CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Media have several qualities, uses, impacts, duality and many significant faces. Media have functioned rapidly on information passing, teaching, entertaining, and creating awareness but at present, it has stretched its wings widely beyond its codified functions. Technological advances in Information Technology have started consuming media space besides making inroads into human lives. Endeavours have always been connected with media, evident in recent research reports. Media have come to rule the personal and public spaces of human, imparting their social, political and cultural dimensions.

It is essential to look-up on the notable impact created by the media through print, radio, television and internet on social, political and economic conditions of our country. Moreover, the differences of media portrayal in arts, education, culture and other social issues ought to be analyzed seriously. Given this context, analyzing the portrayal of conflict by the media assumes significance. Furthermore, it should be encouraging to research the mentality and changes in thought pattern of the society. This has encouraged to set the research objectives to study the relationship between the media and the public perceptions.

As far as media research is concerned, the important current conflicts are interstate, intrastate, religious, and caste conflicts. Particularly after the 9/11 issue, media all over the country have completely turned-up against terrorism. Consequently against Islam, which is deplorable.

Saleem and Kidwai's (2002) quotes like 'Beware of Islamic fundamentalism', 'The Muslims are coming', 'The roots of Muslim rage', and 'Islamic fundamentalism
call a holy war' have always been concerned about Islam and their negative portrayed by the media. In India, the Coimbatore Bomb Blasts 1998 created a serious identity crisis among Muslim community. The present study focuses on the coverage of Coimbatore Bomb Blast conflict by newspapers.

1.1 Conceptualization of the term minority

The word minority is becoming an attractive nomenclature in the society especially in the media coverage. However, generally there exist no predefined definitions or demarcations of minority throughout the world. Minority is commonly defined as a sociological group that does not constitute a politically dominant voting majority of the total population of a given society. Encyclopaedia Britannica defines minorities as aggregate of people who are distinct in race, religion, language or nationality from other members of the society, which they live and who thinks of themselves and who is thinking of by others as being separate and distinct. A sociological minority is not necessarily a numerical minority, which may include any group that is deficient with respect to a dominant group in terms of social status, gender, education, employment, wealth and political power. Hence, to avoid confusions, some scholars prefer the terms 'subordinate group' and 'dominant group' rather than 'minority' and 'majority' respectively. In the field of socioeconomic, the term 'minority' typically refers to a socially subordinate ethnic group (understood in terms of language, nationality, religion and/or culture). Other minority groups include people with disabilities, 'economic minorities' (working poor or unemployed), 'age minorities' (who are younger or older than a typical working age) and sexual minorities (women in many countries). Members identified as minority groups are prone to different treatments in the countries and societies, where they live in.
The provision in the United Nations Minorities Declaration report refers to minorities as “a differed group based on national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity and provides that states should protect their existence”. Even then, there exists no internationally agreed definition as to which groups constitute minorities throughout the world (United Nations Human Rights, 2007).

The difficulty in arriving at a widely acceptable definition lies in the variety of situations in which minorities live. Some live together in well-defined areas, separated from the dominant part of the population. Others are scattered throughout the country. Some minorities have a strong sense of collective identity and recorded history whereas others retain only a fragmented notion of their common heritage.

Considering the social status, minorities are demarcated based on literacy, income, business and all other forms too. This demarcation has caused a greater divide in the societies, creating isolation of power and authority to a particular set of individuals in the society making the rest deprived among the nations across the world.

However, considering the other demarcations of defining minorities, namely the ethnic, religious, linguistic, gender, social class etc., the impacts differ. Always, these minorities have been looked down. The rights, provisions, freedom, equality and representation of these groups have always been biased. These minorities exist in almost all the countries of the world and have been a part and parcel of the majority populace. Under these circumstances, special community rights are necessary both for countering the prevailing form of marginalization faced by minorities in the nation-state and for preserving minority identities.
According to the commentary of the U.N working group on minorities, “any action for the protection of minorities should focus primarily on the protection of the physical existence of persons belonging to minorities, including protecting them from genocide and crimes against humanity”. Especially in 2001 Durban Declaration, it was affirmed that “the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of minorities where they exist, must be protected and that persons belonging to such minorities should be treated equally to facilitate their human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination of any kind” (Camponovo, 2002).

At times of conflicts, the physical integrity of people belonging to minority groups are at greatest risk and keen attention should be paid to ensure that minorities, including those displaced internally within their own country or externally as refugees have access to humanitarian aid and relief such as food, shelter and health care. As former, United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan remarked, “We must protect especially the rights of minorities, since they are genocide’s most frequent targets” (United Nations Human Rights, 2010).

Lack of respect, protection and fulfilment of the rights of minorities are some of the issues faced by them. This may result in the displacement of such groups, serving as an indicator of the degree to which their rights are respected, protected and fulfilled in the country from which they are displaced. Though it is difficult to identify all minority groups as such in a situation of displacement, protection mechanisms, need to be designed in a way, which enables these groups to retain their identity to the greatest extent possible. It is important to note that the protection of the existence of minorities also requires respect for and protection of their religious and cultural heritage, which are essential to their group identity.
An outlook at the various existing minorities in the world, countries give a clear picture that there is no country left out without minority in it. In the United States of America, the minorities include the Blacks, the Latino Americans, the Hispanics, the Native Americans, and the Native Red Indians. These groups were singled out in the name of racial discrimination.

In Europe, the immigrants are discriminated by the majority society and as a threat in the Netherlands. The Albanian immigrants are portrayed as primitive people and depicted as violent criminals in the Italian society (Palmer, 2002). The immigration of Tamil refugees to Western Europe and in particular in the Netherlands is usually described as a panic by the media. At all levels, the Tamil refugees were characterized negatively and their immigration represented as a threat to the nation and the social status quo. The Tamil refugees were more often depicted as economic refugees rather than political refugees. This makes the immigration misrepresented as illegal and as an invasion.

