Chapter 5

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings

The backward socio-economic conditions in the Telangana region, apathetic and sometimes biased administrative response, feudal agrarian structure, Vetti system, the militant history of the people which got ignited after the Naxalbari revolt in West Bengal have all contributed to the growth and sustenance of the Naxal conflict. Inherent in the ideology of the movement is the element of violence. The Naxal conflict is multidimensional - socio-economic, political as it has political objectives and having to do with human rights. The State is drawn into the vortex of the Naxalite movement as it acts to undermine/weaken the State with the ultimate objective goal of overthrowing it. The State response has been coercive and inconsistent.

5.1.1 News -- Rhetorical Traditions

The qualitative content analysis of the coverage of Naxalite related news stories and editorials in select newspapers reveals the following.

A) Information Tradition:
All the newspapers had most of their news stories in the information tradition relating to Naxalites and the Government. News stories on Naxalites in the information tradition included call for bandhs/boycott of polls, PWG warning police informers, their relative strengths-Parallel government in guerrilla zones, inner party activities and the like. Such news stories were displayed prominently. *Deccan Chronicle* published such calls for State/City bandh or poll boycott prominently while it underplayed them when it was to be in the districts. *Eenadu* coverage was not very different except that it had few reports on Naxalites’ ‘warnings’.

**B) Sensationalist tradition**

The news stories on Naxalite violence were in the sensationalist tradition. Violence, was the primary subject of the news stories covered in both the newspapers. The coverage, however, followed a different pattern with regard to Naxalite violence and the actions of the State.

**C) Feature Story Tradition**

Occasionally, *Deccan Chronicle* and *The Hindu* carried reports in the feature story tradition when a top PWG leader was arrested, released or surrendered. Stories were on historic incidents in the movement, interviews of top Naxal leaders, experiences of kidnapped personnel and the journalists who had gone to cover Press conferences.
D) Didactic Tradition:

- The newspapers had news reports in the didactic tradition on the Naxals and the Government. News reports on the tactics of the authorities included the agreements reached between the various State Governments to have a joint command, setting up of the Greyhounds—a police outfit to combat Naxalites, helicopters pressed into service, on combing operations, police propaganda to wean people away from the Naxalites, offer of conditional talks with the Naxalites, etc.

News reports in the three newspapers followed the four traditions with the sensationalist tradition dominating.

- News reports on encounters did not follow the sensationalist tradition and were in the inside pages as single or double column news stories, sometimes along with photographs. The news reports were in a stereotyped format.

- News reports heavily quoted authority sources—such as authorities (Director General of Police, Superintendent of police, District Collector, Circle or Sub Inspector concerned).

- The newspapers labeled the Naxalites as ‘extremists’ ‘terrorists’ ‘militants, radicals’, ‘misguided, frustrated youth,’ ‘criminals’, ‘assailants’, ‘desperadoes’ and words to the effect describing them as ‘anti-social elements.’ Similarly their acts of violence were described as ‘hijacking’, ‘kidnapping’ and ‘abduction’
News stories on surrender of Naxalites in the presence of and laying down of arms received prominent display along with the photographs on the front pages. These news stories carried extensive details of the compensation and rehabilitation package and damaging details on Naxal movement. There were scarcely any news reports where the reporter filed stories after an interface with the surrendered Naxalite(s).

The nature of follow up news stories published can be grouped as 1) Follow up to the movement as a whole and 2) Follow up to violent incidents. The coverage in the newspapers fails to capture the positive 'social effects' of the movement. There was seldom any follow up report on encounter killings except when it involved a top Naxalite leader or killing of over five to six Naxalites. Such coverage was a sequel to widespread condemnation from different quarters. However, the killing of police officials were covered mostly on the front pages above the fold, along with a series of follow up reports on the personality, his positive side laced with element of pathos.

