Chapter II

To understand the ways and means of reporting conflict and the course of any civil war it is essential to gain theoretical knowledge about it and so this chapter explains the various theories about nature of conflict, stages of conflict, and the role of media in reporting conflict. Framing theory and Frame analysis is a broad theoretical approach that has been used in Communication Studies. Framing is the process through which the news organization defines and constructs news\(^1\). This chapter also presents framing theory.

The geographical position of Sri Lanka, the ethnic relationship made India to develop a strategic plan towards the ethnic conflict. The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka generates direct impact in India especially in Tamil Nadu. It is important for the democratic society to be informed about the discernments of the civil society before they move ahead with any strategic development in the bilateral relationship with its closest neighbor. “Media plays an important role in this regard as a resource base through which policy makers of the country could share the ideas of likings of the ordinary\(^2\). For that reason, it is justifiable to say that media plays an important role in disseminating the war news to the Indian public, especially the people of Tamil Nadu.

For analyzing war news reporting it is paramount to know about the steps involved in reporting conflict. Cate Malek in his research paper *Reporting on Conflict A userguide to the beyond intractability* defines the various steps involved in reporting conflict.
Steps involved in analyzing the war news coverage.

**Conflict Assessment** Deep rooted and intractable conflicts tend to be very complex. Conflict assessment is essential to understand about the parties involved and the role they play in the situation.

**Underlying causes of the conflict** As the conflict has gone on so long and become so embedded in the culture. It is essential to understand and explore both the superficial and underlying causes of the conflict from all points of view.

**Effects of conflict in different constituency group** Conflict participants particularly those most directly involved in the struggle often do not really understand the full cost of the conflict and potential benefits of settlement or resolution. Doing an assessment of the human as well as monetary costs of the conflicts on the primary parties, people caught in the middle and on allies and neighbors of the disputants are essential.

**Fact Finding**: Conflict participants from both the sides claim different “facts” are true and the opposing “facts” are false. It is very important to find the real fact. Post modernism appreciates and celebrates the plurality unlike those of other periods.

The media can either propagate messages of intolerance and disinformation or serve as a tool for conflict resolution. It is difficult for the journalist to be neutral, even if he/she wants to be. Pressure from the government, the policy of the newspaper, and prevailing socio economic conditions constantly act upon him/her in direct or indirect ways.

For reporting the conflict it is important to understand the nature of the conflict and its intractability.
**Nature of Conflict and their Intractability**

Intractability is a quality of particular social conflicts.” The broader meaning of social conflict is domestic conflicts wages within the context of political and judicial institutions, such conflicts are widely viewed as serving the interest of adversaries and welfare of society as a whole."4

Intractable conflicts are protracted conflicts persisting for a long time they are waged in ways that the adversaries or interested observers regard as destructive and partisans and intermediaries attempt but fail to end or transform them. The character of conflict changes as it becomes more or less intractable. The changing character may be seen as variations in the core components of every conflict.5

The four main components of social conflicts were the identities or conceptions, the adversaries, the grievances they hold against each other, the goal they set to change other, to reduce their grievance and the means they use to achieve their goals.

Some conceptions of self and others, certain grievances, various goals, and particular conflict methods were conducive to a conflict to become and remain intractable. In general, members of one or more sides often rank themselves as superior to the other side members, which foster intractable conflicts. “At the extreme, one side may view another group as sub human or as evil and as appropriate targets for destructions.6

Members of one or more sides in every conflict have grievances some of which contribute to intractability. “This is the case when members of one side feel grossly wronged by oppression, or feel, that their very existence is threatening”7. Such feelings tend to be found in conflicts that are intractable. Secondly, members of one side may
formulate goals that the opposing side’s members regard as particularly damaging and costly and do not appear to be subject to compromises such goals, are associated with interacted conflicts.

Finally, members of one or more sides may believe that the other side will yield to force and that they have the capacity to inflict extreme violence that will coerce the other side to yield. These methods tend to be reciprocated and to contribute to the conflict’s destructiveness and intractability.

Conflicts passes through a series of phases or stages as shown in FIG I Though different authors name and describe these stages differently, but most common phases are No conflict, Latent Conflict, Emergence, Escalation, (hurting) Stalemate, De-Escalation Settlement/Resolution, Post-Conflict, Peace building and Reconciliation.8

These phases are shown on a diagram the progress from one stage to the next is not smooth and conflict may repeat stages several times.
The potential of conflict exists whenever people have different needs, values, or interest and this is the “Latent” conflict stage. The conflict may not become apparent until a” triggering event”- leads to the Emergence (or beginning) of the obvious conflicts. Escalation, however, cannot continue indefinitely, de-escalation can be temporary or can part of a broader trend toward settlement or resolution. or escalation may lead to a stalemate, a situation in which neither side can win.