One of the Tereskinas (2003) studies focused on how ethnic and sexual minorities were portrayed by the Lithuanian mass media. “There was a lack of in-depth reporting on ethnic and sexual groups in the mass media of Lithuania and minority groups share relative invisibility and one-sided stereotypical representations. Sexual minorities remained a difficult topic of discussion and an extremely sensitive issue involving societal values, norms and sexuality. Homosexuality was frequently described as a scandal, and they are still portrayed as an underworld group. Homosexuality was still strongly associated with sexual promiscuity and deviance.”
It is believed that religious minorities are the worst and world devastating minority identities in the world. Divided on the basis of religious practices and beliefs, the demarcation of minorities by religion is possibly more familiar from historical sources than with the contemporary situation were especially in the western world. The adherents of separate religious persuasions are more commonly regarded as categories of the population than as coherent groups of people with distinctive religious, cultural, economic and political aims, which they pursue in their own interest. However, even today, such situations are not uncommon. In the northern parts of West Malaysia, for example, Thai-speaking Buddhists form an important religious and cultural minority group, whereas a few miles across the border in southern Thailand, it is the Muslim Malays who are the religious and cultural minority. In India and Pakistan, the confrontation of Hinduism with Islam led to the emergence of minority groups whose differences, though expressed primarily in a religious idiom had important political and economic ramifications.

1.2 Minority communities in India

In India, the word minority is being coined in different connotations. However, the government refers to two types of minorities in the constitution, religious and linguistic. Apart from this, India experiences many minorities in the name of caste and other differences. Taking the case of the constitutional reference to the minorities, the lawmakers have never given a clear demarcation of which the minorities are, but there are religious and linguistic minorities in article 30 and article 30 (1). In these articles, the constitution states, “All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice”.

6
Later on, the 'National Commission for Minorities' formed under the 'National Commission for Minorities Act' 1992 provided a declaration of the religious minorities of the country. The word minority religion has not been defined anywhere but finds a mention in many a places in the constitution. This gives minority status to five religious communities viz., Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis). Further, it states, “minorities are not limited to these five religions and states are free to declare/recognize others”. Apart from this, the commission has recommended including Jainism in the list of minorities, though it has not been accepted by the central Government, Jains have been recognized as one of the religious minorities in nine states.

While studying the religious census of the country, among the total population of India in 2001, 80.5% are Hindus while Muslims account for 13.4% and Christians 2.3% respectively of the total population. In absolute numbers, approximately 828 million are Hindus while Muslims are around 138 million out of India’s total population of approximately 1,029 million. Sikhs account for 1.9% of the total population. The proportion of Buddhists, Jains and other religions are 0.8%, 0.4% and 0.6%, respectively (Dyson, 2001).

Further, considering the minorities on linguistic basis, the term 'Linguistic Minorities' as such has not been defined in the constitution or any other law. The term ‘Minority’ has been defined in section 2 of the National Commission for Minorities Act (1992) with reference to the religious minorities only.

According to the Supreme Court judgment in DAV College etc. v/s State of Punjab and others (SCR 688; AIR 1971 SC 1737, 5th May, 1971) “a linguistic minority for the purpose of Article 30 (1) is one which must at least have a separate
spoken language, it is not necessary that the language should also have distinct script”. Hence, any linguistic community with less than 50% of the state’s population can be considered a linguistic minority within the state. This has put the country in further confusion that one language, which is a majority in a state, attains a status of minority in another state. To state an example, Telugu is a main language in Andhra Pradesh wherein it attains minority status in the states of Orissa, Karnataka and Gujarat etc. Likewise, the entire nation is divided based on linguistic differences, bringing in a state of unrest within the communities.

Moreover, the class and section based discriminations are more prevalent in Indian context. Dalits are the most discriminated class in India who are not considered as minorities but they experience similar discrimination than the minorities. Ambedkar stated that the majority did not acknowledge the Dalits as minorities. According to him, “Dalits are more suitable for the meaning of minority people. Though they could claim all the rights and protection of minorities, it is not complete for them. The condition of Dalits in social, economic and education sectors is more backward than the minorities. Dalits need special attention than other minorities to protect themselves from the cruelty of majorities and the social exclusion” (Paswan, & Jaideva, 2003).

It is widely held view that suppression of the minority communities has been a common phenomenon in India. The past and the recent history has recorded lots of blood stained tragedies, riots and heart shocking events where minorities have been treated so vehemently and in an inhuman way.
1.3 Muslim community in the world

Islam founded in the mid sixth century has grown faster and is the world’s second largest religion after Christianity. Its followers today extend from Morocco to the Philippines and it includes different races and peoples of Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia and the Americas. In fact, in 2010, there are about 1.6 billion Muslims in the world accounting for about 23.4% of the world population. Out of these, around 62% are living in Asia-Pacific, 20% in the Middle East-North Africa, 15% in sub-Saharan Africa, around 3% in Europe and 0.3% in the Americas. Hence, calculating the population to that of the world, one fifth of an individual in the world is a Muslim.

On the issue of Islamic identity, the world of Islam is divided between two factions: Modernists and Traditionalists. The former attempted to reconcile Islam with alienating concepts that nevertheless seem to have useful applications to legal systems, Government structures, education, technical skills, national sentiment and self-criticism. The latter questions non-Muslim constitutions and institutions, challenges the modernists’ right of leadership and view the reduced influence of Islamic people as the result of corrupting contacts with alien people and powers.

In the recent years, the traditionalist view has become widespread throughout Islamic countries, assuming dramatic characteristics of what traditionalists call Islamic revivalism. As a result, imperial powers are denounced as ridiculous anti-heroes outside the boundaries of normal decency. Their corrupting influence, transmitted through insidious channels, is considered to have brought about the decline of Islamic faith and practice. The only remedy for this situation is religious revivalism, the eradication of evil and a return to Islamic principles.
Religious revivalism in Islam means getting back to basics. It means the literal application in everyday life of Islamic teachings on topics such as sociology, politics, cosmology, psychology, theology, philosophy and mysticism. The movement is not a reformation, but an affirmation of ancient values. Islamic revivalism does not mean attempting to draft a blueprint of an ideal Muslim society, rather reflecting Western or alien concepts at the expense of traditional values.

An authentic revival of Islam, according to fundamentalists requires a renewal of the traditional framework of the Islamic faith by returning to traditional doctrines and modes of behaviour. In spite of feelings of discomfort, especially against the West, many Muslim Governments, particularly Arabs, purchase arms from the West, sell oil to Western industrialized countries and buy Western products and Western expertise. Thus, an intrinsic contradiction sometimes exists between Islamic words and deeds. Attempts to restore Islamic hegemony without recourse to modern, therefore alien and corrupting techniques and technologies have so far failed. In fact, Islamic proscriptions limiting freedom of thought and action in all aspects of life—private, public and religious have caused serious problems from Islam’s earliest beginnings. Legal interpretations formulated by Muslim religious scholars frequently clashed with policy dictated by Muslim rulers in response to the needs of Government and conflict was resolved in favour of whatever faction dominated at certain times and places. By the late nineteenth century, almost all the Islamic world came under external, mainly European domination and influence.

