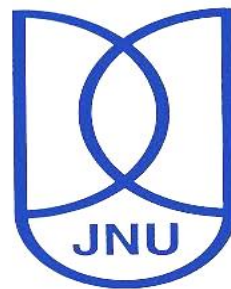


**REPORTING INSURGENCY: A STUDY OF PRINT
MEDIA IN CONTEMPORARY CHHATTISGARH**

*Thesis Submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for the award of the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

MEENAKSHI MISHRA



**CENTRE FOR MEDIA STUDIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELH**

2022



मीडिया अध्ययन केन्द्र
CENTRE FOR MEDIA STUDIES
सामाजिक विज्ञान संस्थान School of Social Sciences
जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय Jawaharlal Nehru University
नई दिल्ली-110067, भारत New Delhi-110067, India

DECLARATION

I, Meenakshi Mishra, hereby declare that this Ph.D. thesis titled “**Reporting Insurgency: A Study of Print Media in Contemporary Chhattisgarh**” submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** is my original work carried out as a doctoral student at the Centre for Media Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, under the supervision of Dr. Chitralekha.

All the sources used for the dissertation have been fully and properly cited. This thesis contains no material which has been submitted for the award of any other degree at any institution.

Meenakshi

MEENAKSHI MISHRA

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this Ph.D. thesis be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Supervisor

Chitralekha

Dr. Chitralekha

Dr. CHITRALEKHA
Assistant Professor
Centre for Media Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067

Co-Supervisor

Arvind K. Mishra

Dr. Arvind K. Mishra



Assistant Professor
Zakir Husain Centre for
Educational Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

Chairperson

Manukonda Rabin

Prof. Manukonda Rabin



अध्यक्ष/Chairperson
मीडिया अध्ययन केन्द्र/Centre for Media Studies
सामाजिक विज्ञान संस्थान/School of Social Sciences
जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय/Jawaharlal Nehru University
नई दिल्ली/ New Delhi - 110067

Tel : +91-11-26704618(Off.)

Address: Room No. 03, Centre for Media Studies, SSS, JNU, New Delhi-110067

E-mail: chair_cms@mail.jnu.ac.in, jnucentreformediastudies@yahoo.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Certificates		
Declarations		
Acknowledgements		ii
List of Tables		iii
List of Figures and Maps		iv
Abbreviations		v
Abstract		vi
CHAPTER-1	Introduction	1-44
CHAPTER-2	Print Media in Chhattisgarh: Histories of Reporting on Maoism	45-76
CHAPTER-3	Political Economy of Print Media in Chhattisgarh: A Comparative Analysis of Three Hindi Newspapers	77-124
CHAPTER-4	Media Labourers: Social Contexts and Trajectories of Work	125-154
CHAPTER-5	Conclusions	155-165
	Bibliography	166-171

Acknowledgment

It is with immense gratitude that I acknowledge the help and support of all those who directly or indirectly guided, cooperated, and facilitated the required necessities in finalising this work.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Chitralkha for mentoring and guiding me throughout my dissertation. She made her precious time and patience generously available to me for questions and discussions, throughout the period of this research work. Her valuable inputs, comments, and encouragements have been immensely helpful in carrying out this study. I am also thankful to my co-supervisor Dr. Arvind Kumar Mishra from Zakir Hussain Centre for Educational Studies for giving his valuable inputs on my research work. I owe my sincere gratitude to our former chairperson Prof. Heeraman Tiwari, Centre for Media Studies, for his valuable suggestions from time to time.

I am really indebted to the Chief -editor of Deshbandhu Newspaper Late Lalit Surjanji, for his help and all support I got through his associates while carrying out my fieldwork in Jagdalpur and Bastar region. I would like to thank the entire journalist fraternity of Bastar, especially senior journalists Devsharan Tiwari and S. Karimmudin without whom carrying out this research work in Bastar was almost impossible. Apart from this, I have received immense help while carrying out my research work from other members of the journalists' fraternity of Bastar like Prabhat Singh and Rakesh Kumar from time to time. I am also indebted with gratitude towards academician Bela Bhatia for her guidance and suggestions during my field work.

At last, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my parents, spouse, friends, and relatives for their unconditional love and support without which this work would not have been possible for me. However, for any error found in this research work, I am the one who is solely responsible.

Meenakshi Mishra

List of Tables

1	General data about the pattern of news being published in the Dandakaranya Samachar	99
2	Data about the number of stories with different tones towards the Maoists insurgency in the Dandakaranya Samachar	100
3	Data of Dandakaranya Samachar newspaper showing page placement of stories based on Maoists Insurgency.	101
4	Number of columns of Dandakaranya Samachar showing prominence of space allotted to different aspects of Maoists Insurgency ..	102
5	Data showing no. of stories with mention of words, Maoists, Naxals, encounter within Headlines, Leads, Body and Graphics (as per prominence of mention of word) for Dandakaranya Samachar	103
6	Data showing the number of news coming from three different sources, i.e., official sources, press notes, and local news sources for Dandakaranya Samachar	104
7	Details of primary data through content analysis from Dainik Bhaskar Newspaper	105
8	Data showing the tone of the stories related to Maoists insurgency in the Dainik Bhaskar Newspaper	106
9	Data showing the page placement of the story in Dainik Bhaskar Newspaper	107
10	Data showing number of column of Dainik Bhaskar newspaper showing prominence of space given to different aspects of Maoist Insurgency	108
11	Data showing story placement of no. of stories with mention of words Maoists, in Headlines, Leads, Body and Graphics in Dainik Bhaskar	109
12	Data showing no. of stories with different sources of the news in Dainik Bhaskar about Maoists Insurgency	110
13	General data obtained out of the content analysis of the Patrika Newspaper	111
14	Data showing the numbers of stories toned positively, negatively, and in a neutral way in the Patrika newspaper about Maoist insurgency	113
15	Data showing page placement of different stories in Patrika newspaper	113
16	Data showing number of columns of Patrika newspaper showing prominence of space given to different aspects of Maoist Insurgency	115
17	Data showing no. of stories with mention of words, Maoists, Naxals, encounter within Headlines, Leads, Body and Graphics in Patrika newspaper	116
18	Data showing no. of stories with different sources of the news in Patrika newspaper	117
19	Lists of number of journalists from different social backgrounds based on caste, religion or tribe.	125

List of Figures and Maps

Fig 1:	Map of Chhattisgarh State	43
Fig 2:	Picture of Deshbandhu news report of 1983 about adivasi joining Maoist	53
Fig 3:	Picture of Deshbandhu news report of 2004 about Home Minister of Chhattisgarh being questioned over restrictions on news about Maoist	58
Fig 4:	Picture of Deshbanshu news report of 2004 about Ashtha Abhiyan to counter Naxalism	60
Fig 5:	Picture of Hindustan Times news report of 2005 about adivasi resolving to drive away Naxals	61
Fig 6:	Picture of Deshbandhu news report of 2005 about adivasi vowing to drive away Maoist	62
Fig 7:	Picture of Dainik Bhaskar news report of 2005 about collector distributing arrows to adivasi	62
Fig 8:	Picture of Dainik Bhaskar news report of 2005 about 40 villages of Bastar together against Maoist	63
Fig 9:	Picture of an article of Chief –Editor of Patrika newspaper, Gulab Kothari vowing his allegiance to Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) government after 2019 parliamentary elections.	90
Fig10:	Picture of Patrika Newspaper front page containing article of the Chief-Editor Gulab Kothari in which he promised newspapers support and allegiance to BJP.	90

List of Charts

Chart 1:	Showing the number of tone of stories (negative, neutral, and positive) in three Newspapers	119
Chart 2:	Showing frequency of page placement of Maoists stories in three Newspapers	119
Chart 3:	Showing frequency of different sources of the news in three Newspapers	120

Abbreviations

ABP	Anandbazar Patrika
ABC	Audit Bureau of Circulations
ACHR	Asian Centre for Human Rights
BJP	Bhartiya Janta Party
CNBC	Consumer News and Business Channel
CNN- IBN	Cable News Network- Indian Broadcasting Network
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPI-ML	Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force
CSPS	Chhattisgarh Special Public Security
DAVP	Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity
FM	Frequency Modulations
FPR	Freedom of Press Report
ICI	Independent Citizen Initiatives
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
IGP	Inspector General of Police
IRS	India Readership Survey
MCC	Maoist Communist Centre
MCCI	Maoist Communist Centre of India
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MoEF	Ministry of Environment and Forest
NCR	Near Capital Region
PESA	Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas
PWG	People's War Group
PW	People's War
PU	Party Unity
PUCL	People's Union for Civil Liberties
RNI	Registrar of Newspapers for India
TOI	The Times of India
SEZ	Special Economic Zones
UAPA	Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act

Abstract

Scholars of mass media have often pointed out that the historical location and standpoint of media workers have a major influence on news content. Their own lived contexts including race, ethnicity, gender, religion, social status, education, upbringing, and personal experiences shape their attitudes, beliefs, and values, which in turn have relationships with the content of the news formed by them (see for eg. Shoemaker and Reese, 1996:61). In conflict and insurgency hit areas, these structures and processes of news reporting, become critically important, particularly in regional newspapers, producers of news (reporters) are often immersed themselves in the issues in different ways; the news stories they are able to write are also related to their individual and collective perceptions, as well as experiences with the issues involved. Howitt, while writing about the role of journalists in conflict reporting, argues that journalists too approach events with pre-set ways of apprehending the world. They have a structure or system of ideas, beliefs, or knowledge which they use when trying to understand the events they observe (Howitt, 1982:43). Thus, the locations of reporters who report in insurgency affected areas play a critical role in shaping news about the issues revolving around the insurgency.

With a purpose to understand the structural constraints and possibilities that local reporters contend with while reporting in insurgency hit areas, and their relationships with the regional print media discourses on Maoist insurgency in the insurgency affected Bastar region of Chhattisgarh state, the present research is focused on understanding the complicated processes of ‘news’ production in Chhattisgarh. The subject of this study is the little understood tribe of journalists working in the region. Through an ethnography of their work conducted between August-October, 2017, the study attempts to unpack the structural and institutionalised constraints to news production in the region, as well as the agency of the local journalists in the state. In order to understand the present trends in reporting and shaping of ‘news’ related to the Maoist insurgency, it is also important to look at the history of Maoist insurgency in India, particularly in the context of Chhattisgarh. The research also contributes to the understanding of the particularities of circumstances of news reporting in such circumstances, such as pressures of revenue collection, fear of offending political acquaintances, financial limitations, moral, and psychological pressures, limitations of geographical locations, risk of loss of critical political sources, and many other such real and envisaged situations under which the process of ‘news

formation' takes place in insurgency prone areas. It examines the ways in which these circumstances relate to the production of 'news' in the regional newspapers.

This research is ethnographic in nature to be able to provide a thick description of the conditions of the field and to interpretatively examine the meanings in conceptual structures and cultures of the life-world. The ethnographic study of the work of journalists reporting on the insurgency in Chhattisgarh tries to unravel the complex process of news production in insurgency hit areas. As such, besides significant archival research in the field, it has involved many months of non-participant observation, interviews, spending time in press offices, meeting some of the 'sources' of those studied. The present research adopts ethnographic study as its primary research method which is the study of "social interactions, behaviours and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organisations and communities" (Reeves, Kuper, Hodges, 2008: 2). Anthropological study on the journalists of the newspapers in India has been previously done by Per Stahlberg, who had taken journalists as the subject of the study in order to understand the vernacular journalism. He did his research work on the journalists of *Dainik Jagran* of Lucknow edition. Likewise, Ursula Rao has performed an ethnographic study on news making in northern India. Through field work and interviews, she compares the work culture of Times of India and *Dainik Jagran*.

This research studies the approach of regional print media towards the insurgency in Chhattisgarh with a special focus on the working of the local journalists in the regional newspapers of the state, their social leanings and compulsions while reporting insurgency, and the kind of threats and problems they face in their everyday work. For this purpose, an ethnographic study of the journalists working with the regional print media houses of the most insurgency affected area of Chhattisgarh, which is Bastar, has been taken. Based on the method of non-participant observation, the method included several interviews, discussions, and spending several working hours with the journalists in their office premises in Jagdalpur, administrative headquarters of Bastar zone, Raipur in Chhattisgarh, and Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh. The interviews and discussions were carried on with journalists, editors, owners of different print media houses, freelancers, stringers, political commentators, Hindi newspaper columnists, and some other media persons. To provide a thick description of the events and

actors involved, besides the months of non-participant observation and interviews with editors and journalists, the study involved conducting interviews with other media staff, peons, typists, and advertising persons of the media firms. In an extremely small office space where top managerial heads like Bureau Chief to editors, journalists and peon, and drivers, share the same space and work in the same environment, their knowledge and information mattered a lot for the proper interpretations of the facts and findings valuable for the study.

The research has also conducted content analysis of news articles of three regional newspapers of Bastar, with the aid of theoretical perspectives of media framing and agenda setting. In addition, to look into the early history of media reporting about the Maoist insurgency in India, the study employed secondary literature; and also archives of the regional newspapers of Chhattisgarh from the year 2000 to 2017. In order to trace the patterns of reporting and nature of historical concerns and issues engaged within print media of Chhattisgarh, the archival study of some of the earliest newspapers of the region, which came under the undivided Madhya Pradesh, was conducted.

The thesis is divided into five chapters including Introduction and Conclusions. The first chapter introduces the research which is focused on the examination of the processes of news production in Maoist insurgency affected areas of Chhattisgarh. The second chapter is ‘Print Media in Chhattisgarh: Histories of Reporting on the Maoist Insurgency’, it delineates the history of print media coverage of Maoists insurgency in Chhattisgarh. The third chapter is ‘Political Economy of Print Media in Chhattisgarh: A Comparative Analysis of Three Hindi Newspapers’, it contributes towards understanding that how the political economy of print media in Chhattisgarh plays its role in reporting and representation of Maoist-based news. There are different stakeholders in the field of print media such as capitalists, the state itself, politicians, and media owners. This chapter tries to explore that how capitalists and some of the local print media houses have colluded their interests and how the process of news publishing influences public opinion in favour of their business interests and how they are supported by the government.

‘Media Labourers: Social Contexts and Trajectories of Work’, is the fourth chapter that has discussed the backgrounds of the journalists, their personal, regional, psychological,

professional, social, educational, and cultural factors. Their personal views about the prevailing condition of insurgency in the state and solutions they think. The fifth chapter is the conclusion of the study. It has discussed the overall approach of regional media in insurgency coverage, local journalists and their work conditions, and its implications for the growth of free speech and free flow of information.

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

Scholars of mass media have often pointed out that the historical location and standpoint of media workers have a major influence on news content. Their own lived contexts including race, ethnicity, gender, religion, social status, education, upbringing, and personal experiences shape their attitudes, beliefs, and values, which in turn have relationships with the content of the news formed by them (see for eg. Shoemaker and Reese, 1996:61). In conflict and insurgency hit areas, these structures and processes of news reporting, become critically important, particularly in regional newspapers, producers of news (reporters) are often immersed themselves in the issues in different ways; the news stories they are able to write are also related to their individual and collective perceptions, as well as experiences with the issues involved. Howitt, while writing about the role of journalists in conflict reporting, argues that journalists too approach events with pre-set ways of apprehending the world. They have a structure or system of ideas, beliefs, or knowledge which they use when trying to understand the events they observe (Howitt, 1982:43). Thus, the locations of reporters who report in insurgency affected areas play a critical role in shaping news about the issues revolving around the insurgency.

Media reporting of sensitive issues such as insurgency in regional language newspapers bring these issues much closer to the local people, often posing problems for nation states and their representatives, who would want to control the flows and directions of such news (Jeffery, 2000: 186). When it comes to reporting on a sensitive issue, the reporters face questions from official agencies, from the people, and lastly, from the insurgent groups as well (Sharma, 2009:5). While reporting on such issues, often, journalistic autonomy is restricted at the political, economic, and organisational levels of news production, negotiated at the editorial level, and exercised at the level of practice. Within the duality of structure, journalistic autonomy is attained when journalists engage in the recursive reproduction of the institution. The level of autonomy enjoyed by journalists, therefore remains a fluid concept that is continually adjusted to manage the daily task of reporting the news (Sojovaag, 2013:155).

With a purpose to understand the structural constraints and possibilities that local reporters contend with while reporting in insurgency hit areas, and their relationships with the regional

print media discourses on Maoist insurgency in the insurgency affected Bastar region of Chhattisgarh state, the present research is focused on understanding the complicated processes of 'news' production in Chhattisgarh. The subject of this study is the little understood tribe of journalists working in the region. Through an ethnography of their work conducted between August-October, 2017, the study attempts to unpack the structural and institutionalised constraints to news production in the region, as well as the agency of the local journalists in the state. In order to understand the present trends in reporting and shaping of 'news' related to the Maoist insurgency, it is also important to look at the history of Maoist insurgency in India, particularly in the context of Chhattisgarh. The research also contributes to the understanding of the particularities of circumstances of news reporting in such circumstances, such as pressures of revenue collection, fear of offending political acquaintances, financial limitations, moral, and psychological pressures, limitations of geographical locations, risk of loss of critical political sources, and many other such real and envisaged situations under which the process of 'news formation' takes place in insurgency prone areas. It examines the ways in which these circumstances relate to the production of 'news' in the regional newspapers.

While newspaper reports on political insurgency, murders, bomb blasts, corruption, etc, make for 'good journalism', at the same time the reporters who report on such issues, may meet with the wrath of the government, criminals, powerful elites, politicians, etc. while carrying out the reporting work (Jeffrey, 2000:181). Often these reporters from the regional areas who are well aware of the complex issues involved in the conflict, get caught in the vulnerabilities of free and bold reporting by either offending the government administrations or the insurgents (Jeffrey, 2000:156). Often some reporters end up making compromises such as acting as messengers either for police or for the Naxalites¹ under pressure. Sometimes, financial support from either party act as a prime factor behind making or not making any news (Chaudhry, 2009:32). The work of local newspaper reporters in conflict-affected areas is much like a double edged sword, carrying the responsibility of free and unbiased reporting to serve the common interest of people,

¹In an interview with *Outlook*, Santosh Yadav, one of the local reporters of Bastar who was caught by the police on charges of being a Naxal informer, spoke to the magazine about how because of staying in the Naxalite affected villages, often reporters like him had to make some compromises. For the fear of being harassed or killed, they could not outrightly say no to the Naxalites for some of their demands like bringing newspapers and some everyday essentials. For detail see article on 'Challenges to the Journalism in Bastar', *Outlook*, dated 29.03.2016.

and at the same time having to contend with the interests of powerful elites as well as the insurgents. What makes reporting in these areas a crucial job is a fact that it does not only involve reporting about the common people but also the people who have conflicting interests. It involves risks in writing about the various stakeholders, as well as carries risks to the security and safety of the sources who provide inputs for these stories. While journalism in any metro-city often constitutes a routine job of visiting high profile dignitaries to make news, in the remote areas of Chhattisgarh, it involves the everyday difficulties of both reaching the risky Maoists affected regions, to proving the credibility of their work to the police. What constitutes these complex processes of news production and how news about the Maoist insurgency is produced in print media of Chhattisgarh, are subjects of primary concern in this study.

In the state of Chhattisgarh, where the majority of the population are *adivasis*² or belong to the scheduled castes, it is particularly important to analyse how the insurgency is presented in the local print media of Chhattisgarh as both the insurgency and its 'news' directly affect these sections, majority of whom reside in rural and forested areas. Most of the adivasi population reside in the poverty-ridden districts of Bastar, Sukma, Dantewada, Jashpur, Surguja, Bijapur, and Kanker,³ which are largely forested areas with rich mineral resources, that have been the major cause of contention between the forest people and the neo-liberal development policies of the government. In recent years, media has played an important role in bringing unheard voices to the forefront of the national debate. like Arundhati Roy's article, 'Walking with the Comrades' (2010), and Subhranshu Choudhary's article, 'The art of not writing' (2009).⁴ However, with the legislation of Acts such as Chhattisgarh Public Safety Act, 2005, which has been in force since 2006 and clearly notifies in section 2 (e) that publishing of any interviews of Maoists and insurgents by any journalists or newspaper organisation is unlawful and will be considered as action against the state, journalistic freedom is seen by many as having been deeply compromised. The consequences of these curbs on media to freely disseminate information on all aspects of the situation in Chhattisgarh through different modes of control,

² The word *adivasi* has been used through this study to refer to the forest-dwelling, indigenous people of India who were socially and culturally different from the Hindu castes, and as it is widely connected to the self-identifications of the indigenous people of Chhattisgarh.

³Census of India, 2011.

⁴Choudhary's article discusses the involvement of the local villagers of the Dantewada districts in supporting the Maoists and their struggle for their land, water, and forest resources.

possibilities for agency in these circumstances for journalists, their negotiations with the prevailing conditions, and their efforts or compromises with the production of news within these constraints, have been important arenas of examination in this study. There are many examples in Chhattisgarh where fake encounters and ‘surrender’ by the local adivasis were shown as Maoist surrender, and later on, these facts were contested in local newspapers of Chhattisgarh such as *Rajasthan Patrika*, *Hindustan*, and *Navbharat* which are the local newspapers of Chhattisgarh.⁵ These instances highlight the importance of examining how the prevailing conditions to doing journalism in insurgency hit areas, political, socio-economic, or personal circumstances that relate to the shaping of news writing in the local print media of Chhattisgarh, as well as the kind of debates, discourses, and representations of insurgency have emerged in Chhattisgarh since the inception of the Maoist insurgency.

While the study includes regional bureaus of national newspapers, the regional print media in Chhattisgarh has been taken up as a major focus for the study, both as it is closer to the daily affairs of the local people and because it is more vulnerable in many ways to the structures of constraint. It has been argued that regional media is mostly characterised by the creation of the public sphere at the local level, giving prominence to the news of the local areas over the national and international news. Localisation of newspapers has led to both empowerment of citizens and simultaneously commodification of news. The discursive domain emanating from local newspapers helps in formulating and shaping public opinion and acts as an important channel for the public to raise their grievances and hold the state more responsible (Neyazi, 2010: 910). Local citizens prompt the press recursively to bring to public attention their difficulties, hopes, ambitions, and ideologies (Rao, 2010: 80).

The role of media is very crucial in the socio-economic and political arenas of society as it is considered a platform for echoing the voices of the different segments of society. The struggle over the control of natural resources, primarily over the water, forests, and land (*jal, jangal and zamin*) between the government and the adivasis, which was gradually taken over by the Maoist forces have escalated the conflict in such areas, including Bastar, thus drawing more

⁵Reports of fake encounters in local newspapers appear every now and then; one example is in *Hindustan*, a Hindi daily report dated- 3.12.2015; another example is of *Patrika*, which carried a report on 24 April 2017, of how police imprisoned 40 villagers on charges of being Naxalites.

attention in the public arena and media towards the region.⁶ In such conditions, eyes turn to the regional newspaper reports as they are much closer to the ground as compared to the national media when it comes to reporting on the conflict, often leading to stricter control and surveillance over the newspapers as well on particular journalists.

The increased media attention also increases the tendency of insurgents to publicise their own agendas, subjecting the newspaper organizations and journalists to surveillance, control, and danger (Wolfsfeld, 1997: 60). Robin Jeffery in his book *India's Newspaper Revolution: Capitalism, Politics and the Indian-language Press* (2000) cites the case of Punjab Kesari newspaper which was mostly targeted by the Khalistan based insurgent group for its open support to the Indian state. Published in Hindi, Urdu, and Gurumukhi (the local Punjabi dialect) the paper enjoyed a wide readership base which became the major cause of disappointment among the insurgents, and as a result, they murdered Mr. Jagat Narain, the elderly founder of the newspaper in September 1981. Later, his son and the successor were also murdered in 1984; between 1989 and 1993 secessionist groups targeted anyone connected to the newspaper and killed around 60 members of the newspaper in less than four years (Jeffrey, 2000: 200). As a result, the circulation of all the three newspapers, particularly the one in Gurumukhi fell drastically from 94,000 to 48,000, and the insurgents could successfully suppress the dissenting voices against them (Jeffrey, 2000: 201). Comparing the situation of larger English print media and regional print media in terms of resisting the outside threats to their work, Jeffery points out that larger English newspapers are more capable of providing a secure environment for their journalists as they can easily hire lawyers, security guards and enjoy fast access to national and international outrage that could be activated if the newspaper or its people were attacked (Jeffrey, 2000: 193). Thus, working in regional newspapers, or media houses in insurgency-affected regions, may be riskier than working with national media, as regional media personnel is not similarly secured against pressures and threats.

The critical issue of the consumption of the news discourse, or reception of news texts, has not been taken up in this thesis, as it was not possible within the complexities of the present

⁶ In Chhattisgarh people have strong sense of being let down by the neo-liberal system when it comes to getting equal share of the natural resources of the region. Land, water and forest are intrinsic to their existence and being denied the same is matter of resentment for them (Milikan and Carney, 2010, 112; Kennedy 2014: 152).

study to also examine the complex processes of the reception of the news products. Additionally, most of the readers of the regional newspapers are non-Adivasi, who were outsiders and migrated into the Adivasi populated areas for their livelihood and better opportunities. Due to the low literacy rate among the men and women of Adivasi population and their acute poverty, the practice of newspaper reading is very less among them; as a result, they mostly remain socially excluded and misrepresented in the media.

I. Literature Review

i) Media and Insurgency: Convergent Trajectories

In reporting insurgency and conflicts, media instead of just reporting the conflict issues can be seen as also ‘performing’ and ‘enacting’ the conflict. Conflicts and incidences of violence are increasingly played out and performed in media (Cottle, 2006: 6). According to Gaye Tuchman, news-making is an act of constructing the reality itself rather than giving the picture of reality, which gestures towards the framing of news (Tuchman, 1978: 12). In the media industry, the role of gatekeeping is also a major factor that influences news content production. Journalists and editors of the newspaper working in conflict areas exercise their influences on the selection of the news (Hanitzsch and Hoxa, 2014: 3). Scholars like Hout and Jacob argue that journalism is an ‘interpretative practice’ and news production is a process of entextualisation⁷ involving multiple actors who struggle over authority, ownership, and control (Hout and Jacob, 2008: 59). In addition, the authors also point out that news production is a process of source and negotiation, negotiated between source, reporters, and editors (Hout and Jacob, 2008: 64). Thus, in conflict affected areas as well, the news story which finally appears in the newspaper, is a product of continuous negotiations between the journalists, editors, and various stakeholders.

In the process of reporting, media engage in practices that define reality through representation (Hall, 1982: 64). As Hall puts it “Representation is a very different notion from that of reflection. It implies the active work of selecting and presenting, of structuring and shaping, not merely the transmitting of an already-existing meaning, but the more active labour of making things mean” (Hall, 1982: 64). Mass media in the situation of crisis and conflict plays

⁷Entextualisation as explained by Park and Bucholtz- is a process by which circutable texts are produced by extracting discourse from its original contexts and reifying it as bounded object- is an indispensable mechanism for the construction of institutional authority.

two major roles: firstly, in such situations, it serves the public heightened need for the information, and secondly, it can define the reality for its audiences (Howitt, 1982: 43). Mobilising, informing, and persuading are integral to the conduct of war. The result is that attempting to shape the representation of the conflict becomes more important for the stakeholders even as it becomes harder to do (Brown, 2003: 87).

Howitt, citing Tichenor et al, notes that during conflict situations, issues ordinarily are created, not in mass media, but either in professional groups or political institutions. Through one or more of these channels, issues become familiar in the community. The effect of mass media is ordinarily acceleration of the issues- acceleration of both awareness and of conflict dimensions (Howitt, 1982: 43). These things again bring the media and media persons closer to any one party, having a stake in the conflict. More than often, it is the powerful and elite parties who control the media output of conflicts by actively encouraging the community enthusiasts to take part in media discussions and debates and through press meets. Insurgent groups are often left out because of the government repressions and law (Wolfsfed, 1997, 42). Thus, media representation is not just a matter of presenting the facts objectively, in disguise; it often carries the agenda of the one who exercises more control over it either through financial support, political power, or dominant views.

Often, media portrays the conflicts and insurgency issues like infotainment, creating a positive image of one party and negative of the other, sometimes exaggerating the issues of violence and justifying it. Wars and such issues are presented as media spectacles and received as entertainment by the audience in American popular culture, however, this is largely restricted to the television news reporting and to interactive communication technologies (Roger Stahl, 2010: 20). Daya Thussu and Des Freedman, while discussing the U.S. media and its role post 9/11, points out that outcome of any war is greatly affected by the battle to win “hearts and minds” and assert that government manages to manufacture the consent through media for solving such issues through force rather than peaceful talks (Thussu and Freedman, 2003: 10).

The construction of news regarding the conflicts is not merely determined by the reporters and the organisation but sometimes citizens also play a major role in shaping the news regarding conflicts. Mette Mortensen argues that the state, military, press, and participants

(citizens) have strong vested interests in the information flow from areas of conflict. When citizens participate, produce and distribute, they engage in the ongoing battle to control and shape the public mediated knowledge and experience of conflict, thus changing the whole dynamics of the flow of information and communication (Mortesen, 2014: 2). Since the role of media in the representation of the conflict and insurgency related issues forms an important aspect in creating audiences' perception about any event, the control, surveillance, and manipulation of media becomes an integral part of any stakeholders in conflict areas. According to the political economy approach of media, it is the social relations, particularly the power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources (Mosco, 1996: 25).

Benjamin Coleman explains that the state uses violence in the garb of war on terror or insurgents for political purposes and gradually media becomes a part of the state as well as insurgents' designs. He argues that for those engaged in political violence, it serves as a universal key to focus media attention and gain publicity, thus enabling non-state actors to set the media agenda and influencing political debates that insurgents convert their violence into political power. The chances that any news media will give attention to the insurgents and represent their voices depend on the balance of power between the news media and the warring parties (Wolfsfed, 1997:58). According to Wolfsfed, to understand the balance of power between the particular antagonist and a particular news medium, one must consider the relative level of value and dependence. Only then one can understand the relative willingness of each side to adapt to the other in order to attain the needed services (Wolfsfed, 1997: 58). Often, events of mass killing, bombing, greater destruction in conflict areas, and charges of big scams raise the public anger and thus, larger public attention, drawing the attention of entire mankind into it, in such situations media acts irrespective of government, capitalist and any other restraints. Dramatic events shape the coverage of the conflict issues thereby bringing the disruption over the control of elites on that particular issue (Speer, 2017: 282). Citing Bennett and Lawrence, Isaac Speer explains that dramatic events can provide "news icons," vivid images, or descriptions that "evoke larger cultural themes" (Speer, 2017: 283; Bennett and Lawrence, 1995).

Apart from governments, insurgents, and the audiences, it is the media as well which plays an important role in mitigating the conflicts or in its exaggeration. Media are considered a major force in conflict and insurgency situations, which are capable of influencing warring parties and their actions. Whether the media's impact is conducive or destructive to conflict resolution is highly dependent on the nature of the coverage of the conflicts and insurgency issues (Sreedharan, 2009: 2). The most common influence of the media occurs when the press raises the political standing of the challengers. Challengers who obtain a significant amount of media coverage usually enjoy a significant rise in political status (Wolfsfeld, 1997: 67). The news media, especially in recent years, often play a critical role in this process: they are the only means for bringing the case of the weaker side to light. Those challengers who successfully promote their frame to the news media are in a much better position to bring the third parties into the conflicts (Wolfsfeld, 1997: 67).

Jake Lynch and Johan Galtung in their book *Reporting Conflict: New Direction in Peace Journalism* (2010), while discussing the differences between the mainstream news reporting of the conflict areas which has likely turned into 'War Journalism' with much focus on military paradigm counting losses and death, stresses that there is need to promote peace journalism which would primarily focus on the possibilities of peace, mitigation, emotions and on narratives of invisible effects such as psychological effects and traumas (Buller, 2011: 252). Thus, it is not only the political economy; but the way individual journalists present the news reports in media also marks a difference. The leanings and the sympathies of the journalists reporting the insurgency and the conflict issues also shape the public perceptions about an event.

