CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Findings of the Descriptive and Inferential Data Analysis

The study, Indian Print Media and Muslims: Coverage of Coimbatore Bomb Blasts in Leading Tamil Newspapers was carried out with the objectives framed in the study. To satisfy the objectives framed for the study and unravel the trends in the data collected various tests frequency distribution, chi-square, Coefficient of variance, ANOVA and model fitting analysis were employed for prediction. The major findings are enlisted so as to arrive at logical conclusion.

Analyzing the nature and intensity of the coverage, it clearly reveals the fact that throughout the cycle of the conflict, more importance was given to 'Hard news', and there is a clear absence of editorial genre. This validates the absence of the newspapers in performing their prime duty i.e., analyzing and providing a clear picture of the conflict. Newspapers have continuously focused on collecting interviews, especially from police/ court sources evident in the source of the newspaper, neglecting the voice of the common man and the victims. Further, the yearwise distribution of the news clearly states that the discriminatory representation of the Muslims began well before the conflict and continued even after the blasts. In addition, the news predominantly local focus and very less importance was given to the issues at a national and International levels. At times whenever connections were established at International level, they only brought a sense of panic in the society. Thus, the intensity of the coverage was a mere news reporting venture by the newspapers attempting to provide solution for pacifying the conflict.
Analyzing the authenticity and credibility of the news stories presented on the conflict, on the whole, all the newspapers have given importance to Judicial, Police and Government Sources, neglecting the versions of the public and the victims. 209 stories have only with anonymous sources, bringing into question the authenticity of the information provided. Mainly, *Dinamalar* has carried most of the stories without attributing any authentic sources. Almost 90% of the stories have not carried any by-line. Especially, in *Daily Thanthi*, not even one story had a by line. News without by line and attribution far from being authentic and credible.

Analyzing the frames constructed in the story, the study clearly reveals the fact that the entire conflict has been covered in an anti-Muslim tone and especially *Dinamalar* has topped in this. Apart from this, the newspapers have provided a neutral tone in the coverage, and the chi-square analysis has revealed a significant association between the newspapers and the tone of the story. Further, analyzing the frames constructed by the newspapers revealed that all the newspapers have tried to construct mostly a law and order frame only to be followed by extremism frame. This clearly shows the attitude of the newspapers towards the news and in making it an issue rather than solving it in a peaceful manner. The chi-square analysis of the frames clearly states that there is a significant relationship between the type of newspaper and the frames provided. While analyzing the angle of the story, it was generally informative followed by being sensational. Thus, analyzing the factors associated with the frames constructed by the newspapers on the conflict, it can be clearly understood that the newspapers have not played a crucial role of a critique. It has just informed the public of the events, supporting the governmental activities, and has played the role of sensitizing the public with sensational and extremist frames.
In any textual content, the discourse determines the reach and impact of the content. Analyzing the labels used while referring to the individuals/groups involved, in the news story some vital findings throw up. Mainly, all the newspapers have tried to address the individuals/groups, involved as ‘accused’ and ‘extremists’ without any authentication or proven conviction. Further, sometimes they have been portrayed as ‘Criminals’, and ‘Muslim terrorists’, though they were not convinced. This phenomenon was not seen for Hindus because there was no reference to Hindu related labels in their stories. This shows the targeted approach of the newspapers towards minorities especially Muslim groups. The newspapers have deliberately provided an anti-Muslim discourse throughout the cycle of the conflict.

