala

In the modern set of Kerala, one can see a spike in interest in others' lives, for that matter and comments on it in social media. This can also be seen in the

matter of criminal justice; public opinion for the case can also create unnecessary sensationalism for the cases, while other cases will not get any. “Malayali Manga”, otherwise known as “Ideal Malayali Women”, which technically is a patriarchal naming for women in Kerala. In this tag, the female is considered to be waiting at home in tradition saree with a flower on her hair, welcoming her husband with a warm smile and thus keeping the serenity in the house. So, if one breaks this gender norm, it can result in moral outrage, which results in calling names. But is it the same for every gender?

In this study, the researcher has taken six cases regarding the gendered backlash and moral outrage for each male and female criminal. By the end of the study, one can understand how the gender disparity and selective moral outrage can create and influence people enough to tag a person by gender. The cases included in this research are: firstly, the Sharon murder case, where Greeshma, the convicted criminal, poisoned her boyfriend, for which she was sentenced to the death penalty. Secondly, the Koodathai serial killing case, where Jolly Joseph, a housewife, killed the whole family through cyanide poisoning. Thirdly, the Simja Mustafa case, where the lady Shimja took a video of a man named Deepak as evidence by accusing him of standing too close and harassing her, which resulted in his suicide. These cases are all related to the female criminals and their crimes. Now focusing on the crimes committed by the males, including: Firstly, the Savad Sha case (2023), where Savad, a daily traveller in a KSRTC bus, was accused of flashing and masturbating in front of the travellers, thus mainly harassing the female passengers. The video was taken by an actress and was posted online. Second case, Ripper Jayanandhan, a famous serial killer in Kerala who is widely known for killing people near Thrissur and Ernakulam district, is accused of killing women who are mostly alone in their houses. Lastly, the Sooraj S Kumar case, where the husband Sooraj kills his wife Uthara through snake-bite poisoning.

Grasping these complex relationships is essential, especially given the fast-changing media world. Because digital platforms constantly influence public opinion and help form social norms, the manner in

which crime is talked about and understood can greatly affect issues of justice, equality, and social cohesion. Biased portrayals risk deepening stereotypes, sustaining discrimination, and undermining the fundamental democratic values of fairness and objectivity. Hence, gender-focused investigations of outcries over moral issues serve not simply as academic explorations but also as ways to nurture more inclusive and fair public conversations.

What is more, this research is a part of the wider gender studies and media research fields, as it demonstrates the link between crime, gender, and communication. Although the study of media portrayal of crime has been an active area of research, only a few works have zeroed in on gendered aspects of public outrage with reference to Kerala. By filling this gap, this study sheds light on how the local cultural environment can influence global media trends, ultimately affecting the public's view of crime.

By combining all these cases together, this research will help one to understand how the words are used to describe each gender. This research is mainly focusing on the qualitative comparison analysis, where the researcher will compare and analyse the cases taken with the objective of proving how society views and gives reactions to each gender. The objectives included in this research are: Firstly, to compare the intensity and nature of moral outrage directed at women versus men involved in similar criminal activities. Secondly, to determine how societal perceptions of "feminine nature" influence the degree of public shaming and dehumanisation of women involved in crime. Lastly, to investigate the linguistic and thematic differences in how media and public discourse frame the motives of female versus male criminals in Kerala.

1.2 The Gendered Lens of Deviancy

This study examines the wide difference in the perception and punishment of male and female offenders by the Keralite society. Male criminal acts are generally explained by factors like social and economic difficulties, entanglement in political rivalries, or abnormal individual behaviour. On the other hand, female crimes elicit a peculiar type of "gendered moral outrage." It is this paper's position

that women criminals in Kerala are subjected to a "double deviancy": the first judgment is against them for the illegal act, and the second one is for their bringing disrepute to the highly worshipped female norms. Hence, the study aims at identifying how women in the media and the public discourse are "framed" as embodiments of moral decay, whereas men in similar circumstances are condemned in a more unemotional, less individualised manner.

To explore this issue, the article adopts two main theoretical perspectives. At first, framing theory is the tool to unravel the way media organisations and social institutions highlight certain parts of a criminal case while downplaying others. When it comes to Kerala, the media portrayal of women offenders generally revolves around their family background, their relationships as mothers and wives, and even their looks, rather than the actual details of the crimes they have been charged with.