In most of the conflict affected areas of the world, journalistic freedom to make the news piece is often restricted. What comes out as a final piece of news is something that is a result of processes of negotiations and mediations. For example, in her study on the process of production of the news about Palestine, Amahl Bishara points out that the news which are being produced about the Palestinian society is not just the cultural product of US society but it also constitutes the elements of Palestinian society as well. The negotiations and adjustments the Palestinian journalists do for the American journalists who visit these conflicted areas in search of news often stay neglected but perform an important role in building of final news products. (Bishara,

2006: 19). Sometimes journalists tend to reject the nationalist propaganda and commit themselves to report about truth. In former Yugoslavia, in the 1990s some of the local journalists resisted the nationalist controlled media and were labeled as traitors or spies working on the behalf of foreign interests (Kenezevic,2015: 44). While discussing the role of media in the disintegration of former Yugoslavia in Europe, Tarick Jusic points out that media played a major role in dividing the public space of the country into different ethnonational identities, which resulted in the proliferation of nationalist ideologies, myth-making, extreme polarisation of discourses and created segmented audiences. Media discourse radically changed and conflicts became all present (Jusic, 2010: 38). He goes on to state that media discourse acts as the amplifier of the political process. Media shape the overall atmosphere in which conflict unfolds and the nature of the public debate; they also influence the action of the actors and provide legitimacy for specific actors in the process (Jusic, 2010: 38).

In Peru, freedom of the press is highly restricted by both the state and non-state actors in order to have stricter control over the flow of information. In 2014, the government of Peru targeted the journalists who were critical of rampant mining in the country by filing criminal defamation charges against them (Freedom of Press Report, 2015). According to the website Freedom House which deals with the status of freedom of speech enjoyed by journalists all over the world “coverage of topics like corruption, misuse of state resources, and mining-related social conflict is considered particularly dangerous” (Freedom of Press Report: 2015).⁸

Similarly, in the African continent, Nigeria is one of the countries facing the highest degree of ethnic violence and insurgency. Nigerian scholars, talking in the context of Nigeria which is widely affected by the *Boko Haram* insurgency, point out that during times of insurgency the media are caught between two concerns and journalists play a vital role in highlighting the right kind of concern. The first is the concern with the media reporting/coverage giving publicity to the activities of insurgents and encouraging them to continue with their attacks. The second concern is that media reporting/coverage should help to rally people together and provide support to the authorities, particularly the security forces, to defeat the insurgency. Arguing that either of these positions has implications for the media and peace building, it highly

⁸The report has been written in context of Peru.

depends upon the individual journalist to create public perceptions and understanding about the situations (Mu'azu and Ibrahim, 2016: 2319).

Nik Gowing, while highlighting the threats journalists are likely to face in insurgency affected areas, argues that due to the advancement of communication technologies which enabled the real-time reporting and witnessing of the war and conflict incidences, journalists are actively targeted by warriors, warlords, and forces of even the most highly developed governments who do not want to let out their doings. Through the examples of various journalists who lost their lives while reporting in conflict affected areas like West Bank and Iraq, he points out that journalists easily become the target of security forces or warriors either for money, publicity, or to maintain secrecy (Gowing, 2003: 233).

ii) Media Reporting of Insurgency in India

In India, unlike countries in the west, the growth of television has been accompanied by the growth rather than a diminution of the reading public (Rajagopal, 2001:153). The penetration of TV viewing audiences in the remote areas of the country, particularly conflict and insurgency affected has created newspapers audiences as well provided space to the people of the region to echo their own sentiments among their community through regional newspapers. According to Rajagopal, print commodities in a given language usually travel within a smaller market with readership limited by literacy, price, and reach. By the same token, then print goods can often express in greater depth more particular views and sentiments not shared across the entire society (Rajagopal, 2001: 158).

In conflict-affected provinces such as Kashmir, the continuous spells of violence, terrorist attacks, counter-insurgency attacks, alleged human rights violations by the state machinery, the territorial claim between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, thus, keep the state at the centre of media attention and sensational reporting. However, in both the countries, India and Pakistan, media has become an accomplice of the respective governments in misinforming people. Media in both countries instead of genuinely carrying forward the agenda of the local people often supports the stands of the respective governments (Navlakha et. al., 1996: 1927). Also, journalists who do want to do ethical reporting in these areas often face problems either from the government or the opposition parties, for example, the recent killing of journalist Shujaat

Bukhari in Srinagar In conflict areas, journalists while reporting also face the problem of verifying with the official information as often there is considerable divergence between what government agencies put out and what they observe on the ground (Sharma, 2009: 5). In case of (mis)representation of the conflicts in North-Eastern societies like Manipur, the mainstream media chooses to report the matter superficially, without giving more details, root causes of the conflicts' historicity and reduces the entire problem to a binary of two conflicting views (Phanjoubam, 2016: 12). Phanjoubam further argues that to maintain objectivity, journalists often resort to placing the conflicting parties' opinions into yes or no voices, which he calls 'attributed opinion'. This often leads a news story to nowhere by hiding the exact situation, creating space for false interpretations and for rhetoric based on half-truths (Phanjoubam, 2016: 12).

When it comes to the Maoist movement, the insurgency started in the Naxalbari village of West Bengal in the year 1967 with the purpose of acquiring equal rights over land resources and to overthrow through armed struggles the power of the landlord class and rich peasants who used to exploit the poor peasants. The Naxalbari movement had its ideological beginning in the ideals of communism, however, due to harsh repression by the Indian state and several ideological splits among the communist groups in India, the movement died a slow death in Bengal. It is through the lineage of the Naxalbari movement, that the Maoists insurgency in the eastern parts of India and central India again started (Sundar, 1997: 266; Banerjee, 2008: 40).

A study on the role of language newspapers in providing citizens' information regarding the Naxal movement in India, revealed that in five different dailies, including one English daily Times of India and Hindi daily *Dainik Bhaskar*, and three other regional newspapers—*Anandabazar Patrika* (Bengali), *Eenadu* (Telegu) and *Munsif* (Urdu)- the news reports were shallow and lacked depth. According to its author, Bella Mody, "More than 90 percent of the articles on the Maoist movement were framed as individual episodes or events with no explanation addressing causes, remedies, or context. Description of the event was the common frame: who, what, when, where - no why," (Mody, 2015: 250). The causes of the conflict were mentioned in passing in up to 23 percent of articles in *Anandabazar Patrika* but were predominant in only 0–2 percent of the others. The author in her study had taken the hypothesis

that newspapers with higher revenue would be capable of investing the larger amount in covering the Naxal related stories in an in-depth manner and hence would report more comprehensively, however, the results were very different. The findings of the study showed that the average articles of *Anandabazaar Patrika* on the Maoist insurgency were more comprehensive in their reports as compared to the average articles written for Hindi readers by *Dainik Jagran*, average articles written for English readers by *The Times of India*, average articles written by *Eenadu* for its Telugu readers and the average articles written by *Munsif* for its Urdu readers (Mody, 2015: 250).

The reporting work carried out in Maoist insurgency affected areas is a tedious and risky game. In the context of Chhattisgarh, Maoist insurgency and conflict between the security and Maoists forces hampers the free flow of information to the mainstream society. Strict vigilance by security forces in the Maoist-affected areas restricts the flow of media professionals to the insurgency hit areas. Subhranshu Choudhary, in his article on reporting in conflict affected areas, has pointed out that reporting in the Maoist-affected area of Chhattisgarh is all about ‘the art of not writing’. Giving the account of local journalists in Chhattisgarh, Choudhury explains that journalists are paid in Chhattisgarh for not writing about the loopholes of government, for not highlighting the human rights violations and for hiding the corrupt (Choudhary, 2009: 21).

iii) Media Reporting of Insurgency in Chhattisgarh

The long ongoing Maoist insurgency in Chhattisgarh state has drawn the attention of several stakeholders- the central government, state government, bureaucracies, academicians, media, social activists, as well as global organisations. The present debate and related controversies about the Indian state’s handling of issues relating to the Maoist insurgency, and the degree of human rights violations have been at the centre of media debates and prime time television.

In order to understand the interplay between media and insurgency in Chhattisgarh, it is pertinent to understand the causes of insurgency in Chhattisgarh through the in-depth study of the history of insurgency and conflicts in Chhattisgarh state, the history of print media in Chhattisgarh, and the contemporary structures of print media in Chhattisgarh. So, towards the given purpose, the literature review for this section has been divided into further sub-sections:

section-a, Chhattisgarh: A Contemporary History of the Insurgency; section-b, A Brief History and Growth of Print Media in Chhattisgarh; section-c, The contemporary structures of Print Media Reporting in Chhattisgarh; section-d, Chhattisgarh Public Safety Act, 2005.

a) Chhattisgarh: A Contemporary History of the Insurgency

Provinces like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Telangana are collectively called as the 'Red Corridor' owing to widespread Maoist insurgency, and media reporting in these areas has always been a sensitive and tough task to carry out.

Maoist insurgency started in India with the onset of the Naxalbari movement in West Bengal in the year 1967. It was spearheaded by the Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist (CPI-ML), after splitting from its mother organisation Communist Party of India- Marxist. The movement primarily aimed at the forced overthrow of the landlord classes and rich peasants from West Bengal, and was widely supported by the poor peasants and landless labourers. Charu Mazumdar and Kanu Sanyal were the most prominent leaders of the movement and founding fathers of the Maoist movement in India. Scholars have divided the entire phase of the Maoist struggle in India into three phases: the first one during 1967 to 1975, the second during 1980-1990 and the present phase has been considered to be ongoing from the late 1990s onwards (Banerjee, 2009: 253). The initial phase during 1967 to 1975 was a phase of Maoism against the unjust social structures prevailing in the Indian society, which drew participants mostly from the urban educated middle class, college students, journalists, and youths. Due to harsh state repression, the movement was killed in Bengal, but it did not completely get wiped out from the minds and hearts of the people left out by continuing class divides and uneven development policies of the state. Those who had joined the movement, mostly university students and intellectuals from Calcutta and Andhra Pradesh, went underground at the time of emergency and due to ideological differences between the different factions, it got divided into different Maoist groups.

The long-term objective of the Maoist movement is the armed overthrow of the Indian state and the creation of a socialist-communist government. The Maoists term this a democratic revolution, which would remain directed against imperialism, feudalism, and comprador

bureaucratic capitalism (Ismi, 2014:38). The Maoist movement in India articulates the deep sense of estrangement that pervades the vast backwater of the country– the alienation of the peasantry from the land; the rupture between the oppressed indigenous people and depressed castes on the one hand and the oppressive upper caste or class feudal vested interests on the other; the uprooting of urban poor from their socio-cultural moorings (Banerjee, 2009: 253).

The second phase of Maoist insurgency started with the arrival of the United Front of Janata Dal government, which gave chances for the different voices to be vocal about their viewpoints. At this stage, there was a rift between the members of the core Maoist group with some members choosing the path of election and democratic practices over violence. However, most prominent amongst all the Maoist groups, People's War Group (PWG) in Andhra Pradesh and Maoists Communist Centre in Bihar (MCC) which are considered as the most radical, believed in the forced seizure of state through armed struggles and rejects the process of political participation (Ahuja and Ganguly, 2007: 268). By the end of the 1980s, several Maoist groups had succeeded in spreading their hold in several parts of India forming a 'Red Corridor' area which mainly constituted Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra. In the 1980s, a few erstwhile leaders of the CPI-ML regrouped together and under the leadership of Kondapalli Seetharamaiah founded the CPI-ML (People's War), or PW in Andhra Pradesh. The PW subsequently merged with the Party Unity (PU) which was based in Bihar (Ramana, 2006:435). The other extreme left-wing group called as MCC operating on the Bihar and West Bengal border, which later aligned with the Revolutionary Communist Centre of India, active in Punjab and Maharashtra and was renamed as Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI).

The third phase marked its starting in the year 2004 when the leaders and cadres of the various Maoist groups joined hands together to launch a fight against the Indian state with the primary purpose to bring agrarian revolution, equal land distribution amongst all, wage struggle against the Indian government's latest plan to set up Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and resists the displacement of adivasis and forest dwellers due to mining projects (Banerjee, 2009: 256) In 2004, after the years of negotiations, the two groups MCCI and PW merged on 21 September and founded the CPI-Maoist. Today, the CPI-Maoist is the largest group of Naxalites in India fighting together for the rights of the indigenous people, against the neo-liberal, capitalist-backed

state machineries in India in the mineral rich and skewed land distribution areas of the Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Orissa, Bihar, and West Bengal borders and adjoining areas (Miklian, 2009: 441). It is a widely held belief among the Indian intelligentsia that Naxalite agitation in India today is merely the latest manifestation of peasant struggles that have periodically emerged in India due to extreme poverty, exploitation, and inequality that has prevailed over the countryside for centuries (Ahuja and Ganguly, 2007: 251).

Although, in the present scenario, the Maoist movement ebbs in wake of strict state repression owing to its internal and external pressure but the history of Maoist movement indicates that there are enough chances for the movement to gain its moment in the future with its own sets of constraints and opportunities because the underlying structural factors which gave birth to it remains the same (Chandra, 2014: 419). The structural inequality prevailing in the countryside, accompanied with the new form of economic deprivations as a result of the neoliberal process of development which is on one hand making the rich richer and depriving the indigenous people of their basic rights over land and forest resources have eroded the belief of people in the democratic process.

In recent years, the prime centre of the Maoist activity is particularly the forested areas of Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana borders which are adjoined to each other, also called *Dandkaranya* forest. When the Maoists entered Chhattisgarh in 1980 after crossing the Godavari river in Andhra Pradesh, they entered Chhattisgarh through *Dandakaranya* forest. All together 49 Maoists belonging to People's War Group (PWG), a faction of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) or CPI (ML), the original Naxalites entered into the Chhattisgarh region in a group of seven armed squads (Roy, 2010). The first Maoist incident was reported in Chhattisgarh which was then part of Madhya Pradesh state in the 1980s. These Maoist group gradually spread their hold in the forested and remote areas of the villages of the Chhattisgarh by helping the adivasi people there in getting justice and relieved them from the atrocities and threats of the people from forest, revenue and police department (Sundar, 2007: 271). Maoists helped the rural tribal people in accessing basic resources but this comes along with absolute territorial control. One of the major reasons for the Maoist movement in

Chhattisgarh is the existing horizontal inequalities within the tribal population, along with the socio-economic grievances against the government which acts as a driving force for the movement (Bhattacharya, 2013: 813).

According to the claims of Maoists literature, since 1993 they are active in organising the adivasi people of Bastar and adjoining areas under 'Sanghams', which is an official name given by the Maoists to the group of people protesting against the unequal developmental policies of the government and are fighting for their rights in the region. From 1993, Maoists have been forming various military outfits in those village areas with the support of the local villagers and by 2000 a large-scale local militia was formed (Sundar, 2006: 3189). It is important to understand that the ultimate aim of insurgents is to seize the state power which they try to do by building counter states. They tend to exercise political control through political channels by building effective state like institutions like Sanghams and Dalams which extend their infrastructural powers (Kennedy, 2014: 212).

In present days, the rural tribal population is the major support base of the Maoist insurgency; this symbiotic relation provides mutual incentives and is especially beneficial for the survival of Maoist insurgency (Bhattacharya, 2013: 814). In Chhattisgarh, the tension escalated after the introduction of the *Salwa Judum*⁹ in the Maoist affected areas, particularly in Dantewada district. Salwa Judum, which literally means 'purification hunt' in the local Gondi language, was introduced by the local Congress leader Mahendra Karma in the southern districts of Chhattisgarh in the year 2005. It was a large informal organisation comprised both of locals and out-of-state opportunists, with active members around 5,000-10,000 in total (Miklian, 2009: 442). The primary purpose of this organisation was to counter Maoism, give information about the Maoists to police, discourage the local villagers from supporting Maoists, garner the support of villagers against Maoists, and lead the security forces in the forested areas, during the patrolling and security checks.

However, the whole episode of the Salwa Judum, turned ugly with the inclusion of the individuals from villages, who joined the group with the sole aim of taking revenge and settling

⁹ Salwa Judum in Gondi language of Chhattisgarh means 'Purification Hunt'. It started in Chhattisgarh in 2005 as a movement against Maoists by the local people of Chhattisgarh and was backed by political forces.

personal enmity. The gradual war between the Maoist and Salwa Judum turned so ugly that both sides took turns in torching villages and raping and killing hundreds of people over the years in a spiral revenge of attacks (Milkan and Carney, 2010: 112). Around 30,000 adivasis were displaced and looted by the Salwa Judum members. A total of 500 charges of murder, 103 of arson, and 99 charges of rape had been labeled against the Salwa Judum (Ismi, 2013: 40). Salwa Judum was being primarily managed and operated by the local thugs and goons of the village who were particularly non-adivasis and frustrated individuals because of the implementation of the 5th Schedule of the Constitution and Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA). Salwa Judum leaders functioned as local warlords, demarcating Dantewada assets and territory among themselves. They built their strength by redirecting funding provided by the state government for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps into personal coffers and by funding personal armies with money received from mining companies who contract them for protection and ground clearing services (Miklian, 2009: 442).

After the operationalisation of Salwa Judum, Dantewada district became the frontline of the state's battle against the Naxals, constituting over 50% of the total casualties of conflict in India (ACHR, 2007). Members of the Salwa Judum forces were involved in the burning of the villages and killing of the villagers for personal enmity (Miklian, 2009: 450). On April 6, 2010, Maoists carried out one of the major attacks on the security forces by killing 76 paramilitaries of CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh, and on 17 May 2010, in Dantewada only Maoist detonated a bus carrying civilians and SPOs Special Police Officers. Following this incidence on May 24, 2011, the then Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh declared insurgency as the single greatest threat to the country's internal security, which further paved the way for the inflow of more funds and security forces to counter the Maoist violence. However, sociologists such as Nandini Sundar argue that Naxalism is not so much about violence in absolute terms, as it is about the reflection of the threat posed by the Naxalites to the status quo. It is also a function of the security establishment's need to project a threat that justifies more and often unaccountable funding and forces (Sundar, 2007: 270). The propaganda of 'Maoist threat' has been used by the government and administrations to implement the state's neo-liberal policies in the forests of Chhattisgarh in an unquestioned manner and without public scrutiny. In another word, 'Maoist threat' acts as a very effective tool

to impose repressive laws and autocratic rules in order to thwart outside exposure, transparency and to carry out the neo-liberal agenda in hidden ways.

In 2011, the killing of Mahendra Karma, the Congress party leader who had introduced Salwa Judum, brought more havoc for the local villagers of Bastar in Chhattisgarh, as it justified the huge influx of security forces and more repressive laws against the media persons and any outsider writing about the Bastar. It thus curbed the voices of dissents by the local villagers of the region, particularly of those who refused to part with their land and their rights over forest resources. Resistance against the government and capitalist forces by the adivasi community is not a new phenomenon in Chhattisgarh. If we turn the pages of the history of the adivasi populated areas in India, such rebellions have frequently occurred for the claim over the forest and land rights by tribals (Guha, 1990: 200). In Chhattisgarh's history, the rebellion of 1876 in the form of appeal to the just king of Bastar, 1910 rebellions against the colonial apparatus including the king led by Gunda Dhur (the local adivasi leader) and the rebellion by the adivasis against the forest and land policies of Congress-led Indian government under the Bastar king Pravir Chand Bhanj Deo in 1966 are the pieces of evidence which suggest that local adivasis have been opposing the unjust forces through different modes of rebellions and resistance¹⁰ which counters the popular myth that adivasis are being misguided by the Maoists (Sundar, 2007: 263).

During the colonial era, due to rampant exploitation of the land and forest resources by the British government and repressive policies against the traditional forest and land rights of the adivasis, there were several revolts and rebellions in different parts of India. In the post-independence period, many of the colonial-era policies that had caused revolt were not reformed, and tribal conflict continued in the form of the Naxalite insurgency. Some scholars argue that in Chhattisgarh, particularly in the Bastar region high levels of British intervention during the colonial period were carried out, which constituted the primary cause of tribal violence in the state; and the post-independence Indian government has not reformed colonial policies in this region, ensuring a continuation and escalation of tribal conflict through the modern Naxalite movement (Verghese, 2016: 1619).

¹⁰In her book, *Subalterns and Sovereigns: An Anthropological History of Bastar (1854-2006)*, author Nandini Sundar has argued this point.

The primary reason behind the conflict in Chhattisgarh has been the struggle of the local adivasis for their rights on *Jal, Jungal and Zamin* (Water, Forest and Land). The theory that the areas with an abundance of natural and mineral resources become the reason for the civil wars and insurgency¹¹ sets apt with Chhattisgarh. Revenues from mineral extractions in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand topped \$20 billion in 2008, and more than \$1 trillion in proven reserves still sit in the ground. But the geological inheritances have been managed so disastrously that many locals-uprooted, unemployed, and living in a toxic and dangerous environment, due to mining operations- have thrown their lot with the Maoists (Milkian and Carney, 2010: 107).

In a continuous fight between the government and Maoists over the control of natural resources, the adivasi community of the Bastar is compromised, not able to see that where their future lies. Continuous loss of relatives, atrocities perpetrated on them by the Maoists as well as by the police in the name of threat to their respective securities, lack of resources, crunching financial conditions, persistent fear of loss of property, of being beaten by either side has promoted them to stay either neutral or to join the Maoists or the state's side. Most of the adivasi families try to stay away from approaching the law and legal system because of the bias of the administrative system towards the powerful. The hue and cry by the vigilante groups against the human rights activists and lawyers who are working for the release of adivasis jailed based on frivolous charges, continuous harassment of journalists who dare to report from the remote forest areas of Chhattisgarh are again a major hindrance which keeps the adivasis away from believing in the Indian law system and the justice of the mainstream society.

The past record in Bastar, Chhattisgarh's most adivasi populated area shows that the administrative highhandedness and atrocities against the adivasi community are not a recent phenomenon. Since the brutal murder of adivasis by the government during the time of Bastar's king Parvir Chand Bhanj Deo for gaining control over the resources of Bastar in 1956 and its

¹¹ Cited by Jonathan Kennedy in his article 'The Socio-Economic Determinants of Natural Resource Conflict: Mineral and Maoists Insurgency in India', *Society and Natural Resources*, 28:2, 149-164.

under reporting of the number of adivasis killed by the police and the administration, people of Chhattisgarh have witnessed many such administrative betrayals (Hemant Kashyap, 2008: 9)¹².

“Bastar would have lost its forests, had not the Maoists been here.” said a scholar working in a government institution in Jagdalpur who did not want to be identified while talking about the Maoist insurgency there. Undoubtedly, this is the prevalent mindset among the locals of the Bastar, if not all but among the certain factions sensitive to the environment, who have observed the rampant and arbitrary distribution of the precious natural resources particularly the lands of the adivasi population among the local politicians and crony capitalist forces. In Chhattisgarh, the conflict is between the unequal forces, the nature loving adivasis who have found a resort in Maoist forces, and the capitalist forces backed by the government.

In an unequal conflict, the most important question is the extent of media independence from the authorities (Wolfsfeld, 1997: 60). This is because the authorities are usually in a much better position to take control of the press than most challengers. Challengers rarely have the organisation and resources to become exclusive sources of information for media. It may be sometimes helpful also to look at the overall level of dependence of news media on certain challenges but this would normally be less central. But such is the situation in most of the Maoist affected areas of Chhattisgarh. The powerful capitalist forces in alignment with the local politicians and warlords have been actively swindling the adivasi population in Chhattisgarh and those adivasis resisting their agenda have often been branded as Maoists or Maoist sympathisers by them. With the purpose to understand the nature of the print media of Chhattisgarh in the present time, it is important to look into the history of the print media of Chhattisgarh. Most of the newspapers that got started in Chhattisgarh aimed primarily to spread and ensure the growth of the Hindi language in the region, while a few were started with the purpose to serve the population. The following section describes the history and growth of print media in Chhattisgarh.

¹²Hemant Kashyap is a journalist who has written extensively on adivasis and about the betrayals they have met due to modern development paradigms and new development regime.

b) A Brief History and Growth of Print Media in Chhattisgarh

The onset of print media in Chhattisgarh occurred in the pre-independence era, with the rise of nationalism in an undivided central province of Madhya Pradesh. A small newspaper called *Prajahiteshi*, which was a Hindi weekly published from Rajnandgaon in Chhattisgarh in 1889, is the first newspaper from the Chhattisgarh area. However, due to the unavailability of any copy of the same newspaper and the lack of proper archival data on *Prajahiteshi*, not much is known about it (Anuja, 2002: 21). *Chhattisgarh Mitra* is considered to be the first newspaper which was published on monthly basis for continuously three years, from January 1900 to 1902 from Raipur. Thereafter, due to lack of funds and financial strain, it closed down. The history of newspaper publishing in Chhattisgarh can be divided into two categories: the first, is Pre-Independence Era Newspapers and the second is Post-Independence Era Newspapers.

During the pre-independence period, most of the newspapers published had a nationalistic tone; many of them focused on the development of the Hindi language like *Chhattisgarh Mitra*, along with concern towards the upliftment of the society as a whole. Pandit Ram Rao Chincholkar and Pandit Madhav Rao Sapre, the prominent nationalists and educationists of that time were its editors. *Chhattisgarh Mitra* used to publish articles, poetry, stories, sarcasm, critical articles, inspirational stories, and biographies of nationalist and religious leaders like Annie Besant, Dada Bhai Naoroji, Vivekananda, etc.

There were several other small newspapers like *Kabeer Panthi* published in 1914, which focused on the development of the society and basically on the uplift of the poor and discriminated sections of the society. Newspapers such as *Bal*, which was a handwritten magazine, and *Suryoday* initiated by Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla in 1914 carried a nationalistic and developmental tone. Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla is considered to be a prominent stalwart amidst journalists of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. He started *Mahakaushal*, a weekly newspaper from Nagpur in 1935, which became the first daily newspaper of the Chhattisgarh region after it started getting published from Raipur in 1951. *Mahakaushal* was deeply associated with the independence movement.

Likewise, there were several other small and medium newspapers which were getting published from the Chhattisgarh region prior to independence. Newspapers and magazines meant for the spread of education and awareness such as *Arunoday* (1921) from Rajnandgaon, *Siksha*, and *Uthan* (1935), *Alok* (1935) which was a literary periodical, *Phanke Mast* (1923) for spreading communal harmony and unity, *Chhattisgarh* (1923) from Raigarh and *Vikas* (1923) from Bilaspur was in Chhattisgarhi language, played active roles in educating the then Chhattisgarh society and in informing people about the prevailing socio-political conditions of the country.

After independence in 1951, *Mahakaushal* became the first daily newspaper of the Chhattisgarh region which was started by Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla. It started getting published from Raipur on December 10, 1951; and by this time Shyama Charan Sukhla and Swaraj Prasad Trivedi were in-charge of its editorial responsibility. Although many small and medium newspapers got started after independence in the Chhattisgarh region but very few survived to date such as *Navbharat*, a Hindi daily. Many of the newspapers and magazines in the post-independence era were devoted to the development and for spreading awareness. Some small newspapers were in the local language, for example, *Van Raj*, started in 1955 from Jagdalpur (the headquarters of the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh) in the local Halwi language was an eight-page newspaper. Later on, *Dandakaranya Samachar* also started in 1959 in Halwi, English and Hindi language from same cities, but till date, none of the two newspapers survive for Halwi language. However, in the Hindi language, *Dandakaranya Samachar* is still thriving and has a committed readership in the Bastar region.

Another small newspaper that got published from Jagdalpur is *Hindsat* which is a Hindi newspaper getting published since 1982. In 1982, it got started as a weekly four-page tabloid, later in 1987, it turned into a daily newspaper. The newspaper is most vocal on the issues of the local adivasis, for protecting the green cover and against the atrocities being perpetrated on local villagers by police in the name of counterinsurgency and Naxalite encounters.

One prominent newspaper of Chhattisgarh is *Deshbandhu*, which started as a daily Hindi Newspaper on April 19, 1959, from Raipur. It was initially started under the name of ‘*Nai Duniya*’ by Maya Ram Surjan, later on, its name got changed to *Deshbandhu* (Anuja, 2002: 14). Maya

Ram Surjan was himself a journalist of high reputation and was known for his committed dedication to the common man of Chhattisgarh. As a result, *Deshbandhu* newspaper enjoys the reputation of being the voice of the local adivasi people of Chhattisgarh. Apart from the main newspaper, *Deshbandhu* group also publishes a broadsheet evening paper 'Highway Channel' and a monthly literary magazine 'AksharParv'. *Deshbandhu* in its attempt to raise the issues of the local adivasi community of Chhattisgarh has lost the lives of some of its reporters as well. The late chief editor of *Deshbandhu*, Lalit Surjan, while speaking about running of his newspaper house under the stiff market competition, explained that "today none of the newspapers can afford to upset their respective governments be it at the Centre or the state level."¹³

In the contemporary scenario, the newspaper which enjoys the major chunk of the readership of the Chhattisgarh population is *Dainik Bhaskar*. *Dainik Bhaskar* is a Hindi daily newspaper with the largest circulation in India (Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2017). The newspaper was firstly launched in Bhopal in 1948 as 'Subah Savere' and in Gwalior as *Good Morning India*. Later on, in 1958, its name got changed to *Dainik Bhaskar*. Now *Dainik Bhaskar* is available in Hindi in 11 states with 46 editions. Besides this, it is also available in Gujarati and Marathi languages as a daily newspaper. *Dainik Bhaskar* group entered into Chhattisgarh in 1988 as *Nav Bhaskar*. On 30 August 1988, it was published from Raipur as *Nav Bhaskar* of 12 pages under the editorship of Ramesh Nayar as its regional editor. In 1992, it was again renamed as *Dainik Bhaskar* (Anuja, 2002: 79). Presently, in Chhattisgarh, *Dainik Bhaskar* has different editions from Raipur, Bilaspur, Raigarh, Bhilai and Jagdalpur cities.

Haribhoomi is another Hindi daily which also claims to enjoy the largest readership in Chhattisgarh. Originally, it got started in Haryana in 1996 as a Hindi weekly newspaper and extended its editions in Delhi NCR areas. Later on, it entered Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh in 2001 and went on to be the largest circulated daily of the Chhattisgarh in the year 2014 (IRS, 2014). As *Haribhoomi* is known for its support for popular demands of the majority population, its proprietors are well politically linked to the earlier ruling government of BJP of Chhattisgarh and are more vocal towards the majoritarian demands.

¹³ Personal interview with late Lalit Surjan, Editor-in-Chief of *Deshbandhu* Group in 2017..

Another major newspaper in Chhattisgarh is *Patrika*, which is a Hindi daily newspaper and is particularly known as the newspaper giving stiff competition to the *Dainik Bhaskar* group's business in most of the Hindi speaking areas of India. *Patrika* entered into Chhattisgarh market in September 2010 in Raipur. Apart from Hindi speaking states, it has also editions for non-Hindi speaking states such as Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal and is widely known for taking up local issues.

Altogether, there are more than a hundred newspapers registered with the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity in Chhattisgarh which caters to the need for print media for the population of Chhattisgarh. Very few belong to the category of big newspapers like *Haribhoomi*, *Dainik Bhaskar*, and *Patrika* while the majority of the newspapers are from medium and small categories like *Deshbandhu* and *Hindsat*. Chhattisgarh state has an interesting print media field where the cut throat competition between the big, medium, and small newspaper houses determine the nature and the category of the news to be presented to the audiences to run the business. With the purpose of understanding the print media field of Chhattisgarh state and the interplay between the media economics and the media reporting of the insurgency, it becomes pertinent to understand the political economy of the media in Chhattisgarh in the following section.

c) The Contemporary Structures of Print Media Reporting in Chhattisgarh.