Analyzing the presentation and various aspects of headlines, a clear outcome of the notion, ideology and the style of the newspapers emerge. Though a majority of the stories carried typical words in their headlines, they have also been given action words, provoking the minds of the readers sharpening the conflict scene thereby increasing its intensity. Dinamalar which is one of the largely circulated and read newspaper in Tamil Nadu has been providing mainly action words in their headlines. Fortunately, newspapers have not opted for deceptive and assumptive words, the newspapers have given mostly three column headlines and single column headlines enhancing the importance given to the stories. Their presentation have also shown that the stories have been presented in single deck mainly, followed by double deck. Though most of the headlines have been in neutral standpoint, is also predominant anti-Muslim. Dinamalar has specifically carried 243 headlines in anti-Muslim stance clearly revealing a biased approach towards the Muslims in the conflict. The tone of the headlines also substantiates the fact that mainly newspapers have gone from denotative headlines rather than implying meanings.
Regarding the visual representation of the conflict in the newspapers, 85% of the stories were without photographs. The photographs provided visuals of the conflict and there was no clear identification of images, when represented. Further, these photographs mainly portrayed action and not a portrait of the individuals concerned or people involved, thus giving a sense of conflict and tension in the minds of the reader. These action images were mainly anti-Muslim in nature and sensational mainly provoking hatred against the community.

Analyzing the agenda-setting role of newspapers in the conflict, majority of the stories irrespective of the newspapers has not prescribed a specific agenda on the conflict, which leaves the readers in a confused mindset. Almost 45% of the stories have provided an anti-Muslim agenda, like saying that Muslims are to be punished, Muslims are the sole reason for the conflict and the Muslims are to be persecuted from the society. Here, Dinamani and Dinamalar have published a majority of issues from an anti-Muslim agenda. Understanding the overall impression provided by the stories on the conflict, 60% of the stories have created a negative imagery about the Muslims, creating an alienation for them. This was found to be particularly high in the year 1998, the year of conflict, which would have intensified the conflict scenario. Moreover, the stories psychologically induced a sense of hatred on Muslims, evident from the analysis of psychological outcome of the story. Thus, the study clearly exemplifies the negative, surrogate and black-sided portrayal for the Muslims in the society.

The stories have mainly been pitched from the viewpoint of court and legal proceedings, police or politics, but there were no themes set on the viewpoint of
neither Muslims nor Hindus, neglecting both the affected communities involved. Further, the approach of the articles towards the issue provided the sad fact that the newspapers have carried an anti-Muslim approach in carrying the conflict. Sometime like triggering the violence, creating a confused mindset among the readers. It seemed that, the newspapers have created their own framework for the conflict and have tried to bring in reality from the sources.

Analyzing the space allocated by the newspapers for the conflict, only lesser space were given for the stories, This fact is evident from the analysis that most of the stories ranged from 150-399 words. Only a minimal percentage of stories have been carried for more than 800 words. Hence, the space allocation was not commensurate with the level of the conflict.

A Model Fit analysis was performed for all the 24 factors to project whether the identified trend could be extrapolated for the publication of similar news in different newspapers in future.

A Model that best fits the description was evaluated and the equation was arrived at for the value of Y for all the factors under study. Y was determined and given in the analysis. Anybody with this kind of data could substitute the values and the possible publication of stories related to each factor could be found with the formula given for specific year by substituting t in the equation.

The study revealed that the trend analysis is in confirmation with the data collected which corroborate the conflict reporting theatrics enacted by the different newspapers, which is being intelligently exploited by the media corporate for their marketing and as specific business development strategy.
6.2 Findings of the Discourse Analysis

The Discourse analysis conducted by the researcher on the noun phrases, words and nouns pertaining to conflict coverage in the newspapers has provided insight into the portrayal of the conflict. The findings of the discourse analysis have been discussed below in detail:

Due to the mere fact that the convicts are Muslims, the newspapers have done an outrageous, blind portrayal of the entire community as convicts by the usage of the words Islamic/Muslim extremists, Islamic/ Muslim terrorists, Muslim extremist movement, Islamic /Muslim fundamentalists, Muslim fundamentalist groups, Muslim religion fanatics, Muslim conservatives and religious radical movements in their coverage. Further, all the banned and restricted terrorist organizations were simply labelled as Islamic terrorist organizations creating up an interconnection between the organizations and Islam.