Moreover, Double Deviancy Theory acts as a main support to explain the public outrage. As per this model, a female offender is regarded as having "fallen" twice. Given that women are conventionally associated with being the "nicer" sex and the keepers of the home, their involvement in crime is considered a total upheaval of their nature. In Kerala, where the "Malayali Manga" (the good Kerala woman) is a very strong cultural symbol, the woman perpetrator turns into a "folk devil" as a result of a moral panic that extends beyond the courtroom.

The differential gender bias in societal backlash and moral condemnation of criminals in Kerala is a mirror of the larger inequalities and prejudices that are a feature of the world today. Double Deviancy Theory and Framing Theory offer ways to look at how gender norms shape changes socially and legally in the identification and treatment of criminals. The ongoing societal position given to male and female offenders is influenced by narratives in the media and public discourse. The study is just a starting point for a conversation about the increase in gender-aware and fair crime policies and practices.

Through public reactions to criminal cases, the society's attitudes and prejudices that might not be reflected in the official records become visible. One

of the issues with women offenders in Kerala is that they are often victimised by cyberbullying, defamation, and moral policing. Also, the main focus of the discussion is on their personal lives, looks, and morals rather than the details of the crime. These types of reactions not only show the discrimination against women, but also the culture of blaming and hating women that is widespread. At the same time, compared to female offenders, male offenders tend to draw less personal attention, and the discussion mainly revolves around the legal side of the case.

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1.3 Significance

This research comes at a time when several high-profile crime cases in Kerala have been continuously featured in the news for a long time. Utilising qualitative methods and case study comparisons, this

paper intends to analyse the stories presented to the public about these infamous people. It does not stop at the "what" of the crime but also explores the "how" of the social reaction. The value of this research is not only in revealing the deep-rooted patriarchal fears of a "progressive" state, but it also provides an analysis of how the gender-based portrayal can affect a person's right to a fair trial, not only legally but also in terms of public perception.

Besides the above, this research is expected to greatly contribute to the development of policy and practice as well. Media organisations, journalists, and content creators are instrumental in shaping public opinion, and a thorough understanding of gender bias issues can lead to fairer and more responsible reporting. Likewise, projects designed to enhance digital literacy and promote ethical use of the internet can be extremely effective in combating the harmful consequences of online public shaming and harassment. By unveiling the influence of gender on community reactions to crime, this research advocates for a more analytical and introspective standpoint in both the consumption and creation of media content.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Yadav, S. (2021, August 26). Brand saga: Kerala tourism – Exploring God's own country through the lens of advertising. Social Samosa. The development of Kerala Tourism's advertising strategy indicates a coherent and developing strategy towards place branding and tourism marketing. As noted by Social Samosa, Kerala tourism's marketing was such that initially the promotion was not visible, but all efforts culminated in the image of the state reaching as far as the globe due to a systematic and strategic communication strategy (Yadav, 2021). One of the most important landmarks in Kerala's branding was the deployment of the tagline, 'God's Own Country', which played a significant role in constructing Kerala's identity and packaging it in its advertising.

2. Zaklama, S. (2025). Exploring the foundations of media framing theory. *European Modern Studies Journal*, 9(1), 75–89. Zaklama (2025). Zaklama (2025) offers a thorough historical and theoretical overview of media framing theory, from its origins in

Erving Goffman's concept of frame analysis through its modern-day applications. The study highlights that framing should not be understood only as a conveying of information but as the active construction of attention to some aspects of reality and the exclusion of others. Such representation of reality serves a key function in the construction of audiences' understandings of social, political, and cultural constructs.

3. Mass Communication Theory. (n.d.). Framing theory. *MassCommTheory*. According to the Mass Communication Theory (n.d.), Framing theory suggests that the structure of a new story affects how the audience sees it. When an event is framed in how the media presents it, it highlights certain details and disregards others, therefore determining the viewers' perception. This is considered an extension to the agenda-setting theory, since it addresses how the audience is directed to consider certain issues and not what they think about them. What is claimed in the theory is that framing is an integral part of communication, which happens at the media level and in daily communications between human beings.

4. Editors. (2025, November 29). Double deviance theory: Unpacking the intricate layers of social stigma and criminal justice. *Svastlexis*. The Double Deviance Theory is often discussed in feminist criminology as it illustrates the way the system perceives gender when dealing with criminal acts. According to this theory, people are convicted for their actions against the law, but also for acting irregularly with respect to socially defined gender roles. Women suffer from double deviation; they are convicted as criminals and as untraditional women. The critique from the literature is that deviance is not just the definition of the criminal act itself, but it is a social construction, which can change throughout different societies, cultures and time periods.