The predominant character of the knowledge of and for society produced by media can be largely accounted for by the exchange value of different kinds of content under conditions of pressure to expand the market and by the underlying economic interests of owners and decision makers (McQuail, 1983: 60). The process of news production is carried out by the journalists and editors of the newspapers within the organisational framework of any newspaper organization, and it is the owners of the media houses who can directly influence the news content (Harrison, 2006: 16). In conflict areas, reporting about the insurgency and conflicting issues is highly linked with factors such as media ownership, media conglomerations, and control over media finances.

While the concentration of media institutions is a worldwide phenomenon, occurring in any kind of economic system, its extent and its patterns vary widely in different countries. When

brought about by private interests, it is more pronounced in developed countries; but concentration caused by the public authority is a feature of both developed and developing countries. As the amount of capital investment required in the communication industry rises, the control of financing and the provision of equipment tends to pass into the hands of large-scale enterprises since only they are able to raise the capital needed (Many Voices, One World, 1980: 104). The control of the capitalist forces over the production, distribution and consumption of the news reports in the conflicted areas determines the nature of the representation of the insurgency issues by either playing down such incidences or by highlighting only the negative aspects of the events. Media representations are intertwined with questions of power and ideology because the process of giving meaning to events suggests that potentially there are multiple definitions of reality (Stuart Hall, 1982: 165). In its act of representation, media imparts meanings to the insurgency and its related issues; these meanings depend on the ideologies of the journalists or media owners and also the imperatives of capital and state power that loom over and have interstices with processes of its production.

In India, presently the structure of print media reporting is largely governed by the capitalist forces. Some of the prominent English and Hindi daily newspapers are owned by the private sector firms and at the same time, they also own several other media platforms such as news channels, tabloids, and entertainment channels. The concerns regarding media concentration in a few hands were raised by the First Press Commission Report 1954, which widely discussed the then prevailing situation of newspaper ownerships and control in the hands of capitalists and its consequences for the rest of the society. However, despite repeated warnings by several committees and reports, consolidation of media conglomerations continued in an uninterrupted way, particularly after the introduction of new economic reforms in 1991. In India, while most of the English newspapers like Times of India, Hindustan Times, The Hindu, The Telegraph, and The Indian Express enjoy a readership base among the elite classes, it is the regional language newspapers that hold the major chunk of the readership base in the respective regional areas.

In Hindi speaking belt some of the prominent newspapers like *Dainik Bhaskar*, *Patrika*¹⁴, *Aaj*, *Amar Ujala*, *Hindustan*, *Jansatta*, *Navbharat Times*, *Navbharat*, *Haribhoomi*, *Nayi Duniya*, *Prabhat Khabar* enjoy most of the readership base, apart from small newspapers. In Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, the newspaper having the highest circulation is *Dainik Bhaskar*, *Patrika*, *Haribhoomi*. Political economy sees the content, style, and form of media products such as newspaper stories or computer games as shaped by structural features such as ownership, advertising, and audience spending. The approach emphasises the media as industries and businesses, with attention to how they are organised, the ways in which they operate, and how what they produce are shaped and determined by economic considerations and their attendant political aspects (Williams, 2003: 56). According to Golding and Murdock, the starting point for political economy is the economic and industrial organisation of the media. They believe that the economic base of media is a necessary and sufficient explanation of the cultural and ideological effects of the media (ibid).

In the case of Chhattisgarh, if we begin to see the economic and political structures of some of the widely read newspapers among the Chhattisgarh readers, barring a few small and medium newspapers firms, most of the newspapers are economically and politically linked to either the major national parties or with some religious outfit. For example, *Haribhoomi* newspaper belongs to the Aryan Group, which is closely linked to the Bharatiya Janata Party leader Captain Abhimanyu Singh Sindhu. He is the finance minister in BJP ruled government in Haryana and holds many of the key positions in National leadership as well as in state leadership. His brother Rudra Sen Sindhu owns the Aryan Group, a company that owns coal washeries and thermal power plants in Chhattisgarh (www.scroll.in Report). According to one report by the web portal Scroll.in in Chhattisgarh a company that has got the mining tender for a coal mine in Chhattisgarh was associated with the Aryan group and had the backings of both Congress and BJP politicians. It is widely said in the journalist circles of Chhattisgarh that, “The *Haribhoomi* started its edition in Chhattisgarh with the sole purpose of countering the opposition voices raised against them for mining work carried out by them in the Chhattisgarh”.¹⁵*Patrika* and *Dainik Bhaskar* are big newspaper houses; in the journalistic fraternity, it is believed that

¹⁴While in Rajasthan and in northern states, *Patrika* is known as *Rajasthan Patrika*, in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh it is launched as *Patrika*. See- Patrika Website: paper.patrika.com.

¹⁵ Personal interview with a respondent (on condition of anonymity).

Dainik Bhaskar has political allegiance towards the right-wing parties¹⁶ while *Patrika*, in competition against *Dainik Bhaskar*, is mostly aligned with the concerns of the adivasis and against the government there. This forms the peculiar nature of the competition, where both the capitalist media firms follow a different ideological tone owing to the market competition.

Scholars have added that cultural practices play a very active but ideological role in the construction of communication relations (Das, 2005: 53). Studies on ideology are valuable because they provide us perspectives that would enable us to read and interpret our culture critically as there are cultural assertions by various groups (Das, 2005:55). For example, *Dainik Bhaskar* is considered as taking a softer stand towards the state agencies and government owing to its majoritarian ideology while *Patrika* is often considered as taking a free and fearless stand against the state machineries related to any issues and especially the insurgency issues.¹⁷ *Deshbandhu* newspaper on the other hand often sides with the adivasi voices of the state as it follows the communist ideology; other newspapers such as *Hindsat* which is the local newspaper of Bastar region, and *Dandakaranya Samachar*, owing to their small production capacity and dependence on state machinery for revenue, express the concerns of local adivasis in a milder tone.

A medium sized¹⁸ newspaper firm like *Deshbandhu* claims that it is the only newspaper in Chhattisgarh solely devoted to journalism with no other side businesses. *Deshbandhu* group, as discussed in the above section, was started with the sole purpose of serving the local population of the areas; its owner believes in the relevance of communist ideology, and readily accepts that today no newspaper house of any place can afford to speak against the government if they have to run their newspaper.¹⁹ *Navbharat* is another Hindi newspaper with a medium level of production that widely constructs as well as influences the public opinion in Chhattisgarh. Since it was started immediately after the independence, *Navbharat* is widely read and most

¹⁶ During the time of interviews, the views expressed by the journalists, though in present political scenario, things are changed as raids were conducted at the office premises of the newspaper across country in July 2021, indicating a shift in power relations between the media house and the state.

¹⁷ Personal interviews with journalists in Bastar.

¹⁸ Based on the amount of newspaper production and circulation, the newspapers have been identified as small, medium and large newspaper firms by Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity Department.

¹⁹ Personal interview with *Deshbandhu*'s late chief editor, Lalit Surjan.

respected of all the newspapers in Chhattisgarh. It widely enjoys the trust of the audiences even today and plays a significant role in creating public opinion.

The fact that different newspapers often support different ideological stances that often contribute to the polarisation of the discourses and create segmented audiences. The same is the case in Chhattisgarh, particularly in Maoist affected Bastar region where the big newspaper brands such as *Dainik Bhaskar*, *Haribhoomi* have fragmented the audiences into those who support the state's development policy, rampant industrialisation, excessive deforestation and modernization; and other groups who are vocal about saving the forest and water resources and are adivasi rights advocates.

In India, newspapers are owned mainly by individuals or by private firms and in this sense are relatively free from government control (Singhal and Rogers, 2001: 54). Since the 1950s, critics constantly argued that Indian newspapers were largely controlled by monopoly capitalists. The First Press Commission in 1954 contended that the power of the holder of a monopoly to influence his public in any way he chooses should be regulated and restrained (Jeffrey, 2010:106). The Indian Federation of Working Journalists in 1973 published a small book titled *India's Monopoly Press: A Mirror of Distortion*, which decried "the vested interests of the monopoly houses which own the biggest newspapers with the biggest circulations" (ibid).

The political economy of the media determines the content of the newspaper in powerful ways; as a counter force to the agency of reporters who work in conflict ridden and troubled areas to accurately represent the conflict issues. Reporting in the troubled areas has its own threats and challenges, and journalists who work in these areas especially the local journalists who witness the insurgency and casualties in much closer aspect, deal with unique kinds of threats and compulsions which is in many ways might be very different from the journalists working in urban and suburban areas. The following section discusses one of the major challenges local journalists face i.e. - Chhattisgarh Special Public Safety Act 2005 in insurgency affected areas, and the obstructions faced while reporting on the insurgency issues, which in turn plays a pivotal role in building the public picture of the insurgency affected areas.

d) Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act, 2005

In order to curb the expansion of Maoism and sympathy for the movement amongst the local adivasis of the state, the Chhattisgarh state government unanimously passed the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act, 2005 in the legislative assembly in December 2005, which came into force on 12 April 2006. The most contentious part of this Act revolves around the word ‘unlawful activities’ which is stated in clause 2 (c) of the Act. Under the ambit of ‘unlawful activities’ any sort of communication by any individual, organization, or group which may disturb the public order, law and order or the work of administration has been included. More than this, even the gathering of the people to show their dissent against the state has been marked as ‘unlawful activity’ (CSPS Act, 2005: 23).

The Act bars the media from carrying reports of any kind of ‘unlawful activities’ in the state. According to the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act, 2005 (CSPS) any form of democratic protest can be declared as ‘unlawful activity’ and any group protesting can be declared ‘unlawful’. Use of words such as ‘tendency’ and ‘encouragement’ in the definition of the crime in the Act can give free hand to state machinery to harass the common man, human rights activists, and journalists in free and unbiased reporting of the incidences. Moreover, the Act denies legal recourse to relief to victimized person and provides for two to seven years of imprisonment without proof of intent or a definite act to commit certain acts. Any journalist reporting or interviewing the candidates of the banned organisations can be punished under this Act.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has described the Act as the undemocratic legislation and emphasised the importance of freedom of speech as a pre-requisite condition for the peaceful resolution of conflict and stressed that restricting the media from carrying out its professional activities can only lead to more suspicion and misinformation.²⁰ Under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) was declared as a terrorist organisation in June 2009 by the Indian government, under which writing or speaking in favour of Maoists will cause punishment up to 10 years.²¹ Many of the journalists in

²⁰See- IFJ website at- [https:// www.ifj.org](https://www.ifj.org)

²¹ The Hindu newspaper’s Report, “Centre Bans CPI (Maoists)”, dated- 23 June, 2009

Chhattisgarh who had been freely reporting about the Maoists version of any event have been intimidated by the police for bringing out the Maoist version, as often questions are raised on them for bringing to the public eye the Maoists' version on such events. In such situations, free flow reporting about the Maoist activities remains a daunting task with many risks. Milikan and Carney observe that this step was taken by the Indian government primarily after the visit of the leftist author Arundhati Roy to discourage anyone from speaking or talking favourably about the Maoist movement, their aims and reasons of the struggles, or even any word of opposition against the mining corporations (Milikan and Carney, 2010: 112). There have been increasing cases of curbs on news reports and journalists in the state with the introduction of the Chhattisgarh Public Safety Act 2005. The case of the arrest of journalist Santosh Yadav from Bastar has been carried out under this Act. Scholars and activists believe that the Act has made it easy for the police to easily wipe out anyone trying to highlight the atrocities and crimes perpetrated on the innocent adivasi population by the police in the name of eliminating the Maoist²² (PUCL, 2001).

Thus, as a result of these repressive measures, in most of the media reports, the structural nature of the conflict is absent. The media sensationalises the reporting of the deaths of either the security forces or the Maoists. While most of the journalists are unaware of the Act but those who have suffered because of it, know better and are still bearing the brunt. Apart from Santosh Yadav, another social rights activist Soni Sori, who advocates for the rights of adivasi people got falsely implicated in Maoist cases and was jailed and tortured for several years under the CSPS Act 2005. To discourage her from being vocal about the rampant human rights violation carried out by the police in the state, Sori was imposed with seven cases and in each one of those, she was booked under CSPS Act 2005. The high court relieved her from six cases and one is still pending (Grover, 2017: 270).

The stringent CSPS Act 2005 was also used to arrest the human rights activist Dr. Binayak Sen. Under this Act, Dr. Sen was charged for supporting and providing aid for the promotion of unlawful activities in Chhattisgarh state, which Dr. Sen denies. He has been implicated in this case only because he chose to spend his life living among the adivasi

²² 'Targeting People's Organisation in the Name of Naxalism', PUCL Bulletin, February 2001 .

population and serving them. Another associate of Dr. Sen, Pijush Guha, a Kolkata-based businessman has been charged along with Dr. Sen for merely possessing the texts related to Maoist ideology, which he claims was implanted by the police to falsely implicate him under CSPA Act 2005 (Outlook, 26 December 2010). Thus, the CSPA Act 2005 is a barrier to open and free flow reporting from the conflict areas which in turn harms the local adivasi population residing in these areas.

In conflict areas, the free flow of information plays a larger role in establishing the principles of the democratic society and ensuring justice to its citizens residing in the remotest and inaccessible areas. Laws like CSPA Act, 2005 do ensure the reinforcing of the dominant voices instead of the marginalised voices.

II. Research Problem and Objectives

In insurgency and conflict hit areas, the news is an important source of information that influences many lives, determines day-to-day activities, and influences policy making as well. News reports about the insurgency related issues have the potential to affect the different stakeholders (social activists, political leaders, human rights activists, Maoists, and business classes) in different ways, which makes it a sensitive job to perform. The process of news reporting particularly in regional newspapers is important as the producers of the news (reporters) are immersed themselves in the issues and while coming out with the news stories they write with their entire collective experiences and perceptions about the issue which they have encountered till date. The process of news making is an act of constructing reality (Tuchman, 1978: 12). Also, it is the regional language newspapers which owing to their use of the local language tend to be closer to the reading public, posing a more serious threat and problems for those who want to control it. English newspapers on the other hand largely cater to the taste of the elite class people and often avoid facing the government regarding any controversial issues (Jeffrey, 2000: 186).

While there is important work on the subject of media in conflict areas in India, contemporary studies on this subject have mostly focused on media discourses, which are often analysed using quantitative methods such as Bella Mody's work on the role of newspapers in providing

information about insurgency was based on content analysis of five newspapers (Mody, 2015: 250). There is a dearth of literature on the lived work of media workers in representations of insurgency and conflict issues in Maoist affected Chhattisgarh state. With the purpose to examine the social contexts and structural constraints which the local reporters find themselves embedded in insurgency ridden areas, and the relationships that these conditions may have with the news texts which are produced by them, the study has taken the tribe of local journalists working in the insurgency hit region of Bastar as its subject of study. This research, being an ethnographic study, renders visible both the structural constraints and agency in the everyday work of the reporters in the regional print media of Chhattisgarh state. The socio-economic background of the journalists, the financial constraints, the political pressures as well as pressures from insurgents and police to write accordingly play a complicated role in the final output of the news stories being written by them. The study examines how the social, economic, and political conditions of journalists working in Maoist affected areas, who produce the news texts for the audiences to consume, in turn directly or indirectly exercise control over the discourse about the Maoist insurgency in regional newspapers. It also examines historical aspects to both the insurgency and print media reportage in Chhattisgarh with an intent to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the significant trajectories of writing news in the region.

The research objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To delineate the contemporary history and significant shifts in reporting of Maoist insurgency in regional newspapers in Chhattisgarh, including study of the earliest reports related to the insurgency that appeared in the regional newspapers.
2. To study the locations and social backgrounds of the journalists, including educational, geographical, financial, cultural, and political contexts and belongings, in order to understand their life-histories and collective work cultures.
3. To study the possibilities for the agency of journalists involved in reporting Maoist insurgency and the mediations of journalists in this effort to report and produce news in the region; this includes an understanding of the ongoing processes of negotiation which local journalists engage in to express the differing voices at the forefront.

4. To trace the major structural constraints, such as social, educational, cultural, institutional, economic, and political conditions for the journalists in the endeavour of news production in the conflict areas. To study how these structural constraints play a role in the constitution of news.
5. To study the political economy of news-making in regional newspapers; the influence of factors such as ownership, pressures to keep the newspaper firm running, and ideological compliances with state and business interests, on the final news produced.
6. To study in detail the role of state measures and policies in the form of laws and Acts which influence journalists in terms of writing the final news related to insurgency in regional newspapers. To examine the significant nodes of conflict between the media labourers and the state in terms of the administrative policy and legislative laws which hinder and often act as a deterrent in free and unbiased reporting.

III. Research Questions

1. What is the earliest history of print media in Chhattisgarh? What is the history of reporting of Maoist insurgency in regional newspapers? What sort of newspapers started covering it initially? What kind of reports initially appeared in regional newspapers related to Maoist insurgency? What was the interest and content of such stories?
2. Who were the local reporters covering insurgency stories at the beginning? What was their social background? What are their memories of reporting during such incidents?
3. What have been the major historical shifts in covering the issues of Maoist insurgency by regional newspapers in Chhattisgarh?
4. What have been the significant transitions in the contexts to the work of journalism for reporters in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh over decades of Maoists presence in the state? What have been the complex political and socio-economic factors behind such changes?

5. Under what circumstances and contexts have the local journalists in the Bastar region in Chhattisgarh been covering the issues related to Maoist insurgency in the region? How do they recall these circumstances in relation to the shaping of their news writing?
6. What are the significant structural constraints that journalists face in the process of production of news in conflict areas? How do these structural constraints influence their writing on the insurgency issue? How do the journalists overcome these constraints while at work? What sort of negotiations and everyday compromises do the local journalists often make under the prevailing constraints in the region? How do some of them exercise agency, under what circumstances, and with what consequences for themselves, and for truth?
7. In what ways and to what extent is the agency (of local journalists) reflected in the final production of the news by media labourers themselves? In relation, how do local journalists view the processes of their own work, and the production of news in relation to political and social constraints?

IV. Theoretical Influences

Significant theoretical influences on this work include the concepts of Social Construction of Reality by Peter L Berger and Thomas Luckman, Political Economy by Karl Marx, Edward S Herman, Noam Chomsky, Peter Golding, Graham Murdock and Vincent Moscow, Three Step Circular Model proposed by Thomas Hanitzsch and Abit Hoxha to analyse the process of news production while reporting conflict, and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of Field.

Social Construction of Reality: This research is influenced by the concept of the social construction of reality which deals with the construction of reality by society. In the present research, this concept will help in tracing the shaping and construction of news related to the Maoist insurgency of the Bastar region in Chhattisgarh and how reality is being shaped around the news related to insurgency. According to Berger and Luckman, the sociology of knowledge does not only deal with the empirical variety of knowledge in human societies but also with the processes by which anybody of knowledge comes to be socially established as reality. Reality in the society, for them, is socially constructed and the sociology of knowledge must analyse the

process in which this occurs. “The sociology of knowledge is concerned with the relationship between human thought and the social context within which it arises,” (Berger and Luckman, 1991: 16). This realm of knowledge constitutes the sociological focus of a much more general problem and is “concerned with the analysis of the social construction of reality”. In our days, media also generates thought processes in human beings and it is important to analyse the social context within which it generates such thoughts. Tracing the roots, both the authors say “it is from Marx that the sociology of knowledge derived its root proposition – that man’s consciousness is determined by his social being”. They also argue for keeping an eye over the distribution of knowledge in society, saying this mechanism of distribution can be made the subject matter of research. Putting common sense knowledge above the ‘ideas’, they say “common-sense knowledge rather than ideas must be the central focus for the sociology of knowledge. It is precisely this knowledge that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could ever exist,” (Berger and Luckman, 1991: 27).

Political Economy of Media: The approach examines the production, distribution, and consumption of cultural resources like films, radio programmes, and news articles and their impact on the existing society. “The anatomy of the civil society” as Karl Marx said in his seminal publication *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* in 1859 “has to be sought in political economy” (Marx, 1859: 20). “The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political, and intellectual life. In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production,” (Marx, 1859: 20). According to him, the totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond different forms of social consciousness.

According to Golding and Murdock, it (political economy) is holistic as it examines in full the interrelation of social and cultural dynamics. As the amount of capital investment required in the communication industry rises, the control of financing and the provision of equipment tends to pass into the hands of large-scale enterprises since only they are able to raise the capital needed (Many Voices, One world, 1980:104). Robert McChesney notes that “the hallmark of

the global media system is its relentless, ubiquitous commercialism. Even, shopping channels, infomercials, and product placement are booming in the global media system (Herman and Noam Chomsky, 2002: XIV). Political economy sees the content, style, and form of media products such as newspaper stories or computer games as shaped by structural features such as ownership, advertising, and audience spending. The approach emphasises the media as industries and businesses. How they are organised, the ways in which they operate, and what they produce are shaped and determined by economic considerations and their attendant political aspects (Williams, 2003: 56). On the basis of such propositions, the research will try to seek answers related to aspects of the political economy of regional newspapers in Chhattisgarh as well as how do the media labourers cope with these forces while at work.

Three-Step Circular Model: The three-step circular model has been proposed by Thomas Hanitzsch and Abit Hoxha to analyse the process of news production in conflict reporting. Taking inspiration from Domingo's model who describes news productions as a generic process that includes five stages- i) access and observation ii) selecting and filtering iii) processing and editing iv) distribution and v) interpretation, Hanitzsch and Hoxha proposed the three-step circular model to analyse the news production process in conflict areas (Hanitzsch and Hoxha, 2014: 3).

The three elements in the model are – story ideation, story narration, and story presentation which have been explained as follows:

- a) **Story Ideation:** This is the starting stage of any story when the journalists first conceive the idea of the story in their mind. The story ideation could be initiated because of the factors – a proactive attitude of the journalists, out of the initiation by some outside forces, it could be event-driven or a follow up story. At this stage, the reporters deal with the question of 'what story to tell'.
- b) **Story Narration:** At this stage, the reporter has to deal with the question of 'how to tell the story'. Usually, at this stage reporters decide the central narrative (story), story angle (the perspective from which story is made), and story framing (interpretative framework). According to Hanitzsch and Hoxha, by looking at the central narrative,

story angle, and story framing one can explore patterns, structures, and roles of journalists in conflict news production.

- c) **Story Presentation:** At this stage, reporters do involve in the process of selection of information and their respective sources. They decide which source should be given the prominence, which suits the central narrative, and on what facts emphasis should be given. Link and references to their previous stories on conflicts play role in determining the presentation of the story (Hanitzsch and Hoxha, 2014: 3).

The above mentioned three stages play a crucial role in the production of the news related to insurgency and conflicts and are helpful in giving insights about the possible influences of insurgency and conflicts in news production related to it.

Bourdieu's Journalistic Field Theory: Pierre Bourdieu's concept of field is a general sociological model that is relevant to the work of thinking about journalists and specifically journalists' source relations. In his article Political Field, Social Field and the Journalistic Field, Bourdieu establishes a direct link between media production and societal process. He argues that we need to try and unravel the complex web of 'mediations' that lie at the heart of news production process (Hout and Jacobs, 2008: 65). What Bourdieu's field suggests is that there are complex structures in the field, which are sometimes influenced by the social actors of other fields, mostly economical and political fields. Bourdieu's emphasis here was on the highly heteronomous character of the journalistic field: journalists are beholden to agents in other fields in order to carry out their work. (Munnik, 2018: 1171)

Mark Peterson stresses that "To understand what a journalist writes it is necessary to understand his or her place in a journalistic field- the status of the newspaper for which the journalists writes (and hence the authority with which he or she speaks and asks questions), the journalists' specific competence in the writing technologies privileged within the field, the positions of journalists within the sets of roles within the newspaper, and history of the journalists' prior relations with the social actors he or she is constituting as sources," (Peterson, 2001:207). Bourdieu's concept of field is helpful in this work as it tries to unravel the working of the journalists who are caught in the situation managing of political and economic pressures along with the crisis created by Maoists and insurgents.

V. Methodological Approaches

The seminal anthropologist Clifford Geertz, drawing from Gilbert Ryle's "thick description" of cultures, draws attention to the importance of minute details, meanings, and conceptual structures; to the interpretation of cultures rather than merely putting out of 'facts'. Geertz, while writing on ethnography, says in anthropology, when practitioners conduct ethnographic studies, it is not merely about establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing the text, mapping fields, keeping a diary, and so on; "what defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is an elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Ryle's thick description...which is the study of "a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures" in terms of different behaviours (Geertz, 1973: 7). Geertz writes that "doing ethnography is trying to read a manuscript- foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalised graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behaviour" (Geertz, 1973: 10). "A good interpretation of anything – a poem, a person, a history, a ritual, an institution, a society – takes us into the heart of that of which it is interpretation (Geertz, 1973: 18). According to him, an ethnographer "inscribes" social discourse; he writes it down. "In so doing, he turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted" (Geertz, 1973: 19).

This research is ethnographic in nature to be able to provide a thick description of the conditions of the field and to interpretatively examine the meanings in conceptual structures and cultures of the life-world. The ethnographic study of the work of journalists reporting on the insurgency in Chhattisgarh tries to unravel the complex process of news production in insurgency hit areas. As such, besides significant archival research in the field, it has involved many months of non-participant observation, interviews, spending time in press offices, meeting some of the 'sources' of those studied. The present research adopts ethnographic study as its primary research method which is the study of "social interactions, behaviours and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organisations and communities" (Reeves, Kuper, Hodges, 2008: 2). The central aim of ethnography is to provide rich, holistic insights into people's views and actions, as well as the nature of the locations they inhabit, through the collection of detailed observation and interviews (Reeves, Kuper, Hodges, 2008: 512). Reeves et al cite Hammersley

as saying the task of ethnographers is to document the culture, the perspectives and practices of the people in these settings and the aim is to get inside the way each group of people sees the world (ibid).²³

This research studies the approach of regional print media towards the insurgency in Chhattisgarh with a special focus on the working of the local journalists in the regional newspapers of the state, their social leanings and compulsions while reporting insurgency, and the kind of threats and problems they face in their everyday work. For this purpose, an ethnographic study of the journalists working with the regional print media houses of the most insurgency affected area of Chhattisgarh, which is Bastar, has been taken. Based on the method of non-participant observation,²⁴ the method included several interviews, discussions, and spending several working hours with the journalists in their office premises in Jagdalpur, administrative headquarters of Bastar zone, Raipur in Chhattisgarh, and Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh. The interviews and discussions were carried on with journalists, editors, owners of different print media houses, freelancers, stringers, political commentators, Hindi newspaper columnists, and some other media persons. To provide a thick description of the events and actors involved, besides the months of non-participant observation and interviews with editors and journalists, the study involved conducting interviews with other media staff, peons, typists, and advertising persons of the media firms. In an extremely small office space where top

²³ There have been many ethnographic studies, such as Gaye Tuchman (1978) on news making in newsrooms, Herbert Gans (1979) on the journalistic and source relations and their impact on news making, sociological and cultural accounts of news production by Clayman (1990) and Berkowitz (1992), (Houts and Jacobs, 2008: 61). However, ethnographic study on the journalists involved in process of news production is a more recent phenomenon. Amahl Bishara has done a recent ethnographic study on the role of Palestinian journalists in news making for the US media houses. Anthropological study on the journalists of the newspapers in India has been previously done by Per Stahlberg, who had taken journalists as the subject of the study in order to understand the vernacular journalism. He did his research work on the journalists of *Dainik Jagran* of Lucknow edition. Likewise, Ursula Rao has performed an ethnographic study on news making in northern India. Through field work and interviews, she compares the work culture of Times of India and *Dainik Jagran*. Apart from this, Tabrez Neyazi's study is on the Madhya Pradesh's Hindi newspaper *Dainik Bhaskar*. Based on participant observation and the data collected from newspapers and field, Neyazi has argued that how the localisation of news at local level in vernacular press has deepened the process of democracy.

²⁴ Non-participant observation is a "relatively unobtrusive qualitative research strategy for gathering primary data about some aspect of the social world without interacting directly with its social world," (Williams, 2008: 561). "Non-participant observers sometimes are physically co-present with research participants in a naturalistic setting, but other times may not be present in the setting," (ibid). In this process, a researcher chooses "a site, collect observational data, and prepare a written report," (Ostrower F, 1998: 57).

managerial heads like Bureau Chief to editors, journalists and peon, and drivers, share the same space and work in the same environment, their knowledge and information mattered a lot for the proper interpretations of the facts and findings valuable for the study.

The research has also conducted content analysis²⁵ of news articles of three regional newspapers of Bastar, with the aid of theoretical perspectives of media framing and agenda setting. In addition, to look into the early history of media reporting about the Maoist insurgency in India, the study employed secondary literature; and also archives of the regional newspapers of Chhattisgarh from the year 2000 to 2017. In order to trace the patterns of reporting and nature of historical concerns and issues engaged within print media of Chhattisgarh, the archival study of some of the earliest newspapers of the region, which came under the undivided Madhya Pradesh, was conducted. The archival study is a method of research that includes a range of “investigations of documents and textual materials” and mainly involves “the study of historical documents” (Ventresca & Mohr, 2001: 3). Articles from journals, newspapers, websites, magazines related to insurgency and media have been used for studying the present research problem. For the archival study of some of the earliest newspapers of the Chhattisgarh region, the researcher has visited Madhav Rao Sapre Library of Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, and has also collected newspaper data from Maya Ram Surjan Library. Data related to the circulation, readership, and penetration of newspapers in the Bastar region has been collected from the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC), Indian Readership Survey (IRS), Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI), and Census of India.

VII. Organisation of Study

The thesis is divided into five chapters including Introduction and Conclusions. Their brief descriptions are as follows:

²⁵ Citing Walizer and Wiener, Wimmer and Dominick define content analysis as any systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information; a research technique “for making replicable and valid references from data to their context” (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011: 156). It is a ‘nonintrusive’ method in which “the researcher examines particular elements in a text or collection of texts to quantify them and use them for statistical analysis,” (Berger, 2016: 233).

1) Introduction: The first chapter introduces the research which is focused on the examination of the processes of news production in Maoist insurgency affected areas of Chhattisgarh. This study which is based on archival and ethnographic research is conducted with the purpose of understanding the contexts that influence the work of journalism in conflict affected Bastar region of Chhattisgarh where political, economic, social, and journalistic forces interplay to bring out any piece of news or to hide it. The study contributes towards an understanding of how the local print media in Chhattisgarh are controlled by the mechanisms set by the state and how it becomes a propaganda tool of the state. It also examines how even in these difficult circumstances the print media in Chhattisgarh manages its business and imperatives of survival and profit-making. It explores the nature of understanding between the press and the state towards maintaining propaganda against the Maoists, and how this cooperation benefits both parties. The introduction details the existing academic literature in this domain, research problem and objectives of the research, research questions, methodological influences, and methods of study.

2) Print Media in Chhattisgarh: Histories of Reporting on the Maoist Insurgency: The second chapter delineates the history of print media coverage of Maoists insurgency in Chhattisgarh. In order to understand the present trends in reporting and shaping of news related to the Maoist insurgency, it examines the history of coverage of the Maoist movement specifically in the context of Chhattisgarh. The chapter examines media reporting of three historically critical events in detail which brought the issues relating to the Maoist insurgency in Chhattisgarh to the national platform and to the world at large. In order to understand the shifts in trends of media coverage of Maoist related issues, a thorough study of the history, and growth of print media in Chhattisgarh has been done. It contributes towards an understanding of how amid all the pressures and chaos, local print media in Chhattisgarh is managing its work and businesses. The chapter attends to the manner in which the media became a propaganda tool for the government during the events of Salwa Judum, as well as the control mechanisms set by the government to control print media narratives about the Maoist insurgency.

3) Political Economy of Print Media in Chhattisgarh: A Comparative Analysis of Three Hindi Newspapers: The third chapter contributes towards understanding that how the political

economy of print media in Chhattisgarh plays its role in reporting and representation of Maoist-based news. There are different stakeholders in the field of print media such as capitalists, the state itself, politicians, and media owners. This chapter tries to explore that how capitalists and some of the local print media houses have colluded their interests and how the process of news publishing influences public opinion in favour of their business interests and how they are supported by the government.