5.1.2 Editorials

Editorials were mainly reactions to Naxalite violence and the decisions/approach of the State on specific occasions. The editorials were equally critical of the Government's policy and also of Naxal violence. The editorials dilated on the causes for Naxal conflict and suggested to the warring groups and the people to meet the Naxalite challenge.

The editorials suggested conflicting steps to deal with the Naxalite problem. On one hand they mentioned that it is imperative to get to the root of the
problem, on the other hand they also favoured that the Government should deal with it as a law and order problem.

➢ The headlines of the editorials indicate that the editorials were written in reaction to some major offensive by the Naxalites. The headline vocabulary the anti-Naxal tone. Also the phraseology /words and expressions echoed the anti-Naxal stance.

➢ The editorials/edit articles and analytical reports made passing comments the causes for the continuance of the Naxalite movement. The three newspapers failed to provide more than cursory attention to the reasons for the continuance of the Naxal conflict.

5.1.3 Edit Articles and Analytical Reports

➢ The edit articles and analytical reports that appeared in the Open page of The Hindu had background material to provide a context to the comments and the analysis. They were informative and educate the readers of the implications of the Government's stance and that of the Naxalites. The edit articles were balanced and were critical of the Government for its inconsistent policy and very harsh against the Naxalites for their violent ways.

➢ The news story on the kidnapping of the Legislator and the headlines had dramatistic elements. Likewise the killing of DIG Vyas in the centre of the City as reported in Deccan Chronicle had projected the victim as a Hero and had suggestions of a myth. Vyas was projected as a sacrificed hero- became a self in the pages of Deccan Chronicle.
In summary, the news coverage of Naxalite activities and those of the Government fall into the four Rhetorical traditions and some news stories, especially the ones related to violence by Naxals, have elements of the Pentad of drama. Also, the coverage of select news stories on victims, especially if they are from the upper rungs of the police administration create a halo around the individual

5.2 Constraints on the Press--Organisational and Individual

➢ The Naxalite groups are in constant interface with the Press to get themselves projected in favourable light. They manipulate, cajole and even intimidate the Press to win favourable publicity. The Naxalite cadres and supporters operate through legal platforms like the civil liberties groups, writers' associations and cultural wings. They communicate the overall Left Wing position on various socio-political issues to the people through open and mass activity. The Press invariably reports them and quite often gives wide publicity.

➢ The conflict between the Press and the Naxalites originates when the Naxalites are projected negatively. The normal reaction of the Naxalites in such situations is to indirectly hint, threaten which is done in a discrete manner. There have been instances of Naxalites threatening and even killing journalists who do not listen to their diktats at the grass roots level, especially in the Naxal infested areas. Due to the prevailing gun culture journalists live in a fear psychosis and do not wish to voluntarily incur the wrath of the trigger happy Naxalites. Of late journalists are under pressure to reveal their sources of information, especially from the police personnel and there has been a case involving the court.
Local newsmen are sources of information for the police and the Naxals. Police attempts to utilise journalists and their daily coverage of events to know about the developments in the organisation and movements of the Naxalites. Similarly, Naxalites utilise journalists to know about the movements of the police. This situation is responsible for journalists to be caught in the police-Naxal crossfire and some have even lost their lives.

The Naxal method of action imposes a serious handicap to the journalists. The hit and run tactics employed by Naxalites have successfully employed precludes first hand reporting. Moreover, Naxal leaders and cadre members remain inaccessible to journalists seeking to cover activities/events. As a result journalists planning stories depend on those who have severed links with the party.

Owing to the complex and strenuous nature of Press operations while reporting this kind of phenomenon, there is ample scope for distortion, misinformation and disinformation. Misreporting is due to lack of any adequate mechanism where information can be verified. Some stringers specialise in filing baseless reports and create news out of nothing.

Journalists are sandwiched between the police and the Naxals while discharging their duties. Sometimes police object and prevent journalists from reporting especially when the reports are adverse towards them.