5. Mulvihill, N. (2020, June 27). Lady Macbeth and double deviance. *Criminology Tales*. As previously mentioned, a good example of how the notion of double deviance has been proven to be a very useful one for explaining the way society treats deviant women has been made by Niamh Mulvihill (2020) in her study of female deviance through literature. In

this work, she examines how female deviance is seen not only to infringe areas of society which are subject to the law or moral codes, but also for women to transgress socially defined gender roles. Using the character Lady Macbeth from Macbeth, she provides a literary basis to the concept of double deviance.

6.Prem, P. B. (2025, January 20). Kerala court sentences Greeshma to the death penalty in the Sharon Raj murder case. This is a rather interesting and powerful example often cited today to investigate gender and crime, and also from a victimology perspective and investigation of how society and the legal system respond to the situation. The recent legal case(20 th September 2007) details the murder of 23-year-old Sharon Raj was poisoned by his wife, Greeshma, using her own herbal mixture, is using pesticides. This resulted in instigated a coma, which ended in multiple organ failure.

7.Cris. (2021, October 13). Kerala snakebite murder: Husband Sooraj sentenced to life for Uthra's killing. The News Minute. This news report on the case of Thutha Uthra has a lot to tell us about the reality of planning for and the severity of intentional crimes against people in intimate relationships. From the article, we can see that this crime was not committed on impulse but over a period of time, with the culprit, Sooraj, 's attempt on 17 July being the culmination of several previous efforts to kill his wife with a potentially fatal snake. This shows a careful and considered deliberateness on the part of the (nominal, as the people involved were not married but still living together) perpetrators, a high degree of manipulation and a prolonged swaying over the victim, and thus shows the use of a whole host of manipulative, methodical and cunning tactics that can characterise intentional crimes

2.1 Research Gap

Crime, gender, and media have long been a focus of research, leading to a rich theoretical and empirical understanding of deviants' social constructions and interpretations. Besides, social media-related studies have uncovered the fact that these platforms escalate people's responses, which often end up in hasty moral

judgments. Nevertheless, a large segment of the current knowledge has not yet been tapped by this research.

Firstly, the bulk of previous studies is either conceptual or Western-oriented, largely neglecting local socio-cultural milieus such as Kerala. Secondly, very little research actually compares societal reactions - especially moral outrage and backlash - to male and female offenders within the same culture and media environment. Even though some earlier studies point out gender bias in general terms, in most cases they do not analyse systematically how different genders committing essentially the same crime lead to different levels of public anger, sympathy or condemnation. This results in a gap in knowledge about the degree and characteristics of gender-based differences in societal judgment.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Qualitative Analysis

The study is undertaken to investigate the societal differences in gendered backlash and moral outrage against criminals in Kerala using a qualitative research design. Since the study is exploratory and mainly concerned with perception, discourse, and representation, the qualitative method is the best way to get the depth, complexity, and quite detailed public reactions. Double Deviancy Theory and Framing Theory are the theoretical underpinnings of the study, and they not only help in choosing the cases but also in the process of analysis.

To compare the impact of gender on crime perception, the study focuses on six crime cases from Kerala, three involving female offenders and the other three involving male offenders. The main reason for picking an equal number of cases across genders is to enable a balanced comparison of how similar types of crimes are perceived and discussed in public and media discourse. Using the case study method, it is possible to do a very detailed study of each case in its socio-cultural and media context and at the same time to do comparative case analysis, which helps identify major patterns.

3.2 Case Selection

This research paper features six case studies sourced from criminal courts, which were equally divided into two groups based on the gender of the defendants:

3.2.1 Cases of female offenders:

1. Greeshma was sentenced to death for poisoning her boyfriend in the Sharon murder case.
2. Jolly Joseph of the Koodathai serial killing case. Jolly Joseph was accused of killing several family members through the use of cyanide.
3. In the Simja Mustafa case, Shimja accused a man named Deepak of harassment by recording a video, which later led to his suicide.

3.2.2 Cases of male offenders:

1. Savad Sha case (2023), where the accused was caught on a KSRTC bus for public sexual misconduct, allegedly harassing female passengers.
2. Ripper Jayanandhan case, the serial killer has been responsible for the killing of women in Thrissur and Ernakulam districts.
3. The Sooraj S. Kumar case convict husband was sentenced to death by the method of venomous snake, not for the killing of the accused's wife.