The efforts to restore the Islamic order were said by the Prophet, and the Quran have been in practice. Even before mounting public visibility of Muslims in the West, the ongoing Palestinian question was severe enough to occupy a crucial
focus of the Muslims in the world. Beyond all these, the 9/11 attacks were perhaps
the single most important turning point in the Muslim experience. Apart from its
negative consequences on their daily lives, the focus of the world of Islam and
Islamic countries reached an unprecedented intensity.

1.4 Muslim community in India

*The historical phase of India began with the Muslim invasion. Muslims were India's first historian* (Beon, 1887).

This statement clearly indicates the presence and participation of Muslims in
the making of Indian history. In fact, the name India that derived out of Hindustan was a
name given by Muslim invaders to the place of Hindus. Muslims came to India for the
first time in 711 C.E, with Muhammad-Bin-Qasim attacking the Sind province for the
release of civilian Muslim hostages held by Raja Dahir, King of Sind province. Further,
occupied the Sind province, thus establishing the first Muslim territory in India where
the Pakistan exists now. Then following him entered various rulers viz. Mahmud of
Ghur and the Mahmud of Ghazni, commonly referred to as Mohammed Ghazni and
Muhammad Ghori in Indian history entered India. But later on, the first Muslim dynasty
in India was founded, with Qutb-ud-Din-Aibak becoming the emperor of Delhi. Various
rulers, who founded four more dynasties, ruled the country, and formed a stable territory
of India, which never existed before them, and brought into India various administrative
reforms, and organized India in a new way, followed him. They were in strong power
for atleast five centuries, within which, the religion of Islam developed itself manifold
times and created a great impact in the Indian society. In short, when the Britishers
came up as traders and started their colonies in India, the country was a Muslim nation
rather than a Hindu country. Islam has become the part of Indian society and became

11
inseparable at any cause. Further, there were no discrepancies within Hindu and Muslim until Britishers came into the scene (Raychoudhry, 1978).

Finally, after the acquisition of India by British and revolt of 1857, commonly known as the first war of Indian Independence, the Muslim rule ended providing a change in the entire lifestyle of the country. The country was united with no differences, fighting for a free India. 'The Divide and Rule policy' of the British brought a change in the harmonious relationship between the communities. The Muslim League was founded in London, which changed the entire ideology of the struggle. The British proposed dividing of India into two states, which was also accepted by some leaders of the struggle for their vested political gains.

Riots, communal rivalry and religious chauvinism started on the very first day of the divide, when both the countries got freedom. There were riots in the border, which resulted in heavy bloodshed, and many lost their families, and got trapped across boundaries. In this, Jammu and Kashmir, which had a greater concentration of Muslims, though ruled by a Hindu king, remained aloof, not joining hands with either of the countries. Further Jammu and Kashmir was annexed by India that added fuel to fire. Tensions mounted in the borders, and two countries treated each other as enemies, which in turn affected the Muslims who were now minorities in India. They were deprived of equal status and were exposed to various levels and types of discrimination. Following the acquisition of Kashmir, three wars were fought on Jammu and Kashmir issue, which intensified the enmity against the Muslims internally.

The next six decades of Muslim history in India saw a lot of bloodshed, riots and many threats from the Hindutva movements, and had shrunken the status of
Muslims to one among the many minorities, thus giving them very little of access and reach towards development. The 2001 census of the Government of India provides the fact that the Muslim population was 138 million out of a total population of 1029 million. Percentagewise, Muslims represent 13.4% of the total population, as compared to 80.5% Hindus (including SCs/STs) and 6.1% other minorities (Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Jains). The largest concentrations, about 47% of all Muslims in India, live in the three states of Uttar Pradesh (30.7 million; 18.5%), West Bengal (20.2 million; 25%), and Bihar (13.7 million; 16.5%). In Lakshadweep Muslims represent a majority of the local population (93% in 2001) and in Jammu and Kashmir (67% in 2001). High concentrations of Muslims are found in the eastern states of Assam (31%) and West Bengal (25%), and in the southern state of Kerala (24.7%). Currently the Muslim population is around 150 million. It was not revealed that such an enormous section of the society is undergoing a serious threat in the name of discrimination and communalism, until a committee was appointed to study the socioeconomic status of Muslims in India (Nandy, & Rao, 2001).

The Government in 2006, constituted a committee under the Chairmanship of Justice Rajinder Sachar, to analyze the socioeconomic and educational status of Muslims in India. Commonly known as the Sachar committee, this is first ever committee in India after Independence that was constituted to study the status of Muslims. This committee brought into limelight of the pathetic situation of the Muslim society in India (Sachar et al., 2006).
The main recommendations of the Sachar committee include,

1) In the field of literacy, the committee revealed that the rate among Muslims is very much below than the national average. The gap between Muslims and the general average is greater in urban areas and women. 25% of Muslim children between the 6-14 year age group have either never attended school or have dropped out.

2) Muslim parents are not averse to mainstream education or to send their children to affordable Government schools. The access to Government schools for children of Muslim parents is limited.

3) Bidi workers, tailors and mechanics need to be provided with social safety nets and social security. The participation of Muslims in the professional and managerial cadre is low.

4) The average amount of the bank loan disbursed to the Muslims is $\frac{2}{3}$rd of the amount disbursed to other minorities. In some cases, it is half. The Reserve Bank of India’s efforts to extend banking and credit facilities under the Prime Minister’s 15-point programme of (1983) has mainly benefited other minorities marginalizing Muslims.

5) There is a clear and significant inverse association between the proportion of the Muslim population and the availability of educational infrastructure in small villages. Muslim concentration villages are not well served with full-fledged roads and local bus stops.

6) The presence of Muslims has been found to be only 3% in the IAS, 1.8% in the IFS and 4% in the IPS.
7) The Muslim community has a representation of only 4.5% in Indian Railways while 98.7% of them are positioned at lower levels. Representation of Muslims is very low in the Universities and in banks. Their share as police constables is only 6%, in healthy 4.4%, in transport 6.5%.