Content analysis of news stories from three newspapers namely Dainik Bhaskar, Dandakaranya Samachar, and Patrika has been done. The perspectives of framing analysis and agenda-setting have been used under the light of which the analysis of the representation has been done. In the analysis, tone of the stories, the prominence given to different aspects of Maoists insurgency in the stories, the prominence given to particular words in the stories, page placement of the story, news sources, number of columns dedicated to various Maoist news are some of the categories which have been analysed.

4) Media Labourers: Social Contexts and Trajectories of Work: This is the fourth chapter that has discussed the backgrounds of the journalists, their personal, regional, psychological, professional, social, educational, and cultural factors. Their personal views about the prevailing condition of insurgency in the state and solutions they think. Their personal aspirations about their life and the role they think that they might be playing or can play in mitigating the situations and communicating the marginalised voices. Along with this, it also looks into the troubles and hurdles a journalist face through various laws and stringent acts which hamper their work to write freely about the Maoist affected areas. Apart from this, the chapter has studied in detail negotiations and even compromises local journalists in Bastar do to carry out their reporting work under the prevailing circumstances. Sometimes journalists tend to together stand against the Maoists as well as against police to guard their colleagues, these all issues have been discussed in this chapter in detail. Sometimes they connect to the city journalists to break any major story and these efforts of the local journalists to trace out the truth and also to manage with the opposing party has been the subject matter of this chapter.

5) Conclusion: The fifth chapter is the conclusion of the study. It has discussed the overall approach of regional media in insurgency coverage, local journalists and their work conditions,

and its implications for the growth of free speech and free flow of information. It details how the overall situation in Chhattisgarh about the print media coverage of Maoist insurgency is controlled by the government and political economy of print media in coverage of Maoist insurgency. The chapter looks into the gap of literature, the significance of the study, and suggestions for future research.

Figure1: The map below shows Bastar and its adjoining Maoist stronghold in Chhattisgarh state.



Source: www.mapsofindia.com

Chapter-2

PRINT MEDIA IN CHHATTISGARH:

History of Media Reporting on the Maoist Insurgency

The issue of contemporary Maoist insurgency, its relationships with the prevailing conflicts over natural resources, and media reporting of these issues over the decades have been entangled together in complex ways. To understand these entanglements in contemporary Chhattisgarh, this chapter tries to look back into the significant trajectories of print media reporting of the insurgency in the state. The chapter analyses in detail some of the major Maoist related incidents in Chhattisgarh in relation to media reporting about them; and the role this coverage has had in shaping the state's stance on these issues. With the purpose to understand the interstices among them, the chapter has been divided into two major sections under the sub-heads: i) A Brief History and Growth of Print Media in Chhattisgarh, and ii) Reporting of Maoist Insurgency since 2000.

In the first section, an archival study of some of the earliest newspapers of the region has been taken up in order to understand the nature and concerns of these newspapers at the onset of the print media industry in the region. In the archival study, some of the earliest newspapers of undivided Madhya Pradesh state were taken to study from the Madhav Rao Sapre Library, Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh. A thorough study of the available copies of the earliest newspapers of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh has been done with the purpose to understand the early discourses in these newspapers. The second section takes into account three different major incidents related to the Maoist insurgency which have marked the history of Chhattisgarh state and examines the print media reporting of these events in the state.

i) A Brief History and Growth of Print Media in Chhattisgarh

The beginning of print media in Chhattisgarh started with the onset of vernacular newspaper production in Madhya Pradesh in the 19th century. By the 20th century, vernacular dailies had also started getting published in many of the regions of (current day) Chhattisgarh such as Raipur and Rajnandgaon. Some of the newspapers such as *Nayi Duniya*, *Amrit Sandesh*, and *Dainik*

Bhaskar which were getting published from Madhya Pradesh still enjoy their audiences in the Chhattisgarh region even today. For the newspapers which started getting published one or two decades before independence, sentiments of nationalism and the service of the nation were the primary driving factors. In order to serve the interest of the country which was a struggle for freedom, these dailies took up the task of enlightening the masses, organising their thoughts towards freedom through their editorial writings, by publishing speeches of political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, and towards the upliftment of society through articles on education and women's education.

Some of the earliest newspapers of undivided Madhya Pradesh were: *Malwa Akhbar* (weekly) which started getting published on March 6, 1849; *Akhbar Gwalior* (weekly) first published in January 1852; and *Jayajji Pratap* (weekly) which started on January 11, 1905 (Anuja, 2002: 10). In most of these newspapers, two languages such as Urdu and Hindi were used; while one column of newspapers contained news in Hindi, the same content was written in the second adjacent column in Urdu. With the gradual rise in consciousness for Hindi, later these newspapers started publishing news only in Hindi language. It could be noted that while the earliest copies of *Malwa Akhbar* and *Jayaji Pratap* were initially published in both Hindi and Urdu language, gradually after the 1940s some of these newspapers stopped using Urdu and instead focussed totally on Hindi.²⁶

The onset of print media in Chhattisgarh occurred in the 20th century with the rise of nationalism in the undivided Central Province of Madhya Pradesh. A small newspaper called *Prajahiteshi*, which was a Hindi weekly published from Rajnanadgaon in Chhattisgarh in 1889, is the first newspaper from the Chhattisgarh area. However, due to the unavailability of any copy of the same newspaper and the lack of proper archival data on *Prajahiteshi*, not much could be known about it (Anuja, 2002: 21). *Chhattisgarh Mitra* is considered to be the first newspaper which was published on monthly basis for continuously three years, from January 1900 to 1902 from Bilaspur. The history of newspaper publishing in Chhattisgarh can be divided into two categories, the first is Pre –Independence Era Newspapers and the second is Post-Independence Era Newspapers.

²⁶Detail study of the copies of *Jayaji Pratap* and *Malwa Akhbar* could be found in Madhav Rao Sapre Library, Bhopal and also in book *Shabd Satta: Madhya Pradesh Me Patrakarita ke 150 Saal* written by Vijaydutt Shridhar.

During the Pre-Independence period, most of the newspapers published had a nationalistic tone and many of them focused on the development of Hindi Devnagari language like *Chhattisgarh Mitra*, along with the concern towards the uplift of the society as a whole (Shreedhar, 1999: 48). In *Chhattisgarh Mitra* the editors of the newspaper Pandit Madhav Rao Sapre and Pandit Ram Rao Chincholkar, in its introductory note²⁷ clearly point out that except for the Chhattisgarh region all other states and regions have their newspapers either in Hindi or their regional language. The editor clearly specifies that the newspaper would give special attention to the development and spread of the Hindi Devnagari language. The primary purpose of the newspaper was to spread awareness through education.

It contained less news and more critical comments, essays, and life histories of famous personalities. The newspaper was more conscious about the Hindi grammar and had a very critical tone for those newspapers not taking care of grammar in the Hindi language. *Chhattisgarh Mitra* used to publish articles, poetry, stories, sarcasm, critical articles, inspirational stories, and biographies of nationalist and religious leaders like Annie Besant, Dada Bhai Naoroji, Vivekananda etc. It also focussed on news related to science, economics, psychology, strategic affairs, and women's issues.

In issues related to women's affairs, it had a patriarchal tone about the education of girls and the duties of an obedient wife within the family structures. The newspaper, in some of its editions, particularly complained about the apathy of the rich people of Chhattisgarh who hesitate in investing money in newspapers as well as on the readers who do not timely pay the bills, thus showing little interest in the spread of education and awareness. Clearly, it indicates that by this time there was not much readership base and reading audience for the newspaper in this region.

There were several other small newspapers like *Kabeer Panthi* published in 1914, which focused on the development of the society and basically on the uplift of the poor and discriminated section of the society. Another newspaper *Chhattisgarh* was a monthly newspaper published from Raigarh. *Agradoot* which basically had a nationalistic tone got published in 1942

²⁷The published copies of Chhattisgarh Mitra has been compiled into a book year wise and these copies are available in Madhav Rao Sapre library for reading and purchasing.

as a daily Hindi newspaper of Chhattisgarh. Initially it was started by Kehsav Prasad Verma and later on Swarjya Prasad Trivedi. The newspaper's tone was critical and staunchly against the then British government, due to which censorship was imposed on it in September 1942 and one of its editors was jailed; as a result publication of the newspaper was closed down and after independence in 1983, it became an evening newspaper (Shreedhar, 1999: 111).

Newspapers such as *Bal*, which was a hand written magazine, and *Suryoday* initiated by Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla in 1914, carried a nationalistic and developmental tone (Anuja, 2002: 22). Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla is considered to be the prominent stalwart in the journalism of the undivided Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh who started *Mahakaushal*, a weekly newspaper from Nagpur in 1935. Likewise, there were several other small and medium newspapers which were getting published from the Chhattisgarh region prior to independence. Newspapers and magazines meant for the spread of education and awareness such as *Arunoday* (1921) from Rajnandgaon, *Siksha* and *Uthan* (1935), *Alok* (1935) which was a literature based periodical, *Phanke Mast* (1923), for spreading communal harmony and unity, *Chhattisgarh* (1923) from Raigarh and *Vikas* (1923) from Bilaspur were in Chhattisgarhi language, played active roles in educating the then Chhattisgarh society and in informing people about the prevailing socio-political conditions of the country (Shreedhar, 1999: 95).

In the pre-independence era, most of the newspapers were already driven by the idea of an 'imagined community'²⁸; in the post-independence period the feeling of being part of one nation state was the prominent tone exhibited in the newspapers. In the post-independence era, the publishing of the small and medium scale newspapers multiplied by many folds and further escalated the competition (Shreedhar, 1999: 150). Though a decent earning from newspapers was not possible during that time, the power and influence it wielded was seen as worth trying for. Also, in the political fraternity, some of the newspapers had a good reputation and credibility. This period in Chhattisgarh and most of India was marked by the phase of newspapers being the mouthpiece of a certain ideology. Like *MahaKaushal* was regarded as the propagator of Congress party viewpoint and similarly, *Yug Dharma* was considered as the mouthpiece of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (Shreedhar, 1999: 119).

²⁸The concept of Imagined Community was given by Benedict Anderson in his book "Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism" (1983).

In July 1946, *Mahakaushal* was restarted from Raipur as a weekly and this became the first daily newspaper of the region in 1951. Mahakaushal was restarted by the Congress stalwart of Madhya Pradesh Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla and was dedicated to Congress ideology. It contained political news, literature, cultural news, and a special column dedicated to women and children. Most of the subjects of the newspaper were related to Indo-Pak issues, speeches of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the life of socialism, the management of socio-economic administrations, Gandhian ideology, and rural life. It used to publish special feature stories on the occasion of Deepawali (a festival of light), in which it used to publish the tales and fable stories of local communities such as Maria (adivasi) community of Chhattisgarh, sometimes tales of the local community of Punjab, Assam, Vindhya region and many others.²⁹

By 1948, newspaper publications started spreading to the interior areas of the Chhattisgarh region. Many newspapers such as *Nav-Rashtra* (1950) weekly and *Nav-Jyoti* (1950) monthly from Raipur, bi-weekly newspaper like *RashtraBandhu* (1950) and *Angara* (1950) from Jagdalpur. *Lok Mitra*, *Toofan*, *Nav-Samaj*, and *Mukti* from Bilaspur in 1953, *Sevak* from Mahasamund, *Chitra* from Rajnandgaon, *Prakash* from Bilaspur, and *Adhikar* from Raigarh these all were getting published in 1954 (Shreedhar, 1999: 160).

Although many small and medium newspapers got started after independence in the Chhattisgarh region but very few have survived till date. Many of the newspapers and magazines in the post-independence era were devoted to development and for spreading awareness. *Parakram* and *NayiDasha* from Bilaspur (1955), *Sabera* from Rajnandgaon (1956) were some other newspapers (Anuja, 2002: 30).

Dainik Bhaskar, which became one of the prominent newspapers of the present day in all Hindi-speaking regions, was firstly launched in Bhopal in 1948 as 'Subah Savere' and in Gwalior as *Good Morning India* (Anuja, 2002: 80). Later on, in 1958, its name got changed to *Dainik Bhaskar*. It was then started by Dwarka Prasad Agarwal. Under the leadership of Ramesh Agarwal, the Bhaskar group extended its publication in Gwalior and other parts of Madhya Pradesh. Today, *Dainik Bhaskar* Hindi is available in 11 states with 46 editions. Besides this, it is also available in Gujrati and Marathi languages as a daily newspaper. *Dainik Bhaskar* group

²⁹Some of the earliest copies of Mahakaushal is available for research in Madhav Rao Sapre Library, Bhopal.

entered into Chhattisgarh in 1988 as *NavBhaskar*. It was published from Raipur as *NavBhaskar* with 12-pages edition under the editorship of prominent journalist Ramesh Nayar as its regional editor on August 30, 1988. In 1992, it was again renamed as *Dainik Bhaskar* (Anuja, 2002; 79). Presently, in Chhattisgarh, *Dainik Bhaskar* has different editions from Raipur, Bilaspur, Raigarh, Bhilai, and Jagdalpur.³⁰

Some small newspapers were in the local language; for example, *Van Raj* started in 1955 from Jagdalpur in the local Halwi language, was an eight-page fortnightly newspaper. *Chhattisgarh* newspaper from Raipur was started by Khub Chandra Baghel. It was a prominent mouthpiece of the Socialist Party in Chhattisgarh. Similarly, newspapers like *Maha Bharat*, *Adharsh Bharat* from Raipur started in 1957 (Anuja, 2002: 82). There are some newspapers, which though they started from the undivided Madhya Pradesh region, still enjoy a good reading audience in Chhattisgarh and even today have a good number of readers. These are *Nav Bharat* (1950), *Yug Dharma* (1956), *Amrit Sandesh* (1984), *Nayi Duniya* (1987), *Chautha Sansar*(1989); and two English dailies *The Hitvada* (1957) and *The Madhya Pradesh Chronicle* (1957) (Shreedhar, 1999: 133).

Nav Bharat, a prominent newspaper of Chhattisgarh, which was started earlier from Jabalpur in 1950 as a daily newspaper, later started getting published from Raipur in 1959. Initially, in Raipur, its editor was Shiv Prasad Diwedi (Shreedhar, 1999: 140). *Nav Bharat* has a reputation of being genuine and truthful about its report, however, very recently, the paper went through a major change in its policies and altogether removed the section of editorial writing from its pages, which brought a sense of disappointment among the journalist's fraternity of Chhattisgarh.³¹

Later on, *Dandkaranya Samachar* also got started in 1959 in local Halwi, English and Hindi language from Jagdalpur city. The newspaper in Halwi language could not survive due to lack of infrastructural facility, however, in the Hindi language *Dandkaranya Samachar* is still thriving and has a committed readership in Bastar region. One prominent newspaper of Chhattisgarh is *Deshbandhu*, which started as a daily Hindi Newspaper on April 19, 1959, from

³⁰For further information see DB Corporation website of DainikBhaskar newspaper.

³¹In an interview with one of the journalist who worked as its editor, revealed that he left the paper because it has stopped the publishing of editorial section in 2018.

Raipur. It was initially started under the name of '*Nai Duniya*' by Maya Ram Surjan, later on; its name got changed to *Deshbandhu* (Anuja, 2002: 14). Maya Ram Surjan was himself a journalist of high reputation and was known for his committed dedication to the common man of Chhattisgarh. As a result, *Deshbandhu* newspaper enjoys the reputation of being the voice of the local adivasi people of Chhattisgarh. Apart from the main newspaper, *Deshbandhu* group also publishes a broadsheet evening paper 'Highway Channel' and a monthly literary magazine '*AksharParv*'. *Deshbandhu* in its attempt to raise the issues of the local adivasi community of Chhattisgarh has lost the life of some of its reporters as well. The late³² Chief Editor of *Deshbandhu*, Lalit Surjan, while speaking about running of his newspaper house under the stiff market competition himself explained that "today none of the newspaper can afford to upset their respective government be it at the Centre or at the state level."³³

Another small but prominent Hindi newspaper which got published from Jagdalpur since 1982 is *Hindsat*. In 1982, it got started as a weekly four-page tabloid; later in 1987, it turned into a daily newspaper.³⁴ The newspaper is most vocal on the issues of the local adivasi, for protecting the green cover and against the atrocities being perpetrated on local villagers by police in the name of Maoist encounters. *Haribhoomi* is another Hindi daily which also claims to enjoy the largest readership in Chhattisgarh. Originally, it got started from Haryana in 1996 as a Hindi weekly newspaper and extended its editions for Delhi-NCR areas. Later on, it entered into Chhattisgarh in 2001 in Bilaspur and went on to be the largest circulated daily of the Chhattisgarh in the year 2014 (IRS, 2014). *Haribhoomi* is known for its support for popular demands of the majority population; its proprietors are politically linked to the BJP and are more vocal towards majoritarian demands.

One of the major newspapers in Chhattisgarh is *Patrika*, a Hindi daily newspaper particularly known as the newspaper which is giving cut-throat competition to the Dainik Bhaskar group in most of the Hindi speaking areas of India. *Patrika* entered into Chhattisgarh market in September 2010 in Raipur. Apart from Hindi speaking states, it has also editions for

³²During the time of conducting the interview in year 2017, The Editor-in-Chief of *Deshbandhu* newspaper was healthy and in Good health, he departed in year 2020.

³³Interview with Lalit Surjan, Editor-in-Chief of *Deshbandhu* Group.

³⁴Interview with the *Hindsat* Editor-in-Chief D. S. Niyazi

non-Hindi speaking states such as Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal and is widely known for taking up local issues.

Altogether there are hundreds of newspapers registered with the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) in Chhattisgarh, which caters to the need of the print media of the people in the state.³⁵ Very few fall in the category of big newspapers like *Haribhoomi*, *Dainik Bhaskar*, *Nav Bharat*, and *Patrika*; the majority of these newspapers belong to medium and small categories like *Deshbandhu*, *Dandkaranya Samachar*, *Nayi Duniya*, and *Hindsat*. It could be noted that Chhattisgarh state has an interesting print media field where the cut-throat competition between the big, medium, and small newspaper houses determine the nature and the category of the news to be presented to the audience to run the business. The competition is to grab the different advertising customers residing in villages and towns of different districts of Chhattisgarh, along with the government offered advertisements. This has led the big newspapers to start different editions for different areas of Chhattisgarh. For example, *Dainik Bhaskar* has four separate editions in Chhattisgarh for Raipur, Raigarh, Bastar, and Bilaspur. These editions further contain diversified news and one page devoted to news about the different districts of these regions.

In India, and also in Chhattisgarh, news became a lucrative business only after the liberalisation era of the 1990s. After 1990s the sense of imagined community (which was a Hindi speaking community of Chhattisgarh) started clashing with the understandings of adivasi community who have had their own world remote from the belongings of a neo-liberal nation-state. The liberalisation era opened up the scope of newspaper marketing as well as the forests of Chhattisgarh to the business community. On one hand, the gradual opening up led to the exposure of the living conditions of adivasis to the world, their thoughts and aspirations, social structures, and socio-economic conditions, and on other hand, it gave power to the print media people who were reinforcing the dominant views to manipulate the common voices in their favour. The gradual liberalisation phase gave power in the hands of private businesses to run the newspaper firms or news channels and at the same time empowered them to dig the mines for

³⁵Data was provided by one of the newspaper owner interviewed, his publishing house is empanelled with Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity. This information is based on Advertisement Report, Publications on DAVP Panel for Chhattisgarh State as on 26 August, 2017, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

minerals in the Chhattisgarh forest. One such case is of Haribhoomi newspaper, the owner of which is associated with Bhartiya Janta Party and owns mining firms as well. Another similar case is of Dainik Bhaskar group which has a range of businesses-mining, real estate, hospitality, power, education, construction, advertising, publishing, and food processing. In fact in Chhattisgarh, almost all the major newspaper firms like Dainik Bhaskar, Nav Bharat have mining businesses and it is their primary business, apart from running media enterprise.³⁶ Not only this, media persons working in these newspaper firms have also their small private businesses and related scams and scandals as well. One such case is of Nayi Duniya Newspaper, where Bureau Chief of Jagdalpur of this newspaper, Bhawar Bothra, who happens to be a businessman as well, was alleged in grabbing the land of Dalpat Sagar lake back in 2016.³⁷ There are many such cases where either media persons or media firm owners happen to have other businesses interests in Chhattisgarh and their connections in media serve them the dual purpose of getting the desired business deal as well blocking the undesired news about their fraudulence. In order to understand the effects of such policy decisions, it is important to analyse the history of media reporting of insurgency in tandem with these related issues as it provides a clearer picture of the impacts of media conglomerations on the society of Chhattisgarh.

ii) Reporting of Maoist Insurgency 2000 Onwards

The start of the new millennium, the year 2000 marked the start of several new phases in the history of newspaper industries as well. After the introduction of new economic reforms, newspapers now had considerable freedom to expand and spread their market. These years particularly witnessed the unceasing expansion of Hindi newspapers such as Dainik Bhaskar and Patrika all over the Hindi speaking belts and rising competitions among the different media houses, print, and television to tap the untapped markets of rural areas of the country (Ninan, 2007: 25). To understand the history of print media reporting of Maoist insurgency particularly from 2000 onwards which marked the formation of the new Chhattisgarh state as well, it is important to locate these entire processes of print media reporting in the context of the socio-economic changes that were going on during that time. In order to understand the history of print

³⁶A journalist on the condition of anonymity said this.

³⁷For details please see, “Nayiduniya Bureau PramukhBothrakeKhilafDhokhadharikaMamla” (Fraud case filed against NayiDuniya Bureau Chief Bothra) dated 16.01.2016, at <http://bhadas4media.com>.

media reporting of insurgency in Chhattisgarh from the year 2000 onwards, three important events were taken from the history of Chhattisgarh which proves to be the turning point in the history of insurgency as well as media reporting. Revolving around these three events, a study of the news reports related to insurgency published in three newspapers, two Hindi and one English newspaper, has been done. The study takes into consideration the time of one month around the events to focus on the news reports appearing in different newspapers, the pattern of news, the nature of coverage, the tone of the narratives and the kind of follow up stories, the importance assigned to the news, the space given to the news report to have a holistic understanding of the history of reporting insurgency in Chhattisgarh. The three newspapers which have been taken are Dainik Bhaskar, Deshbandhu, and Times of India. The three important events are a) Starting phase of *Salwa Judum*³⁸ in 2005 b) Killing of 75 CRPF personnel in April 2010, and c) Killing of prominent Congress party leaders of Chhattisgarh, including Mahendra Karma, who was the founder of the Salwa Judum movement. Although this study considers the history of the Maoist reporting from the year 2000 and onwards but primary fieldwork reveals that Maoist presence and Maoist related incidents of violence were happening much before that. Reports related to Maoist linked incidents are available in some of the local newspapers of Chhattisgarh dating back to 1988. (See Figure 2.³⁹)

The earliest reports related to Maoist insurgency started appearing in local newspapers of Chhattisgarh such as Deshbandhu in 1988. Most of these reports were related to the address of Inspector General of Police to the policemen about the presence of Maoists in forested areas of Chhattisgarh, their preparedness to fight this situation, interviews of those who decided to support Maoists, interview of the then state Cabinet Minister Arvind Netam about the presence of Maoists and reasons of their presence and the possible way out, interviews of B.D. Sharma⁴⁰, an adivasi rights activist on issues of Maoists.

³⁸Salwa Judum means purification hunt in Gondi language of Chhattisgarh.

³⁹Even some senior journalists interviewed who have been reporting since the time of undivided Madhya Pradesh reinforce the fact that Maoist activity started in late 1980s in some parts of Madhya Pradesh.

⁴⁰B. D. Sharma was an IAS officer who resigned from government service for advocating tribal rights in Bastar region (he died in Dec 2015).



Figure: 2, Source: Deshbandhu Library, Raipur.

It even conducted a detailed interview of those men and women candidates who had joined the *Maoistdalams*⁴¹, operating in Bastar. In 1988, Deshbandhu carried a detailed report on the reasons of adivasis frequently joining Maoists and in its headline, it stated that, “Due to lack of food adivasis are joining hands with Naxals.” Even the reporting of incidents such as ambushes of Police-Naxals contained the details of those killed and interviews of the family members of Maoists and their place of origin, interviews of the women Maoist who lost her husband in police firing etc.. All these reports indicated that at least there was a practice of tolerance from the state machinery towards the newspaper firms. Rampant killing was not then possible, and whoever got killed in the police-Naxal ambush, their records were maintained.

By 1990s, reports related to insurgency became rampant in most of the local newspapers such as Nav Bhaskar, Amrit Sandesh, Nav Bharat, and Deshbandhu. Since at this time Chhattisgarh had very little English readership, so most of the offices of English newspapers were located in Bhopal (capital of undivided Madhya Pradesh), and thus, reports related to insurgency were very less or negligible. One news agency reporter said that during the 1990s most of the insurgency related reports they used to do were incidental and all information gathering were used to be done through phones because most of the newspapers firms had no

⁴¹Dalams are squads of Maoists working in a group.

time and money to recruit a permanent reporter in interior areas of Chhattisgarh.⁴² This also indicates that back then the issue of Maoists was not of such importance as it is now.

In the 1990s, in a bid to wipe out Maoist sympathisers, a counter-insurgency group called 'Jan-Jagran' was started. The insult and threat to adivasi rights activists such as B. D. Sharma⁴³ by the year 1992 started happening. He was badly thrashed and ousted by the local mob, led by anti-Maoist groups. The only thing lacking then was widespread media reporting which is comparatively a recent phenomenon and owing to fewer media reports these incidents used to get less audience attention as well. Similarly, journalists who advocated for adivasis welfare like Kirit Doshi were chased away from Bastar in 1992. *Deshbandhu*, in one of its reports of the year 1992, asks the Inspector General of Police to clarify the police act of searching the house of journalist Kirit Doshi to which the IG clarifies that it is a piece of false news and as such nothing has happened. In the same year 1992, another journalist Premraj Jain was held by the police on the charges of being a Maoist sympathiser. The only difference between media coverage of insurgency then and now is the lack of media hype and propaganda which is there right now.⁴⁴

During 1990s, mainly media reports about the Maoists' induced violence were getting reported. Reports of threat, torture and kidnapping of adivasi community people for going against Maoists started appearing in the newspaper with no clear explanations of such instances taken from Maoist spokespersons. By this time the tone and narratives used by different newspapers were clear. For example, while *Deshbandhu* resorted to reports like 'Naxals restoring the lost confidence of adivasis which was based on the comment of the then Commissioner Sandeep Banerjee in 1991 who was investigating the case of illegal felling of trees in Bastar, other newspapers resorted to reports such as 'From Andhra Pradesh, Naxals have entered into forests of Sihava'. Some of the newspaper reports took anti-Maoists stand blaming the adivasis for supporting Maoists without explaining the causes of such incidents and only concentrated on the solutions and strategies to deal with the Maoists. Their indirect message to its readers was that adivasis are 'the other' in their beloved state of Raipur acting as anti-development agents and coming in the way of their prosperous future state of Chhattisgarh. In another sense, they

⁴²Interview with the journalist based in Raipur.

⁴³ B. D. Sharma was a tribal rights activists and supporter of imposition of 5th Schedule for *adivasis*.

⁴⁴Interview with the veteran Journalist Ramesh Nayyar.

literally played the role of dividing the audience between non-*adivasis* and *adivasis* and then further creating strategies of counter-insurgency. This process of creating a bifurcated audience or divided public became more and more prevalent with the formation of Chhattisgarh state. It is important to point out that media can play a crucial role in creating a clarifying and transparent attitude of the general public towards the insurgency and conflict issues and at the same time media is capable enough to malign the images of *adivasis* population who often get caught in between the fight of security and Maoists forces by painting them as Maoist supporters. Like Tarick Jusic in his study about the role of media in the disintegration of former Yugoslavia pointed that media played a major role in dividing the entire public space of the country on the lines of ethnonational identities. (Jusic, 2010: 38). Similarly, in Chhattisgarh media since the beginning of the issues of Maoists insurgency, there were some newspapers like *Deshbandhu*, clarifying the root cause of insurgency whereas others like *Amrit Sandesh* reported only the deaths and casualty aspects of Maoists insurgency while hiding the root of the problem.

One important change which came in newspaper reporting after the new economic reforms of the year 1991 was the extension of mass communication system. Newspapers in order to compete with the growing television audience and to build their advertising revenues started extending their services to the village areas and then gradually occurred the phenomenon of the localisation of news. Researcher Sevanti Ninan notes that “the decades of 2000 began with advertising recession, and newspaper such as *Rajasthan Patrika* worked harder to create an alternate source of advertising by extending the paper’s circulation in small towns and villages of Hindi speaking belts. By this time, *Patrika* claimed to have reached 300 panchayats and Tehsils and *Dainik Bhaskar* claimed to have 50 percent, rural people, as its reading audience.” (Ninan, 2009: 262).

Ninan points out that the peculiar nature of this extending newspaper readership was the localisation of news. In order to fulfill the readers’ expectations of rural areas, Hindi newspapers went on to localise the news which led to the publishing of every trivial affair of the village and rural areas (Ninan, 2007: 25). This entire strategy was adopted by the newspapers to attract readers in rural areas and build a readership base. Localisation of the news led to the coming up of many newer editions of these newspapers at district levels and greater demand of local news

to fill up the pages of newspaper which in turn led to the hiring of untrained local village youths for sending local newsworthy information to the news editors. Ninan points out that the untrained youth which she calls as 'local news gatherers' were mainly those who took up the work of newspaper distributorship, were not literate enough to frame the news piece and use to send the new worthy information through mobile phones. Newspapers organisation, in order to retain these local news gatherers, started providing them press cards and but no monetary support (Ninan, 2007: 267). It could be noted that this widespread localisation of the news particularly in the Chhattisgarh belt led to the widespread newspaper reporting of the Maoists insurgency issues; to build more and more readership bases, newspaper organisations resorted to sensational reporting of the insurgency issues without giving deeper explanations about the root causes. While a full page reports could be seen about the insurgents caused deaths and incidences in most of the Hindi newspapers like *Dainik Bhaskar* and *Patrika*, very little is written about the root causes of the contention.

Few newspapers like *Deshbandhu* continued to freely write on the Maoist issues such as publishing the interviews of some Maoists on subjects such as why the officers of forest areas were being harassed by them and their clarifications and counter-claims about the officials being corrupt and exploiting adivasis. While news related to the solutions to the Maoist issues such as initiation of talks to the Maoist leaders by government, a statement by home minister Arvind Netam about leaving Bastar for Maoists to manage and police strategies to sort out the Maoist menace was more prevalent in newspapers like *Dainik Bhaskar* and *Nav Bharat*. Things gradually started changing by 2003 with the seizing of the press houses printing Maoists pamphlets and their literature and steadily watching closely on the media to control the Maoist related news started happening by this time. This control over media came in several forms like stringent laws, restrictions, and financial control over the distribution of advertisements to several newspapers. Some of the news report highlighting the attitude of the government is below in the picture. By the year 2003, which also coincided with a change of political regime at the state level, the attitude of the government shifted toward restrictions on the news which could possibly build a positive image of Maoists, and gradual propagation of government propaganda about villagers getting annoyed with Maoists.



Figure: 3, Source: Deshbandhu Library, Raipur.⁴⁵

Chhattisgarh government tapped the capability of the local newspapers to spread government propaganda among the rural areas of Chhattisgarh and went ahead with the curbs on spreading any news about Maoists which could build their positive image. In its efforts, the government got full support from the local newspapers which along with the financial support of the government (through advertisements) were in dire need of such news which could fill up the inside pages of several sub-editions of local areas such as Jagdalpur, Narayanpur, and Dantewada.