This research is derived entirely from data that is available to the public, and doesn't comprise of any form of direct interaction with the participants. However, ethical issues are still a major concern. The paper neither glamorises the crimes in question nor perpetuates the stereotypical portrayals of the offenders. There is also a great deal of caution exercised during the examination of the comments that have been made publicly in order not to reveal private details or to single individuals out. The main attention is on overall patterns of discourse rather than individual thoughts.

3.3 Theoretical Framework: Double Deviancy Theory and Framing Theory

One needs a deeply rooted theoretical basis to understand the gendered difference in social reaction and moral outrage to offenders, a basis that can explain how the creation and dissemination of social

norms, expectations, and perceptions lead to the formation of public opinion. This paper is largely grounded on two main theoretical outlooks: Double Deviancy Theory and Framing Theory. These two sets of ideas, when combined, serve as a powerful instrument to understand the role of gender in determining the criminal behaviour judgment, as well as the media and public portrayal of crime.

Double Deviancy Theory is a criminology concept which interprets why female offenders are frequently penalised more severely than their male peers. The theory states that female offenders are treated differently and harshly by the criminal justice system, just because they violate both legal and gender norms. It was coined by a British Feminist, sociologist and criminologist named Francis Heidensohn, and she introduced it in her 1968 paper "The deviance of women: a critique and an enquiry". The theory highlights the fact that female criminals are seen as breaking not only one, but two sets of norms: one set of legal norms and one set of gender norms. Obviously, anyone who commits crimes is going to be punished, but society also tends to label women as deviant when they do not conform to the socially constructed "feminine" role.

Women have been traditionally expected to personify traits like care, nurturing, emotional sensitivity and moral integrity. These expectations are ingrained in patriarchal social arrangements where women are usually regarded as caregivers, mothers, and moral pillars of their families. A female offender, especially one who commits a serious or violent crime, will not only be seen as disrupting the legal system but also as challenging these deeply held gender norms. Therefore, such a woman's deeds will often be regarded as more disturbing, less natural, and morally more reprehensible when compared to similar male behaviours.

3.3.2 Framing Theory

Framing Theory, which originates from communication and media studies, focuses on how the method of presenting information affects the way people perceive it. The concept of Framing theory was introduced by Erving Goffman's (1974) work on frame analysis in sociology, which states how people

organise and make sense of the world (Riza, 2025). Later, this theory was further elevated and argued by Robert Entman (1993), who stated that it not only organises but also puts concepts or reality into a frame which is to be altered and hung for the people to see and receive a particular promoted perception by certain groups. The framing theory can also be considered as the closer relative of the agenda-setting theory (Riza, 2025). In line with this theory, media do not just convey events as straightforward facts; rather, they actively create stories by picking certain elements of real life and highlighting particular points of view. Such "frames" govern how people learn about, understand, and react to events, even crimes.

When you start with the framing theory and start analysing cases, one can see how agenda-setting theory can also be implemented because of the portrayal of female accused or criminals. Cases of female offenders, evidently, are a few, but are made to appear more frequent as these are carefully selected and may be questioned as prompted by media availability and desirability of depicting women victims within the theme of womanhood and suffering.

IV. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

This part of the study presents the results of the comparative analysis of six selected criminal cases from Kerala to examine the gender gap in societal backlash and moral outrage. The focus is on three cases of female offenders and three cases of male offenders that have received sufficient media exposure and public involvement. By thoroughly investigating the media and public discourse in these cases, this part seeks to determine whether gender determines the level, type, and direction of societal reactions.

4.1 The Condemned Feminine

4.1.1 Case 1: Sharon Raj Murder Case



Fig 1 (Source: Manorama Online)

Accused: Greeshma Verdict: Death Sentence

A 23-year-old resident of the capital district, Thiruvananthapuram Sharon Raj, was a final-year BSc Radiology student who was murdered by Greeshma, a literature student who was then his girlfriend. According to the prosecution, tension in their relationship started when the family members of Greeshma started to find another individual for her to marry (Prem, 2025). The court has established that it was done through deliberate poisoning. Greeshma firstly gave poison mixed with an herbal tonic called "Kashayam", but that plan later dropped because the victim, Sharon, complained about it being bitter. Later, she succeeded by mixing herbicide with mango juice, thus resulting in the multiple organ failure of the victim. The family of the victim contacted Greeshma to understand what she had given to the victim, but she refused to tell the name for fear that he would be alive, which resulted in Sharon being in the ICU for one whole week with the pain like internal burning, according to the doctor who treated him.