8) Maulana Azad Education Foundation is effectively the corpus needs fund to be increased to 1000 crores. Total allocation in the four years 2002 to 2006 for Madarsa Modernization scheme is 106 crores. The information regarding the scheme has not adequately percolated down. Even if the share of Muslims in elected bodies is low, the other underrepresented segments can be involved in the decision making process through innovative mechanisms.

9) Most of the variables indicate that Muslim-OBCs are significantly deprived in comparison to the Hindu-OBCs. The work participation rate (WPR) shows the presence of a sharp difference between Hindu-OBCs (67%) and the Muslims. The share of Muslim-OBCs in government/ PSU jobs is much lower than Hindu-OBCs.

10) In the seventh part of the findings, it has been clearly mentioned that the basic amenities like the electricity, water distribution, postal services and telephonic facilities were not adequate in Muslim dwelling areas.

The above mentioned points suffice to articulate the sad state of affairs of the Muslim community in India. After the Sachar committee, report was made public the nation debated the condition of Muslims in India. The Government acknowledged the problem and beneficial schemes were introduced. But according to the report released by Anhad (a civil society, group working on minority affairs) even after the national meet on the status of Muslims in contemporary India, the per
capita level of investment from the side of Government for the community still stands low. The scheme for investment in districts with a high minority population, at the best covers 30 percent of the total population. The programmes were provided for area development rather than programmes focused on the minorities. Therefore, they prove blunt instruments as much of the expenditure is on general infrastructure and little to directly benefit deprived people of the community. Altogether, they are not consulted for their priorities.

On the economic front too Muslim community face problem, which equals human rights violations. In the recent past, after every terrorist attack Muslim community is targeted by the state machinery and several time innocent youth were arrested on false premises or just on suspicion without any substantial proof. Cases of illegal detention are generally reported from states like Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. A study portrays that there are 1, 02,652 Muslims in prisons of India, out of the total prison population of 3, 73,271 (Raghavan & Nair, 2011). The states with the most disproportionate amount of Muslims in prisons are Maharashtra, Gujarat and Kerala. In Maharashtra, Muslims account for 10.6% of the general population, yet they comprise 32.4% of the prison population. It became known that Muslim youth were randomly picked in Hyderabad and from Azamgarh of Uttar Pradesh.

The Andhra Pradesh Government admits illegal detention of Muslims when it paid compensation to 21 Muslim youth who were tortured in the police custody after being wrongly held in 2007. India’s popular investigative magazine *Tehelka* found than an overwhelming cases of arrests pertaining to the minority community in terrorist acts were based on non-existent and fraudulent evidences. Hundreds of
According to media reports, bar associations in different parts of the country, Faizabad, Lucknow and Dhar among them, have asked their members not to defend Muslim terror suspects (Giraldus Cambrensis, 2006). For instance, in a Bomb Blast at red fort bus stand on July 14th 1997. Police arrested Mohammad Ameer Khan and declared him as the terrorist, but court released him in the year 2009, after enquiring 23 evidences, which serve as an example of the unfair approach towards Muslims (The Hindu, 2012). On September 18th, Thameem Ansari was arrested, as he was suspected to pass news via Sri Lanka to Pakistan on the secrets of Indian Army. Later on, he too was released, as the information was mere fake. These clearly show the conceited and inequitable treatment towards Muslims in India (Anthonisamy, 2012).

Analyzing the political representation of Muslims in India, it is a well-known fact that Muslims have always been provided a meagre representation in elections bank (constitutional representation to be included) and has been viewed as mere voters rather than members of the constituencies. Representation of the needs of the Muslims has not been portrayed in the right spirit. Further, a news article by Mari Selvaraj, published in Ananda Vikatan, a leading Tamil magazine on 29th May 2013, provides a clear picture of the status of Muslims in India. When a church Pastor made 100 children to draw images of terrorists, uniformly all children drew the picture as a dwarf, with a beard and kurta, the traditional outfit of Muslims. This shows how Muslims have been framed as terrorists even in the young minds of India. With a significant proportion of the Muslim population in India, for any election, they remain important in pre poll phase but become pathetic in the post poll
scenario. The social and cultural misrepresentation of Muslims has been continuing driving them to a state of distress.

1.5 Images of Muslims and Islam in the media

"The media is the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that is power; because they control the minds of the masses" - Malcolm X.

We live in an era of sophisticated society. In this fast moving world, media play a major role and stand as part of day-to-day life. Media have become the opinion leader for human in each and every aspect of life. An important pillar of the present society, moulding the thought process of the public rather than happenings. In the era of media corporate and media supremacy, the formation of opinions and decisions are not the outcome of our personal experiences rather, media practitioners are responsible for the creation of those mental pictures. With the advancements in technology, gadgetry and the advent of various forms of media, it is appropriate to comment that reliance on information has increased significantly to the satellite communication power in making, remaking, manipulating and distorting different images, and perceptions on the conflicts and happenings in the society. Even then, newspaper, the traditional mainstream media plays a major role in shaping and mobilizing the opinions on the societal happenings in the minds of the readers. Christopher, while writing about the formation of images, refer that image does not come from the personal experiences, but from the best output of a professional media process (Atton, 2001).

Hence, print media have become an important pillar of the society and have the power to blow up a micro issue as a big conflict and vice versa. As referred by
Cohen (1983) everybody collects our impression, images of societies and issues from the media. Thus, the editors and reporters of newspapers construct the real face of happenings in society and they serve as the policymakers in disguise.

Quite a lot of studies have authored/established the power of media on audience. They mostly rely on the media agenda, respond according to the media information, and even ponder on the model advocated for them by media contents. It can be assumed that the media conglomerates slowly and steadily rose as a force to reckon within the business of structuring, restructuring, constructing or distorting the images of the nations, communities, religion, caste, colour, creed and different ethnic groups. Thus, in this world of information technology, millions of people understand the world events through the prism of the media.

It is a known fact that a person develops perception about another with the help of images. Correspondingly, studying the images is noteworthy in the analysis of international policies. As Robert Jervis precisely stated that, it is often impossible to explain policies without reference to the decision maker’s belief about the world and their images of others (Jervis, 1976).