Though the modus operandi and the execution has been done at local level, the newspapers have taken them to a national and international level by referring to the Afghan terrorist link, Pakistan contact, ISI contact, LTTE contact, foreign conspiracy, foreign terrorist, Kashmir terrorist link, Mumbai terrorist contact the news related to the conflict. This has brought down the status of the Muslims in Tamil Nadu to a pathetic condition. Media has redefined the fact that each and every news on Pakistan has to be looked upon as news related to Indian Muslim through their repeated acts of portrayal. The newspapers have often carried news that foreigners are the reason of the Bomb Blasts.

While PUCL has clearly analyzed and reported that the November riots were a planned and executed attack on the Muslims, the newspapers have maintained it as
a communal clash of both the communities. There was clean bias in the news and no mention of the Hindutva and Hindutva groups was found in the coverage.

The story on the search of Human Bomb Aysha/ Aysha has created a lot of hostilities on Muslim women. Wearing Burqa and other cultural practices was affected and finally it was proved that the story on Aysha was fake and none existed in the name. Though there is a general rule that a person who is not proved of crime should be considered as an accused and not criminal, the newspapers have thrown the ethics to the wind carrying stories on Muslims, stating them as criminals, terrorist etc., even before a charge sheet was filed on them as ‘Suspects’. Further, Jeenath, was suspected as a woman terrorist and was arrested and released after a day that she was harmless. But without any authentication and proof of conviction, Dinamalar has carried a news story stating Women terrorist Jeenath arrested, there by defaming her and the Muslim community.

Covering the real reason behind Bomb Blasts (November clash), the newspapers have portrayed the Babri Masjid attack as the reason behind the issue, and supplying provoking headlines like How did December 6 left still, the newspapers have continuously been tingling the flames of communal clashes in the society. Even today, the day of the Babri Masjid has been sensationalised as a day of terror reinstalling the conflicts in the minds of the people, pertaining to hostile treatment of Muslims on these days.

While portraying the murderers of traffic constable Selvaraj as ‘Al-Ummah’, the people who were involved in the Killing 18 Muslims, Ransacking of Muslim properties were just represented as gang violence, mystery gang, social enemies etc., even during the attack and ransacking of Muslim properties even after the Bomb
Blasts. PUCL has stated clearly in its report the media has failed in portraying the real reasons of the riots and Bomb Blasts.

Sensation has always been the main focus of the newspapers in the coverage of the conflict. Headlines like *Deserted van creates panic in city; Judgment in Coimbatore Bomb Blasts case: panic in Coimbatore city* goes on to prove this fact. Thus, the analysis clearly details the coverage of Bomb Blast conflict and the modus operandi of the newspapers in the coverage

### 6.3 Findings of the In-Depth Interview

The research intends to elucidate the views for the neutrality of the newspapers from the experts. All the experts chosen for the in-depth interview have presented their clear views about this Coimbatore conflict. The questions framed have a close and provoking aspect, to explore the thoughts of various experts, who were not known to each other. This has helped the researcher to study the significance of the research in various angles and to compare them with the analysis of the research.

The intention of the research for the primary question whether the newspapers acts neutrally with respect to the experts is elucidated herein. The newspapers had published news in a partial way without analyzing the actual incidents that happened between the Hindu-Muslim communities. It is evident from the responses that the media have portrayed news in the following aspect viz. news based on sensation, information obtained from police without researching for factuality, portraying the victims as Muslims, all Muslims were terrorists etc, which has changed the impact on the Muslims, especially after this particular issue. A serious notion of portraying Muslims as terrorists is a transnational phenomenon
after every bomb blast, which arrived in peaceful South India tagged along with the Bomb Blast. For instance, newspapers published news stating that Ayub Khan was arrested, but he was in no way connected to the issue. Many political parties made this adverse incident to their advantage and turned the game towards the innocent Muslims.