The professional journalists' links with the PWG is rather complicated because PWG is a banned organisation openly advocating the overthrow of the Government and so any contacts with it have been construed as abetment of
extremists and disruptive activities and have attracted the penal provisions of TADA.

➤ Reporting any police activity, be it repression or police excesses etc, would mean earning the wrath of the Naxals. Naxals openly write letters to journalists castigating their 'silent spectator's role and reminding them of their professional obligations to the society during severe repression. On the other hand, reporting conclaves, praja courts or any Naxal related activity would also land journalists in trouble.

➤ Two or three stories in succession either on the police or the Naxals would lead to the reporters' being branded as 'Naxal sympathiser' or as 'police informer' by the Naxals.

➤ Journalists are exploited by the police and the Naxals when need arises and later they are suspected to be either close to the police or to the Naxals. This has led to a situation wherein reporters live in a fear psychosis and just write a few developments. Earlier, it was the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act but now it is oral threats from the police, which has forced many a journalist to write only the violent side of Naxalites. Police adopts a need based policy seeking publicity through newspapers.

➤ Both the warring parties, the police and the Naxals are at times friendly with the reporters.

➤ Journalists find themselves in a quandary when at times dalam leaders make statements and later retract or even deny
All the newspaper managements have an unwritten policy for their staffers on how to cover Naxalite activities. This unwritten policy is to highlight the negative aspects, violence and the sensational side and such information which could be of help to the State.

There are instances where Naxalites have infiltrated the Press and vice versa.

The police-Press relations especially in the Naxal infested areas is very tenuous as the police have a strong sense of alienation, even of persecution and undue insensitivity.

A number of cases have come up before the Andhra Pradesh Union of Working Journalists regarding arrests and foisting of false cases on journalists on the grounds that reporters had links with the Naxalites.

The rules of the jail manuals are rigid and prevented journalists from interviewing the under trial Naxals. The general refrain among them is that the procedure to gain access to interview undertrials is cumbersome as officials are unwilling to take any responsibility.

5.3 Police Opinions on Coverage

Journalists and newspapers prefer to give wide coverage to Naxalite activities on the pretext that it is of interest to the readers whereas it is the commercial interest that dictates media behaviour. Extensive interviews with underground hardcore elements/extremist leaders a common phenomenon in the newspapers are partly due to the desire of the extremists to manipulate the media and partly due to the commercial interest. Naxalite related stories...
are often spicy and sensational. Negativism has of late become an established news value for newspapers. News stories on Naxalites are full of such slant

➢ The Press should avoid publication of the future programmes of underground extremists. In all the bandhs organised by the extremists the role of newspapers is prominent as an anonymous letter sent to the Press by the underground criminals about the intended bandh is promptly published in all newspapers.

➢ There is planned infiltration by terrorist sympathisers in the media. False stories are spread in order to spread terror and terrorists are portrayed as Robinhoods. This is particularly in the vernacular Press where chosen literary expressions are used to describe and extol the extremists.

➢ The Indian Press has failed to critically analyse the terrorist outfits in India. The socio-economic dimension is taken for granted to justify the raison-d'etre of the terrorist groups. The police may at times plan to suppress or curb such information which may affect the peace and tranquility in the region or impede police in curbing anti-social activity in cases like arms cache, bombs etc. The police-Press relationship varies with an event, time and place to the extent that it does not encourage the extremist outfits.

➢ Journalists are carried away by rumour mongering, especially in the rural areas. The general tendency of the Press, not to cross-check facts on the pretext of meeting the deadlines is also leading to false/inaccurate coverage.
Police charge that the Press is ignorant of the police work. Most reporters have very little knowledge, do no homework regarding police procedure and regulations.

The Press instead of projecting police excesses in a proper perspective to see that the human rights are not violated often covers such events in the manner that justifies Naxalite onslaught on the police.

The Naxalites have a network of front organisations and committed individuals who make a deliberate and sustained effort to reach out to the Press. On the other hand, the police does not make an organised effort for Press relations.

