Chapter V

CONCLUSION

The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka was spurred by four important events. They were, the Sinhala only act of 1956, the Republican constitution of 1972, the parliamentary elections of 1977 and the 1983 ethnic riots. The killing of 13 soldiers by the LTTE on July 23rd 1983 marked the initiation of armed hostilities and the beginning of Eelam war I which ended in 1987.

Eelam war II began in 1990 and closed in a ceasefire in 1995. The next round of Eelam war III began in April 1995 and ended with the February 2002 ceasefire, which was the longest conflict. The decisive Eelam war IV started at MavilAru in June 2006. The Sri Lankan army scored a historic victory on 18 May 2009 and it declared the defeat and the death of Prabhakaran and his extremist movement LTTE.

Eelam war IV was launched in three stages. MavilAru and liberation of east, Capture of Kilinochi the defacto capital of the LTTE and finally cornering and crushing LTTE at Mullithivu. The last stage of the fall of LTTE took place during the month of January 1st to 31st may 2009. So this period was chosen for analysis.

The framing of this stage in the news sites www.thehindu.com and www.thenewindianexpress.com was observed. Framing of news was observed because media played a potential role in conflict prevention, conflict management and post conflict reconstruction.
Media does the watchdog function while reporting conflict. In a situation of misreporting the ultimate losers are the ordinary people. In the absence of truth, persistent propaganda reigns supreme and in the end it becomes the truth because the alternative voice is missing or withheld.

Through framing of news the journalists sets the public agenda. Frames are abstract notions that serve to organize or structure social meanings. Frames influence the perception of the news of the audience. This form of agenda setting not only tells what to think but also how to think. Framing is a style of communication that leads other to accept one meaning over another.

Media does not only provide entertainment and information but also transmits culture, values, and beliefs. It is a valuable document that records the history and so it is essential to study the media content.

This study is a qualitative content analysis that concerned with dissecting the framing of the news about the fall of LTTE in Sri Lanka in the news sites the www.thehindu.com and www.thenewindianexpress.com.

A qualitative study was done by the researcher to observe and interpret the data using Faming analysis. Framing is a process whereby communicators, consciously or unconsciously, act to construct a point of view that encourages the facts of a given situation to be interpreted by others in a particular manner.

The news sites www.thehindu.com and the news site www.thenewindianexpress.com successfully incorporated the six
identified frames namely the Military Conflict Frame, Responsibility Frame, Human Interest Frame, Diagnosis Frame, Prognosis Frame and Media Referential Frame in the news stories about the fall of the LTTE in Sri Lanka.

Analysis about Framing of Conflict news has become an important genre in Mass communication. It was observed that the framing of the news about the plight of the people who were caught in the conflict were given less importance. The news about the conflict always concentrates on the “hero versus villain” the “good vs. bad” of the conflict.

The sorrows and sufferings of the people were totally darkened. News about catastrophes like famine, civil war, and natural disasters have become increasingly conveyed in the media. The victims of these catastrophes were seen as deserving innocents, while the victims of culture war and ethnic conflicts might be undeserving.

On the contrary the Nobel laureate Dr. AmirtyaSen in his famous book “Poverty and famine” An essay on entitlement and deprivation, Oxford claredon presswrote that “On the 1947 Bengal Famine the catastrophe was the consequence of the loss of people’s entitlement to food,not the obsolete shortage of food in an area. He commented “ that wars, conflicts, the collapse of civil order, an over ideological political system are all associated with, and pre-conditions for famine”.

It was understood that the conflict or the collapse of the civil order was the pre-condition of famine. But the new site does not emphasis the sorrows and the suffering of the people which is a precedent for “famine”
and human destruction. It is only the *military conflict frame* that outraced other Frames.