It can be said that image may guide or mislead the viewers. Similarly, it is not always based on lies. Thus, due to the revolution in information technology and the growth of mass media, significance of images in international politics has been enhanced. In this millennium, it is possible because of the satellite media, live images of the media disseminates events instantly to hundreds of millions of audience around the globe.

Currently, millions of people receive first hand information with the help of the media. Thus, criteria of relationship among nations and states demarcated by the
media from time to time are decided in the backdrop of these images as diplomats and foreign policy makers obtain the bulk information from the mass media despite their access to other forms of communication.

According to Parenti and Michael (2003), the most deadly and effective propaganda device related to distortion of the image depends on framing rather than untruth. 'It means, of twisting the facts, or bending the truth rather than breaking it, using emphasis, and other auxiliary embellishments, media practitioner can create a desired impression without departing too far from the appearance of objectivity'.

Chomsky (2003) has also invariably used the term 'framing' in an interview to refer the way New York Times introduced a news story, which reported an offer by Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. Primarily, Noam Chomsky argued that the newspaper story marginalized Iraq’s offer by opening its story with, a statement from the White House official discrediting it.

We cannot doubt the influence that the media put forth in the society today. Though the traditional models of delivery in broadcast media become obsolete and newspaper circulation declines, and people have turned to the fast evolving environment in which the proliferation of channels and 24-hour broadcasting are delivered from almost anywhere onto computers, phones and hand-held devices. The decision-making and opinion favouring power still vests in the hands of the newspapers. ‘Martini media’- as described by the BBC’s Director-General, Mark Thompson consumed ‘anytime, anyplace, anywhere’, today's media still have increased powers not only to reach and reflect, but also to influence what people think (Hakim & Harris, 2011).
At times of conflict, the media can aggravate or modest insight of fear and threat, the most sensible among them being the depiction of Muslim images. Ever since the 9/11 attacks, newspapers, TV networks and the internet have been the chief focus of public debate on Islam and Muslims throughout the world. Mainly, in countries with a large Muslim population, indisputable feelings of insecurity and threat amongst minority populations have become entangled with prevalent concerns about uncontrolled migration and criticism of multiculturalism. These dialogues are replicated, and often amplified by different media channels. The way in which Muslims and Islam are portrayed in the media reflects the communal attitudes towards them, but at the same time shaping the political arena within which Muslims feel excluded or welcome. Indeed, overwhelming analyses support the view that the portrayal of Muslims in the media affects the public opinion of them (Niyas, 2013)

The disagreement between Islam and the media is not a new occurrence. The history substantiated in the fact that the conflicts and controversies over the media portrayal of the Muslims can be traced back to the days of its inception. Nevertheless, the same has undergone a drastic change since the attacks of 9/11, which has brought the entire attention of the world towards Islam and the coverage provided by the media towards it.

It is acclaimed that the mainstream media of the world have been diffusing fake information about the Islamic community for the last few decades. As an outcome of the distorted images, framed and manipulated by the media, Islam stands as the form of negativity in the world. This is a known fact that both the United States and Western mainstream media often misrepresent and wrongly interpret/represent Islam, Islamic community and its manifestation. Even the elite media of
the United States like *New York Times* and Washington post, magazines like *Time and Newsweek*, and the electronic media, including ABC, CBS, NBC and CNN have been portraying the Islamic world in a negative and adverse manner. With the termination of communism, Islam became the next focus of the media of the entire world (Trinka & James, 1995).

Likewise, the statement of Jean Kirkpatrick also supported the ideology of Muslim analysts. Jean, the former ambassador of UN, had referred on the CNN as they watched the hammer and sickle go down last time on Kremlin: the next enemy is 'Islamic fundamentalism' (Lewis, 1990).

That is why tools/devices related to creation of images and stereotypes were considered as crucial tools to counter emotional conflicts around the world. Elgamri (2010) sought to highlight questions of power and ideology in the process of representation in light of the characteristics of orientalist dialogues. According to the orientalist tradition, Islam is viewed based on the following set of assumptions:

1) Its alleged contrast with and difference from the West
2) Its alleged inability to change
3) Its perceived incompatibility with modernism
4) Its perceived threat and destabilizing power
5) Its demographic and socio-cultural threat, and
6) Its monolithism

However, after the Gulf War, and especially after the embassy bombings (1998) and the World Trade Centre attack of (2001), coverage of Muslims started to occupy an important place in the news. Thus, the American public was constantly exposed to a negative image of Islam and Muslims. Consequently, the image of
American Muslims took shape alongside the images of Muslims on television. This Muslim image is known to anybody as irrational terrorists, airplane hijackers, and suicide bombers who wage war against 'civilization' and 'democracy' in the name of 'Jihad' (holy war) to establish the Islamic way of life against the _cavern_, who are unbelievers to be either converted or killed.

Coming to the scene in India, the media did not miss any chance to publish news about their rituals and cultures negatively. Not only in the print media in India, but also at international levels, there is a case for general portrayal of Muslims as terrorist. The print forms portray news against Muslims with efficient captions. Television was also powerful in bringing the scene in the minds of the viewers. They raise suitable terror music with bloodstains to give news a terrific theatricality.

The news media in India since 1947, largely, unconsciously, have moved against the principles of good journalism when they have supposed their prime responsibility in supporting the rulers to promote the so-called national interest, but largely at the cost of the Muslims, indulging in offending and insulting them. The basic objective of this sort of anti-Muslim journalistic set-up is to serve the interests of the majorities and work against, mainly, the Muslims (Colachal, 2008).

Muslims in post-independence India have lost out in terms of growth. Thus, when it comes to a discussion of the relationship between Media and Minority, Muslims once again get marginalized. A staff-reporter of a news daily (Hindi) in Delhi says that he has been asked to cover Muslim issues only when something goes wrong. In case of positive news, he was asked to drop that. The English newspapers have nothing better to offer than some reports in their supplement section in a month or two. The Urdu newspapers, on the other hand,
have still enough to add to its professionalism in order to fit in this market-driven media age (Kumar, 2011).

Since the media plays chaos in the perceptive domains of majority of Indian, a few lines would help these self proclaimed patriots to understand the realistic position. While focusing on Muslims in India, the media and politicians encouraged by the administrators make it appear that Muslims are a trouble and many funds are spent on them without cause. Thus, media at a time and then, has been providing a false, surrogate, misinterpreted imagery of Muslims make them an alien on the soil and giving them the names and identity as fanatic, barbaric, ruthless, the non tolerable crew of people (op. cit, 2008).