Thus, with a large amount of evidence, which includes WhatsApp messages and Google searches on how to poison and family backing, (Sessions Court, 2023, p. 10). Greeshma was convicted under several provisions of the IPC, including Sections 364 (kidnapping or abducting with intent to murder), 328 (causing hurt by poison), 302 (punishment for murder), and 201 (causing disappearance of evidence) and thus calling it a "rarest of rare case" which resulted in a death sentence (Prem,2025).

4.1.2 Case II: Koodathai serial killing



Fig 2 (Source – Mathrubhumi English)

Accused: Jolly Joseph

Verdict: Ongoing

The Koodathai serial killing is one of the most haunting criminal cases one can find in Kerala, which involves the accused Jolly Joseph, a resident of Koodathai, who is accused of murdering the six members of the family over the span of 14 years (2002-2016). According to the investigation reports, one can see how the incidents that happened over 14 years and how they died are shown inherently, like heart attack and other illnesses (CNN, 2019). But due to the death of family members in these years with similar circumstances, aroused the suspicion, which resulted in the investigation. It was also later discovered that Jolly was living in the family with a false identity, where she is a professor at the National Institute of Technology, Calicut. The murders were planned and done very carefully and methodically. Sometimes, several years elapsed between one killing and another to reduce the risk of being caught. Besides, every murder was cleverly disguised as a case of natural death or accident. This was the reason why she managed to get away with it for an extended period of time without being detected (CNN, 2019). This case has gained attention both nationally and internationally because it's a rare occurrence where one can see a female serial killer.

4.1.3 Case III: Simjitha Mustafa/Deepak case



Fig 3 (Source: NewsX)

Accused: Simja Mustafa Verdict: 10 years imprisonment

Recently, in January, at the beginning of the year, Shimjitha Mustafa, a social media influencer, accused Deepak of sexual harassment while travelling in the KSRTC in Kannur. She posted a

video which shows him being near her side, and later, due to the high visibility of the post and cyberbullying, the man accused of sexual harassment, Deepak, committed suicide on January 18, 2026. After Deepak's death, a case was filed against Shimjitha under the abetment to suicide, Section 108 BNS (Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita), firstly by the Kozhikode Medical College Police, where later the family filed a complaint. Later, she was arrested and kept under judicial custody for 19-21 days, where, for the first trial, she was denied bail, but later, on February 11, she was released with a 50,000 fine (The Hindu, 2026).

4.2 Crime of a Man

4.2.1 Case 1: Savad Shah Case



Fig 4 (Source: News 18)

Accused: Savad Shah Verdict: Ongoing

In May 2023, Savad Shah was accused of masturbating on the bus while commuting from Angamaly. He was arrested after the vlogger had put up the alleged recorded video of him on social media and raised concerns over women's safety. Later, he was granted bail and welcomed by AKMA (All Kerala Men Association). But again in 2025, he was arrested for alleged molestation of a woman in a KSRTC bus, which was commuting from Thrissur to Malappuram. Later, he was produced in the court and was remanded for 14 days of judicial custody.

4.2.2 Case II: Ripper Jayanandan Case



Fig 5 (Asianet Newsable)

Accused: K.P Jayanandan Verdict: Life Imprisonment

K P Jayanandan, also known as “Ripper Jayandan”, was a convicted serial killer for his 8 murders and 35+ robberies from 2003 - 2006. He was named Ripper due to his violent actions by the police. Jayanandan committed his first serious crime in September 2003, when he broke into the house of 45-year-old Jose, within the Mala police station area. During the robbery, he hit Jose on the head with a crowbar while he was sleeping and left him for dead. Getting away, Jayanandan stole Rs 17,000 and a video cassette player. In March 2004, he performed yet another violent burglary in the same locality, where he killed 51-year-old Nabeesa after she woke up in response to suspicious noises. Jayanandan also took the lives of two other women, Fousiya and Noorjahan, as well as two children in the same household. In October 2004, he targeted a couple, Nirmala and Sahadevan, at their home in Puthenvelikara. He murdered Nirmala and left Sahadevan with serious injuries, after which he fled. He also stole gold ornaments in this crime

(Murderpedia). He was later arrested on September 13, 2013, near Thrissur, following a jailbreak in Pujappura Central Jail in June 2013.