If the pain of continuing the conflict exceeds that of maintaining the confrontation, the parties are in a Hurting Stalemate which often presents an ideal opportunity for negotiation and potential settlement. Finally, when an agreement is reached peace building efforts works to repair damaged relationships with the long-term goal of reconciling former opponents.

Actual conflicts usually do not follow a liner path; rather, they evolve in fits and starts, alternatively experiencing progress and setbacks towards resolution. The lack of linear progress helps to give the conflict a sense of intractability. Escalation may resume after temporary stalemate or negotiation. Escalation and De-escalation may alternate. Negotiations may take place in the absence of a stalemate. However, this model is still useful, because most conflicts pass through similar stages at least once in their history.

Delineating the different stages is also useful in efforts to resolve the conflict. By recognizing the different dynamics occurring at each stage of a conflict one can appreciate that the strategies and tactics for participants and interveners differ depending on the phase of the conflict.
We note that the stage of a conflict is determined subjectively by those involved. “Some participants may see the conflict as escalating, while others believe it as de-escalating; one side may perceive itself to be in a hurting stalemate, while the others believes it can prevail through continued force. Determining each party’s assumptions regarding the stage of the conflict is thus important, before one can design a conflict or a conflict resolution”\textsuperscript{11}.

The above mentioned stages of conflict were universal in nature. One of the key issues in the analysis of any conflict was the identity of the parties involved in the conflict. “The term parties in conflict are individuals, groups, organizations, Nations or other systems in conflict\textsuperscript{12}. It is this parties that initiate a conflict, pursue it, and determine its outcome. In order to understand a conflict it is necessary, to know about the parties involved in the conflict.

**Role of Media in Reporting Conflict**

The mass media have powerful influence on how people view the world. Newspaper, radio and tv are the only link to events happening outside of one’s neighborhood. A reporter’s story on a conflict is the sole information available to his audience. How the reporter frames the conflict can bias the audience in favor of one party, or one solution over another. It can also intensify the conflict or cool it down.

Tankard and Dimitrova says that\textquotedblright The intensity of the conflict is directly proportionate to the level of involvement of communities or nations\textsuperscript{13}. People get their information about what is going on in these
conflicts through the media, so the media plays a critical role in how these conflicts develop and change.

This study explores the role of online media in more depth looking at the media’s coverage of a conflict. The news story may be framed in favoring one party which may escalate or reduce the conflict situation. It may be because of the Socio political Compulsion, Likes and dislikes of the news organization, Delay in disseminating the news and to create sensation and thereby increase the circulation.

The media may use different frames to report Conflict news. Framing is a process whereby communicators consciously or unconsciously act to construct a point of view that encourages the fact of a given situation to be interpreted by others in a particular manner. Frames are often found within a narrative account of an issue or events, and are generally the central organizing idea. Frames operate in four key ways. They define the problem, diagnose cause, make moral judgment and suggest remedies.

**Media Frames.**

ShantoIyengar says that “Media frames” are the central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of the events. The frame suggests the controversy and the essence of the issue.

A more detailed explanation of how media provide audiences with schemas for interpreting events with essential factors is selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in communicating text, in such a way as to
promote a particular problem, definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation and /or treatment recommendation

**Framing as Dependent and Independent variables**

Framing research can be divided into two, examining frames as independent or dependent variables. Studies of frames as dependent variables have examined the role of various factors in influencing the creation or modification of frames. At the media level, journalists’ framing of an issue may be influenced by several social structural or organizational variables (eg Shoemaker and Reese, 1996) and by individual or ideological variables (Tuchman). Researches defined media frames as an independent variable having an impact on attitudes and opinion on individuals.

This study examines frame as dependent variable. How the policy of government and other social –structural or organizational variable and other individual or ideological variables influence the journalists in framing the news about the fall of LTTE in Sri Lanka.
## Typology of framing Research

**TABLE - 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuchman 1978</td>
<td>Pan and Kosicki 1993</td>
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<td>Bennett 1991</td>
<td>Entman 1993</td>
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<td>Edetman 1993</td>
<td>Huang 1996</td>
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<td>Gamson 1992</td>
<td>Snow and Bedford 1988, 1992</td>
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<td>Huang 1996</td>
<td>Nelson Et Al 1997</td>
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Framing Theory

The entire study of mass communication is based on the premise that the media have significant effects. According to Mcquail “the history of research on media and its effects can be divided into four stages. It begins from the turn of the 20th century to the tale of 1930, when the media was dominated by the strategic propaganda of World War I which led to a growing fear of the influence of media messages on attitude”\(^15\).