_Hindu Tamil_ newspaper has published the case of Bomb Blast attempt of the 1996 Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple. “Few Muslims were arrested due to the commanding power of police. Later on the Muslim group related to the suspects spoke to the chief minister and made things clear which led to the release of the arrested ones” (2013).

These serious consequences are due to the negative portrayal by the print media of some Muslim criminals that affects the community as a whole. The essay published by _Junior Vikatan_ on 20/10/2013 has portrayed the area of ‘Nellupettai’ (Madurai) (7000 Muslims out of 10,000 population) as the birthplace of terrorism. Hence, the Muslims in this area are portrayed as terrorist and were assaulted repeatedly by police.

The art of ‘follow-up’ being practiced in the newspaper was actually drafted only with the Muslim issues. Muslims arrested on any changes were portrayed as
only 'terrorists'. The very notable point is that, the newspaper does not portray reality.

Many genuine Muslims miss their golden opportunities as a result of such issues and portrayal. Terrorists may belong to Islam, but not all the Muslims are terrorists. Islam strictly prohibits terrorism. The Quran clearly states that, "If anyone slew an innocent person, it would be as if he slew the whole mankind and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole mankind" (Al- Quran, 5:32). So, from the point of view of Islam, these Bomb Blasts are the activities against the human race. But newspapers unmindful of the benevolent tenets of Islam continue to publish news against Muslims.

A woman saint was arrested and questioned based on Malegaon Bomb Blast. Home Minister Sushilkumar Shinde has strictly instructed that talking or writing about this is a great insult of court (Vaithiyanathan, 2013).

There are about 75,000 newspaper organizations and 450 television channels in India, churning news 24/7 but rarely do we find positive images about Islam or Muslims.

There has been a debate ever since independence on how the Muslims have been perceived as an alien and enemy in India. Considering the fact that it is the second largest community in the country and is a minority. This has made this notable population of the country live in their homeland as second class citizens, deprived of the powers and recognition. There have been a lot of riots, incidents, bloodshed and conflicts to substantiate this fact. But the media, be it print or visual, which ought to have reiterated peace and brotherhood in the society alas was on the adverse side. Distorting information about the Muslims excluding them from the
mainstream. This has further widened the cracks between the communities, making them act as real enemies. One such case, the Coimbatore Bomb Blast conflict, which shook the entire South India for around a year. On the onset of conflict, media played a crucial role, in the portrayal of the conflict. This has further shattered the relationships between both the communities, providing vulnerability. This role of media need to be studied to make them realize the role they ought to play, and the role they are playing in actuality, suggesting them the errors they have made if possible bring about change the role, functioning and position in the society.

1.6 Origin of the conflict

Communal violence can be defined as exposure to acts of interpersonal violence committed by individuals who are not intimately related to the victim. Some of the acts that fall under the communal violence umbrella include sexual assault, burglary, use of weapons, muggings, the sounds of the bullet shots, as well as social disorder issues such as the presence of teen gangs, drugs, and racial divisions. It occurs between different communal groups, but the affected ones remain to be the innocent people, rather than the exact accused. Groupings in community can be based on religion, tribe, sect, race and others (Tadjoeddin, 2004).

Communal violence raises larger issues of grave national importance, which represents a straightforward law and order problem. The primary responsibility of providing security of life and property of all has not been satisfactorily discharged in the past two decades, and this failure has greatly aggravated the problem. The remedy does not lie in the communalization of the administrative machinery, but making administration more effective. The de-communalization of politics is a
task for the political leadership, and there is a need for greater responsibility (Rajeshwari, 2004).

A long-term study of communal violence in independent India would show that it have become a permanent phenomenon. The violence has marked the Indian transition for the past few years. Incidents of violence have spread within the country, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and in many other places. Krishna in (1985), in his short report exclaimed that communal violence had become an endemic feature of Indian life before independence, which declined markedly after 1947. There are no adequate data on communal incidents between 1947 and 1954, but there is good ground for believing that there were not many of them. Such information was available in India, except Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, there were only 20 incidents in 1950 (11 of them in West Bengal), 7 in 1951, 12 in 1952 and 4 in 1953. The great division in the history of communal riots in India was 1964. This was borne out by the statistical compilation put together by the Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, whereas the total number of reported communal incidents over the period 1950-1963 was 1141, gave an average of 81.5 per year, and in 1964, it had a rise to 2115. Admittedly, 1964 was a particularly dark year for communal violence, but there is no mistaking the fact that it represented a major change in the communal climate in the country. In the seven years between 1964 and 1970, the average number of incidents per year was 1025, as against 81.5 for the preceding fourteen years.

Kausar (2006) exclaimed that after the India-Pakistan partition, great massacre due to communal riots seems to continue in present times too, evidenced by Muzafar Nagar (2013) incidence. The root cause of these riots shall be ascribed
to the prevalence that happened in Jamshedpur, Rourkela and Jabalpur (1961 and 1964), Ahmedabad (1969), Ranchi-Bihar (1967), Turkman Gate massacre (1976), Moradabad (1980), Nellie, Nowgong, Assam (1983), Bombay Bhiwandi (1984), Meerut (1987), for instance. Though communal riots are condemned in various quarters, there is still complete inaction from both the administration and the ruling Governments in many states. Political parties have always had a hand in instigating and exploiting communal violence, so as to meet their electoral interests. In many of these riots, nearly 1,000 Muslims were killed each time in the due course of the riots. Communal conflicts leading to communal violence and genocide were primarily due to religious fundamentalism. This eventually led to the destruction/demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya and Gujarat riots, in 1992 and 2002, engulfing thousands of Muslims from Ahmedabad and Surat.