By the year 2003, the gradual control over the press against the Maoist news started increasing. Most of the newspapers by this time only wrote about the threat and violence created by the Maoists. While every act of Maoists whether it is looting of the police station, deaths caused by them, attacks on police, and killing of local adivasis in Jan Adalat is a common thing to report and analyse, these reports preferred one-sided reporting with no counter clarifications from Maoists. Except for Deshbandhu, most of the newspapers generally resorted to incidental reporting, indicting about the number of deaths, loss of property, and the degree of the Maoist cruelty. Chhattisgarh government by this time started increasing their control over the pattern of

⁴⁵The news story details about the questions raised by the leaders in Question Hour during state legislative assembly of Chhattisgarh about the restrictions on giving news related to Maoists to media persons.

news being disseminated by the media about insurgents. For example, in the above image (Fig. 3) Deshbandhu newspaper reports on June 12, 2004, that oppositional leaders created a ruckus in Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly) over the censorship of news related to Maoists. According to the report, an order was passed to all the police headquarters and police heads to stop giving news related to Maoist incidents to the media. The purpose was to create indirect censorship on media to stop publishing Maoist favouring news. Finally, a bill to fully control the Maoist related news and interviews came in the form of Chhattisgarh Special Public Safety Act 2005 in December 2005; and in the same year in June 2005, Salwa Judum was launched.

The onset of Salwa Judum was an opportunity for the local newspapers to publish more and more about the local areas and local people which in turn attracted more newspapers buyers, to purchase the newspaper and read about themselves. Most of the news reports about Salwa Judum were carried out on the first page with almost half-page filled with pictures of the local people who vowed to fight against the Maoists and the rest of the half-page filled with news reports, and in the inside pages, there were more such reports related to the same news story. Some of the pictures of news reports have been shown on the next pages. Salwa Judum was led by Mahendra Karma, a local Congress MLA, and was indirectly supported by the state and police. It was a concerted movement against Maoists, and with the starting of Salwa Judum and the government propaganda that the local people are against the Maoists, anti- Maoist reports saw a surge in media reporting. The aim was to create a counter-narrative against Maoists and their agendas. A report by Independent Citizen Initiatives indicates that in its initial stage all the press notes to villagers for mobilisation were issued by the name of a person ‘Sodi Deva’ and when the local journalists traced the origin of this person, it appeared that the press note was being released by the Office of Inspector General of Police Bastar (ICI, 2006:17).

Not only in 2006 but even earlier than this, efforts by some groups to create a counter-narrative against Maoists were done in the 1990s. Above is the picture of a Deshbandhu newspaper’s report mentioning the groups of local people under the leadership of Mahendra Karma launching ‘*Astha Abhiyan*’ (Faith Movement) to counter the Naxalites.



Figure: 4, Source: Deshbandhu Library, Raipur.

However, in the haste to wipe out the Maoists, the government and authorities perpetrated indiscriminate atrocities on the local villagers residing in the remote areas by displacing them, by forcing them to join anti-Maoist rallies and doing fake encounters, torching villages, and then blaming Maoists; these atrocities as well as Maoist counter attacks, drew the attention of the local as well as the worldwide community to the ongoing human rights violations.

In the following sub-sections, certain historically important events, from the point of view of critical trends in media reporting of insurgency in Chhattisgarh are discussed in more detail. The events considered are a) Beginning of Salwa Judum) Killing of 75 CRPF personnel in Dantewada district by Maoists; c) Killing of local Congress party leaders of Chhattisgarh, including Mahendra Karma by Maoists. To study the reportage revolving around these events, the news reports appearing in three different newspapers namely Dainik Bhaskar, Deshbandhu, and The Times of India have been studied in depth.

a) **Salwa Judum**

After the carving out of Chhattisgarh from erstwhile Madhya Pradesh, and increased willingness to wipe out the anti-developmental forces from the state, the Salwa Judum movement was started.⁴⁶ All the newspapers, whether Hindi or English, were widely publishing news stories

⁴⁶ Amongst the local journalist fraternity of Chhattisgarh it is widely considered that Salwa Judum was posited as a peoples' movement against the Maoist forces and days before its introduction, an agenda that villagers are against Maoists was set in the media. Mahendra Karma was the major force behind this propaganda.

about the aggrievement of villagers with Maoists. From the year 2003, reports regarding the mass surrender of Maoists started appearing in local newspapers like Deshbandhu, Dainik Bhaskar, and some other newspaper like Jan Satta, NavBharat as opposed to their reports earlier of a Maoist couple having surrendered or one or two persons having surrendered. For example, a report that 27 Maoists have surrendered themselves to the police appeared in Dainik Bhaskar, and Jansatta on May 14, 2003.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, to instigate the adivasis to stand against the Maoists, Jan Jagran Abhiyan⁴⁸(anti-Maoists movement) was going on continuously in which most of the Salwa Judum members along with Mahendra Karma and his Jan-Jagran representatives used to visit the different villages and ask the villagers to join the fights against the Maoists or else their huts will be burnt. The purpose was to raise some anti-Maoist forces in the village who can counter the Sangham members of the Maoists in villages. For instance, some images of reports published during this period in Chhattisgarh are given below and on the next page.

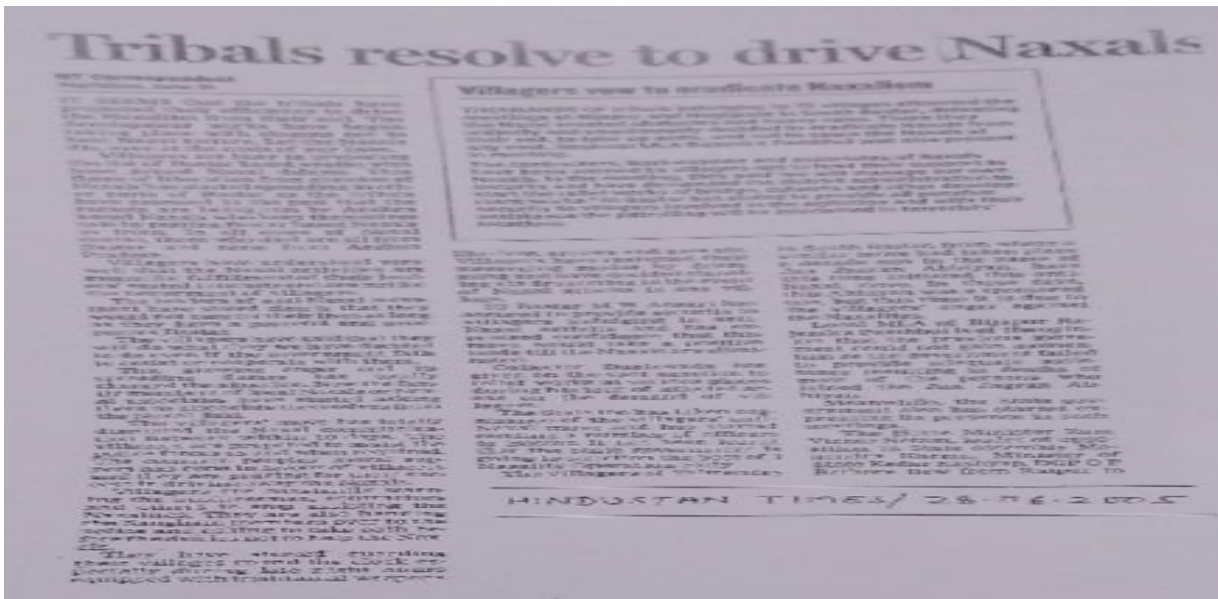


Figure: 5, Source: Deshbandhu Library, Raipur

⁴⁷ It is widely considered amongst the journalists of the Chhattisgarh state that most of the news about Maoists surrender were either fake or villagers who went to meet the police for some reasons were lured and shown as surrendered Maoists by the police.

⁴⁸ Jan –Jagran Abhiyan was started by the former Congress leader of Chhattisgarh Mahendra Krama. The purpose was to visit from village to village with Jan-Jagran representatives and bring awareness amongst the rural people about the harm and damages which happen due to Maoists and organsie a local peoples’ movement against Maoists.



Figure: 6, Source: Deshbandhu Library, Raipur



Figure: 7, Source: Deshbandhu Library, Raipur



Figure: 8, Source: Deshbandhu Library, Raipur

The above pictures are from the different newspapers of Chhattisgarh carrying the news reports about the local people rising against the atrocities of the Maoists in the villages. These news reports are of the starting phase of the Salwa Judum in June 2005. Figure 4 shows the news report of the Hindustan Times, Fig. 6 is of Deshbandhu, Fig. 7 and 8 show the news reports of Dainik Bhaskar.

After the launching of Salwa Judum, newspaper reports were filled with news of Jan-Jagran meetings, how villagers are rising against the Maoists, and how much they are suffering from Maoist atrocities, while the reports about those villagers supporting the Maoists were missing. In the 1990s, news reports of the villagers or families supporting Maoists could be seen but after Salwa Judum entire rhetoric of the newspapers shifted in favour of Salwa Judum. For example, on June 20, 2005, Dainik Bhaskar reported in bold headlines and half-page report, “*Naxaliyon aur adivasiyon me chidi jang*” (Adivasis wage war against Naxals). The report contained details about the number of villagers (six) who were killed by the Maoists for supporting Salwa Judum and with how much brutality they were killed besides the number of villagers missing (around 30) due to fear of Maoists. In its half-page report, the story contained three pictures, one showing adivasis who escaped the Maoists attacks and their anger, another picture showed an adivasi women feeding her baby in *Kutru* primary health centre and third picture showed adivasis youths posing with bows and arrows, vowing to fight against Maoists. The entire news story looked very dramatic and its tone and narrative were equally dramatic with images of all the adivasis vowing that they would not allow any Sangham member to stay in their village and either they will chase out Maoists or will die. The newspapers ignored the fact that many of the Sangham and dalam members were family members of these adivasi families.

The Deshbandhu reported the same issue next day on its first page in one small column and its details on the second page. It narrated the same story as follow up but the representation was without pictures and it contained details that villagers are angry with Maoists for hindering developmental work. The newspaper avoided the dramatic representation of the adivasi people in pictures. For the entire month of June and July, Dainik Bhaskar was full of news stories about the Salwa Judum, about the killings of the villagers by Maoists, carried the addresses of the Chief Minister, Salwa Judum leader Mahendra Karma, collectors, and governor on their support to the villagers to fight the Maoists. News reports such as speeches of the then Governor of Chhattisgarh, Retired Lt. General K. M. Seth justifying the industrialisation and its expansion to counter Maoists were published prominently in both the newspapers Deshbandhu as well as Dainik Bhaskar. Almost every day, in Dainik Bhaskar, stories with bold headlines about the

erupting of anti-Naxal fire in the villages of Bastar and nearing areas, kept appearing. During the starting phase of Salwa Judum the then chief minister Raman Singh addressed the issue of Salwa Judum and described it as “after independence, revolt against Naxalism as first mass movement in India”. Deshnadhu newspaper along with other local newspaper like Haribhoomi prominently carried out this news reports on their first page on 24 June, 2005.

The desperateness of the government to counter insurgents increased so much that the collector along with the superintendent of police and Salwa Judum leader M. Karma in their Jan-Jagran meet in fact distributed arrows to the adivasi villagers to fight Maoists. Dainik Bhaskar went on to report the issue on July 12, 2005, showing pictures of villagers posing with bow and arrow. Figure 6 shows the same news report. Compared to other two newspapers, Dainik Bhaskar prominently carried out the movement and progress of Jan-Jagran Abhiyan, reporting it on day to day basis. The newspaper resorted to biased reporting by reporting only the killings done by Maoists and publishing speeches and activities of Mahendra Karma and government officials. However, Deshbandhu newspaper July 11, 2005 published a news on its inner pages, claiming that those adivasi families who are not taking part in Jan-Jagran meetings, their houses are being torched in the presence of police. Specifying that such claims have been made by the Maoists through letters, the reports even claimed that Maoist leaders in this letter to the press have refuted the rumours spread by local media that they are foreign agents, backed by the foreign countries to hamper developmental work. This report was carried out by Deshbandhu newspaper but most of the other local newspapers fell in line with the tune of government rhetoric that Salwa-Judum is as anti-Maoist movements spreading across the villages like fire. In another sense, when most of the local newspapers were doing the job of spreading false notions about the Maoists, some exceptions like Deshbandhu newspaper was also there to counter the lies. Most of the local newspapers with its many vulnerabilities, were not capable enough to break the anti-government stories prominently. Although reports about the atrocities and crimes being committed under Salwa Judum started appearing in even its initial stages, none were able to raise the questions and set an agenda over the mindlessness of government over supporting the local villagers to fight Maoists who were much more powerful and organised compared to people associated with Salwa-Judum. In fact the very acts of chief ministers, governor, and administrative officials about assuring the adivasis of providing government support through

distributing traditional arms and sending security forces to back the villagers should have been questioned by the local newspapers rather than blindly publishing governmental press notes and speeches.

On the other hand, English newspapers like Times of India, did very little reporting on the issues of Salwa Judum and its launching. However, as compared to the local newspapers reporting in English print media was relatively low-key. The TOI chose not to report and publish such acts of Chhattisgarh government of distributing arms and setting the agenda of the government that anti-Maoist sentiments are spreading like fire in the jungles of Chhattisgarh. In the entire month of June 2005, there were very few reports by TOI on the issue of Salwa Judum and the alleged war against the Maoists by the adivasi villagers. On June 27, 2005, one report appeared in TOI newspaper with the headings, “Surguja Tribals Rise Against the Naxal Might’. The entire report narrated the same story as the two local newspapers did in one week from June 20 to June 27, 2005, with some quotes by the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh assuring the safety of adivasis against the Maoists attacks and quotes of opposition member Mahendra Karma who again and again stated that adivasis are fed up of left wing extremists. Even the English newspapers ignored the fact that those Maoists who are attacking the villagers going against them are actually part of the village themselves and mostly dalam members who are working at an ideological level rather than mercenaries with guns and arms. The government and opposition leaders applied the old colonial policy of divide and rule. While in the initial phase of Salwa Judum, TOI carried out very few reports, in 2006 the newspaper carried several reports when the violence between Maoists and anti-Maoists forces escalated and when villagers who were being made the scapegoat in the entire story were getting badly affected by both the conflicting forces. The newspaper reported on these issues with sensible comments and analysis, with one of its editorials carried out in a Mumbai-based edition which questions the government strategy. The newspaper in its editorial opinion of Mumbai based on July 19, 2006, pointed out that the violence carried out by Maoists by killing Salwa Judum members is the outcome of the Chhattisgarh government’s own fault of neglecting the political and economic aspects of problems of Maoists affected region and the state has failed miserably by ignoring it.

During the entire phase of Salwa Judum, between 2005 to the year 2011, the local Hindi newspapers carried out the detailed reporting; while in English newspapers like TOI, the reporting took a surge during the year 2006 to 2011 when Salwa Judum attracted the attention of the entire national media as well as international media. By this time rampant human rights violation and the civilian casualties were at their peak. In 2008, the Chhattisgarh government stepped back and slowed down its activities of instigating and supporting the anti-Maoists forces to fight them because many cases of human rights violations and a writ petition to ban Salwa Judum were filed in the Supreme Court by this year. At the same time launching of the operation Green Hunt (mediatised term used for an operation by Central government to wipe out Maoists from the central region of India) in the year 2009 increased the anxieties of the Maoists and a spell of counter attacks and violence increased reaching its peak by killing of 75 security forces in Dantewada. This was again followed by increased media reporting, the details of the same have been discussed in the following section.

b) Attack on CRPF at Tadmetla

On April 6, 2010, 75 personnel of Central Reserve Police Forces (CRPF) were killed by the Maoists in Tadmetla village of Dantewada in Chhattisgarh. The attack was in retaliation to operation Green Hunt launched by the Central government and Salwa Judum by the Chhattisgarh government. The entire episode shook the conscience of the Central government and state government. It was the first instance of such a massive loss of lives of security forces experienced by the government; and for the first time, it reflected the concern of the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who recognised insurgency as the greatest internal threat to the country's security and development. However, for media, it was another occasion for setting an agenda and producing news around it. Local media as well as English media went on to extensively report on the issue, however, comparatively fewer reports appeared in TOI as compared to the other two local daily newspapers of Hindi.

On April 7, 2010, Hindi newspaper Dainik Bhaskar reported the issue as '*Sabse Bada Naxali Hamla*' (Biggest Naxal Attack) and besides this headline graphically represented the bloodstains in red colour on the front page. This was a full page report with graphics and pictures of soldiers who suffered the attack. The reports were carried out in the inner pages as well with

two full pages devoted to the attack, however, the entire stories mostly discussed only the security lapses made by the CRPF forces, lack of proper machines and vehicles to detect the underground landmines, blame to the government and political parties for being engaged in petty political issues and negligence of the Central government in giving funds to the state government to combat Naxalism. The newspaper went on to report that the Centre and state might need to think about deploying Army forces in Chhattisgarh to combat insurgency. It detailed that around 1,000 Maoists had surrounded the security forces nearby their base camp and fired at them. However, it does not address the issues in in-depth as of why Maoists chose to attack the security forces and how come 1,000 Maoists gathered at the base camps of security forces and attacked them, without any prior hints to the security forces. While issue of security lapses was discussed and communication gaps between the CRPF and villagers were touched, it lacked a detailed discussion about the reasons for such attacks, about the response of the villagers, their interviews, any versions of the Maoists and their spokespersons about the attack. The reports which kept on emerging till one week in an extensive way, mostly narrated the one side of the story. Moreover, the tone and narrative of the news stories were such that it would leave any reader full of frustration and anger against the conflicting opposite party without letting them understand the purpose and consequences of such attacks. News reports like '*Kadam kadam pe force ne ki galti*' (at every step forces committed mistakes), '*Tal Sakta tha Hamla*' (The attack could have been averted) are mostly involving one and it gives the reader a feeling of perceiving the entire incidence from the side of paramilitary forces. Subconsciously, the newspaper narrative does not give its reader a chance to think that they are the third party and not at all involved in this conflict. The newspaper through pictures and pictorial representation presented the entire attack story on its first page. The pictures of 75 dead bodies of security personnel lying near the base camp and pictures of bloodstained injured security personnel being treated in hospitals were intended to create apathy and feeling of anger amongst the readers.

Deshbandhu newspaper also carried out the front page reports with the same title as "*Sabse bada Naxali Hamla*" (biggest Naxal attack) but without bloodstained pictures and no graphical representation of the entire ambush episode. The newspaper placed the pictures of killed soldiers lying on the ground in a row in the background of the masthead. The report was

half-page and it contained concerns of the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Home Minister P. Chidambaram, critical comments from the Chief Minister and Governor of Chhattisgarh. It also contained one story about the mastermind of the attack coming from Andhra Pradesh. In Deshbandhu, the overall pictorial representation of the incidence was equally provocative like Dainik Bhaskar, however, the tone and narrative of the news stories were not the same. In a clear inset like the versions of Prime Minister and other high profile dignitaries, it also took a comment from Maoists leader Goplaji, who said that Central government instead of stopping operation Green Hunt, filled the Chhattisgarh jungles with more paramilitary forces as a result, Maoists have been able to gather more strength and inspire more people to join them in their fight against the state. In the inside pages also, there were news stories about the several political and social sections of the society criticising the attack, burning the effigies of Maoists, criticism of the social workers who indirectly support insurgents and some of the stories were in continuance with the first page. The tone and narrative of most of the stories were written in neutral language rather than in the language of anger and frustration which could be easily traced in the stories of Dainik Bhaskar. Follow-up news stories in the above two newspapers kept propping up every now and then and these were mostly related to the establishments of investigation teams, their proceedings, and reports, while the second conflicting party voices were shunt and nothing significant appeared from their side of the story.

As compared to two local Hindi newspapers, Times of India (TOI) carried the reports in a relatively more analytical manner. While the reports were full of bloodstained pictures and graphics, at least the editorials were thoughtful and introspective. On April 7, 2010, the TOI came up with a headline as “Its war: Maoist butcher 75 in worst blow to security forces: CRPF walk into Ambush on a false tip off Most of the newspapers whether Hindi or English declared it as a war between the Maoists and security forces. In Chhattisgarh, the event of killing of 75 security personnel led the media to declare it as a war between the civilians and insurgents without digging into the actual reasons of such war. Gradually, the death of 75 security men led to the ideological war between the civil society members and Central government, who accused the civil society members of providing indirect support to the Maoists. The article of Shobhna Saxena, in Times of India, “Nothing Very Civil about this war” discussed these attacks on civil

society members by the then Home Minister P. Chidambaram, who said that civil society members are interfering in the government work of clearing the forest areas of Maoists. The government waged a two front war, one of which was pitted against the Maoists and the second directed towards the civil society members, local journalists, and sympathisers. While arrest and attacks on Maoists sympathisers were going on, the magnitude of this war escalated by many folds with time.

The Times of India wrote an editorial about Chhattisgarh, published on April 7, 2010 -- "Raising the states: The latest Maoists attack shows just how serious the problem is -- was introspective and raised questions against the government strategies in dealing with the Maoists. Its editorial blamed the negligence of the Chhattisgarh government towards the socio-economic issues, and adopting violent methods of solving the issue. Articles like 'Govt. senses guns, not the only solution', 'Time to fight back or win hearts?' were balancing and showing some responsible stand of the newspaper in the entire narration. The paper lends its page to the debate that whether the Maoist problem is just the incapability of the government to sort out the socio-economic problem of the state or it is adopting the right repressive measures to sort out the Maoist issues. In an article on April 8, 2010, "Maoist Ideology: Violence only way to Goal: Call Democracy a sham, likens themselves to Islamic extremists" on its edit page, it echoed a counter view that for Maoists democracy is sham and they like themselves to be called as Islamic extremists, so in such situations, it is better to take oppressive measures against them rather than talking to them. In TOI as well, there were few number of news stories related to the incidents one week and thereafter, every now and then follow up news stories kept appearing related to the incident but it was relatively less as compared to other two newspapers.

As compared to the two local Hindi newspapers, Times of India reports were more responsibly phrased. The reasons for the different style of reportage in TOI as compared to the Hindi newspapers maybe because, firstly, TOI has fewer number of readers particularly in rural Chhattisgarh; secondly, the journalists of TOI, who report the issues are less likely to be natives of the interior regions of Chhattisgarh who tend to indulge in sentimental writing; thirdly, unlike Hindi newspapers who have potential advertisers in the villages of Chhattisgarh, for TOI, since there are fewer readers, so there are fewer advertisers as well. So, economically devoting much

more space to this issue was not much profitable. Overall, as compared to two local newspapers, the English newspaper TOI was equally vocal in representing the common sentiments without taking a neutral stand in case of the killing of 75 CRPF personnel but it did dare to question the government plans and policies and reflect upon it. But, TOI is a paper that primarily enjoys the readership of the upper strata of the population, so most of its coverage of the stories whether Salwa Judum or killing of the CRPF personnel mostly remained restricted to the editorial level, unlike local newspapers where most of the newspaper pages used to be filled with the incidental news of the above mentioned events. It lent its pages to the debate about the use of oppressive measures to deal with the Maoists' issues or not. However, it avoided indulging in sensational reporting, and the style of narration and tone was comparatively neutral as compared to the local dailies of Chhattisgarh. It could be noted that the escalation of violence in Chhattisgarh gave the opportunity for the print media for selling more news stories and more revenue collections. Incidences of Maoists killing security men and their supporters, and counter attacks by the security forces on villagers kept appearing, leading to another big Maoists attack on the leaders of the Congress party of Chhattisgarh, commonly known as *Darbha* massacre or *Jheerum* incident.

c) **Darbha Massacre**

Commonly known as '*Jheerum Kand*' or '*Darbha* Massacre', the incident dates back to May 25, 2013, when a convoy of Congress leaders was returning from their election rally from Sukma district to Jagdalpur in Bastar, Chhattisgarh. In between Sukma and Jagdalpur, a place called Jheerum (valley) the convoy was attacked by the Maoists in which 25 people along with 12 prominent members of Chhattisgarh Congress were killed. Some of the most known faces were Vidya Charan Shukla who was once a cabinet minister in Indira Gandhi-led Congress government at the Centre, Nand Kumar Patel, Congress party chief of Chhattisgarh and his son Dinesh Patel, Mahendra Karma, who had planned Salwa Judum and Uday Mudliyar who was a former legislative member of Congress in Chhattisgarh. The incident was a big jolt to the Centre and even to the state government for Maoists were successfully able to eradicate those persons who were on their hit list, particularly Mahendra Karma who was in their hit list since 1992. For Chhattisgarh media, it was a big incident and a turning point too, for after this incident sympathy

for the Maoists among the general public started deteriorating, police and Maoists both started dealing with local journalists with a sense of distrust and more importantly it filled the local journalists with a sense of fear leading to avoidance to visit the remote and forested areas. Eventually, the spaces left vacant by the city journalists who feared visiting these areas were gradually occupied by journalists from the remote areas who either had fewer choices, were opportunists who in the lure of getting government contracts joined the profession.

The day after the incident, on May 26, 2013, Dainik Bhaskar newspaper, reported that Naxals were supported by the villagers in carrying out the killings. The report appeared as a full page story on the front page of the newspaper for Chhattisgarh edition⁴⁹ with blood-stained pictures of the Congress leaders who escaped the attacks. It contained details that how villagers supported the Naxals in their plan to kill the Congress party leaders. The city specific pages contained the pictures of the wailing families who lost their dear ones, details of protests by the Congress leaders before the state assembly, and several stories such as how the other Congress leaders like Kawasi Lakhma was spared by the Naxals, claims of Congress members that attack was planned by the then chief minister Dr. Raman Singh, conspiracy of wiping out Mahendra Karma by former chief minister Ajit Jogi, security lapses, police and intelligence being unaware about it, number of Maoists present at the spot, etc. There were no versions from the Maoists that why and for what purpose the attack was carried out. However, three days later in Dainik Bhaskar, on May 29, 2013, reports appeared in the newspaper that to avenge Operation Green Hunt and to stop it, the attack was carried out by the Maoists.

Emotional narratives about the Mahendra Karma's death and killing of other Congress leaders was one of the prominent features of local Hindi newspaper, Dainik Bhaskar. For example on May 28, 2013, Dainik Bhaskar reported on its city page, '*Shahidon ko Bidai, Chalke Ashun*' means bid adieu to martyrs with tears in eyes. These one-sided reports ignored the histories to the conflict, and that years before, in the year 1992,⁵⁰ Mahendra Karma was already

⁴⁹Since some of these reports were especially maintained by the Deshbandhu Library, so taking pictures were not allowed.

⁵⁰ A journalist himself told that he has done a story in 1992 in which Maoists had added Mahendra Karma in the hit list.

on the hit list of Maoists, and his death was not a sudden and unexpected outcome. Such headlines are most likely to cause anger among the public without comprehending the entire conflict situation.

Deshbandhu newspaper narrated the entire story in a slightly different way, showing the blood-stained pictures of Congress leader Ajit Jogi assisting the evacuation of injured Congress leaders behind its head mast. In the inset, pictures of Congress leaders who got killed, Mahendra Karma and Uday Mudliar, and of those who were injured, VC Shukla, KawasiLahma, Harshad Mehta, and those kidnapped by the Naxals, Nand Kumar Patel (Congress Chief) were shown. On the city specific page, it detailed about the Congress members protesting against the government, and pages were filled with pictures of the protests. Deshbandhu in its pictorial representation took a more moderate stand as compared to Dainik Bhaskar, opting not show the bloodstained pictures of leaders on its front pages.

On the other hand, Deshbandhu reported the news stories of killed leaders with headlines as, ‘*Shahid Rajesh ka Antim Sanskar aaj*’ (Funeral of martyr Rajesh today) and on Karma as ‘*Karma ke Sharir par 60 se Adhik Chot*’ (Karma was shot at more than 60 times) which were relatively moderate narratives. Both the newspapers were filled with front page stories as well as inside papers were also filled with minute detailing of the issues. While this can be seen as the advantage of local newspapers that connects them to the local audience⁵¹, it also plays a role in agenda-setting as well as image building of the conflicting parties. Here in this incident, while the entire sympathy of the newspapers particularly Bhaskar went with the Mahendra Karma, the

⁵¹ Arvind Rajagopal in an article of his edited book *The Indian Public Sphere: Readings in Media History* points out that Indian language press (in case of Chhattisgarh it is Hindi press) more often mofussil in location, and harkens back to indigenous questions, interests, and styles, even as they are changing. The Indian language press has exponentially larger audiences and it shares language and culture with its audience in a way that is not true in case of English print media (Rajagopal, 2009: 17). In his article -A ‘Split Public’ in the Making and Unmaking of the Ram Janmabhumi Campaign, discussing about role of Hindi language newspapers in Ram Janambhumi campaign he points out that “Hindi news audiences had more fraught and contested relation to the power and could not assume a transparent, value-neutral approach to the news in same way.” With the purpose to politically inform its citizen, Hindi news are written quite differently from the English news for Hindi audiences. “The narrative aspect of news Hindi news during Ram Janambhumi Campaign was much more in evidence, and perhaps understandably so, as the power relations between readers and rulers required constantly to be assessed, dramatised, criticised, or ridiculed, rather than to be taken for granted.” While this aspects of Hindi news could not true in national Hindi dailies which are run by national English dailies, Rajagopal points out that same in true most of the cases of Hindi dailies which are primarily in Hindi language (Rajagopal, 2009: 209). In case of Chhattisgarh state as well these aspects of Hindi news dailies and its news narratives for its audiences can be seen as dramatised and more connecting to its audience.

Maoists and the villagers who were allegedly supposed to have helped Maoists became the criminals without any space given to considerations that they have no other options than this. Both the Hindi dailies, considered the killings of the Congress leaders as a stage in Naxalism where they have lost the ideals and concerns of the Maoism ideological struggle, and in their editorial criticised the killings of the Congress leaders. . The emotional and sensational pieces of the news were also because these news stories were more localised in their approach as their target audiences were the local people particularly the local people of village areas who were supporting the fight against the Maoist.⁵²

Times of India, on May 26, 2013, came out with the news of the Maoist attack as the deadliest attack on the politicians. It wrote a headline as “Maoists kills Salwa Judum founder Mahendra amongst with other Congress leaders.” The report of half-page appeared on the front page of Raipur edition with passport size pictures of killed and injured leaders. The article contained the highlights such as details of killed and injured leaders, the timing of attacks, and news such as Centre is rushing more forces to Chhattisgarh. The paper avoided publishing blood-stained pictures of the injured leaders and soldiers and in its narratives, while describing the incidence as lethal and deadliest in the history of Maoists insurgency, adopting a moderate narrative tone rather than describing it in sensationalized terms. More details about the incident appeared on the city page such as details of the state Congress chief Nand Kumar Patel and his son being missing, which on a later date as on May 27, 2013, was clarified that Nand K Patel along with his son Dinesh Patel was killed by the Naxalites. The newspaper showed the dead bodies of the father and son on its front page to explain the news. Political news of Congress high command Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh rushing to Raipur to meet the injured Congress leaders, at later dates political blame game news such as “BJP-Maoists nexus at work, Congress alleges,” alleged conspiracy by Ajit Jogi made most parts of the news.

However, TOI maintained a neutral stand when it comes to indulging in a dirty political blame game. When most of the local newspapers concluded that Kawasi Lakma, the adivasi

⁵² During the phases of Salwa Judum and through Jan- Jagran Abhiyan led by Mahendra Karma , the local leaders of Salwa Judum were able to convince some local adivasi villagers to take anti-Maoists stand and come forward for protests. Salwa Judum created a phase when local villages of the Bastar were divided on the basis of their pro-Maoists, neutral and anti- Maoists stand.