The second stage which ended in the late 1960s revised the paradigm of strong media effects. Personal influence was considered to be a main influence on attitude change. Klapper (1960) summed up, “campaigns do not influence people, their major effects are the reinforcement of existing attitudes, and the effects are minimal”. The third stage started in the 1970s. “The focus of effects shifted from attitude change to mere cognitive effects of mass media”. (Beniger A & Guesk1995 p198) The present stage started in 1980s, was characterized by “social constructivism”. Media discourse is part of the process by which individuals construct meaning and public opinion is part of the process by which journalist develop and crystallize meaning.\(^16\)

Starting from Goffman’s (1974) the frames are that it defines social situations. TverskyKahneman’s (1981) work on the positive or negative message frame and their influence on decision making. Entman (1991) specified four stages to his analysis of frames: Agency – Who is doing what to whom, Identification - With people in the stories, Categorization - the use of adjectives, Generalization – To other news stories, long standing debates. Peace /War journalism supported framing theory theoretically.

The origins of the framing concept lie in the field of cognitive psychology and anthropology. It was adopted by other disciplines like
sociology, economics, linguistics, social movement’s research, policy research, communication research, political communication research, public relation research and health communication research.

**Framing as a Process**

“The potential of the framing concept lies in the focus on communicative process. Communication is not static, but rather a dynamic process that involves *frame-building* (how frame emerge) and *frame-setting* (the inter play between media frames and audience predispositions)”\(^{17}\). It is noted that frames have several locations, including the communicator, the text, the receiver, and the culture. These components are integral to a process of framing.

Frame building refers to the factors that influence the structural qualities of news frames. Factors internal to journalism determine how journalists and news organization frame an issue. Equally important, however are factors external to journalism. “The frame building process takes place in a continuous interaction between journalists and elites and social movements”\(^{18}\).

**The different uses of framing**

Media may shape public opinion is by framing events and issues in particular ways. . It is used to study the relationship between the media and the public. It can be either content study or framing effects.

*The different stages of Framing include frame building and frame setting.* *Frame building* refers to the factors that influence the structural qualities of news frames. *Frame setting* refers to the interaction between media frames, individual prior knowledge and pre dispositions frame may affect learning interpretation and evaluation of issues and events.
Consequences of framing of news can be conceived at the individual and the societal level. At the individual level, frame altered attitude about an issue based on the exposure. On the societal level frames may contribute to the shaping of social level processes such as political socialization, decision making and collective actions.

Media frames can be studied as DV (direct variable) as the outcome of the production process including organizational pressures, journalist routine and elite discourse. It can also be studied as IV (indirect variable) as the antecedents of audience interpretations. Frames are “persistent patterns of cognition interpretation and presentation”19.

Frames in the News stories:

There are two approaches available to identify the frames in the news. They are Inductive and deductive. The inductive approach refrains from analyzing news stories with predetermined news frames in mind. The approach should be deductive in nature which were defined and operationalized prior to the investigation.

A news frame must have identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics. It should be observed in journalist practice. It must be possible to distinguish the frame from news. A frame must have representational validity and not merely a figment of a researcher’s imagination.

In the deductive approach the relevant question is what (which components) in a news story constitute a frame. The frame in the news can be examined and identified by “the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, and sources of information
and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments”

The most comprehensive empirical approach is, by listing out the framing mechanism or focal points for identifying and measuring news frames. They are the headlines, sub headlines, photos, photo caption, Leads, source selection, quoteselection; pull quotes, logos, statistics, charts concluding statements and paragraph.

In sum scholars within the empirical approach agree that the frames are specific textual and visual elements or devices. These elements are essentially different from the remaining news story which may be considered as core news facts.

News content is divided into frames and core facts. “Certain frames are pertinent only to specific topics or events such frames may be labeled as Issue specific frames. Other frames transcend thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different topics. Some even cover time and in different cultural context. These frames can be labeled as Generic Frames.”
**An Integrated Process model of Framing**

**TABLE - 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame Building</th>
<th>Frame Setting</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FRAMING</strong></td>
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<td>Internal and</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Factor</td>
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<td><strong>FRAMES</strong></td>
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<td>Issue Specific</td>
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<td>Frames</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generic Frames</td>
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<td><strong>FRAME EFFECTS</strong></td>
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<td>Information processing effects</td>
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<td>Attitudinal Effects</td>
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<td>Behavior Effects</td>
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Frames in the News:

The variety of definitions of news frames in both theoretical and empirical contribution was considered. “Frames are Persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation of selection, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol handlers routinely organize discourse”23

According Shantolyengar frames are referred as “interpretative packages” that give meaning to an issue. At the core of this package is a “Central organizing idea or Frame for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what at issue” By virtue of emphasizing some elements of a topic above others, a frame provides a way to understand an event or issue. It is suggested that frames activate knowledge, stimulate ‘stocks of cultural morals and values and create contexts in doing so frames define problem diagnose cause make moral judgments and suggests remedies.