There is an element of untruth in the version of the police and the Naxals regarding encounters.

Press constitutes one of the determinants, among others in shaping public policies but the Press has not been instrumental in shaping the public policy towards Naxalism.

To counter the Naxal menace at the grass root level, police embark on anti-Naxal propaganda in a big way. Police durbars, performances by Praja Natya Mandalis, audio and video presentations of extremist violence are some methods that have been adopted in Naxal infested areas.

Persistent coverage of Naxalite activities leads to a conflict of interests between the police and the media. Such coverage especially during abductions, provides Naxalites an opportunity to fulfil their objectives of obtaining
publicity for their cause. Public interest by the Press must be balanced with
the public interest represented by the police.

➢ Unwittingly the Press is becoming a party to the Naxalite propaganda.
Naxalism is given currency by the continuous coverage by the Press in the
form of interviews. One finds that there is no credible evidence that media are
an important factor in inducing and diffusing terrorist acts.

➢ There is no legislation to regulate media coverage of Naxalism and any such
move will raise constitutional issues. On the desirability of placing curbs /
censorship on the Press, police personnel were divided. While one line of
argument is that 'the movement is actually dead but for the 'survival' in the
media. The contrary viewpoint is that there is no need for curbs as this would
lead to rumours.

5.4 Ideologues' Opinions on Press Coverage

The views of ideologues on coverage given to Naxalite activities reads like a
chargesheet against the existing newspapers in the State; their ownership, their
lack of objectivity etc.,

➢ The Press, both the English and the Telugu newspapers has failed to
understand and highlight the social transformation that has taken place in
the northern Telangana districts during the past two decades. Lumpenisation
of the movement went unnoticed by the Press.

➢ The Press supports and promotes the ideology of the State. As long as there is
no ban on the PWG and its front organisations, the Press gives coverage to its
activities. But once, the ban is imposed, there is an unwritten ban on a section of journalists in some newspapers to write about Naxal related news.

- Casteism has crept into the Press which is evident in the coverage when names of activists/victims of Naxalite violence are clearly mentioned. Also, in the case of surrendered Naxals, there has been no news about harassment of those from underprivileged sections.

- The capitalist Press in pursuance of its anti-Left policy, takes full advantage of the habit of the reader to go through the headlines owing to time constraints twists headlines or inserts misleading headlines. The Press spreads lies. The biggest lie is the Press never speaks of the social and political significance of the movement.

- The capitalist Press in the state in, the process of defending capitalism, does not try genuine debate on the social and political happenings. Instead it suppresses the evils of capitalism, pushes the corrupt practices of the capitalists under the cover and gives misleading interpretations to various issues to suit the capitalist politics.

- The Press has failed to interpret the problems attributable to capitalist economic crises or violations of human values and rights. The Press, according to ideologues, does an excellent job of covering events but fails to evince interest in the processes that led to the events. Press has failed to focus on the unresolved land question and the continued tribal exploitation that provided a breeding ground for Naxalites.
The Press chooses to be a key player in the political process but it failed to document the disinterest and disregard in the democratic process.

Certain noted Telugu newspapers glorify surrenders and publish them on their front pages. The State apparatus and its representatives generally, specifically senior police officials manage the Press during such surrenders by calling for Press conferences.

The newspapers in the State, both English and the Telugu ones are market driven. Profit motive is their primary concern. Any news story which has the potential of raking in revenue is promptly published.