MLA from Bastar who was spared by the Maoists in the attack, was a part of the conspiracy against the Congress party, TOI resisted such conclusions, and on May 30, 2013, and it came out with a news story with headlines as, “MLA survives Maoists, now fights conspiracy theorists,” narrating the situations of Kawasi Lakma himself who suffered the allegations of the newspapers. TOI, by taking the versions of the Chhattisgarh Congress leaders, refuted such allegations and concluded that his situations were similar to innocent adivasis who are always accused of helping the Maoists whenever such attacks happen. The allegations against Congress leader and former chief minister Ajit Jogi and MLA Kawasi Lakma were propounded by the then state BJP spokespersons and were readily floated by the local Hindi dailies; on the other hand, English newspapers abstained itself from such hurried conclusions and avoided itself becoming the part of ruling government rhetoric. While TOI in its editorial refuted the actions of the Maoists as the deadliest and least beneficial for the cause of adivasis, it supported the view that Maoists have lost the principles based on which they had started this struggle. On the other hand, it lent its pages to the debate whether strict actions are required to counter Maoism or constructive talks should be the norm.

Conclusions

The overall coverage of print media in Chhattisgarh on Maoist issues since the beginning has been full of ups and downs. Initially, at the emergence of the insurgency, coverage was much wider, clear, highlighted the social issues, raised the issues of adivasi rights, talked about the implementation of the 5th Schedule of the constitution, and the social and economic relevance of the Maoist struggles. Later on, after the formation of Chhattisgarh state, restrictions on media were tightened. With the implementation of the CSPA Act 2005 and further restrictions on the press on coverage about the Maoist issues, reporting on the insurgency and related issues became virtually a one sided narrative. With the initiation of Salwa Judum, it can be noted that the entire media narrative was set up against the Maoists and they were portrayed as obstacles to the development of local villagers. The coverage of Salwa Judum made invisible the questions of Maoists’ close engagement with the indigenous people, their struggles for their causes, and restricted the debate about Maoists to those who are misguiding the adivasis for power.

In the analysis of all three incidents in the preceding sections: starting phase of Salwa Judum, Maoist attack on CRPF near Tadmela, and Maoist attack on Congress convoy, it has been observed that for local Hindi dailies it was the time to monetise the untapped market of the rural and innermost forested areas of insurgency ridden Bastar. Backing the government agenda of popular resistance against the Maoist forces in the form of Salwa Judum was the only way out through which it was possible to tap the rural market. In the rural and adivasi villages of the Chhattisgarh, very few amongst the adivasi people are readers of newspapers; most consumers of newspaper subscriptions are from salaried classes, government employees, contractors and dealers residing in places like Bijapur, Narayanpur, Usur, Bhopalpatnam etc. Salwa Judum became an opportunity to tap the markets in Bastar which were ready with substantial advertising revenues .

While the Hindi local dailies, in their tone and narratives were closer to and could emotionally connect to readers owing to localisation of the news; English newspapers like Times of India abstained from emotional narratives. While political neutrality and objectivity helps the newspapers to resist political pressures but it acts as a disadvantage in terms of forming connections with the local readers⁵³. English dailies have less readership as compared to Hindi dailies in Chhattisgarh and particularly in the remote and innermost areas of the state. So, economically it is less viable for the English dailies to cover the Maoist and insurgency-based news as compared to Hindi newspapers. In this study, in the case of Salwa Judum, while more reports were appearing in two Hindi dailies, TOI had few reports. On one hand, the English newspaper avoided the government propaganda of entire Chhattisgarh villages getting fed up with the Maoists, but on the other hand, they also refrained from investing in in-depth reporting. The lack of in-depth reporting can be attributed to the lack of human resources and proximity to the affected areas, which instead acted as advantage points for the local Hindi dailies.

Thus, there is a range of factors that lead to the sensational media reporting of the Maoists insurgency instead of addressing the root causes of the problem. Localisation of the

⁵³ Discussing the role of English dailies in his article – A ‘Split Public’ in Ram Janambhumi Campaign, Arvind Rajagopal stresses that in English newspaper, news value is related to objectivity and neutrality, which served as a marker of relationship of its audiences to power. Whereas for Hindi newspapers, objectivity was one of a range of possible values in news and neutrality was one of a variety of possible relationships to power (Rajagopal, 2009: 210).

news, which in turn allowed market expansion of the newspaper firms, the competition between the newspaper firms to build a readership base and tap the advertising opportunities available in the rural areas, the pressure from the government and security forces to curb the in-depth news about Maoists activities and to build propaganda against the Maoists are the few ones. From the perspective of the political economy, it is in the interest of most of the Hindi newspapers to keep running the news of Maoist violence in media because factors such as fear, crime, and violence draw more readers.

The observations in this chapter about the media reportage of Maoists insurgency further raises questions about the role of media conglomerates, media owners, some of whom have business stakes in mining and real estate or other businesses in Chhattisgarh, in this entire phenomenon. It leads us to the need to examine the critical role of political economy in print media coverage of Maoists insurgency. It raises questions of how production, distribution, and consumption of information about the Maoist insurgency are controlled; and what kind of news about it is then distributed amongst the readers. These questions have been dealt with in the next chapter, which examines these issues from the perspective of the political economy of print media.

Chapter 3

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF PRINT MEDIA IN CHHATTISGARH: Comparative Analysis of Three Hindi Newspapers

After the initiation of economic liberalisation in India (1991), media houses have largely been operating on the business model and their primary aim is profit maximisation. The emergence of media conglomerates, media giants, and media houses with wider business interests other than media have been observed in India as well. It has been observed in the previous chapters that Hindi print media houses in Chhattisgarh rapidly tried to expand their business all over in Chhattisgarh particularly in rural areas. Also, it has been discussed that before the formation of Chhattisgarh state, there were fewer restrictions on media reportage of the left insurgency from the standpoint of the Maoists; but after the formation of Chhattisgarh, there has been constant pressure on the media houses to restrict coverage of Maoists' perspective related to the insurgency. The introduction of the Chhattisgarh Special Public Safety Act, 2005, and recurrent incidences of violence on media reporters during phases of Salwa Judum were part of this trend. In fact, after the formation of Chhattisgarh state and with the introduction of Salwa Judum, local media houses virtually abandoned the coverage of political and social issues related to the insurgency, focusing almost solely on the violent aspects of Maoists presence in the region. This chapter engages more closely with the examinations of these shifts in media narratives about the Maoists insurgency in Chhattisgarh. The sections ahead attempt to address questions such as: In what ways did local media represent the Maoist insurgency in Chhattisgarh? What are the social, economic, and political factors directly or indirectly influencing the media coverage of Maoist insurgency? How have the production, distribution, and consumption of news related to the Maoist insurgency been entangled with these factors in Chhattisgarh? The aim of this chapter is to examine media representation of the Maoist insurgency in Chhattisgarh from the perspective of the political economy of media.

The researcher has also drawn from media framing and agenda setting theories to help locate the findings of content analysis of media discourse in the chapter. Taking cues from framing and agenda theories, the researcher was able to conduct content analysis “by measuring

clusters of messages also known as frames to see how these are then incorporated into their audiences' schemata"⁵⁴ (Entman: 1993). Content analysis is essential to finding patterns, based on which scholars and researchers can methodically evaluate news media and its use of framing; in turn, it allows for the comparison of possible agenda setters' bias of the event (Cissel. M, 2012: 70).

"The anatomy of the civil society" as Karl Marx said in his seminal publication *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* in 1859 "has to be sought in political economy" (Marx, 1859: 20). While writing his critique of the same, Frederick Engels (1859) said "political economy begins with commodities, with the moment when products are exchanged, either by individuals or by primitive communities. The product being exchanged is a commodity," (Engels, 1859: 218). Engels further said that economics is not concerned with the things but with relations between persons (between producer and consumer) though this "relation is however bound to things and always appear as things"... and this commodity is a commodity merely by virtue of the thing (Engels, 1859: 226). On the same lines, Graham and Murdock termed the mass media organisations as commercial organisations which produce only commodities. "The starting point for a political economy of mass communication is the recognition that mass media are first and foremost industrial and commercial organizations which produce and distribute commodities," (Graham and Murdock, 1997: 4).

For mass media, it is the piece of news that is a commodity for its audience and audiences are the commodity in exchange for advertisements for the advertising companies. Having set itself with such a system of business, it is common for the media companies to monitor the kind of news which is being sent out by them. Citing Ralph Miliband's important observations on advertisements as commodities in his book 'The State in Capitalist Society (1969), Haralambos and Heald write, "all advertising is political since it serves to further power and privilege of the dominant class" (Haralambos & Heald, 2010: 103). Emphasising that the corporates through advertisements generally portray that public service is their main concern and profit is secondary, Haralambos and Heald citing Miliband argue that "capitalism and its commodities are subtly

⁵⁴Schemata: Schemata or Schemas are set of patterns or categories (of any object or event) which suggest audiences about any particular issue (Baran& Davis, 2009: 254).

linked via advertisements to integrity, reliability, love, innocence...” just to disguise the exploitive and oppressive nature of capitalism itself (Haralambos & Heald, 2010: 103).

In *‘Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media’* (1988) Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman theorised their seminal ‘propaganda model’ to understand the working of mass media. It states that there are set of filters that filter out the news worthy of printing, marginalise dissent, and allow government and dominant private interest to distribute their message across the public. These sets of filters include size and concentrated ownership of mass media firms, advertising which determines the revenue of the newspaper firms, news sourcing, flak as a means for disciplining the media, and anti-communism as national religion and control mechanism. Any news item must pass through these filters for being eligible for printing (Herman and Chomsky, 1988:2). The authors point out that media serve and propagandise on behalf of powerful societal interests that control and finance them. Also, the basic institutional structure of media is maintained in such an order that an element of dissent and questioning is acceptable to such level that autonomy of the media institutions could be maintained but within boundaries so that they do not interfere with the mainstream agenda (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: XU).

Media are major institutions in the economic and political fabric of our societies. They provide vehicles for advertising which connects the world of production to that of consumption (Golding and Murdock, 1997: XIII). Theories of political economy in mass communication stress on the indirect influence of the economy, social relations, and politics on the media. Political economy sees any marketable product as a commodity and its commodification is the core issue which it seeks to study. Some scholars point out that political economy is the study of social relations, particularly power relations, which mutually constitute the production, distribution, consumption of resources, including communication resources (Mosco, 2009: 25). Political economy for understanding any social phenomenon considers a range of factors such as social, political, cultural, and economic pressures and interests and how these things influence the current policies and political processes towards the particular social phenomenon. Attention to the political economy of journalism means examining the ways in which journalists are influenced, or vice –versa, by the political and economic power relations within an agenda

setting context, and how that impacts their social responsibility role to serve as watchdogs, rather than mere lapdogs or cheer leaders, in the interests of the general public (Shaw, 2015: 2). Since the mass media has performed the role of agenda-setting, they do not tell people what to think but they tell what to think about.

Apart from the general functions of mass media to entertain and amuse, one of the tacit functions of mass media is to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society, (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 1). As Chomsky sees it, “state propaganda when supported by the educated classes and when no deviation is permitted from it, can have a big effect. It was followed by Hitler and is being followed today,” (Chomsky, 2004: 13). Media concentration in few hands and conglomeration that create a monopoly has been a major factor as well as concern for scholars to observe the political economy of mass media. As Bagdikian says “five global-dimension firms, operating with many of the characteristics of a cartel, own most of the newspapers, magazines, book publishers, motion picture studios, and radio and television stations in the United States” (Bagdikian, 2004: 3). Bagdikian further notes that such practices give more communications powers to these firms and their leaders compared with any despot or dictatorship in history.

In the Indian context, warning of media concentration in few hands was first reported in the First Press Commission (1952-54). The reports of the commission especially warned against media concentration and recommended measures to thwart this phenomenon. By the 1970s, some of the major print media giants emerged. These were Hindustan Times owned by well-known industrialist family Birlas who have many other businesses, Indian Express owned by Goenkas who also owned a range of other industries, along with local language based newspapers such as Tamil Dinamani, Andhra Prabha, and Malayala Manorma owned by Mammen Mappillai in Kerela. Times of India with Navbharat Times along with FM radio station Radio Mirchi besides many web portals owned by Bennett and Coleman; and Calcutta-based Anand Bazar Patrika (ABP) group which also owned The Telegraph are a few examples (Ninan, 2010: 61). The ABP group also owns Bangla news portal *Ebela*, news television channels in different languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, and Telugu besides several magazines. The Second Press Commission of 1978 recommended in its report which

appeared in 1982 for the public take over of major print media houses to thwart the monopolistic trend in the media industry (Ninan, 2010: 62). However, no substantial steps were taken to curb such trends. Over the years, media concentration and cross media ownership became a very common phenomenon, particularly after the era of economic privatisation, liberalisation, and globalisation of 1991.

In the beginning, usually, there were large English print media houses like Times of India, Hindustan Times, Indian Express, local language newspapers like Malayala Manorma, Anand Bazar Patrika. Later, gradually Hindi newspapers such as Dainik Bhaskar, Rajasthan Patrika, Dainik Jagran also emerged, claiming their circulations on vast Hindi-speaking Indian region and enjoying readership of wider audience groups. Over the years, these print media houses have started providing a range of services like FM radio channels, TV news channels, online websites, and web portals leading to cross media ownership. Although this trend is a major threat to the diversity of views and it threatens to restrict the diversity of opinion but the government has paid little attention to it.

Some of the major developments in media concentration came in 2012 in form of India's largest media group Network18 which owns a range of TV channels like CNBC-TV18, CNN-IBN, News18 India, Colors, websites like Moneycontrol.com, Firstpost.com, Bookmyshow.com, Homeshop18 and a range of magazines which were acquired by the Reliance group, headed by Mukesh Ambani. Not only Network 18 but all non-Telugu TV channels of Eenadu group which is a giant media conglomerate in south India was acquired by the Reliance group (Thakurta, 2014: 12). Thus, this phase of media corporatisation has attracted concerns from intellectuals about the authenticity of media in maintaining diverse public opinion. Though print media houses have had more diverse ownership patterns in comparison to electronic media, they are not free from corporatisation and conglomerations. Most big print media houses have cross media ownership, owning a range of cultural products and services such as TV channels, FM radio station, magazines, online websites, and blogs.

In Indian society, with the penetration of television in the rural and urban areas, the demand for news and information accelerated (Rajagopal, 2009: 207); in turn carving out ways for the newspaper industry to tap the untapped rural market (Ninan, 2007: 20). Not only did the

advent of television into the lives of rural people increase the demand for news, but it has also aggravated their interest in politics and day to day happenings of their own society (Ninan, 2007: 21). This, in turn, has given the newspapers a chance, to perform its much expected role of inculcating the rural individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour of the dominant culture. In fact, as scholar Ambirajan has observed “market and media symbiotically act to produce culture. The more efficient media is more successful in stabilising or destabilising existing social, cultural, economic, political, legal, religious and moral arrangement” (Ambirajan, 2000: 2141). The entrance of newspapers in rural areas has led to the speeding of demand for the consumption of marketised products (Ninan, 2007: 24).

As stated earlier, besides the perspective of political economy, this research has taken the help of media framing as well as agenda setting theories to analyse what local print media in Chhattisgarh write about the Maoists issue and how things are represented in the news related to insurgency in Bastar region. Towards this, a comparative analysis of three newspapers namely Dainik Bhaskar, Patrika, and Dandkaranya Samachar has been conducted. These three Hindi dailies are amongst the prominent newspapers of Chhattisgarh; Dainik Bhaskar has the highest circulation rate followed by Patrika and Dandkaranya Samachar.

This comparative analysis has been done in order to understand how media frames the Maoist issues, what kind of news gets prominence, what is the tone of the story, what matters related to Maoist insurgency is prominently shown, and what is the frequency of such news stories. What kind of issues are finally presented as the ‘news’ pertaining to Maoist insurgency? How does the ownership pattern of different newspapers impact the publishing of this news and how do the indirect pressures of government through methods of different laws and control through advertisements regulate the news on Maoists insurgency?

While analyzing the media products as news in a print medium, “framing is an important variable to consider and along with it, the agenda-setting theory of communication research should also be acknowledged” (Freyenberger, 2013: 16). The sociologist Erving Goffman (1974) is credited for developing the earliest perspective on framing analysis which has its roots in symbolic interactionism and social constructionism theory. Generally, all media theories are of the view that media has a significant and powerful role to play in the construction of reality or

social representation (Kubey: 2001). As Bryant and Oliver say “all journalistic work and media content attempts the social construction of knowledge and/ or reality,” Goffman also expressed that “individuals used words and non-verbal actions to help negotiate meaning through the lens of cultural contexts and world views (Manning: 1992). According to Goffman, frame analysis “provides a systematic account of how we use expectations to make sense of everyday life situations and the people in them” (Baran& Davis, 2009: 316). He “used the term frame to refer to a specific set of expectations used to make sense of a social situation at a given point in time,” (Baran & Davis, 2009: 317).

Goffman, in his work *Gender Advertisements* (1979), used frames to present a very insightful explanation of the influence of advertisements on the perception of people of the opposite sex. Extending Goffman’s ideas of framing as a conceptual framework in media research, many sociologists applied it in their scholarship. Todd Gitlin (1960), Gaye Tuchman (1978), and William Gamson (1989) are a few prominent scholars amongst them.

Gitlin, while working on news coverage of radical political groups of the 1960s, showed that the news coverage related to these political parties were presented in a way that it ‘demeaned’ their activities and reinforced only the existing and socially accepted social cues related to politics in the United States during 1960s. “We rely on media for concepts, for information, for values and emotional frames, for images, for symbols in general, even for language...you (mass media) organize your messages in a mechanical way...you reinforce a sense...” (Gitlin, 1977: 790). Further, he says in his essay *Spotlight and Shadows: Television and the Culture of Politics*, “one of the major functions of the media is precisely this: to make certain issues and certain movements legitimate and others not” (Gitlin, 1977: 795). His contemporary and well-known name in the tradition of Goffman’s framing analysis, Gaye Tuchman, as cited by Gitlin, writes that media creates controls the constructed controversies by itself at the same time. Tuchman, following Goffman and Berger and Luckman’s social construction of reality, says “knowledge is always socially constructed and it always organizes experience ...shapes meaning” (Tuchman, 1980: 217).

Extending the importance of a frame in the analysis of social events, Gamson in his essay, *News as Framing*, says that facts presented in a news story have no intrinsic meaning

unless they are “embedded in a frame or story line that organizes them and gives them coherence, selecting certain ones to emphasize and while ignoring others,” (Gamson, 1989: 157). According to him, a frame suggests that “what is at issue”. Scholars define news frames as “a central organizing idea or story line that provide meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving connections among them” (Gamson and Modigliani, 1989). Vreese defines that frame as an emphasis on the salience of different aspects of a topic. Frames are parts of political arguments, journalistic norms, and social movements discourse. They are an alternative way of defining issues, endogenous to the political and social world (Vreese, 2015: 53).

In Chhattisgarh, particularly in the Bastar region, the source of news related to Maoist insurgency is mainly the government officials and press releases. In this state, the public relations department has served the purpose of constructing news frames, and here journalists rely on the public relations department, official sources, and press releases from police to write about the Maoist insurgency based events. Such practices do reinforce the dominant views, suggested by the source of the news -as Entman says that if a text frame emphasizes in a variety of reinforcing ways that “glass is half full, the evidence of social science suggests that relatively very few in the audience will conclude it is half empty,” (Entman, 1993: 56).

Extending it further, while decoding the power connotations hidden in frames, Entman says sometimes journalists may follow the norms of objective reporting in their news stories and “yet convey a dominant framing of the news texts that prevents most audience members from making a balanced assessment of a situation,” (Entman, 1993: 56). Explaining it further, he notes that in such cases even though most of the scribes do lack of common understanding of framing, they “frequently allow the most skillful media manipulators to impose their dominant frames on the news,” (Entman, 1993: 57).

Such situations are often evident in journalistic practices in the Bastar region where most of the journalists, particularly stringers do not get proper professional training for objective journalism. Even though some of them do strive towards objective reporting, the senior editors placed in Jagdalpur (district headquarters of Bastar in Chhattisgarh) or in Raipur (capital city of the province), are always in the position to set the frames intended in news related to Maoist insurgency.

According to Vreese, media can shape public opinion by framing events and issues in a particular way. He points out that communication is not static, but rather a dynamic process that involves frame building, frame setting (the interplay between media frames and audience predispositions), and individual and societal level consequences of framing. Citing Tuchman, Gans, and Cooper, Vreese stresses that the frame building process takes place by continuous interaction between the journalists and elites and social movements (Vreese, 2015: 52). By frame setting, he refers to the interaction between media frames, and an individual's prior knowledge and predisposition. Frames in the news may affect learning, interpretations, and evaluations of issues and events. On a societal level, frames may contribute to shaping social level processes such as political socialization, decision making, and collective actions.

Further, at the level of operationalization, generally, there are two common approaches for identifying frames—a) Inductive and b) Deductive. The inductive approach analyses the news stories with new frames (Gamson: 1992) while the deductive approach “investigates frames that are defined and operationalised before the investigation” (Vreese, 2005: 53). In this study, a deductive approach to framing analysis has been taken and it aims to investigate frames that are defined and operationalised prior to the investigation. While identifying a frame in a news story, the most important question is which components of it (news story) are identified for crafting a frame. In this connection, Entman writes that frames can be identified and examined “by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments,” (cited by Vreese, 2005: 54).

In the present study, different frames/ themes predominantly related to the public (and academic) discourse on Maoist insurgency in Chhattisgarh such as conflict, development, violence, and human rights have been identified. In order to examine news stories in relation to these frames/ themes, words/codes like “Maoists, Naxals, encounters, Hindi words like “*lal aatank* (red-terror) and *khunkhar* (dreaded) have been selected to analyse different aspects of media representation of Maoist insurgency in Chhattisgarh. These themes or frames, as Judith Butler pointed out, shape “the way we apprehend or engage with the victims of conflict” (Butler, 2009: 2). These frames play a crucial role in creating images about a group of people whether

their life would be considered “valid” or “worthy of public grief” or not (Butler, 2009: 17). As Butler argues, few lives are not presented as valid lives “that merit care and protection by that country’s government and its media” and the “framing styles and norms ensure that these are not quite lives, not really worth grieving and therefore easy to forfeit”. The major chunk of adiasis’ population of Chhattisgarh do fall on the same line like their lives in conflict is not being taken with utmost seriousness, and frames related to the conflict do not talk about the intrinsic issues related to the same.

As stated earlier, along with framing theory, agenda setting theory has also been used in this study in order to understand the presentation of the Maoists insurgency issue in local Hindi newspapers. The roots of agenda setting can be traced back to Walter Lipmann’s seminal work *Public Opinion* (1922), which claims that “mass media is the link between individual perceptions of a world, and the world that actually exists,” (Rogers: 1994). Lipmann’s notion about agenda setting is mainly rooted in the mass society perspective where media was considered as one of the major forces leading to “subvert essential norms and values and threaten the social order”, thus justifying the control over media by the elites (Baran & Davis, 2009: 54). Bernard Cohen took Lipmann’s ideas on agenda setting further, arguing that the “press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion”, and “it is successful not only in telling people what to think but also what to think about” (Cohen, 1963: 13). He stated that the world looks different to different persons and it depends not only on their personal interests but also because of the news writers, editors, and publishers of the media content they read (ibid).

The agenda setting theory of Maxwell E McCombs and Donald Shaw, which is specifically based on the aforesaid understanding of Cohen on the subject, argues that in choosing and displaying news, journalists play a significant role in constructing and shaping the political reality. “Readers learn not only about a given issue but how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position... The mass media may determine the important issues ... and set the agenda of the campaign” (McCombs and Shaw, 1972: 176).

McCombs and Shaw later also linked their agenda setting theory with the frame analysis theory and categorized their theory into two parts– first at the object level and second at the

attribute level. In the first level, according to them, the theory suggests about what to think while focusing on the priority assigned to the issues, political events or news; whereas at attribute level, it suggests how to think while influencing the agenda of attributes, suggesting which attribute is important to us and which attributes are non-significant. They coined this attribute level agenda setting as “second order agenda setting”, and argued that these agenda of attributes are frames.

“Agenda setting works at two levels, the first level is to highlight the salience of the issue or objects into the minds of public and at the second level to highlight and transmit the attributes or different characteristics of the issue or objects to public”, (McCombs&Sebastian, 2007: 47). This characteristic could be positive or negative depending upon the agenda of the mass media. The scholars’ stress that which aspects of an issue are covered in the news and the relative aspects on these various aspects of an issue, considerably determine how people would perceive the issue (McCombs &Sebastian, 2007: 47).

McCombs and Shaw both claimed that the linkage of agenda setting theory with framing theory will help explain some concepts of framing theory and enhance the communication process. Pointing out the very thin line between framing theory and agenda setting theory, which are sometimes overlapping each other, theorists have argued that framing analysis is psychological-cognitive in nature; in agenda setting theory “attributes of agendas” related to “how to think about” things have usually been operationalized in terms of candidate images as for e.g. whether candidates project integrity and virtues; while framing approach’s attention to “how to Think about” would instead focus on how and why journalists present or ignore competing explanations of what factors are causing a problem and what solutions might be possible” (Maher, 2008; Weaver et al, 1981; Reese, Gandy, Grant, 2008).

McCombs and Sebastian emphasise that in both, media framing and attribute agenda setting, the focus is on salient characteristics or traits in which topic or news object is portrayed in the mass media (McCombs & Sebastian, 2007: 48). However, the framing technique takes much wider aspects of the issue other than characteristics. In fact, while the agenda theory of the media stresses on the salience of the issue set by the media, the framing theory mainly focuses on the salience of how things are being represented by media (Vreese, 2005: 53). The core principle

of agenda-setting theory is that there is a direct relationship between the priority of the issues of the mass media and the priority issues of the public. How media choose to report about the public issue can have a positive or negative effect on the minds of the audience and more importantly, the issues occupy importance in the minds of the public. This theory has been taken for study along with framing theory in order to study how the local newspapers have prioritised the issues of Maoists insurgency and what aspects they have chosen to priorities prominently. This study seeks to focus only on what kind of `news` the newspapers have prioritised and how to understand that what has been presented to the public to think about. This study has limitations in studying the presentation of news and agendas set by the newspapers rather than views of the public, giving a probable understanding of what is being priortised to the public by the newspapers.

In their research about agenda-setting theory, Iyengar and Kinder analysed that, “those problems that receive prominent attention on the national news becomes the problems the viewing public regards as nation’s most important” (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987: 3). The scholars pointed out that positioning of the news story, the vividness of presentation, salience given to the story, and priming greatly influence the importance of the issues in the audience mind at larger extent (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987: 4).

So, to study how the three daily Hindi newspapers of Chhattisgarh frame the Maoists issues and what major impact these presentations can have on public opinion, the entire data collected has been categorized, through content analysis, into several sections, based on the tone of the story (negative, positive and neutral), salience, page placement (front page, front of supplementary, inside pages), prominence, how many columns have been dedicated to what sort of news related to the Maoist insurgency related issues and again based on prominence, story placement (mention of words like Maoists, Naxals, encounter within the body text, graphics, lead and headlines of the story), and sources of the news (official sources, press notes, local sources).

I. Political Economy of Print Media in Chhattisgarh

Most of the population of Chhattisgarh lives in villages and witnesses insurgency related issues in their everyday lives at some point of time but the media narrates the same happenings from a different perspective, trying to set the agenda about various aspects of Maoist issues.⁵⁵ Often local journalists who work in the field say that media only represents the violent aspects of Maoist insurgency while hiding the other side which indicates the root causes.⁵⁶ This phenomenon of the print media of Chhattisgarh has been more explicitly explained in the following sections which analyse the data obtained from the content analysis of three newspapers.

In Chhattisgarh, while a larger proportion of the population belongs to the indigenous community, the smaller population belongs to those who have migrated from other places of the country in search of jobs and business opportunities. Most of them are in the businesses of mineral excavation in Chhattisgarh; and the mining industry, including the media industry, is owned by these small numbers of people. In the media business, in most of the newspapers, it is evident that the decision making authority and power holding positions like editor-in-chief, editor, senior reporters go to the individuals who belong to the upper castes. In comparison, there are few adivasi male or female journalists working in this field.⁵⁷ So, in the present scenario, the control over the kind of news produced is likely to be controlled in favour of the elite class rather than in favour of the marginalised class. The phase of the advent of local Hindi newspapers⁵⁸ and their widespread popularity amongst the masses particularly in the Hindi speaking regions of India, has further given rise to different social phenomena. On one hand, these local Hindi

⁵⁵ Although the major chunk of adivasi population is not the direct consumer of the newspapers, but they get to hear about Maoists based news from opinion leaders of the society like village heads, Panchayat officials, teachers, or local news gatherers.

⁵⁶ For example on condition of anonymity one journalist explained that recently four villagers were killed in police station near by Jagdalpur (in June 2021). One of the prominent local dailies NaiDuniya published it in one column, but any positive work of government was often highlighted in four columns.

⁵⁷ As per the report of a study conducted by Media Ramble and Oxfam India, "Who Tells our Stories Matters: Representation of Marginalised Caste Group in India, out of 121 newsroom leadership positions- editor-in-chief, executive editor, bureau chief, input/output editor across the newspapers, TV news channels, news websites and magazines under study -106 are occupied by journalists from upper caste and none of these belongs to SCs and STs category people. The study chose six English newspapers and seven Hindi newspapers having country wide circulation.

⁵⁸ According to Sevanti Ninan, this phase of advent mostly started with the phase of economic liberalisation in India in 1990s and went on rapidly expanding 2000 onwards.

newspapers are widely read and accepted by the rural masses of the Hindi speaking belts and on the other hand, it has opened the gates of marketisation (Ninan, 2007: 24). The popularity and rise of circulation of Hindi newspapers not only gave rise to the Hindutva identity and promoted the regional identity politics (Rajagopal, 2009: 207), but through the penetration into rural areas it has also given space to the marginalised people to echo their concerns and grievances against the government (Neyazi, 2011: 75). However, in the case of Chhattisgarh, this seems to be limited to the issues of corruption and financial irregularities but whenever politically controversial issues such as the scandals related to Maoists come up, immediately the matter is suppressed.

Robin Jeffrey points out that the localisation of news while giving space to the local issues sometimes also allow the proprietors of the newspapers to advance their political ideologies through subliminal ways and has pointed that local journalists and editors try to cover such stories in order to build their reputations in front of proprietors⁵⁹ (Jeffrey, 2009: 188). In other words, local journalists and editors try to come up with stories with a political hook to please their masters as well as politicians. For example, Haribhoomi is the local Hindi daily of Haryana, having its editions in Chhattisgarh. The newspaper is one of the highest circulated newspapers and is politically linked to the Bharatiya Janata Party government. Its owner is Captain Abhimanyuwas, who was a BJP MLA from Haryana from 2014 to 2019. His business ventures range from coal mining, power generation, share broking to education and media. So, in this case, it is obvious that something investigative against the political parties connected to the newspaper is very unlikely to be published. While in the case of Patrika newspaper, it is widely

⁵⁹He has explained this phenomenon through the example of DainikJagran, which took the issue of killing of monkeys by poisoning. The newspaper, on April 12, 1998, in its Bareilly edition, highlighted that 200 monkeys were killed by poisoning while the other newspapers reported as 50 dead monkeys. The newspaper allegedly tried to give it a communal colour and continuously highlighted it in front page; but when actual perpetrators came out as Hindu farmers who were annoyed of the monkey's menace, the follow up stories were put at the back pages. For detail see, Peter G. Friedlander, Robin Jeffrey and Sanjay Seth (2009), "Subliminal Charge: How Hindi Newspaper Expansion Affects India," in Arvind Rajagopal (eds) *The Indian Public Sphere*. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp: 188-206.

accepted as being against BJP⁶⁰; particularly in Rajasthan state and Chhattisgarh, it used to openly criticise the state policies. However, in May 2019, after the victory of BJP at Center and in the state, chief-editor of the newspaper Gulab Kothari seemed to make a radical switch and the newspaper came up with an editorial published on the front page of the newspaper, in which the editor claimed that Patrika newspaper of three states Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh will completely support the policies and initiatives of the BJP government ⁶¹(for photos of the editorial see figures 9 and 10). The incident clearly shows that prominent newspapers have to compromise with the ethos of free speech in order to run their businesses.