The question about newspapers tendency to frame a public feed against the Muslims examines that not all the newspapers have been blamed. Some genuine newspapers have obviously published news with absolute truth and have provided the actual evidence behind the conflict. If all the newspapers have followed this unbiased approach, impartial and actual news would have reached the public not creating a negative impact in the minds of the society; especially a pessimistic view would be avoided. After Coimbatore Bomb Blasts, experts felt that media joined hands with some religious, political organizations, which portrayed Muslims in a biased way. A pitfall created by the newspapers was that the spiritual and religious practices of Muslims also have been portrayed as an act of terrorism inducing a wrong assumption towards the religion. Question about the offensive language, in views of the experts were exclaimed that the newspapers crossed the boundaries. These testimonies had a wrong reflection among the Tamil society on the Muslims, who was exposed to the unparliamentarily words lured at them. This paved a way to make people think that every Muslim shall turn as a terrorist and shall induce a Bomb Blast.

Though there were chances for the media to publish authentic, experts feel that Media seem to be diverse and rely on some political parties and organizations. Journalists just report but never analyze from any historic angle. The position of
media during conflicts seems to be similar opined all the experts making journalists write news as conflict-friendly, cook up a story and add their own point of view about any incident, mostly against Muslims to make it lively. An imaginary news, as remembered by Ayub Khan, is *An elephant tusk destroyed by Muslim at the Hindu Temple*. Thus, it is clearly evident that, media do not attempt to pacify way, instead make the consumers believe it completely. Contrastingly, if the news reflects the truth, media take seize the opportunity to sustain the essence and enmity, and flash news repeatedly, for sensationalism victims were neglected making clear that media functioned administratively and not sensitively. Thus, an overall expert's view on conflicts was that, media have always dealt issues with a grudge, unmindful of welfare of the society, or peace and tranquillity or upholding highest secular ideals.

6.4 Conclusion

In 1998, the South-Indian city Coimbatore witnessed 19 serial Bomb Blasts that served as a journalists' delight and the regional newspapers turned their flashlights on Muslims from which it has never ceased. Thus, the current research *Indian print media and Muslims: Coverage of Coimbatore Bomb Blasts in leading Tamil newspapers* by four Tamil newspapers viz. *Daily Thanthi*, *Dinamalar*, *Dinamani*, *Dinakaran* presented extensive evaluation to understand how media constructed imagery against Muslims and the social consequences that influenced consumption of superfluous information. The objective of the research apparently proved that the media that ought to have acted impartially were highly controversial and the coverage questionable. A total of 1855 published news stories in regional newspapers between 1997 and 2009 i.e. 13 years after the Bomb Blasts happened was analyzed. About 24 factors and associated variables were identified to study the coverage of the conflict by media that have comprehensively depicted the approach of media.
The current investigation has revealed various outcomes corroborating results of already published literature. Media have exercised a strong influence on the lifestyle of common people, especially over their thought process, perceptions, taste, cultural sharing, social interactions, public opinion formation etc. Several studies in the recent past have also proved the relationship between media and its readers merely deal with consumer-seller relationship. Researches on media content, framing of opinions, use of words and their intended meanings in their news have stimulated a certain degree of conflict.

Regional newspapers are very closely attached to the life of people who believe any matter in print than real time happenings. The portrayal and coverage of such conflicts had provoked violence and hatred in the minds of the people, which is evident by the framing analysis of the four newspapers of Tamil Nadu. No other conflicts in India have been reported in the newspapers as widely as the Coimbatore conflict or any other similar state conflict in any regional newspapers. After the twin tower attack in (2001) US, the whole world seemed to have created a negative opinion about Islam and the Muslims. This research establishes such negative dictum about Muslims who were portrayed after 1998 Coimbatore bomb blast, which confronted India as one among the first few countries to have labelled, weaved and branded the Muslims as terrorist, much before the 9/11 attack. Thus, media with all the associative factors were studied and supported by statistically derived values to strengthen the negative impact on Muslims.

Without focusing the accused, media focused overall Muslim community as a cause of the Bomb Blasts. The outcome of the current study also reflects a similar perception. Among 1855 news, only 32 news was authentically published with reporter /editor's name and the rest were merely concerned with sources from police,
Government and allied Law Departments. Moreover, there were less than 1% about the affected and victim related Muslim stories. Most of the data in this research have clearly established that the articles in the newspapers related to crime were published based on the statements given by the Police Department.

