CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The study has analysed the contribution of the media in consolidating and advancing the struggle of the peasantry with a view to understand the role the media played in addressing the agrarian problems. Prabhatham and later Deshabhimani extended consistent support to toiling peasantry. Both these newspapers went beyond the role of a mere supplier of information to the peasants. Unlike the bourgeois media, Prabhatham and Deshabhimani used to play an active role as a catalyst for social change. They served not only to announce party decisions but also to give voice to the tillers of the soil. Prabhatham and Deshabhimani was a platform for the peasants to air their views and complaints.

The approach of Prabhatham towards capital accumulation and revenue collection is notable since it tries to ensure maximum public participation. It was a distinctive feature of Prabhatham that it designated
separate pages for the news regarding the working class and the news related to
the peasantry. It reserved two pages titled *Karshaka Lokam* exclusively for
publishing the news affecting the peasants. The headers of *Prabhatham* were
not passive titles, on the other hand they were exhortations to the masses. It
contained articles which gave information about acts and bills. Whenever new
bills and acts came up *Prabhatham* reported them in detail and carried articles
which could inform the peasants the detail about it.

The role which the media have played in producing a counter hegemonic
discourse was commendable. The study threw some light into the nature of the
media itself. Some of the news reporting served the purpose of inspiring the
farmers about what can be achieved by Collective action. Secularism and a class
perspective were the enduring qualities of the discourse generated by
Prabhatham.

One of the most significant aspects of the work of the *Prabhatham* is its
emphasis on building up worker peasant unity. *Prabhatham* in its discourses
always strived to promote the cause of unity of working class and peasantry.
Notable is the support extended to the struggle by the Karshaka Sangham, thus
reinforcing the peasant and agricultural workers unity against the land lord. It can
be seen that the *Prabhatham* carried the details about the unionization
happening among workers of various industries, teachers and others. It also
noticed the organisation of students and youths and most importantly it never
missed to emphasize their role in advancing the cause of the peasantry by assisting their struggles.

*Prabhatham* actively supported the attempts of social reform. The reports of *Prabhatham* served the cause of enlightening the peasants their struggle was part of a larger struggle launched all across India. While *Prabhatham* gave attention to publish news across the country, it also gave space to international events. *Prabhatham* contained inspiring news about the struggles of workers and peasants across the world. They have handled news from an international perspective. One of the most significant functions performed by *Prabhatham* was the ideological education it provided to the peasants through various writings.

Along with the representation of agrarian problems, *Prabhatham* served as a tool for the political education of the masses by the CSP. *Prabhatham* used to publish articles as study material for party classes. The stories which were published in *Prabhatham* in almost all issues were intended to create political awareness and social sensitivity among the peasants.

The media can play a crucial role in introducing the changes which are happening across the world to the people. The 1930s with its undeveloped technology of communication and interaction, *Prabhatham* has performed this function in a notable manner. Some of the articles sought to elaborate on the organizational aspects of the Sangham itself, comparing it with various other movements especially the national movement. Apart from being a newspaper
which reported local, regional, national and international events, apart from being an educator in ideological and theoretical issues, Prabhatham carried a lot of literary writings.

In fact it became the platform for the initial writings of the many later stalwarts of Malayalam literature like S K Pottekkad, Thakazhi Sivasankarapillai and P Kesavadev. Prabhatham carried poems, stories and plays. All of them served the cause of inspiring the peasantry by deeply touching and awakening their emotions. The poems and songs published in Prabhatham became the marching songs and slogans of the Jathas conducted by the Sangham. Many songs which were published in Prabhatham were the form of songs which were sung in the places of work. Prabhatham contained many stories. Most of these stories had a very simple plot and they were notable in the attempt to spread political education by the graphic illustration of the lives of the peasants.

The stories had often simple narrative but they carefully portrayed the transition from a peasant consciousness to that of a radical class consciousness. Stories in Prabhatham challenged the bourgeois notions of morality and dealt with the themes of prostitution and illicit sex with courage. Prabhatham also used to publish plays reflecting the plight of the working class and the peasantry and their heroic fight against the present system.