The news site highlights only the success of the Sri Lankan military and not the misery of the Sri Lankan Tamils. The foreign policy of India supports the Sri Lankan government in expelling the LTTE from Sri Lanka. The news sites, www.thehindu.com and www.thenewindianexpress.com reflected, the Indian government’s external affairs policy, while framing the news about the “Fall of the LTTE in Sri Lanka”.

The news sites www.thehindu.com and www.thenewindianexpress.com used episodic frames rather than thematic frame. The premise of this research is that news about the fall of the LTTE in Sri Lanka almost invariably used either “episodic or thematic” frame.

The episodic frame focuses on specific issues or events, while thematic frame places issues or events in some general context. Both the news sites reported the individual act of violence using “military conflict frame” and thereby the presence of “Episodic frame was more than the presence of “thematic frame”. The use of lethal weapons and the success of the Sri Lankan military were emphasized in the news reported in the news sites.

The observation proves the hypothesis that the presence of “Military Conflict frame” in the news about the fall of the LTTE in the news sites were dominant than the other frames.
The news sites justified the military action taken against the LTTE and it established “Armageddon” against the LTTE as though it was the only solution to resolve the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka, omitting other alternatives. The news sites focused only on the conflict arena but not the force and factors influencing them.

The different frames were used with the specific purpose. Military success of the Sri Lankan army and the fall of LTTE was reported using *Military Conflict Frame*, the Loss and damages caused to the Tamils were reported using *Responsibility frame*, The role of India in the ethnic conflict was expressed through the *Diagnosis Frame*, The future plan of the Sri Lankan government in protecting the Sri Lankan Tamils were expressed through the *Prognosis Frame* When news from other media was quoted the *Media Referential Frame* was used.

The table clearly states that order of the presence of *Military conflict frame*, which was followed by *Responsibility Frame*, *Human interest frame*, *diagnosis Frame*, *prognosis frame* and *media referential frame*. The external affairs policy of the Indian government was reflected in the news stories presented by the news sites, [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com) and [www.thenewindianexpress.com](http://www.thenewindianexpress.com) using the “diagnosis” frame.

India’s diplomatic efforts in countering terrorism and providing a military solution to Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict and its support for a sustainable political solution through a negotiated settlement have characterized India’s policy on Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict. This was reflected in the news disseminated by the news site [www.thenewindianexpress.com](http://www.thenewindianexpress.com) and [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com).
It was observed that the journalists who framed the news about the fall of the LTTE in Sri Lanka followed the War Journalism approach in contrast to Peace Journalism because war journalism focus on conflict arena. It concentrated only the parties involved, goals of the war and in general it concentrated on zero sum orientation. War journalism focused only on visible effects of violence. It portrayed the people involved as “us vs them. War journalist approached conflict as a problem. It is propaganda oriented. It dehumanized the people involved. It is victory oriented. It closed space, time and cause and effects of the war. It is poor in context on the contrary Peace journalism explore the reason for the conflict formation. It opened the space, time, cause and outcomes of the war and it is rich in context. It focused on the visible effects of the war. It makes the war transparent. It gives voice to all parties.

The researcher felt that the news sites discussed the news about the “fall of LTTE in Sri Lanka” with war journalism approach because the use of the military conflict frame was more in number when compared to the other frames. The news about the conflict arena was discussed in detail in both the websites. It was propaganda oriented it propagated the success of the Sri Lankan army and it also focused only on the visible effects of the war and not about the consequences.

The analysis of news about the fall of the LTTE in Sri Lanka in the new sites, www.thehindu.com and www.thenewindianexpress.com clearly proves the fact that both the news sites embedded six predefined Frames in the news stories.