4.2.3 Case 111: Sooraj Kumar case (Kerala Snakebite Murder)



Fig 6 (Source: BBC)

Accused: Sooraj S. Kumar case

Verdict: 17 years imprisonment, 2 consecutive life sentences, 5 Lakhs penalty

The convicted Sooraj was accused of murdering his own wife, Uthara, through a bite of live cobra venom. Before that, she had gotten a mysterious snake bite from a Russell's viper, which had put Uthara in the hospital for 52 days and required three painful surgeries. Later, while she was resting in her house, her husband, Sooraj, came with a container that had a live cobra. He gave Uthara a juice laced with a sedative and let the five-foot-long cobra loose on her while she was sedated on the bed. (BBC, 2021) Later, Uthara died due to respiratory failure and due to suspicious behaviour of Sooraj, the parents filed a complaint, which led to an investigation where they found the truth that even the Russell's viper was also a preplanned attempt of murder, which Sooraj bought from the snake catcher named Suresh. With large amounts of evidence found in the car, like the presence of sedative items, call history and Google history directed towards Sooraj.

4.3 Findings & Comparison

“Aval Kashayam thannu chadichu” means she deceived him by giving him the Ayurvedic concoction laced with poison. This was a headline for the shorts of a news channel; from this, we can understand how the character of Greeshma has more

importance than the crime itself. Greeshma was convicted of the murder of her boyfriend. Here, even the audience and media are mostly focusing on the moral and social responsibility that she has broken, as well as how much of a failure in being an ideal woman.

In the case of Koodathai Serial Killing, when the media understood her life from the neighbours and friends, they decided to sensationalise how a mother, a wife, a woman can commit a heinous crime. Thus, resulting in the breaking of the ideal woman character. Here, again, rather than focusing on the crime, people are more focused on her gender and roles. In the case of the Shimjitha/Deepak Case, before even the members of the family could file a complaint, the Kozhikode Medical College Police had filed a case on behalf of Deepak. In the history of Kerala, one can see it's a rare area where the police file a complaint, and one would never see this in any other cases.

By combining these cases along with the double deviance theory and framing theory, one can understand how the female is framed by the media and audience as a larger-than-life criminal, where "she" is breaking the peace. Double deviance theory

shows how a female is judged as both female and her sociocultural responsibility in the image below, one can see how a man is wearing cardboard as a form of protest against Shimjitha. But one can question themselves and ask if it's the first time and which gendered had it most.



Fig 7 (Source: Spicy Fule, Instagram)

Female Offenders

Case	Public/Media Labelling	Deviance Theory	Framing Theory
Sharon Raj Murder Case	Poison Queen, Cruel Woman, CEO of Deception, Kashyam Greeshma, Kalan of Sharon	More than seeing her as a criminal, the media and public mostly focused on the area where she is a girlfriend and young woman. The public portrayed her as the betrayal of the ideal woman.	Rather than focusing on crime, the media mostly focused on sensationalising the term "girlfriend", which resulted in a public social media trial.
Koodathai Serial Killing	Cyanide Jolly, Cyanide Killer, Lady Serial Killer, Monster Mother, Psychopath Housewife	Jolly received a major backlash just because she went against the social norm as a caregiver, wife, mother, and religious woman. The public anger intensifies over how a woman and a mother can commit a serious crime.	Here, the media as an information messenger, they portrayed her earlier life, how she behaves and how she became now. They also emphasise how she was a deceiver who was hiding behind the idea of the ideal woman.

Shimjitha Musthafa/ Deepak Case	Fake Feminist, Attention Seeker, Kalankini	She was portrayed as a manipulative and immoral woman, which also extended towards her womanhood and personality.	The media portrayed her as a “fake feminist.” And how she misused the digital media and feminism, rather than focusing on the crime she committed. Thus, resulting in the focus on social media, digital, feminism, and women rather than the crime itself
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Table 1 Male Offenders

Case	Public/Media Labelling	Double Deviance Theory	Framing Theory
Savad Shah Case	Pervert, KSRTC Pervert	In this case, one can see how the Savad was judged based on his morality or how good a son he is, but just based on the crime he has committed.	The media and people perceived him as a pervert who can see every day, rather than the importance of the crime and public safety. The media never focused on his social responsibility or his morality.
Ripper Jayandan Case	Serial Killer, Ripper	Despite the cruelty of His murder, no one questioned him for the failure of not Following his social responsibility, even Though he attacked elderly people, who tend to be vulnerable.	Here, the surprising part is that the media showed the crimes, patterns, counts, jail break, but nothing made him accountable as a man who failed, but just enhanced the fear & crime.