5.5 Conclusion

The media, including the Press plays a crucial role in a democracy by bringing issues into the open for debate and moulding public opinion. The Press as a subsystem operates in a larger system, the society. The multi-dimensional nature of the society impinges on the functioning of the Press as much as the Press influences the working of the society. While the Press does serve as a mirror it is a part of the reciprocal process. The Press is pushed into reporting events by organised groups in the society and its reports become an integral part of the social process which has a bearing on the nature of future events. Groups in a society may use the Press as sources of information, to read the mind of the public and as a device for creating awareness and defining problems. The performance of the Press or other media, thus becomes a part of the conflict/controversy.
Most conflicts are newsworthy as they bring about a disruption in the status quo. Actual conflict is newsworthy because it is physical and usually leads to injury and damage. Violent in itself, stirs emotions of members of the society and seems to be enormous of importance. As is in the West as a news value, Indian newspapers also consider conflict as a news value. Thus wars, murders, violent protests—manifestations of conflicts on a larger scale are more disruptive in nature and have tension and suspense as corollary qualities besides consequence.

In all information activities, including the conduct of social conflict, information control is one key aspect. In the process of information control, the Press lives with most intense conflicts but does not necessarily turn conflicts into public issues. They may underplay or exaggerate them or give continuous front page coverage. The coverage may equalise levels of understanding to the extent that it contributes to the intensity of the conflict. Further, information, which is a prime resource in the creation and maintenance of social power, may increasingly become visible as social conflicts progress.

The media, including the Press participate in a social conflict in circumscribed ways which are reinforced within the system. The media, tend to reflect the perspectives of organisational power centres which is obvious in both homogenous and heterogenous communities. Where there is diversity, in social power, the media tend to reflect the orientations of those segments that are higher on the power scale. The tendency to reflect the outlook of dominant groups can have a consequence in conflict situations.
Newspapers and other media may contribute to increasing the intensity and broadening the scope of the conflicts while performing their traditional roles. The newspapers by bringing conflicts to public attention and by giving salience to particular aspects of the conflicts become the focus of public discussion and action. The media's agenda setting power lies in its ability to give publicity or deny it in conflictual situations. Media publicity is one of the strategies among others through which extremists can bring their concerns to the attention of the society. Although media glare is useful for revolutionary groups, the groups' characteristics and goals determine the type and extent of publicity likely to be most helpful as well as the myriad obstacles each group will face to gain media attention. Among the hurdles is fierce competition among extremists for limited news space.

Extremist and separatist activities are not uncommon to India. In the post-independence era, India has been plagued with various conflicts ranging from interpersonal to insurgent and separatist activities where small groups lock horns with the State with an aim to secede or to overthrow the Government. Mention may particularly be made of the situation in Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and the North East states. While the causes for the turmoil in these States tends to be varied and deeply rooted in the community’s historical, political and cultural development, the Press has come under severe strain.

The response of the Press has been varied in these States which varied from being a ‘mouthpiece of the terrorists’ to ‘braving the bullets of the terrorists.’ The Press in Punjab was divided, and confused, helpless and angry and some of it partisan. The response of the Government controlled media was in no way different as both
All India Radio and Doordarshan scrupulously complied with the Panthic Press Code released by Sohan Singh.

Pressmen in Assam were warned of death if they violated the Code formulated by the United Liberation Front of Assam which proposed censorship.

In Jammu and Kashmir, during the height of militancy, when newspapers were heeding to the diktats of the militants and it was becoming increasingly difficult to gather news due to the prevailing gun-culture, the Government resorted to legislative measures which empowered the State with sweeping powers.

However, the Press Council observed that the State Government is invested with enough powers to deal with ‘erring newspapers’. At a later stage, the Government had to withdraw the Bill.

While Punjab has gone through the strife and the turmoil continues in Jammu and Kashmir and the North East, in Andhra Pradesh, the Naxalite movement has sustained itself forever two decades now. Naxalism which has social underpinnings and political goals with violence inherent in its ideology has been able to dominate the public as well as the media agenda. Also, the State Government, has been seized of the issue during the last two decades as is reflected in various policy pronouncements, though inconsistent, and in setting up of various Committees to examine the issue and suggest solutions.