The study revealed that publications like Prabhatham and Deshabhimani represented the interests of the working class and the peasantry. As the organs of the Congress socialist Party and Communist Party, they stood by the struggles
of the proletariat and peasantry. They constantly published news on peasant struggles and tried to counter the attempts by the bourgeois media to put their struggles into oblivion by either not reporting them or distorting them through exaggeration. Prabhatham served as a tool of political mobilization and organisation as it was the channel of communication for the vast majority of the peasantry which it attempted to reach out. Deshabhimani carried this tradition forward and went ahead to become a daily newspaper.

It can be noted that Deshabhimani carried forward the anti imperialist and anti feudal struggle and strongly assisted the peasant movement through the worst phase of state and feudal oppression. The effectiveness of the role played by Prabhatham can only be understood if its performance is compared with that of other newspapers of the time. Mathrubhumi was one among the most prominent nationalist dailies of the time and it enjoyed widespread popularity.

Newspapers like Mathrubhumi, though taking an anti British position were but careful not to invite their wrath by lending open support to the movement of the peasants. Moreover, once it was clear that the peasants were being mobilized under the communist party; their neutrality was often betrayed by the distortion they made while reporting the peasant agitations and their unwillingness to report the repression unleashed by the police and authorities on the struggling peasants.
The study of the print media revealed a perceptible difference in the way of functioning by various newspapers. It can be safely argued that the organs like Prabhabatham and Deshabhimani assisted the peasant movement to a great extent in generating a counter discourse. It equipped the peasantry in its fight for hegemony with the strong ideas and a vision about the alternatives. This has helped the peasant movement of Kerala to change itself from that of class in itself to a class for itself.

The study of the media reached the conclusion that, the dominant classes retain their dominance not only through the dominance of coercive apparatus but also because of the control exercised over the ideological apparatuses. Prabhabatham and Deshabhimani and such organs were crucial attempts in countering the attempt of ruling classes by presenting a challenge to the ruling ideas.

Literature played an important role in constructing the social imaginary of the agrarian problems and the peasant struggles. Kerala witnessed a conscious literary effort on the part of the great number writers in Kerala. No poet could ignore the presence of such social upheavals, whatever be the school, various litterateurs represented. The study could find that there was a dialectical relationship with the literature and peasant movement. Many of the poets of Malayalam openly came up in support to the suffering peasants and gave voice to their concerns. A class of progressive writers emerged in Kerala
who believed in employing their literary skills for the advancement of the cause of the peasant movement.

The study analysed how fruitful was the effort of conscious and openly political interventions in peasant agitations. Literature played a great role creating a counter hegemonic discourse. The widespread popularity and the potential to entertain ensured the message getting carried faster. It has to be noted that the participation of the poets, story writers, novelists and playwrights with a definite political goal was something which was achieved without effort. The intellectual domain of Kerala has witnessed fierce raging debates over the propriety of the litterateurs being part of such efforts. Many of the critics found that unpalatable. The art for art's sake and the arguments about form and style dominated the literary scene. But the emergence of the progressive writer's associations made a great difference in this situation. Once the writers under the banner started their collective efforts to promote the cause of the downtrodden sections of the society, no poet could ignore its impact.

The study tried to understand how far the literature and society influenced each other. It could be observed in the study that there is no literature which can be held neutral. At least the experience of Malayalam literature, the case in point, shows that the collective efforts by a set of writers who kept close links with the people could create a counter hegemonic space. It can be held as the success of the progressive writers and their intervention that in Malayalam literature, no poet could ever ignore the social realities.
As Marx has stated in the German ideology, “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness, and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch.”¹

So the struggle was twofold. On the one hand the peasants got organised into collectivity and attaining physical strength. The other fight was at the ideological realm where they tried to attain hegemony in the ideological level. The experience of Kerala shows that they were able to generate a strong mass

movement and a strong political wave in their favour thanks to the two fold struggle they undertook.