Parameters like 'Angle', 'frames', 'Tone' of this research proves that it has attempted to change the mindset of the readers by negatively portraying one-sided anti-Muslim statements. Concerning the parameters tested for the subjected newspapers 59% were against the domain of Muslim. Likewise, the media approach devoid of educative prospects was either, 'Sensational' and 'Informational' and was not clear reportage about the conflicts, strengthening concepts like terrorism that provoked the common readers.

While studying the quality of the headline words used the subjected newspapers, the usage of certain vocabulary with 'Action words' was used to ignite the readers. For instance, 'Cotton city burns' -Dinamalar, 'Bomb, Treasure in Chennai: Terrorists Intrusion?'-Dinamalar, "Mystery man wanders: People Police screws-up’ -Dinamani, have been sensational and provocative. The same conditions prevailed while using 'Typical words', which created confusions. News were presented to viewers with a mentality of 'Anti-Muslims' in 50% cases and some in a neutral tone without genuineness in its inner content. Following are source of the headline that created conflicts analyzed through the present research: Background of Banned Organization- Al-Ummah and Jihad Committee, Behind the Black Coolers (Madhani), Singapore- the Roots of Coimbatore conflicts? But then the inner contents contain serious, pessimistic description using words like ISI terrorists, terrorist link, 25 Muslim Organization, Foreign influenced group, Kashmir trained groups etc.
The conflict related news was accompanied by sensationalism, and negative portrayal. From almost all the newspapers, studied agenda seem to have been against Muslims, in particular slogans like 'Accused must be punished' and 'Muslims must be punished'. The news does not explain why Muslims must be punished rather they assume all the Muslims to be terrorists. Therefore, the news article and news about court case, before and after the Coimbatore conflict, were sometimes impartial differing among newspaper and totally against the Muslim society.

This thesis has well established that media has not concentrated on the factual and on-the-spot reportage of the Coimbatore conflict. The views and statement of the experts also reiterate the findings of the study. The findings of the descriptive, inferential data discourse and In-depth interview of the experts has also led us to the same line of conclusions.

Newspapers chosen for the study have been evaluated with various significant parameters and the results of the ‘Discourse analysis’, ‘Noun phrases’, ‘Noun’ have supported the research established the biased stance of the newspapers. Phrases like 'Human Bomb Aysha' 'Pakistan contact', 'Muslim extremists', 'Muslim Fundamentalists', 'Muslim religious Fanatics', 'Kashmir terrorist link', displays that media was stubborn and unfriendly.

It is concluded that the regional newspapers have exhibited their subjective partial and unprofessional approach towards the management of Coimbatore Bomb Blast conflict coverage. The appeared news items neither intended to sensitize the general public nor bringing about the peace among the conflicts groups. The selection of vocabulary, placement of news, choice of language, construction of frames and embedded meaning of the text have their own independent functions.
among the readers towards the manifestation of the real meaning of the conflict. The findings of the research has explicitly summarized the diverse characteristics of the regional media. Hence, there is no standard professional principle and approach among the journalists towards the portrayal of Coimbatore Bomb Blast conflict through news coverage.

In conclusion, the present research depicts that media played a vital role against the Hindu - Muslims relationship and tutored the mentality of common individual to highlight the conflict in superfluous manner.

6.5 Suggestions and Recommendations

The research findings mandate the following recommendations.

The sources collected related to the Coimbatore bomb-blast conflict from the regional newspapers have explored that the news regarding the negative portrayal of Muslims, misleading approach about the Bomb Blasts events, common conflicts handled manner etc. The above approach of the media and the journalists shall be improved using the following suggestions.