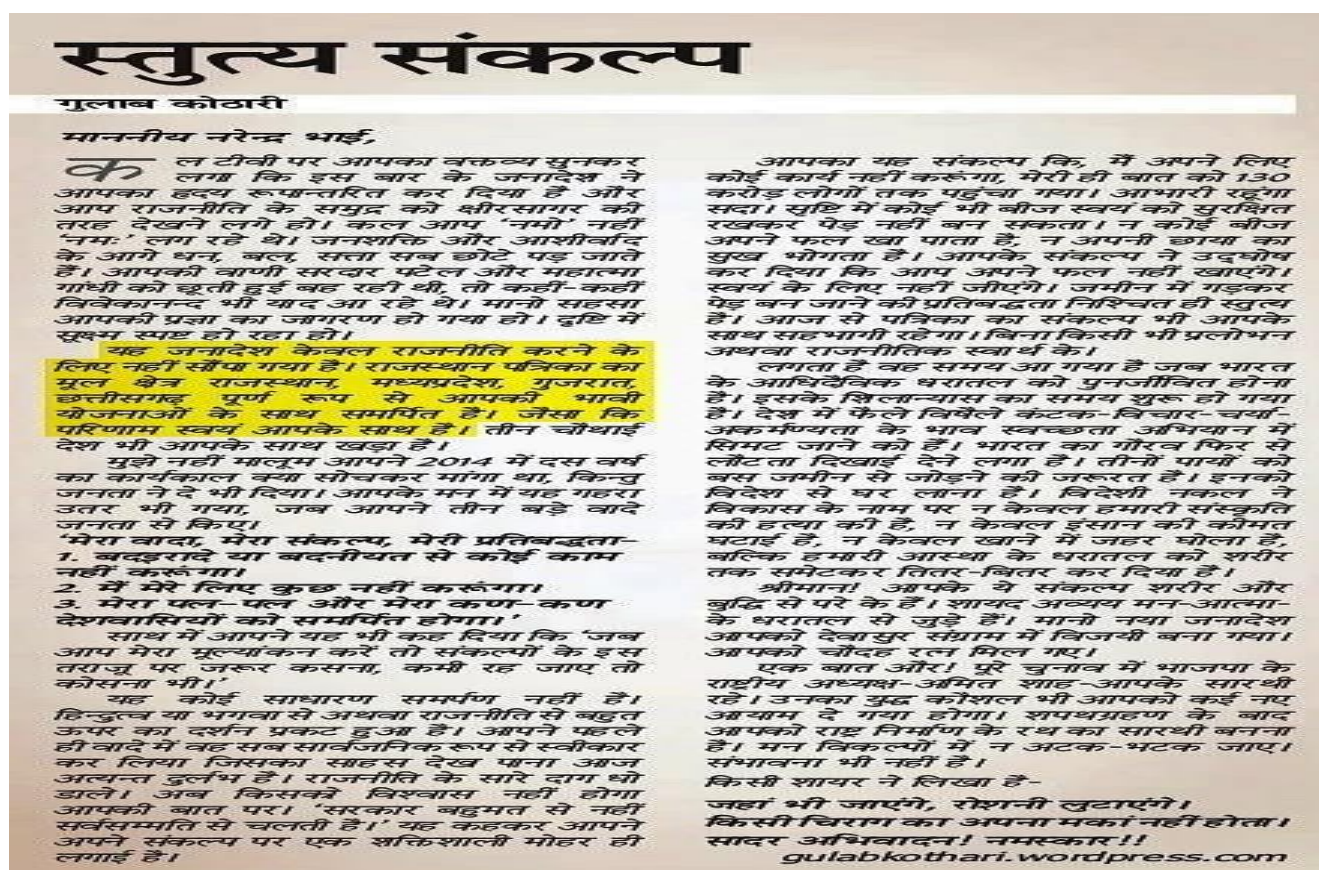


Figure: 9

⁶⁰Patrika is widely accepted as against BJP amongst the journalist fraternity of Chhattisgarh.

⁶¹For more detail visit <https://www.newslaundry.com/2019/05/28/rajasthan-patrika-gulab-kothari-modi-victory-election-results-2019>



Figure: 10

Dainik Bhaskar on the other hand claims to be a populist newspaper and its editorial policy is to cater to the popular views of its audiences. A journalist of Dainik Bhaskar, on condition of anonymity, said the newspaper has a clever editorial policy. It gives orders to write unfavourably against the government whenever it is required to cater to the popular mood of the public. Like, in Bihar, in order to increase its circulations and advertising revenues, sometimes it writes favourably as it sees the popular public opinion is in favour of the government. In one instance, Dainik Bhaskar newspaper moved to the High court to stop the release of a documentary by Cobra Post, which was supposed to be released on May 25, 2018. The documentary was based on a sting operation and it was supposed to show how the various big media houses of the country succumbed to the temptation of offering news space for money for publishing biased and maligned news against any entity standing or speaking against the ruling Bhartiya Janta Party. Although, due to the High Court Order, though Cobra Post was not able to reveal the name of any media organisation, it was evident from the order that the interest of the Dainik Bhaskar newspaper was at stake because of the content of the documentary. Its lawyers argued in court that statements made by employees should not be seen as coming from the group itself.⁶²

Sevanti Ninan, while discussing the growing popularity of Hindi newspapers, cited that in one instance, Dainik Bhaskar in Madhya Pradesh came up with paid advertorials and sponsored reporting in local elections in 2005. Its resident editor of Bhopal defended its position by saying

⁶²For more detail, see The Wire Report, “Dainik Bhaskar Gets High Court to Block Fake News Expose” dated 25.05.2018 on <https://thewire.in/media/dainik-bhaskar-gets-high-court-to-block-fake-news-expose-of-big-media>

that there is nothing wrong with it because it is already mentioned that it is advertorial (Ninan, 2007: 25). However, the author pointed that many small politicians complained that rural people are comparatively naive to understand such things and if any politician fails to buy their paid advertorial package, he or she probably gets+ less coverage during the elections. So, in the case of big newspapers to run the business not only they came up with purchased readerships but sometimes also purchased coverage (Ninan, 2007: 25). So, in the present scenario where profit making is the topmost priority for these printing houses, to run the business different tactics are required and these tactics could be joining hands with the powerful politicians, big businesses, or echoing the popular moods irrespective of the sense of responsibility.

The three local Hindi newspapers taken in this study are Dainik Bhaskar, Dandkaranya Samachar, and Patrika. While all the three newspapers are run privately by individuals, two of them i.e. Dainik Bhaskar and Patrika are large media houses having wider circulation and running other media services such as radio channels and digital websites. All three Hindi newspapers have their own political allegiance. While Dandkaranya Samachar is considered as a left leaning newspaper, Dainik Bhaskar and Patrika are widely accepted as right leaning newspapers in the fraternity of journalists. Patrika, since it widely competes with Dainik Bhaskar, so often both newspapers take an ideologically opposite stand to each other over political issues. The reason for taking these three is because Dainik Bhaskar and Patrika are large media houses having their circulation in the wider Hindi speaking belt. Dainik Bhaskar group, apart from running a media business, also runs other businesses in Chhattisgarh such as mining and real estate. Dandkaranya Samachar is a comparatively smaller newspaper having its circulation mostly in Chhattisgarh and adjoining areas of Chhattisgarh state. The purpose was to compare the pattern of news coverage of these newspapers about Maoist insurgency and at the same time to understand the factors which influence these small and big newspapers when it comes to news coverage about the insurgency.

In the case of Maoist insurgency news reportage, the readers of the newspapers are commodities that are exchanged in terms of advertisements. In Chhattisgarh, the advertisers are government agencies, who in exchange for publishing more and more Maoists related propaganda, offer generous advertising funds to these small local newspapers. The local

newspaper has become so, through a series of control mechanisms being adopted by the government such as control over the distribution of government advertisements to these newspapers, advertisement revenue coming to them through different officials who like to extend their wishes to ministers and high ranking officials through these newspaper ads, and the Chhattisgarh Special Public Safety Act 2005. . Apart from this, there is a range of factors that directly and indirectly affect the newspapers reporting of Maoist insurgency based news in Chhattisgarh which has been discussed in the previous chapters. The following sub-heads try to discuss the matter from the perspective of print media businesses:

- i) **Political Pressures**: Chhattisgarh is a province enriched with an abundance of natural resources. There are lots of economic opportunities for the rich and middle class people to create wealth out of the businesses of mineral resource extraction. For the same reasons, it is eyed by the business community of India. Any political party regardless of ideology wants to have rigid control over the economic activities in Chhattisgarh in order to keep the goodwill of the business community. So, it becomes imperative that any of the political parties would try to have stricter control over the media. In that line the chief editor of the local Deshbandhu newspaper, late Lalit Surjan said, “none of the state governments in today’s scenario can have the tolerance towards the critical writing or writing against them.”⁶³ He especially pointed out that no newspaper can survive by disappointing the politicians who are in power in a cut throat competitive environment like present days. Political pressures, as well as united resistance of the business class, restrict the emergence of any alternative views about the Maoist insurgency. For example, most of the journalists admit that if Maoists had not been there, the entire Dandkaranya forest would have been robbed off of its green and natural cover because of the nexus between the politicians, business community, and administrative officials, but rarely anyone can dare to come up with the proper story on that line. Moreover, newspapers houses have to maintain their newspaper on the line of tapping the popular moods of its audience. For most of the newspapers, the popular mood of the audience in Chhattisgarh is that Maoists are a law and order problem that needs to be tackled by the government. So, newspapers like Dainik Bhaskar have a policy like ‘no negative news on Monday’.

⁶³The Chief-Editor of Deshbandhu Group, on 28September 2017, in his interview to the researcher expressed his views at his office in Raipur.

- ii) **Economic Pressures:** For the sake of cost-effectiveness and maximising profit, it becomes important for media business houses to produce something more popular and acceptable rather than unpopular and not widely acceptable (Graham and Murdock, 1997: 4.) In Chhattisgarh, to maximise the revenue of the newspaper firms, it becomes imperative to write favourably about the government and hide the corruptions and scandals of the official. Sociologist Nandini Sundar has argued that propaganda about the Maoist insurgency and its dangers is a political strategy to keep up the flow of funds from the Centre to the Chhattisgarh state for eradication of Maoists (Sundar, 2016: 11). Also, all the major newspapers studied in this work seemed to work in tandem on this subject, more or less following a similar line of representation in the sense that if one newspaper decides to highlight a particular aspect to an emerging story on the Maoist insurgency (or even completely avoid covering it), the others follow a similar line. A very famous example is the scandal of the security guards during the Hindu festival of *Raksha-Bandhan*⁶⁴ in Girl High School in Dantewada in August 2017, where a few security guards had allegedly molested school girls. Initially, no newspaper dared to write against the security forces' misdeeds in the school but later on, after the news was telecast online by a Delhi based NGO, every local newspaper immediately picked up this news.
- iii) **Social Pressures:** Social structures of Chhattisgarh greatly affect the news about the Maoist insurgency. Most of the educated class people in Chhattisgarh residing in cities belong to the non-indigenous groups who have migrated to this land in search of jobs and business opportunities. Since most of the audiences of the newspapers belong to the business class who have either higher economic or middle-class status, so no one wants to listen about the Maoists and their perspective about the socio-economic development of the society.

For instance, an editor of one of the major print dailies in Raipur, who requested not to be quoted on the matter, stated his dilemma, about audience preferences with the following words, “no one wants to spoil their morning tea by reading these negative news about corruption, Maoists and all, so we need to cater to the audience demands.” I also observed this to be a sentiment commonly shared amongst other editors. In fact, most of the higher-ranking journalists and editors in Chhattisgarh have their side businesses like doing contracts jobs or their kins are

⁶⁴A festival in which sisters tie threads to their brothers' hands for their safety.

involved in some form of work with the government because they are paid very less salary. If alone one has to survive on these salary structures offered by the newspapers, survival could be tough. Owing to these pressures, they refrain from doing investigative journalism and writing against the government.

- iv) **Tacit Nexus between Business class, Media houses, and State:** Chhattisgarh state has an abundance of minerals and natural resources. Owing to this fact, there are several media houses in Chhattisgarh having their subsidiary companies involved in mining, transportation, and real estate; including, to name a few- Haribhoomi and Dainik Bhaskar.

Dainik Bhaskar group has its sister company, DB Power Limited, which is involved in the mining and real estate business in Chhattisgarh. In one instance, the Dainik Bhaskar group was alleged to have supported its sister company DB Power Limited involved in land acquisition in Raigarh district for coal mining through a series of articles. As per the Hindu newspaper's report dated December 11, 2011, DB Power limited had to acquire 693.2 hectares of land for coal mining and 141 hectares of this land came under the municipal township of Dharamjaigarh township. The residents of Dharamjaigarh opposed this project and land acquisition for the fear of environmental pollution and refused to give their consent for land acquisition. As a result, the company came up with an affidavit mentioning it will not acquire land falling under Dharamjaigarh township. To this, residents objected that the changes in mining plans could not be reflected in the Environmental Impact Assessment submitted by the company and is a violation of the term of reference issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF). As a result, a writ petition was filed in the High Court in July against the company. While the public hearing for environmental clearance was going on for this case, Dainik Bhaskar's Raigarh edition published articles like "Black Diamond to lend Sparkle to Dharamjaigarh's Destiny", "Villagers move forward in support of DB Power", along with a series of articles which targeted its lead petitioner D. S. Maliya to influence the hearing. The petitioner alleged that the company adopted a "deliberate, illegal and manipulative approach". Thus, the newspaper unhesitatingly

used its pages to create favoured public opinion for its sister company.⁶⁵ This is only one case of a newspaper firm supporting its subsidiary company through creating public opinion. If further investigated, there might be several such examples of newspaper firms supporting their subsidiary companies to which the state government has chosen to ignore. However, it points towards the colluding interest of the business community and media firms.

Adding to this, big newspaper houses like Dainik Bhaskar, which took the land on lease from the government for establishing newspaper office in Raipur in 1985, used the same land space for opening commercial complex along with sharing it with newspaper office space. As per the lease deed, it violated the standard norm and that land was allotted solely for newspaper press. It also occupied some extra land around this commercial complex. State governments, irrespective of ideologies, have chosen to ignore this fact till 2017, after which notice was sent to Dainik Bhaskar's office, but till date, Bhaskar continues to occupy it.⁶⁶ The state government ignored these things because, at some point, the state also needed newspaper backing in carrying forward its various agendas such as propaganda against Maoists insurgency, for covering up human rights violations and environmental damages which happens due to rampant mining. Thus, in the case of Chhattisgarh which is affected by the Maoist insurgency, the role of media as a proponent of free speech is even less true than in other areas of the country.

II. Content Analysis of Three Newspapers

This section attempts to examine the representations of the Maoist insurgency in the major local newspapers of Chhattisgarh, addressing issues such as what kind of content is being produced and circulated, the source of these messages, story placement, the prominence given to different aspects of Maoists insurgency, tone of the story, etc. Here, content analysis has been taken as a tool to ascertain answers to these issues.

⁶⁵For more details see, The Hindu article dated 11.12.2011, "High Court Stays Clearance for DB Power Coal mine in Chhattisgarh. Also, available on [http:// www.thehindu.com/news/national/High-Court-stays-clearance-for-DB-power-coal-mine-in-Chhattisgarh/article1342299.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/High-Court-stays-clearance-for-DB-power-coal-mine-in-Chhattisgarh/article1342299.ece)

⁶⁶For more details see article in NewsLaundry, "Dainik Bhaskar: A story of Big Media, Big Business and Big Bucks", dated 11.09.2021 by Prateek Goyal and Ashwini Kumar Singh. Available at <http://www.newsLaundry.com/2021/08/11/dainik-bhaskar-a-story-of-big-media-big-business-and-big-bucks>

Content analysis is a method of social research that aims at the analysis of the content-qualitative or quantitative, or sometimes both of documents, books, newspapers, magazines, and other forms of written material (Ahuja, 2012: 273). Wimmer and Dominick, while citing Walizer and Wiener, define it as a systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information (Wimmer& Dominick, 2011: 156). The basic assumption implicit in content analysis is that an investigation of messages and communication will allow some insight into some aspects such as the beliefs and values of the people who receive these messages (Berger, 2012: 135).

The content analysis aims to analyse the data within a specific context in view of the meanings someone – a group or a culture attributes to them. “Communications, messages, and symbols differ from observable events, things, properties or people in that they inform about something other than themselves; they reveal some properties of their distant producers or carriers, and they have cognitive consequences for their senders, their receivers and the institutions in which their exchange is embedded” (Krippendorff, 1989:403). Since Maoist insurgency is a very sensitive issue in Chhattisgarh and there are various forms of restrictions on publishing about the different aspects of Maoists, it becomes more important to understand the content of the messages and their intent and their possible cognitive influence on the receivers.

Content analysis is an empirically grounded method, exploratory in process and predictive, and inferential in intent. The content analysis seeks to examine data, printed matter, images or sounds, texts in order to understand what they mean to people, what they enable or prevent and what are the information conveyed by them does. Citing Webster dictionary of English language, Krippendorff explained about the content analysis as “analysis of the manifest and latent content of a body of communicated material (book, paper or film) through the classification, tabulation, and evaluation of its key symbols and themes in order to ascertain its meaning”.

The tables depicting the data obtained through content analysis of local newspaper Dandkaranya Samachar have been arranged based on the salience of the Maoists issues, page placement of the story, tone of the story, placement of the word Maoist, Naxal, and encounter. The following sections have been divided into three sections as per the different newspapers.

a) Data Analysis of the Dandakaranya Samachar

Dandakaranya Samachar is the local newspaper of Chhattisgarh published primarily from Jagdalpur, which is the official headquarters of the Bastar region. Originally started in 1959, the paper claims to represent the voice of the local people and their grievances. Content analysis of the newspaper reveals the following data. The table below shows that Maoist based news primarily fills the local section of the newspaper, which shows that the issue occupies a prominent place in the newspaper's agenda setting. The tables in the following sections show the data obtained out of the content analysis of Dandakaranya Samachar newspaper from September 3 to September 25, 2017⁶⁷.

The table 1 gives the general data about the pattern of news being published in the Dandakaranya Samachar newspaper which is the local newspaper of Chhattisgarh and is getting published from Jagdalpur.

Total no.of Days = 23 days	September 3 to September 25
Total Number of Maoist Insurgency based Stories	52
Total Number of Primary Stories	44
Total Number of Secondary Stories	8
News Related to Maoists Arrests	16
Maoists Killed/ Security Killed	6
Villagers Killed by Maoists	1
Human Rights Violations by Police	1
Police- Village Community Talks	11

⁶⁷ All the data obtained out of the content analysis of all the three newspapers belong to the same date as mentioned above.

While the above table indicates that in most of the news stories of Dandkaranya forest, Maoist issues are of primary concern, most of the stories are related to their arrests, surrender, and encounters and almost none of the stories explain about the reasons why Maoists have been indulging in the violent activities. Another prominence has been given by the newspaper to stories that are meant to build good relationships between the police and villagers in order to sort out the Maoist problem in the villages. “The repetition of the messages about the public issues in the newspaper day after day, along with the pervasiveness of the mass media in our daily lives, constitutes a major source of journalism’s influence on the audience” (McComband Sebastian, 2007: 46). In this newspaper, clearly, the emphasis has been on highlighting the problems emanating out of the Maoist insurgency, its negative repercussions, and on building trust between the police and local adivasi people, while the other aspect of the insurgency which the Maoists claim as a fight against the unequal development policies of the government is completely missing. In short, the data given below shows that most of the news stories are anti-Maoist; there are no explanations about the purpose and role of Maoists, neither there are explanations about the people support which the Maoists enjoy in the villages of Chhattisgarh.

2. The tone of the story on Maoist issue in Dandakaranya Samachar Newspaper

Table 2 shows the number of the stories presented in the Dandkaranya Samachar with different tones. It is important to understand the tone of the story to understand the media framing of the Maoist issues. Vreese points out that news frames carry an inherent valence that is emphasising the positive and negative aspects of an issue - having the ability to influence public support for policies (Vreese, 2015: 60). Following is the table 2 which gives data about the number of stories with different tones towards the Maoists insurgency in the Dandakaranya Samachar newspaper.

Tone of story	Negative	Neutral	Positive
No. of Stories	38	13	1

In this way, news frames can influence public understanding and public opinion. Thus, emphasis on the positive or negative aspects of the issue has in turn major influence on making a public opinion. Media frames any social issues either positively or negatively to build public support either in favour of the issue or against it.

If we analyse the data given in table two, certainly a maximum number of stories about the Maoists are in a negative tone, with the portrayal of the Maoists as a nuisance creating people who are disrupting the development of the village. In most of the stories of the Dandkaranya Samachar, Maoists have been portrayed as nuisance makers who either burn the public transport to create fear among people or as the ones losing the battle against the police either by surrendering or getting killed. There is only one positive story which tells that the Maoists had released all the captives which they had detained, except for giving initial reasons of the captivity, the news story does not give the details about why the Maoists have indulged in this and about their basic concerns. Clearly, the newspaper abstains from drawing any neutral or objective picture of the Maoists among its audience. From table 1 and 2, only one aspect of the Maoists insurgency- that is it is a violent process that is against the law and order of the land, has been presented to the audience; the other aspect is that it is a political struggle to set claims for the rights of the underprivileged class are invisible.

3. Page Placement of the story

Following is the table 3 for the data of Dandakaranya Samachar newspaper showing page placement of stories based on Maoists Insurgency.

Page Placement	Front Page	Front of Supplement	Inside Pages
No. of Stories	1	0	51

The Dandakaranya Samachar is a broadsheet newspaper containing 15 to 16 pages and does not include any supplementary pages (supplement) unlike Dainik Bhaskar and Patrika, so most of the stories appeared in the local section of the newspaper or on the front page. Only one news appeared on the front page which is related to the statement of the then Home Minister Rajnath Singh who visited Raipur and clearly proclaimed that Naxalism will end in Chhattisgarh because most of the Maoists top leaders enjoy a good life and force their subordinates to live difficult lives in the jungle. Page placement of the story is related to the prominence the newspaper gives to any particular kind of issues, and clearly, here prominence has been given to the government agenda about ending Maoism from the Chhattisgarh region. The story is related to the conflict between the Maoists and government forces, and it highlights only one aspect of Maoists

insurgency that Maoism should come to an end as Maoist leaders are repressive towards their subordinates. Media framing is based on the concept that media constantly tries to highlight one aspect of the issue more prominently over the other aspects; here in this story, the reasons why Maoists are calling people to be part of the struggle have been left out whereas their repression is highlighted.

4 .Prominence Given to Different Aspects of Maoists Insurgency

Table 4: Number of columns of Dandakaranya Samachar showing prominence of space allotted to different aspects of Maoists Insurgency .

Different aspects of News	Number of News	No. of Column
Maoists arrested for harassing villagers, Joint operation against Maoists	2	6
Maoists website governed by China, villager awareness campaign against Maoists, Maoists internal ranking, security checks by high ranking officials in Maoists affected areas, Police warning to Maoists	7	5
Maoists arrested and surrender, security arrangements, Maoists harming public property, schools, hospitals, blames to Maoists for village backwardness	9	4
Maoists surrender, arrested, Maoists kidnapping villagers security checks, political statements, the political blame game	17	3
Press notes about Maoist's arrest, surrender, robbery, death	5	2

Table 4 above shows the prominence given to the different aspects of Maoist insurgency in terms of space allotted to the news stories. The number of columns indicates the amount of space allotted to raise the salience of the issue. In the Dandakaranya Samachar newspaper, the stories like “Maoists arrested for harassing villager” and “Joint Operation against Maoists” have been given a six column space to highlight the negative aspects of the Maoists as well as on the work being done to eradicate this issue. The most common aspect of Maoist insurgency which is being presented in these newspapers is that Maoists pose threats to the lives of villagers, Maoists create hurdles in the development of the villages of Bastar and the government is trying everything to counter the Maoists threats.

While the five and four column news mostly carries the government agenda of building trust between the villagers and police officials, they also contain news based on propaganda that Maoist websites are being controlled by Chinese websites with no proper website linkages and quotes from senior diplomats of either country. In addition, what efforts the government is making to resolve the Maoist threat become an important aspect of Maoist insurgency. Again the three and two column stories also carry news about the arrest and surrender of Maoists. Most of the arrest and surrender news stories of Maoists are based on the press release by the police offices and some of the four and five column news stories of Maoist arrests and surrender also contains descriptions about how valiantly police arrested them, also the surrender stories carry the descriptions that how the Maoists who surrendered have chosen to surrender due to poverty or due to ill-treatment and partiality of their seniors in Maoists groups.

5. Prominence as per the mention of the words

Just like the prominence given to the lead stories positioning which mean stories that are presented on the front pages or placed on the first half of the page, mentioning of the words related to the issues like Maoists, Maoist encounter, Naxals into the headlines, leads (first paragraph of the story) and within the body of the story also determines the prominence assigned to the matter. In Dandakaranya Samachar, almost all the Maoist based stories start with mentions of the word Maoist, or Naxals in their leads. The data about the specific mentions has been given in table 5 below. While the maximum number of headlines contains mentions of the word Maoists, encounter, and Naxals which also indicate how prominently the issue is being presented

by the local media to its audiences. Thus in turn it establishes that how deadly is the Maoist issue and how urgently it needs to be dealt with.

Table 5: Following is the table showing no. of stories with mention of words, Maoists, Naxals, encounter within Headlines, Leads, Body and Graphics.

Different words	Headlines	Leads	Body and Graphics
Maoists and Naxals	41	45	11
Encounter	3	3	3

6. No. of stories with different sources of the news

News sources of the story help us to understand that through which frame the story is being created and presented. Since the definition of the frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral valuation, and treatment recommendation for the item described (Entman, 1993: 52).

Following is table 6 showing the number of news coming from three different sources, i.e., official sources, press notes, and local news sources.

Different News Sources	Official Sources	Press Notes	Local Sources
No. of Stories	12	31	9

If we analyse the above data for the Dandkaranya Samachar newspaper, we can see that most of the news sources for these news stories are coming either from the police press notes which police release about the ongoing Maoists activities or through the government sources which is either police officers or administrative officials.

Very few stories that are related to Maoists come from the local sources of the reporters. This selective presentation about the Maoist issues from the police sources often leads to one sided interpretations of the Maoist insurgency amongst the audience. Often some journalists complain that what police write in their press notes about the Maoist deaths or surrenders is not

hundred percent true. Sometimes Maoists also clarify it by sending their press notes about the false police claims.⁶⁸ Hence, the above data signifies that the narrative about the Maoist insurgency is often coming from the police and administration and is almost built and controlled by the police sources, thus setting it as a public agenda.

b) Data Analysis of Dainik Bhaskar Newspaper

Dainik Bhaskar is a big business newspaper with a relatively wider audience stretched over the entire Hindi speaking readership of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujrat, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar and it is still expanding. It also has a unique style of presenting the Maoists' issues which are seen in table 7.

Table 7: Details of primary data through content analysis from Dainik Bhaskar Newspaper

Total Number of Days	23 Days
Total Number of Maoists Insurgency based Stories	31
Total Number of Primary Stories	27
Total Number of Secondary Stories	4
News Related to Maoists Arrest/Surrender	5
Maoists Killed/Injured	2
Villagers Killed/Injured by Maoists	1
Human Rights Violation by Police	0
Police/Villagers Trust building Talks	2
Other Stories (Maoists nuisance/ Security arrangement against Maoists)	18

⁶⁸Interview with journalists

The news stories presented in Dainik Bhaskar through the use of pictures and language give a comparative picture of Maoist acts versus police acts and present a subliminal message which stresses the dedication of police and inhumanity and unreasonable acts of Maoists. The paper mostly stresses on presenting the Maoist issue as a law and order problem. It has dedicated a maximum number of stories in depicting that Maoists mostly create nuisance like burning vehicles, road blocking, and hurdles in developmental works, whereas police are involved in taking each and every measure to check this issue. Their discussion does not touch any serious issue like local peoples' support, which Maoists receive nor about the Maoists' agenda of fighting for equal development rights. It highlights few stories discussing the police efforts to build a relationship of trust between the villagers and police; most of these trust building talks are twisted and presented as villagers' complaints and grievances against the Maoists.

The newspaper clearly has chosen to set the agenda against the Maoists and to present them amongst the audience as the ones losing the support of the local people and losing their ground in Bastar. However, this effort of propagating the government propaganda has been going since the launching of Salwa Judum, yet Maoists have not been completely wiped out of these areas.

1. The Tone of the story on Maoists Issue in Dainik Bhaskar Newspaper

Table 8: Following is the table showing the tone of the stories related to Maoists insurgency in the Dainik Bhaskar Newspaper

Tone of story	Negative	Neutral	Positive
No. of Stories	23	7	1

Newspaper as a source to influence public opinion and as an agenda setter for the public can contribute a lot in making a positive or negative opinion about the issue, particularly amongst the public which is solely dependent on newspaper for understanding what is happening inside the remote and unreachable jungles of Chhattisgarh. Dainik Bhaskar, with the largest circulation

among these newspapers, tends to present the Maoist issues negatively, thus building the negative image of the Maoist issues and agenda. The most surprising fact is that even the large business newspaper such as Bhaskar has chosen to talk less about the Maoists issue, coming out with the least number of Maoist insurgency based stories as compared to the other two newspapers.

2. Page Placement of the Story in Dainik Bhaskar

In the Dainik Bhaskar newspaper, along with the main edition, there is one more supplementary newspaper, specifically publishing about the local issues of the different districts of Bastar on each page. While there are only two stories related to Maoist issues on the front page of the main newspaper, most of the stories have been prominently placed on the first page of the supplementary newspaper. Since the paper has more resources, it has dedicated more space to prominently highlight the Maoist issues in a negative tone. The prominence given to the issue or the different aspects of the issue also comes under the strategy of agenda setting of the newspaper. As per the following data, it can be said that prominently chose to highlight the negative attributes of Maoist insurgency amongst the public.

Table 9: The following table shows the page placement of the story in Dainik Bhaskar Newspaper

Page Placement	Front Page	Front of Supplement	Inside Pages
No. of Stories	2	21	8

3. Columns Dedicated to Different Aspects of Maoists Insurgency in Dainik Bhaskar Newspaper

Table 10 gives detailed pictures of the space dedicated to the different attributes of the Maoist insurgency. It depicts that most of the spaces have been dedicated by the newspaper to highlight the negativity and problems the Maoists insurgency has created in Bastar.

Table 10: Number of columns the newspaper dedicated to different aspects of Maoists Insurgency

Different aspects of News	Number of News	No. of Columns
On Valour and dedication of Police Officers committed to end Maoists forces	1	6
About how Maoists hide arms and ammunitions in forests	1	5
Maoists harming public properties, schools, hospitals, blames to Maoists for village backwardness, Police-Villager trust building talks against Maoists, villagers vowing to act against Maoists	3	4
Maoists surrender, arrested, security arrangements against Maoists, Maoists hampering transportations, buses, trucks	10	3
Press notes about Maoists' arrest, surrender, murder	8	2
Maoists surrender, murder, threats, security arrangements	8	1

On the other hand, it stands in full support of the police officials agenda building initiatives that Maoists are losing their battle against the police and government by dedicating more columns to such attributes of Maoist insurgency. The highest number of the stories are about the Maoists surrender with no clear cut picture of those who surrendered- whether they are Maoists holding guns and involved in crimes or just the villagers who were involved in acts like distributing pamphlets, providing food, and lodging to Maoists, or helping them in any other forms. The agenda about the Maoists losing the battleground started at the onset of Salwa Judum and is being carried on by the newspaper till date.