The roots of communal tension in Tamil Nadu date back to the early 1980s, with over 1,200 Dalits of Meenakshipuram, a village in Tirunelveli district, embracing Islam and changing the name of the village as ‘Rehmatnagar’. The Dalits viewed the conversion as a means to social empowerment whereas, the Hindu activists took it as a threat and visited ‘Rehmatnagar’ and other areas in order to ‘bring back’ the converted Dalits into the Hindu fold (Rajamohan, 2001). These incidents ignited tensions between the two religious groups. On March 1982, the first communal riots broke out at Mandaikadu, Kanyakumari district, between the Hindus and Christians, due to the alleged conversion by Christian missionaries.
1.7 Serial issues related to Coimbatore Bomb Blasts - A short description

Coimbatore district is one of the biggest districts in Tamil Nadu and is divided into three revenue Divisions and Nine Taluks enclosing of 482 revenue villages. Out of three revenue divisions, Coimbatore division is industrially developed with revenues crossing more than Rs. 6,000 crores. Pollachi is predominantly agricultural whereas Tirupur is partly agricultural and partly rich in hosiery manufacturing. Simultaneously, many textile mills were set up attracting workers from the outskirts of Coimbatore and from neighbouring Kerala. Gujaratis and Marwaris established textile godowns in the city. Muslims constituted the predominant group that came from Kerala. Even before this influx, Muslims living at Kottaimedu in Coimbatore had developed strong links with Kerala. Kottaimedu is the heartland of the Muslim population in Coimbatore; about 80,000 Muslims, 25,000 Hindus and 4,000 Christians live there.

At the outset, the Coimbatore Bomb Blasts have vertically isolated the Muslim community from other communities. Subramanian (1998) published details regarding many incidents, which caused violence in this city. Hindu Munnani leader Rama Gopalan used to visit Coimbatore often to deliver highly provocative speech insulting Muslims and Islam. The genesis of the communal violence in Coimbatore can be traced to assault Tirukovilur Sundaram, and Jana Krishnamoorthi, a Hindu activits, in June 11th1983. Some Muslims assaulted him because he delivered provocative speech against Islam and Prophet Mohammed. Militant Hindu Munnani activities like Moogambikai Mani and Koodangulam Selvaraj also specialized in reviling Islam. The passions roused by these activities and speeches led to the founding of Al-Ummah. Al-Ummah leader S. A. Basha himself assaulted Rama Gopalan at Madurai railway station.
1.8 Excerpts of the First Information Report (FIR) about communal violence against the two major groups

On December 13th, 1986, defamatory words against Muslims were written on the walls of the house of Hamsa by RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) which led to fights between them. Next day near Eshwaran temple, a person known as Ramesh was attacked by Bismi Muslim organization. The night Hindu Munnani people on the Winston road around 7:00 pm attacked a Mohammed (alias Khalasi) and by 8:30 pm, 15 members of the Hindu Munnani attacked a person known as Jaffer Ali. These serial incidents led to the conflict between the two religious groups started to develop. As a precautionary measure, police arrested ten people including Basha on December 15th and another ten of rival group enclosing Balasubramaniam.

On July 13th, 1987, at Rowther Street, Jahangir's car was damaged and Dravidar Kalaga Periyar library was attacked. Hindu Munnani targeted many Muslim organisations for an attack enclosing Gopal (Dravidar Kalagam).

On March 8th, 1988 Abdhul Lathif, Yusuf Razak, Nizam, Abdul Rahman, after the meeting of the Dravida Kalagam were attacked due to the reason of talking abusive words about the Hindu religion. Veeraganesh and many others attacked them. In this clash, Abdul Lathif was killed.

On April 3rd, 1989 by 11:00 pm, Hakim of Dravida Kalagam was attacked and killed by Ramanarayanan, Veera Ganesh, Moogambigai Mani, Paramasivam of Hindu Munnani. On August 26th, 1989, Zubair and many others murdered Veeraganesh. L. K. Advani, prominent Leader of Barathiya Janatha Party (BJP) came for the condolence.

The summary of Subramanian (1998) report states the Hindu Munnani platform speaker called Veera Siva (alias Veera Sivakumar) was murdered on
September 5th, 1991. Within 45 minutes of this murder, a Muslim preacher and Hakkim of Kerala was murdered in R.S. Puram. The Hindu Munnani went on a campaign calling the Hindus to purchase only from shops owned by Hindus. Since this affected the footpath business by Muslims. S. A. Basha, formed a group by the name Al-Ummah to protect their business interest.

In the early 90s, gradually, the growing religious tensions were manifested in violence all over the state, and during this period, the political parties made efforts to win the vote bank of majority and minority communities. All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) tried to secure more Hindus votes, while, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) employed the strategy of pacifying the Muslims. This added to polarization between the two communities that was further intensified after the demolition of the Babri Masjid, at Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh on December 6th, 1992. Immediately after the demolition of the Babri Masjid, there were protests in the Kottaimedu area. On December 8th 1992, police opened fire near Masjid and lathi-charged Muslims at the assembly. Fortunately, there were no injuries or human loss.

According to the FIR filed on September 12th, 1993, a minor incidence occurred while playing cricket, which was solved amicably. K. C. Aarumugam's brother, Paramasivam brought this issue to Hindu Munnani. On September 15th, 1993 at 11:00 am, Hindu Munnani attacked the shops of the Muslims. A Muslim youth complained this to Al-Ummah. That resulted in the attack of Tamilvanan and many others by 11:00 pm. in retaliation.

In November 1993, there was a Bomb Blast in RSS building in Chennai. Thus, as a prevention act Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA). The Coimbatore police arrested S.A. Basha and 15 others. Sequentially,
police also entered Kottaimedu, blamed Muslim people, and ransacked their houses and arrested almost all Muslim youth on false grounds and beat them up in custody. This brutalized their minds against the police (PUCL, 1998).

To add up, the police installed three check posts on important entry roads of Kottaimedu, and four pickets inside Kottaimedu, making it an island. In the recent past, Muslims gathered themselves under various organizations like Al-Ummah and the Tamil Nadu Muslim Munnetra Kazagham (TMMK), for their 'protection and safety'. Another organization, called Jamaithul Ahlul Quran and Hadis (JAQH), works for removing the ills in the Muslim community. During the election campaign, DMK candidates promised that the check posts would be removed if they come to power. After sensing electoral victory, some Muslim youth smashed the check posts and stabbed two constables who protested their action. Police officers took the above incident as a challenge to their authority.

According to the FIR filed on January 28th 1997, the Jihad committee's head, Palanai Baba was murdered, in Pollachi, which led to a clash between the Hindus and Muslims, as a result, on February 1st 1997 Sadhiq Basha, and Iqbal were murdered.