- According to the famous saying, "Pen is mightier than sword", a spoken word, a published paragraph or televised images have an impetus of its own. It has an ability to damage any sort property or a body. Instead, journalists should take the power of pen for genuine representation of the situation and not as an explanation model regarding the depiction of the portrayal of minorities.
- To improve better image of the both sides, it is crucial that media practitioner of the mainstream channel should adopt the universal canon of journalism. They should follow the principles of objectivity, professional ethics, neutrality and fairness in coverage of the issues involving the both sides. The
management of the media enclosing the civil society representative is highly responsible for any of the published news that created the conflict. Therefore, enough freedom and capacity building should be provided for the journalists to make them explore the exact aspect of any conflict. It is their responsibility to make people educate about the media literacy and shall empower some debate programs on civil movement.

- Khaled al Aswar has rightly suggested about the ratification of the image of Islam that it requires strong and persistent efforts from the Muslim themselves, both in the Islamic world and in Muslim communities. This initiative should be a comprehensive process, starting by consolidating mechanism of Islamic work on the masses and official levels. The writer suggested that they would have to emerge as a nation of culture and civilization in order to present their better and soft images image in the world. There is a need hourly need for effective initiatives to educate and awareness about Muslim for an accurate concept of peace and tolerance of Islam.

- Religious related and religious political related news have been relayed in the Muslim media, and makes it devoid of representing them as the mainstream media. Therefore, it is suggested them to publish news in neutral sense and educate the entire population about the true value of Muslims to eradicate the negative image on Muslims.

- In Tamil dailies, the newsroom is mostly dominated by the non-Muslims. The interviews with the journalists, editors and Muslim politicians confirmed that the Muslim journalists are seen rarely in the newsrooms of Tamil media. However, it is important to note that newsrooms lack of diversity. The
Muslim journalists and editors are intentionally or unintentionally missing from the newsrooms. The Muslim news and the Muslim journalists experience social exclusion from the Tamil dailies. This makes the media to publish news with sensation and partial news against the Muslims and it is highly recommended to provide exposure for Muslims to work along.

- It has been long considered that media is responsible to enhance the scrutiny about caste, community and culture clashes, political, social and sexual conflicts. Media is highly considered to entertain people act against such pessimistic forces and has made some journals like ‘Conflict reporting’, ‘Peace journalism’ to be treasured worldwide. Reports of that quality are trained all over the world to augment the field of mass communication. If India adapts such multidimensional sense of journalism practice, issues like Coimbatore conflicts and few other bomb blast portrayals shall be handled with care and genuinity, thereby would educate the readers neutrally.

- Altogether, though the ‘Press council of India’ has framed guidelines, for journalists, they are not followed or implemented strictly. Hence, such media’s impartial portrayal about few bomb blasts, caste-community riots shall be redefined to draw them through new optimistic paths. Educational institutions should offer programs on ‘Conflict reporting’ and shall organize seminars, conferences to empower upcoming buds and professionals.
6.6 Scope for Future study

The mutual relationship between Hindu and Muslims in Tamil Nadu is greatly interrupted because of the Coimbatore Bomb Blast incident. The present investigation analyzed the news published on Pre/ Post years of Coimbatore Bomb Blasts. They are about 13 years on the leading regional newspapers namely, Daily Thanthi, Dinamalar, Dinamani, Dinakaran regarding the Coimbatore conflict. Based on the outcome of this study, much other research need to be carried out based on the present findings of the study. The researcher has recommended some titles for further research.

- Comparative analysis of newspaper contents and magazine contents on Coimbatore Bomb Blast conflict.
- Comparative analysis of the content of the Electronic media and the content of the print media on Coimbatore Bomb Blast conflict.
- Comparative analysis of Mumbai conflict and Coimbatore Bomb Blast conflict.
- It can be comparatively analyzed for the contents published in newspapers about the Coimbatore conflict with respect to 9/11 twin tower attack.
- A detailed study on the Press-Council of India guidelines, International code and guidelines related to the portrayal of Coimbatore conflict might also be one of the important research topics for the new researchers.
- The relationship between the media portrayal and changing status of Muslims maybe also be analyzed.
• A detailed investigation on the perception of the affected victims, and their families on the media portrayal of the conflict will also be one of the important areas for the researcher.

• Comprehensive analysis on conflict reporting, communal violence, inter group and intra group violence will be more important in the field of media studies.