Military victory of the Sri Lankan army was glorified using Military Conflict frame, Responsibility Frame was used to describe the damages caused to the life and property of the Sri Lankan Tamils and it
pin points LTTE for causing this damage. The sorrows and sufferings of the Sri Lankan Tamils were expressed through *Human Interest Frame.*

The foreign policy of the Indian government was manifested in the news which discussed about the India’s role in the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict. The proscription of the LTTE and India’s denouncement of the LTTE as a legitimate political force were exhibited in the news using such *Diagnosis Frame.* The future of Tamils in Sri Lanka, the role of the Sri Lankan government in the rehabilitation of the Tamils was expressed using *Prognosis Frame.* International Media was quoted by both the news sites using the *Media Referential Frame.*

The order of occurrence of the frames was clearly stated in the Tables and Charts and it also proved that the use of *Military conflict* was more in number when compared to the occurrence of other frames.

Though military conflict frame outraced the other frames, the news site [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com) and the news site [www.thenewindianexpress.com](http://www.thenewindianexpress.com) uses the Responsibility *Frame* more than the *Military conflict* Frame in the month of February and March respectively. Through this the news sites tried to justify the military action taken against the LTTE. This was established by using more Responsibility *Frame* and so there were more number of Responsibility *Frames* in the month of February and March in news sites [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com) and [www.thenewindianexpress.com](http://www.thenewindianexpress.com) respectively.

The involvement of child soldiers in the war front was described with the Responsibility *Frame.* The LTTE was charged for this merciless deed. The agonies of the Sri Lankan Tamils were expressed using
the **Human Interest Frame**. The news about the damages caused to the life and property of the Sri Lankan Tamils were expressed using this frame.

Frames can be studied as dependent or independent variables. In this research frames were studied as dependent variable reflecting the foreign policy of India towards Sri Lanka. India’s concern for the Sri Lankan Tamils and its ban on the LTTE played an important factor in influencing the news about the fall of the LTTE in Sri Lanka.

India’s policy toward Sri Lanka has undergone many twists and turns during the post-independence period. From a policy of active involvement during 1983-1990, it took a hands-off policy after the assassination of, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. But because of the geographical continuity and ethnic affinity India cannot isolate itself from the development on the island. Instead of relationship focused on conflict intervention, India’s policy has pushed economic engagement into the lead role in bilateral relations. Calls from within Sri Lanka, India and International community, for the Indian government to assert its influence on resolving the conflict are met with a cold response from Indian policy makers who were reluctant to re-intervene in the conflict.

The role of India in the Sri Lankan ethnic crisis, and in expelling the LTTE from Sri Lanka were defined by both the news sites. The news also reflected the foreign policy of India towards Sri Lanka.

Though the LTTE chief Prabhakaran was killed and its top leaders were eliminated the future of the Sri Lankan Tamils, were in in peril. The devolution package promised by the Sri Lankan government to the
Tamils, their life and security which were described using *Prognosis Frame* was still unfulfilled.

**This proves the Hypothesis-1** “the presence of *Military conflict* was dominant than the other frames in the framing of the news about the Fall of LTTE in Sri Lanka during the period of 1st January to 31st May”.

**The foreign policy of the Indian government towards Sri Lanka** was strikingly reflected in the news stories. Thus, the **Hypothesis-2 was proved** which states that the news framing is as a dependent variable which reflects the Foreign Policy of the Indian government towards Sri Lanka.

To sum up the news sites [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com) and [www.thenewindianexpress.com](http://www.thenewindianexpress.com) presented the news about the fall of the LTTE in Sri Lanka as military news. Human sufferings were pushed aside in the framing of the news. This was explicit in the tables and charts. The news sites also reflected the policy of the Indian government towards Sri Lanka.

**All the above discussion clearly demonstrates that**

1) The military success of the Sri Lankan army was glorified with the help of Military Conflict Frame. The news about the victory and fall of the LTTE was more in number and so the presence of military conflict frame was dominant in the news about the fall of the LTTE in Sri Lanka presented by the news sites the [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com) and [www.thenewindianexpress.com](http://www.thenewindianexpress.com)
2) The news presented in both the news sites strikingly reflected the foreign policy of Indian government towards Sri Lanka.

“All war is a symptom of man’s failure as a thinking animal”

John Steinbeck