Another important reason for the conflict is mamool (bribe). There are about 1,200 footpath shops in and around Ukkadam, Big Bazaar and Kottaimedu, mainly owned by Muslims. Police collected as mamool approximately Rs.25 to Rs.50 per day per shop as mamool. After the elections, these traders got themselves organized under banners like the TMMK, the All India Trade Union Congress and Al-Ummah. It is to be noted that Al-Ummah and TMMK have played a crucial and effective role in curbing the mamool collections by the police that led to the conflict between the Muslim community and the police.
1.9 Bomb Blasts and their consequences

People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL, 1998) reported the first series of events happened in the month of November 1997 in Coimbatore. On November 29th, around 7.00 pm, a Sub Inspector (S.I.) stopped two Muslim youth on an M-80 two-wheeler. One of them was Jahangir, an office bearer of Al-Ummah. There was a wordy duel and he was taken to the B1 police station. On hearing this incident, Ansari, Secretary of Al-Ummah and Samsudeen went to the police station at about 7.30 pm to enquire about it. In the presence of Ansari, the S.I. allegedly told Jahangir that all Muslims should be packed off to Pakistan and also used denigrator language against Muslims. Ansari used abusive language in retaliation for which he was beaten up by S.I. and the constables. Ansari said that he would take up the matter to the higher-officials.

The news of 'Al- Ummah -Leader' being beaten up, spreaded and a large number of people assembled before Al-Ummah office. When Ansari reached the office, the crowd started debating on a road-Roko to protest against the S.I. As the meeting was in progress, around 11 pm, Police Commissioner Rajendran came with a police force to Al-Ummah office. The restive crowd objected to this. The police then informed the group that they had come to arrest the three persons who had killed a traffic constable named R. Selvaraj at 9.00 pm. Ansari said that he was not aware of such an incident and that he would help apprehend the killers and hand them over by 11 am the next day.

While retreating from Kottaimedu, police allegedly set fire to the footpath shops. Kottai Saravanan, District Secretary, Hindu Makkal Katchi told the PUCL team that it was 'The Hindus' who burnt down the footpath shops. Leaders of the TMMK, who were returning from Pollachi at 1.30 am on November 30th, saw the
shops burning. Arunthathiyars (a Dalit community) living across Ukkadam confirmed that the shops were burnt during the night of November 29th. The burning of footpath shops seems to add fuel to the burning flame to the theory that mamool collection was on the backdrop. Based on a few eyewitness accounts, Al-Ummah located the three persons suspected in the killing of Selvaraj - Abbas (22), Shafi (22) and Azeez (20) - and handed them over to the police at 9 am on November 30th. While Abbas and Shafi were iron scrap traders, Azeez was a footpath vadai vendor.

According to Subramanian (1998), the incidents viz. Traffic constable R. Selvaraj's incident of murder made the policemen furious, which made them damage and attacked the Muslim footpath shops. Some Hindus belonging to Kempatty colony looted Muslim shops. By 8.00 am on November 30th, more than 100 police officers staged dharna (strike) at Ukkadam and then took a procession towards the General Hospital. At kottaimedu and in many other places Muslims were killed in police firing.

Muslims retaliated and a tense situation prevailed. On the other side of Kottaimedu, N.H. Road and in CMC Colony in Hafizpet, Hindutva forces launched a vicious attack on the houses of innocent Muslim families. In terror, several families handed over their house keys and stood as mute spectators just to save the lives of their women and children. Ayub Khan, district urban secretary of the TMMK, came to the troubled spot around 11.00 am and saw the situation tense. He also saw 'Valliammai Bakery' and 'Krishna Sweets' burning. A few huts on the colony side were also burnt. It was claimed that Ayub Khan and his friends saved a few Hindu youth and controlled the Muslim crowd.
On November 30\textsuperscript{th}, 1997, traffic constable Selvaraj was killed by Al-Ummah cadres that resulted in a brutal retaliation, where 18 Muslims were killed. The city of Coimbatore was subjected to 19 explosions, between February 14\textsuperscript{th}, 1998 and February 17\textsuperscript{th}, 1998, resulting in the death of 58 persons and injuries to 250 persons and huge loss to private and public properties. Bombs planted in 24 places were recovered and defused. According to the prosecution, this was engineered by Al Ummah, as A1 (Accused number one) S.A. Basha. The photographs and video clippings of the dead bodies of these persons were distributed to incite feelings of revenge and violence that resulted in serial bombing. To demonstrate their feelings, they chose the day of L.K. Advani's visit to Coimbatore, to attend an election rally. To execute the plot, various accused procured explosives and planted them at strategic locations to cause explosions. (Judgment report of the Madras High Court, 2009), and about 168 Muslims were arrested in Coimbatore. A special court was formed in 2001 and 345 victims were enquired from August 23\textsuperscript{th}, 2001 and the case is in the 'Supreme Court' for the remaining 18.

The blasts were reported on West Sambandam Road, Gani Rowther Street at Ukkadam, at a textile showroom on Big Bazaar Street, a shopping complex near the main bus stand at Gandhipuram, the vehicle parking at Coimbatore Junction railway station, the Coimbatore Medical College Hospital (CMCH), a travel agency on V.K.K. Menon Road, a Jewellery shop on Oppanakara Street, a BJP election office at Ratnapuri near Sivananda Colony and a temple at Kurichikulam. The blasts occurred despite the elaborate security measures, including the deployment of paramilitary forces. Mobs ran amuck soon after the blasts, looting and burning Muslim shops in scenes reminiscent of December (1997) riots.
PUCL (1998) clearly states the fact that the Coimbatore episodes were not a mere expression of anguish over the death of a constable. In fact, it exposes the strategy of the perpetrators of these attacks and reveals the connivance between the Hindu fundamentalist forces, police and perhaps several administrative/revenue officials.

1.10 Statement of the problem

The Bomb Blasts of Coimbatore have the dubious distinction of being the cynosure for over a decade. News articles, features, columns, photographs and cover stories were carried in almost every newspaper irrespective of the native language. Throughout the period of the conflict before and after, newspapers have been continuously providing information regarding the conflict and related issues. The portrayal of conflict by regional newspapers needs to be subject to closer scrutiny with intense introspection. It is believed that the negative, surrogate portrayal of the media at some places without authentication have given a wrong imagery about the Muslim community among the readers affecting their livelihood and development. Hence, the researcher attempted to study the depiction of the conflict in the newspapers, with journalistic pertinence in order to understand the wider ramifications.