The Press and Naxalites interact for mutually advantageous purposes. Newspapers cannot shrug off their responsibility of reporting on Naxalism, especially when such activity in the political process occurs in the area where the newspaper has its readership. Even for such newspapers published from distant
places, Naxalism becomes an important phenomenon to be covered due to the impact it has on the society, the State and also due to the inherent sensational nature in that particular news event. On the other hand, Naxalites due to their underground activity need channels of communication to the masses without hampering their operations. This necessity to compete for public space without operating from among the people, most often, makes it imperative for them to find space in the newspaper columns.

Naxalites manœuvre space in newspaper columns through many forms. They include: giving selective interviews, clandestinely mailing Press releases to newspaper offices, intimidating newsmen to cover them in a favourable manner, reaching out to the Press through legal platforms, manipulating the Press through their friends and ideological supporters inside and outside the Press, infiltrating their activists/sympathisers into journalism to have a live channel of communication.

There are instances where newspaper managements willy-nilly approve/encourage this trend for the following reasons. Firstly, to have most reliable and effective news sources. This necessity assumes importance, by and large, due to the secretive nature of its operations. Covering such a phenomenon becomes much more difficult as authentic information is not forthcoming.

Secondly, newspaper managements find it difficult to monitor the credentials of people joining its vast rural network. Thirdly, people with Naxalite background, quite often exhibit better literary and writing skills most required for journalism.
There are several individual and organisational constraints on the Press while reporting Naxalite related events.

First hand reporting and spot news coverage is often adversely affected due to a host of reasons. They include non-availability of authentic information, journalists' lack of access to senior Naxal leaders, difficult terrain in which Naxalites operate, apathy or propagandist information by police officials, unwillingness of eyewitness and other sources to divulge information due to fear of both the police and the Naxalites.

The main activity of underground Naxals is guerrilla warfare- the nature of these belligerent activities makes it difficult for journalists to reach the spot immediately and report it in time. This impediments contribute to the process of journalists disseminating, unconsciously or consciously, distorted information.

Journalists are often caught in the police-Naxal crossfire as both the parties pressurise the journalists to reveal their sources of news, withhold from publishing information, doctor reports in favour of one or the other party.

In the absence of support from newspaper managements to non-partisan reporters, local newspapers often tend to identify themselves with either of the parties and survive on such identity itself. In most cases, there is a tendency among newsmen to align with Naxalites as they have legal and constitutional mechanisms to deal with police harassment.

In this complex operations, journalists, many a time become suspects in the eyes of either of the parties. This needle of suspicion lands journalists in trouble as both the parties are armed.
There are also instances where journalists are useful to resolve the crisis between the State and Naxalites much to the relief of the society at large. Due to the diverse implications and sensational character of Naxalite related events, journalists compete to file their stories in the absence of proper professional training and the prevailing fear psychosis, journalists, especially in the rural hinterland have no sources to cross check information. This professional lapse is misread as a deliberate attempt to distort news by either of the aggrieved parties- Naxals or police. In the process, journalists have been fiercely attacked or killed either by the police or the Naxals.

Also, there are instances where Naxalites turn to journalism to seek shelter from the law of the land. Police find it increasingly difficult to tackle such Naxalite - turned journalists as the issue it bound to be projected as an attempt to muzzle Press freedom.

Besides the prevalent ground realities, existing statutory and legal providions also deter journalists 'access to information.' For instance, the jail manuals often prevent journalists to interview undertrial Naxalites.

Even the police have a grudge against the Press. Any information released by the police to the Press is reportedly construed as State propaganda. On the contrary, information put out by supporters of Naxalites is accepted as truth. This kind of journalism, according to many police officials is different from the so-called adversonal role ascribed to the Press in India.
The general anti-establishment stance of newspapers makes them bend towards Naxalites rather than the side of the law. The negative image of police in general, in dealing with insurgent operations in particular, is also fuelling the turmoil.

The police argue that the Press coverage and at times glorified account of Naxalites only contribute to the sustenance of extremism and impede security operations by the State. Societal interests are kept at stake to achieve cheap publicity, argues the police.