In this study, the researcher observed the framing of news about the fall of LTTE in Sri Lanka in the news sites www.thehindu.com and www.thenewindianexpress.com for a period from 1st January to 31stMay 2009. Framing theory posits that media transfer the salience of specific attributes to issues or events. To select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text is framing technique. In news media coverage, framing stems from a process of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration by the news organization.

For instance, in a case of war, the media can focus on the destructive elements caused by the war as opposed to freedom from tyranny, it can frame the event as an invasion versus attack, it can emphasize the victims versus invaders, and can highlight a positive versus negative attitude towards the war. It is considered that media’s framing ability to organize everyday reality as their most important task. Media
frames organize the world both for journalists who report it and for consumers who rely on their reports.

Different factors influence how journalists frame issues, including social norms and organizational pressures. Journalistic practices and routines, cultural values and broader sociopolitical forces shape the selection of media frames.

There are two types of frames: *Episodic frame and thematic frame*. **Episodic frames** are references to isolated news events without providing broader context—“only a passing parade of specific events”. **Thematic frames**, on the other hand, provide broader societal context to issues and events and thus present more complete pictures and collective evidence.

*Shantolyengar identifies* Episodic and thematic frame. *He says that the episodic and thematic frames* have different effects on the audience. **Episodic frames** tend to put responsibility on specific groups or individuals whereas **thematic frames** attribute responsibility to the societal/political forces.

Frame analysis is a multi-disciplinary social science research method used to analyze how people understand situations and activities. Frames are “principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of about what exists, what happens, and what matters.

To do frame analysis it is necessary to identify repeated patterns in news coverage, using various techniques like where the emphasis or selection of the news lies, such as headlines, lead, last paragraph, or the body of the news. It is also important to analyze in the news stories about what is said and what is not said. Observing, master narratives or themes like, who are the villains and who are the heroes. What is assumed to be the source of conflict? What stories or
aspects of stories are not being covered? The clues such as language choices ("gunned down" versus "accidentally hit by stray fire"), modes of reference, use of quotes and attribution were taken for observation for frame analysis.

In this study the news about the fall of the LTTE in Sri Lanka was taken for analysis using Framing analysis method and so it is very much essential to know about the socio, political and historical background of the Sri Lanka and the ethnic crisis. Chapter III deals in detail about the socio, political economic condition of Sri Lanka, the reason for the insurgency, the Rise of LTTE and India’s foreign policy towards Sri Lanka.
Chapter II

End Notes


2) Malek Cate, Conflict Information Consortium: University of Colorado. USA, 2002: p.133

3) Mcnelly and IzcarayNavasky cited in Zetize reporting conflict stage p.42

4) Tankard (1997), Dimitrova et al. / War on the Web www.conflictreporting.com

5) Ibid. p. 70

6) Ibid. p.145

7) Ibid. p.120


9) Ibid. p.123

10) Ibid. p.156

11) Op Cit.n.4, p.281

12) Ibid. p.267
13) ¹Ibid. p.284

14) ¹Gitlin, Framing Analysis Himalayam publication. New Delhi. p. 69

15) ¹Ibid. p.89

16) ¹Ibid. p 90

17) ¹Seow and Maslog Framing Analysis Himalayam publication page 120(2005)

18) ¹Ibid. p.145

19) ¹Gitlin, Framing Analysis Himalayam publication. New Delhi. p. 69

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3) Mcnelly and IzcarayNavasky cited in Zetize reporting conflict stage P.42

4) Ibid. P. 68

5) Ibid. P. 69

6) Ibid.P.145

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8) Mcnelly and IzcarayNavasky cited in Zetize reporting conflict stage P.42

9) Ibid p.123
10) Ibid 156

11) Op Cit.n.6, P.281

12) Ibid p267

13) Ibid P 284

14) Gitlin, Framing Analysis Himalayam publication. New Delhi. P. 69

15) Seow and Maslog Framing Analysis Himalayam publication page 120 (2005)

16) Ibid p145


18) Gitlin, Framing Analysis Himalayam publication. New Delhi. P. 69

19) Gitlin, Framing Analysis Himalayam publication. New Delhi. P. 69

20) Seow and Maslog Framing Analysis Himalayam publication (2005)

21) Ibid p147

23) Ibid p135