Snakebite Murder- Sooraj Kumar Case	Snakebite Murder Accused, Cold-blooded murder	Here again, one can see that rather than a husband attacking a wife, where a husband should protect, it is shown how he committed a crime, thus just receiving backlash only for the crime he committed, not being a failure of norms.	As above the median and audience mostly focused on the crime and evidence rather than showing the morality or social responsibility of a person.
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Table 2

By comparing these 3 cases of male offenders, one can see no one points out the moral and social responsibility men are breaking, just showing the crimes and how it happened, along with fuelling fear among the citizens, for example, Ripper Jayandan. In the case of Savad Shah, no one questioned him for his character and public harassment, but made it out as funny news, where later one can see how AKMA has received Savad Shah with a garland by saying that this is men's right and they will protect him (Rahul Eeshwar). This happened 2 years before the Deepak case, yet no one questioned him even after getting caught in 2025. Every pointed finger against Greeshma for killing her boyfriend and Jolly for her family, yet no one raised a moral question against Sooraj, husband of Uthara, who had a speech impairment, were in the world; are men considered to be the guardians of women, thus proving patriarchal influence.

V. CONCLUSION

“The treatment of women in crime and justice reflects wider gender inequalities in society.”

- Carol Smart (Women, Crime and Criminology, 1977)

In this study, “The Gendered Disparity of Societal Backlash and Moral Outrage against Female Offenders in Kerala”, one can now understand the gendered disparity and moral backlash in crime and the gender of criminals. This was done through the method of qualitative analysis of six high and low-profile cases involving both female and male offenders. By analysing public judgement, media narratives and societal reaction through the lens of double deviance theory and framing theory, the research identifies the significant difference seen in how both male and female offenders are perceived, received, represented and judged.

The findings of the research reveal that female offenders are subjected to more intense and personalised reactions for the crime compared to the male offenders who have committed similar offences or even bigger ones. While the male offenders are looked at mainly through the crime they committed, and through the framing of the power narrative of their gender. And after the crime they have committed, they are soon forgotten with great leniency, while for the female offenders, they are judged twice, as a woman and as a criminal. “Double damned” or “Double Devinat” that will be how “she” will be framed, rather than a crime just because she deviated from the ideology of being an “Ideal

Malayali Woman” With AKMA (All Kerala Men’s Association) supporting an accuser who was arrested for misconduct in public, rather than focusing on the crime, but advertising that he is an innocent man, even though there was video proof, and later welcoming him with a garland because he was bailed. But did that stop the accuser? No, he was again caught after 2 years with the same charge. This was an incident that happened on a bus. Did that stop women from travelling through public transport?

transportation? Similarly, after 2 years, a woman named Shimjitha was falsely accused of sexual harassment, which resulted in the death of a man, Deepak, by suicide, and in this case, Shimjitha was targeted by the whole of Kerala, especially saying that ‘this is why you shouldn’t educate a woman’, essentially targeting her character, while no one ever targeted Savad on that basis of his character or morality. Through these examples, one can understand how much media framing can also affect the minds of citizens, along with the help of patriarchal norms.

This research stresses how to focus on gender sensitivity and media framing of the crime rather than the whole character and gender itself. Media institutions, digital media, and society at large should understand how the portrayal of a gender can create further, deeper stereotypes in society, which can result in slogans such as “we don’t need feminism”. People should focus less on the ideal woman because no one is ideal, and every person or gender can commit a crime, and crime has no gender.

5.1 Limitations

One of the limitations in the methodology is its reliance on secondary data. This means that the research is entirely dependent on the availability and quality of the existing materials. Media reports, as well as social media content, have their own biases that can affect the results. Besides, choosing only six cases reduces the extent to which the findings can be applied to the general population.

Another drawback is that social media discourse may only represent a part of the views of the population since it is influenced by factors like digital access, platform algorithms, and user engagement patterns.

Nevertheless, the qualitative approach allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the essence of gendered perceptions and how society reacts to them.

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