Due to the inherent appetite for sensational stories and headlines, newspapers unabashedly publish the slogans given by the Naxalites thus according them some legitimacy.

Police find it difficult to muzzle erring newsmen as they have to operate within the legal framework and the given political process whereas Naxalites do not have any such constraints to stifle the Press. Thus the Naxalites score over the police.

The researcher also observed that the police, especially at the lower level, do not have any professional training to deal with journalists. The general culture of secrecy prevalent in the State apparatus becomes much more rigorous during security operations. The resultant casualty is the total lack of transparency which is viewed with suspicion by the Press.

There is a general criticism of the Press that it merely confines to event related reporting and do not comment on the ‘process/processes’. The Second Press Commission had also mentioned about the obsession of the newspapers with events and their weakness for processual coverage. This general weakness of the Indian Press is equally applicable to the Naxalite related reporting. A landmine
blast or an encounter, police combing operation, Naxalite movements in the forests, kidnaps become news for journalists. But the socio-economic milieu that contributes to the emergence and sustenance of the Naxalite phenomenon is often ignored by the Press due to its obsession with event related reporting.

Naxalites lament that the socio-economic changes brought about by their movement are not reflected in the columns of newspapers. On the other hand, violence perpetuated by them to achieve such changes is prominently reported. The other political forces criticise the Press for ignoring the violent attacks of Naxals on their unarmed cadres.

Yet another major criticism is that the Press fails to initiate any incisive analysis on the phenomenon of Naxalism even after covering it for the last two decades. There is no attempt to scientifically understand the phenomenon and present practicable and feasible solutions. Neither has the Press attempted to set an agenda for the government on this issue. Naxalites have a clear ideological opposition to the Press in general, and the big newspapers in particular, describing them as capital enterprise of exploitation.

They also view the Press as part and parcel of the State oppressive machinery serving the cause of the ruling classes at the cost of the interests of the common masses. Despite such 'class' understanding of the role of the Press in the society, Naxalites make all efforts to manipulate and manoeuvre for space in the Press.

Striking a discordant note, another viewpoint which crystallised during the interviews is that the Press, in no way should contribute to the ignition of
conflicts or remain silent on the conditions that breed such conflicts. Also, it is felt that the Press, whatever be the limitations, should strive to end such conflicts, prevent their recurrence and also help identify lasting feasible solutions.

**Suggestions**

* The Naxalite problem has to be viewed as a socio-economic one and there should be a concerted effort on the part of the State Government to solve it. These efforts should involve bureaucrats, police officials, planners, human rights activists, intellectuals, media personnel, the tribals and the poorest of the poor. The government should ensure the participation of the masses in the developmental programmes rather than adopting a policy of give and take. Land reforms should be undertaken on a priority basis.

* Newspapers should desist from indulging in sensationalism and projecting the movement as a disruptive movement lest readers infer that the movement has 'misguided youth who are trigger happy.' Newspapers must shift their focus from events to process/processes and understand Naxalism as a part of the social process.

* The editorials/edit articles/analytical reports should make an incisive analysis of the various facets of Naxalism and set an agenda for the Government. In the overall context, it may help the Government in shaping a public policy towards the persisting Naxal problem. This is warranted as they are written mostly as reactions to Government decisions, Naxal violence and contain a recap of the news events.
The newspaper managements and the State Government have to be more responsive and sympathetic to journalists working in Naxal infested areas. Journalists' trade unions should be more firm while dealing with police for their excesses and the Naxalites for their intimidating tactics.

* Journalists should observe restraint while reporting Naxal related events. They should, in possible instances, cross check information and avoid evoking response from the police or the Naxals.

* The unhealthy friction/mistrust between the police and the journalists could be avoided provided both the parties understand each others limitations. A media coordination cell which can help disseminate information at the district level can be a help to the journalists. Such wings could be set up even at the Mandal level.