4. Story Placement of the Maoists Issues in Dainik Bhaskar Newspaper

Table 11, shows that most of the news stories on Maoist insurgency carried the words Maoists, Naxals, in headlines as well as in leads. In Dainik Bhaskar newspaper, most of these headlines appeared with highlighted graphics, coloured fonts, with pictures giving prominent visual space to these stories. Thus, the newspaper assigns a substantial amount of prominence to the Maoists issue, and to grab the attention of the viewers most of these stories are placed in the first half or second half of the supplementary newspaper of Dainik Bhaskar. The use of the word ‘encounter’ in headlines and leads also indicates that the purpose is to build and set the agenda that Maoists are rapidly losing battles in the jungles of Dandkaranya Samachar and their ending is not far away. The stress among the reporters on relatively ‘neutral’ reporting on the Maoist issues which they actively pointed out in interviews thus indicates their helplessness towards the constraints on free reporting.

Table 11 indicates story placement of no. of stories with mention of words Maoists, Naxals, encounter within Headlines, Leads, Body and Graphics in Dainik Bhaskar Newspaper

Different words	Headlines	Leads	Body and Graphics
Maoists and Naxals	24	26	7
Encounter	1	3	3

5. Different News Sources of the Insurgency Based News in Dainik Bhaskar Newspaper

In the field of journalism, “the thumb rule for reporters has been to reproduce facts and opinions of others, not to express his/ her own opinion and as per this rule, newsgathering becomes a process of putting a picture of an event together through the accounts of sources, documentary as well as human” (Ellada, 2015: 6). News sources, especially when they are official, try to maintain the administrative dominance over news being spread by selective dissemination of the information by highlighting favourable facts and hiding the unfavourable ones. Since, the reporting on Maoist insurgency is an issue related to conflicts, official control over the news sources often leads to one-sided news reporting and framing of the news.

In table 12 below, most of the news sources are either official sources or the official press notes of police, thus framing the entire Maoist insurgency issue as a law and order problem, restricted to Maoists ' nuisance and a hindrance in development work in Chhattisgarh region.

Table 12: No. of stories with different sources of the news in Dainik Bhaskar Newspaper

Different News Sources	Official Sources	Press Notes	Local Sources
No. of Stories	6	20	5

b) Data Analysis of Patrika Newspaper

Originally known as Rajasthan Patrika in the state of Rajasthan, the paper outside of Rajasthan is widely called as Patrika.⁶⁹ Patrika was launched in 1956 and since then it has expanded its reach starting from Delhi, Gujarat, to southern states like Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Its latest expansion has been in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The paper is the fifth most read Hindi newspaper in the country. According to the Indian Readership Survey of 2017, Patrika is the seventh most read newspaper in India across languages with a readership of 16.32 million.

⁶⁹Initially started in Rajasthan and Delhi in 1956 by Karpoor Chandra Kulish, the paper was known as Rajasthan Patrika. Widely known as Patrika Group, the media house apart from owning newspaper business, also runs digital, radio and television businesses under its banner.

Patrika is a big business newspaper with wide human resources as well as an ample amount of technological advancements. The newspaper has a supplementary section for covering the news of the Bastar region and it allocates each page of the supplementary section for different districts of the Bastar such as Narayanpur, Bijapur, Kanker, Dantewada, and Sukma.

Table 13: Following are the data obtained out of the content analysis of the Patrika Newspaper

Total Number of Days	23
Total Number of Maoists Insurgency stories	46
Total Number of Primary Stories	41
Total Number of Secondary Stories	5
News about Maoists Arrest/Surrender	5
News about Maoists Killed/Injured	4
News about Security Killed by Maoists	2
News about Villagers Killed/injured/harassed by Maoists	6
News about Human Rights Violation by Police	1
News about Police-Villagers trust building talks	4
Other stories based on Maoists insurgency: (following are details)	23
News about Maoists Nuisance	7
News about Security Arrangements against Maoists	12
News stories based on entertainment industry	2
Soft stories based on Maoists surrender	2

Table 13, above gives the details of the news patterns related to the Maoists, insurgency being published in Patrika from the Bastar region of the Chhattisgarh state. Patrika newspaper comparatively publishes more news related to the Maoists issues, thus allocating more space and resources to the issue. It has chosen to publish on a wider variety of Maoist related issues as compared to other newspapers, sometimes highlighting some Maoist stories as soft news, as for example, in an entertainment news dated 24.09.2017, about Bollywood actors working on Maoist

based film Newton which was selected for Oscar nominations in the year 2017. Since the film shooting was being done in Bastar, Patrika came up with lots of soft stories regarding the mobile network issues in the forested areas, problems faced by the actors, and day to day struggles of staying in Bastar. This news story was highlighted in the entertainment section of the main newspaper. It even highlighted the contribution of local journalist Mangal Kunjam in the film Newton.

Other stories dated 23.09.2017, about the human rights violations being perpetrated on Maoists by police, were also given space in the inner colourless (black and white) pages of the newspaper supplement in which a Maoist who was ready to surrender, was killed by the police. As per the story, the villagers claimed that a Maoist was illegally picked up by the police at night from his home and was killed while the police claimed it was an encounter killing that happened in the forest. However, the maximum number of stories are related to security arrangements being done to counter the Maoists and on presenting about the nuisance created by the Maoists with little or no in-depth explanations about the reasons for their deeds. The mention of the context and objective of such Maoists' deeds are missing from the news reports.

Stories of villagers being harassed or killed by the Maoists are more in Patrika as compared to the two other newspapers. Also, the news stories based on a humanistic angle about Maoists' surrenders have been framed in such a way which could highlight the negativity of the Maoists. For example, one story headlined “Maoists surrendered after fathers demise” dated 4.09.2017 placed on the first page of supplement newspaper, highlighted that due to financial pressures and due to unfavourable attitudes of the other Maoists of her group, the lady left the group and surrendered. The story has been framed to point out the inhuman behaviour of the Maoist leaders.

Similarly, another story dated 7.09.2017, placed on inside pages of the supplement newspaper, states that “the young Maoists who surrendered got killed by the Maoists and his widow was given a job by the government.” The paper presents the contrast between the humane and forgiving attitude of the government towards the surrendered Maoists and the harsh treatment of the Maoists towards those who surrender. Thus, only those facts are highlighted which points out towards the goodwill of government agencies and the harshness of the Maoists.

1. The Tone of the Story on Maoists Issues in Patrika Newspaper

Out of 46 news stories presented by the Patrika newspaper, 30 stories appeared with a negative tone, 14 stories were neutral and two had positive tones. Those stories which were neutral were generally related to security arrangements that were being done by the police to combat Maoists such as the opening of the police station, police strategies to combat Maoists, hiring of sniffer dogs, etc. News which had a negative tone highlighted the Maoists as being a hurdle in the development of the village areas, obstacles in the construction of schools and hospitals, nuisance creating people, harassers of the villagers, and inhuman creatures in the land of Bastar. The two positive toned stories were related to captives being released by the Maoists after warnings to avoid being close to the police.

Table 14: Following are the numbers of stories toned positively, negatively, and in a neutral way in the Patrika newspaper.

Tone of Story	Negative	Neutral	Positive
No. of Stories	30	14	2

2. Page Placement of the Story in the Patrika Newspaper

Table 15: Following are data showing the page placement of different stories in Patrika Newspaper

Page Placement	Front Page	Front Page of Supplement	Inside Pages
No. of Stories	2	11	33

Out of 46 stories, only two appeared on the front page; one was related to “security personnel slain by Maoists” (dated: 5.09.2017) and another is about “blueprint to trap most wanted Maoists leader Hidma” (dated: 15.09.2017). The prominence assigned to these stories indicates that the stand of the newspaper is to view the Maoist issues as simply a law and order problem rather

than a socio-economic and political issue. While 11 stories appeared on the front page of the supplement which is a coloured page, 33 Maoist stories appeared on inside pages. Most of these 11 stories were about the village-police trust building talks, about the security officials visits to Maoists areas, about Maoists surrender, Maoists harassing villagers whereas stories related to the human rights violation against Maoists, court cases about Maoists in which they were set free, about the special investigation team to investigate about the torching of the villages were in inside pages and that too in black and white fonts.

Here, the prominence was assigned to police narratives, Maoist surrenders, and Maoists ' notoriety while negative aspects of police and administration were kept in inside pages. This is how the newspaper selectively framed the Maoist insurgency issue and presented it to the audience, setting the agenda against the insurgency.

3. Columns Dedicated to Various Maoist Based News in Patrika Newspaper

Apart from the page placement of the story, the space allocated to various aspects of Maoist insurgency related news can also help us understand the pattern of presentation and framing of the Maoist issues. The amount of space given to various aspects of Maoist insurgency itself speaks volumes about which kind of news is being prominently presented to the audience.

As far as the above two factors are concerned i.e. - tone of the story and page placement of the story, it is clear that negative and obstructionist aspects of the Maoists insurgency have readily been highlighted by the newspaper. This section further examines the framing of Maoist insurgency related news coverage. While six and above columns of space are dedicated to presenting the concerns about the Maoist issues and its administrative solutions, five, four, and three column space have been dedicated to highlighting stories about how the Maoists have been harassing villagers and how they are getting fed up of them, villagers' complaints against Maoists, Maoist nuisance, security news, progress in security services, etc. These have been given more importance over the news of human rights violations against Maoists, or for instance the news of investigation on village torching which could only get two column space to present the issues.

Table 16: Number of columns newspaper dedicated to different aspects of Maoists Insurgency

Different Aspects of News	Number of News	Number of Columns
Maoists encounter based news, Maoist's internal managements such as Hidma appointed as a central committee member, public property destroyed by Maoists, some entertainment news	6	6 and above
Maoists encounters, Police strategies to counter Maoists, Villager grievances against Maoists, Security checks and arrangements, Maoists surrender	7	5
Maoists harming public property, schools, hospitals, blames to Maoists for village backwardness, Police-Villager trust building talks against Maoists, villagers vowing to act against Maoists	6	4
Maoists surrender, arrested, security arrangements against Maoists, villagers complain against Maoists, Maoists' dictates, Maoists killed villagers	4	3
Human rights violations by Police, Fake encounters, Maoists surrender, encounters, villagers killed by Maoists	13	2
Maoists dismissed cases by courts, Maoists harming public property, hidden weapons, Maoists pamphlets.	10	1

Most of even these two and one column news is about the Maoists' surrender and encounters with police. What is different from the other two newspapers is that it does mention

the fake encounter, human rights violation news while such news could not get any space at all in the most widely read newspaper the Dainik Bhaskar. Table 16 above shows details about the distribution of news about various aspects and attributes of the Maoists insurgency.

4. Story placement of Maoists insurgency issue in the Patrika newspaper

Table 17: Story Placement: No. of stories with mention of words, Maoists, Naxals, encounter within Headlines, Leads, Body and Graphics in Patrika newspaper

Different words	Headlines	Leads	Body and Graphics
Maoists and Naxals	34	40	46
Encounter	5	5	5

Out of 46 stories that appeared in the Patrika Newspaper, 34 stories contained the mention of the word Maoists and Naxals in the headlines, 40 stories contained mention of these two words in leads, and almost all of the 46 stories, the mention of either of these two words were seen mostly in the body of the story and sometimes in the graphics. It is important to point out here that Patrika has a special way of grabbing the attention of the audiences by use of the Hindi word '*lal aatank*' (red terror) and '*lal ladaka*' (red fighters). Also, such stories about the Maoists appeared in red outline and sometimes with the use of different colours to highlight the graphical data presented in the stories. Also, most of the stories appearing on the front page of supplementary newspapers used colours to highlight the issues. Similarly, five stories were there related to encounters with security forces, and placing of the word encounter could be seen throughout these five stories prominently.

6. Use of Different Sources in the Patrika Newspaper

Table 18: No. of stories with different sources of the news in Patrika newspaper

Different News Sources	Official Sources	Press Notes	Local Sources
No. of Stories	13	21	12

“Dependence of the news media on official sources, provide these sources with an opportunity to convey their messages through the news coverage and frame them to try to construct the reality for the audiences they target and achieve desired ends” (Ellada, 2015: 3). Most of the sources of the newspaper have been the press notes and official sources except a few local sources. Clearly, the stories which are being painted about the Maoist insurgency are one sided and there is no representation of the either villagers or the Maoists to counter these stories. The dominant side which is, of course, the government forces have greater control over the local newspaper and they build the rhetoric about the Maoist issues by controlling the sources of the news, control over the prominence of the different attributes of the news, and by framing the Maoists based issues.

III. Comparative Analysis of the three Hindi Newspapers

Out of the three Hindi newspapers taken for study, the Dandkaranya Samachar is a small scale published newspaper having circulation mainly in Chhattisgarh, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh, whereas Dainik Bhaskar and Patrika have a wider circulation all over central India and some parts of northern and southern states. While Dainik Bhaskar extends its reach to Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar along with central India including Gujarat and Rajasthan, Patrika extends its reach to southern states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and in the north to states like Rajasthan, Delhi along with central India.

Financially, Patrika and Dainik Bhaskar stand out to be much stronger than Dandkaranya Samachar, having larger human resources, bigger advertisement revenue, and larger profits. However, in terms of the coverage of the news regarding Maoists insurgency, Dainik Bhaskar lags behind the Dandkaranya Samachar and Patrika newspapers. The newspaper with the maximum number of Maoist insurgency based stories is Dandkaranya Samachar (52), followed by Patrika (46) and Dainik Bhakar (31). The level and depth of coverage in all the newspapers are the same with almost no in-depth report about the incidents apart from basic details of what, when, where, and whom. To the reasons as “why” such things are happening, how they

happened and the reasons for such happenings have no explanations. Also, most of the stories are presented as one sided stories with only official and police standpoints on the Maoists insurgency. In Chhattisgarh, the CSPA Act 2005 was already in force by the time of fieldwork due to which no one can talk and obtain the version of Maoists. As per the journalists, mostly Maoists in Chhattisgarh claims about the Maoists issue usually through their own press notes but that is limited to big incidents like the killing of politicians in the Darbha massacre, killing of some journalists like Sai Reddy, burning of transportation, however, for everyday incidents reported about Maoists surrenders or being killed, there is no counter versions from the Maoists side, nor any in-depth explanations by the newspaper.

In terms of patterns of news coverage, Dandkaranya Samachar and Patrika have given maximum space in terms of columns to highlight the police and government strategies to counter Maoists, police peacebuilding efforts with villagers, and the negative news about Maoist's notoriety; Dainik Bhaskar has also focused on such issues but the frequency of stories is less. While in Dandkaranya Samachar and Patrika, issues related to human rights violations of Maoists, court rejection of the cases against some of the arrested Maoists are covered (though in less frequency); in Dainik Bhaskar, there are no such stories at all that may draw attention to the faults of government agencies. The primary reason behind this is that most of the advertisers of the newspaper are the local government officials (publicity department), local political leaders, and *panchayat* (smallest rural administrative unit) leaders of the local areas, who cannot be offended for the sake of such news. Also, the newspaper is more successful as compared to the other two in running its business, and to run the business, advertisers have to be appeased.

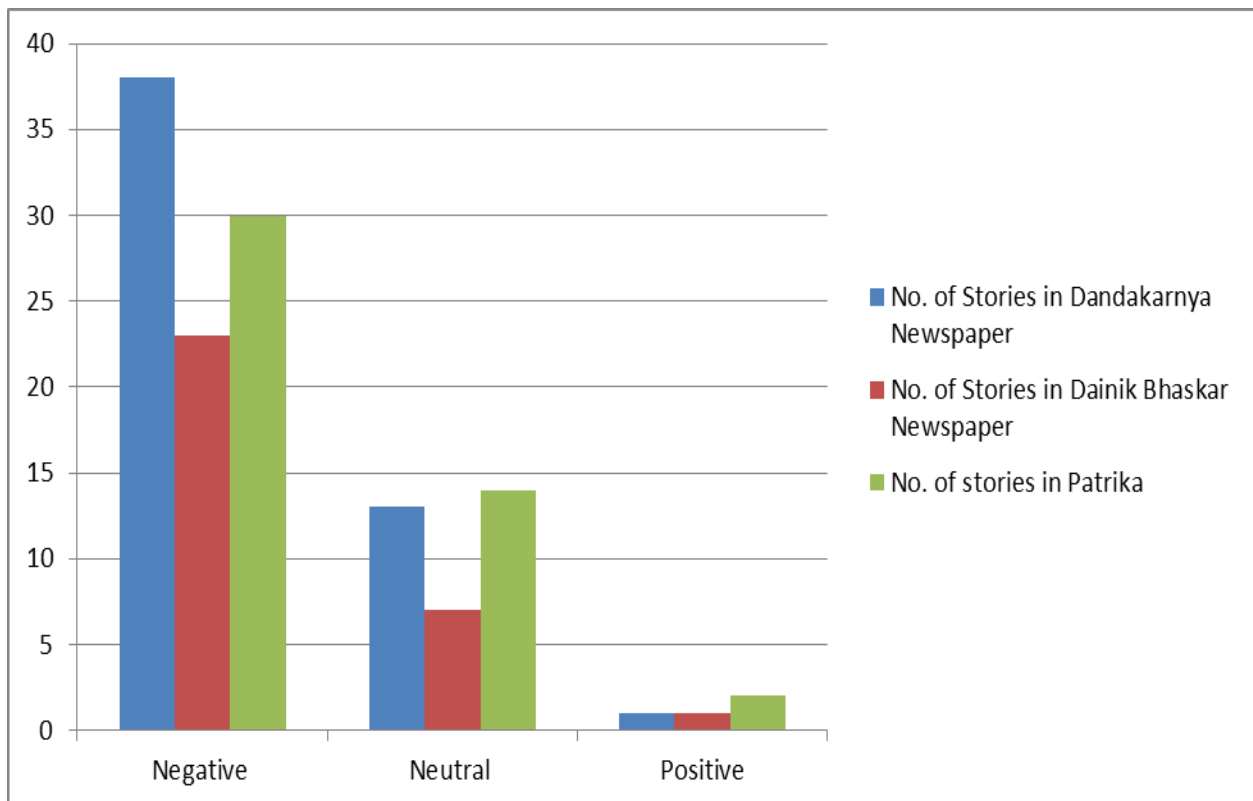
One of the journalists who had worked under the then bureau chief of Dainik Bhaskar⁷⁰ pointed out to this study that the person himself cut out the news which highlighted the negativity of the government officials regarding issues of Maoists and villagers because apart from being the bureau chief here, he is also a business man depending on the government tenders

⁷⁰On the condition of anonymity, a journalist pointed out that the then (2017) Bureau Chief of Dainik Bhaskar for Jagdalpur, Bhawar Bothra's name has been indicted in many scandals and cases of fraudulences. But still due to his political links he manages to head the prestigious newspaper like Bhaskar in Jagdalpur. The person owns a private building company and has allegedly been named as a major culprit in seizing the lands of historical Dalpat Sagar lake through fraud means. For details please see, "Nayiduniya Bureau Pramukh Bothra ke Khilaf Dhokhadharika Mamla"(Fraud case filed against Nayi Duniya Bureau Chief Bothra) dated 16.01.2016, at <http://bhadas4media.com>.

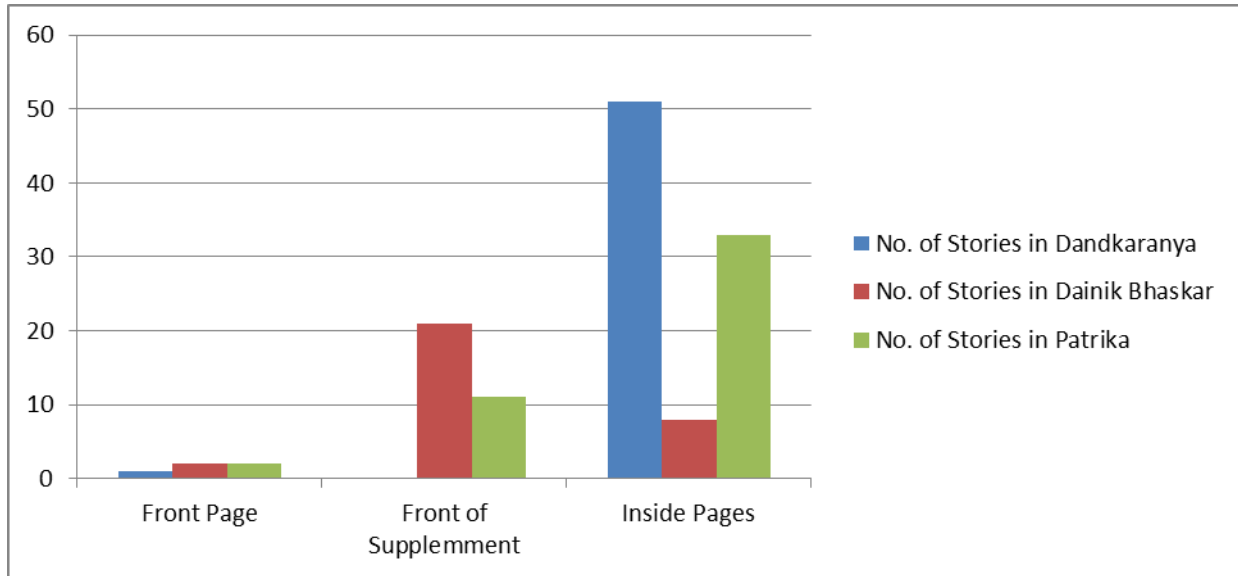
and contracts. So, in one aspect while running the business and to maximise profits by these local Hindi newspapers, the thin line between the editorial ethics and advertising business is compromised.

The three charts below provide a comparative view of the tone of the news stories, place placement of news stories, and about different news stories sources: number of stories with different tones (Chart 1), page placement of the stories (Chart 2), and different sources of the stories of all the three newspapers (Chart 3). In all the three newspapers, the maximum number of stories are coming from the official sources and police notes (Chart 3), thus it can be said that the agenda against the Maoist insurgency has been set by the government and the local dailies seem to have succumbed to the government pressure.

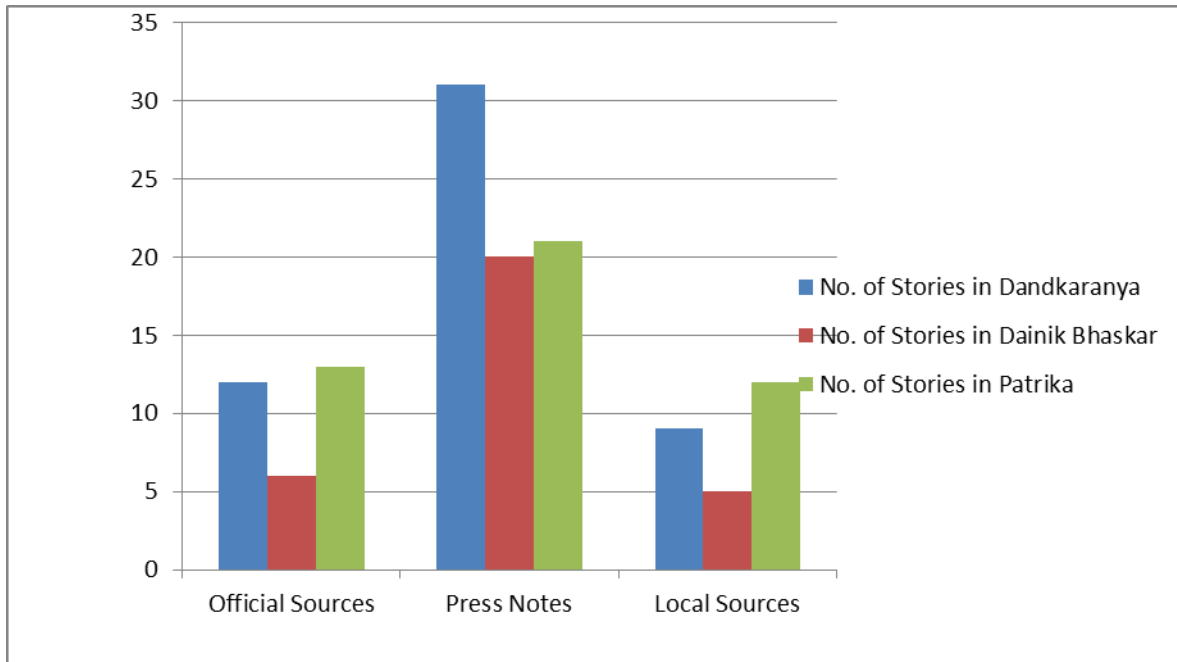
(i) Chart 1: Showing the tone of stories (negative, neutral, and positive) in three Newspapers



(ii) Chart 2: Page Placement of the stories in three Newspapers



(iii) Chart 3: Showing Different Sources of the three Newspapers



In Chart 1, since the maximum number of stories are covered in the Dandkaranya Samachar newspaper, so a maximum number of stories with negative tones are showing in Dandkaranya Samachar, followed by Patrika and Dainik Bhaskar, in terms of positive stories, Patrika has though less number of stories but comparatively greater than the first two newspapers. Chart 2 shows the page placement of the story, the chart depicts that in terms of assigning prominence, Dainik Bhaskar scores more than Patrika and Dandkaranya Samachar, because the newspaper has chosen to show the maximum number of Maoists insurgency based stories on the front page of the supplement. Chart 3 shows the sources of the story. All three newspapers are relying mostly on press notes.

IV. Conclusions

The media industry plays a pivotal role in reinforcing and legitimising capitalism and mainstream politics. It is also primary means of reinforcing power and politics. (Ninan, 2010: 4). All the three newspapers studied in this chapter, Dainik Bhaskar, Dandkaranya Samachar, and Patrika, seem to follow the government's demand of portraying Maoist insurgency solely as the biggest obstacles in development. It has been observed that how the big print media firms, business class, and intellectual class have colluded together to cater to the interests of the business community in Chhattisgarh and have chosen to ignore the voices of the adivasi community. In Chhattisgarh, instances of human rights violations, opposition against mining companies, and land acquisition are a common phenomenon; however, every effort of opposition by marginalised people is blamed as coming from Maoists and gives credence to the state government's mandate to wipe out the Maoists. It could be said that governments (irrespective of ideologies) and business classes have colluded with the single motive of controlling the natural resource of Chhattisgarh.

The findings in this chapter with regard to the page placements of the stories, sources of the news, and the number of positive, negative, and neutral stories about the Maoists suggest that among all the three newspapers, big banner newspaper like Dainik Bhaskar has given special prominence in highlighting the negative aspects of insurgency placing a maximum number of such stories on the front page of the newspaper or front page of supplement. Also, as compared to the other two, Dainik Bhaskar has chosen to publish a fewer number of stories about the Maoist insurgency. It could be concluded that being a big newspaper firm the newspaper does

not lack the required resources and manpower to cover this issue. However, the newspaper maintains its populist stand that it caters to the demand of the public and serves what the public wants to know more. In the name of maintaining a populist stand, the newspaper has hidden its own purpose of helping the capitalist class through its stories and agendas. The other big newspaper Patrika in competition with Dainik Bhaskar has tried to highlight the almost same number of stories and has done more stories than Dainik Bhaskar. It could also be observed that since big newspapers like Dainik Bhaskar and Patrika have their own established business and profit sources, they are comparatively less dependent on the government for survival, so they can afford to publish fewer stories related to insurgencies, while small newspaper Dandkaranya Samachar has succumbed to the state demand of writing everything coming as press notes and from official as a ritual. In the case of Dandkaranya Samachar, it has been noted that the newspaper does not have supplements, so all the stories about Maoist insurgency appeared in inside pages meant for local news.

In the case of Chhattisgarh state, the political economy of print media plays a particularly significant role in coverage of the Maoists insurgency in Chhattisgarh. Print media in Chhattisgarh exist in a reciprocal relationship with the state irrespective of political ideologies. While the print media supports the state with its propaganda against Maoist insurgency, the state government feeds them with necessary financial support by offering advertisements, grants, leases and sometimes ignoring their major and minor mistakes.

Also, the flow of money in the form of advertisements to the local Hindi newspapers houses in Chhattisgarh is controlled by the state government and what content these local dailies would produce about the Maoists insurgency is indirectly in hands of the state government. Indirect control over the print media by the state government in Chhattisgarh also indicates the exercise of the power relationship between them. Through this study, it could be concluded that the state exercises abject power over the press and successfully reinforces the dominant views and values in the society.

Chapter 4

MEDIA LABOURERS:

Social Contexts and Trajectories of Work

The sociologist Gaye Tuchman in her book *Making News: A Study in Construction of Reality* (1980), points out the fact that “knowledge is always socially constructed and it always organises experience ...shapes meaning”, (Tuchman, 1980: 217). This production of meaning as she says is always embedded in the activities of men and women who are in social institutions, organisations, “and professions associated with their activities and they produce and reproduce, create and recreate” (Tuchman, 1980: 216). Thus, she notes, “news is a social resource, a source of knowledge, a source of power, news is a window to the world” (ibid). Even the very act of assigning a particular beat to a specific journalist is itself an act of “socially constructing a news” because it sets the boundaries of the news by limiting what is worthy or not so worthy of getting published (Tuchman, 1978: 265). As news is a social construction of reality and it is continuously constituted by journalists, editors, and the entire fraternity of news media, under such situations, it becomes imperative to understand the social backgrounds of the journalists and its relationships with the prevailing circumstances under which a news story comes out in conflict affected areas. In insurgency affected areas, most of the reporters either belong to the affected areas or their interest overlaps with either side of the conflicting parties. For example, while some journalists view the Salwa Judum as a right approach by the government to counter the Maoists because they or their family have been chased out by the Maoists, many view it as an atrocity on the adivasis because they have suffered in the conflict.

In the previous chapter, it has been observed that the political economy of print media plays a major role in curbing certain facts and marginalising the dissenting voices. The control mechanisms of ownership, and advertising revenues given to the preferred newspapers is a net set by the system to check unfavourable news stories. However, even if there are several stringent mechanisms to wipe out unwanted news related to the Maoist insurgency, still some news stories of human rights violations, corruption related to it do come out from time to time. The journalist fraternity plays a determining role in the dissemination of messages particularly in conflict

affected areas such as the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh. As Patterson puts it, “News is a highly selective account of events. News is a construct: it is a version of reality shaped in significant part by journalistic norms and conventions” (Patterson, 2006: 224). Since journalists can play a significant role in influencing any society and particularly in conflict affected areas, it becomes important to understand their social backgrounds and contexts in which they perform their role of watchdog. Several determining factors act upon journalists when they are in process of making news. Structures such as news net, gatekeeping, the influence of sources to name a few.

Talking about sources of the news, Herbert Gans points out in his book *Deciding what's News: A Study of CBS News Evening, NBC Nightly News, News Week and Time* (1979), that source is the most influential factor in the process of news selection. It is the source that gives information to the journalist, selects them for disseminating their information, and informs them only with what they think necessary to disclose. He stresses the fact that sources are equally important for the news firm as are the audiences (Gans, 1979: 73). So, sources exercise power over what they choose to disclose and to what extent. He stresses that “news is an exercise of power over the interpretation of reality” (Gans, 1979: 81) and this shaping of reality is greatly influenced by the sources. Herbert Gans’ work provides a useful framework to understand the work of print media reporting in Chhattisgarh where journalists, to a larger extent, are in some way influenced by the sources in making news. Not only sources, but also various social, political, economic, and legal factors exercise direct and indirect control over the news. Gaye Tuchman points out that in newspaper houses an entire news net is formed; this news net consists of different journalists, editors, camerapersons placed at the centralised institutions who bring out the news. It is formed based on the preferences of the seniors and is hierarchical in a structure whose internal negotiations define the character of the news (Tuchman, 1978: 253). To understand these internal negotiations, the chapter attempts to analyse the social backgrounds of the journalists and its impact on their work which relate to the trajectories of their work.

“Although journalism is an international professional practice, it is always attuned to the institution of local political culture” (Stahlberg, 2006: 52). It is also related to the agency of journalists who engage and negotiate with different aspects to these cultures to bring out the ‘news’. This chapter explores how the social background, work pattern, geographical locations,

ethnicity, life experiences, and other social contexts of journalists, editors, and stringers who are involved in the process of news production affect their work. It also attempts to understand the constraints journalists contend with while carrying out their work and how they negotiate these difficult situations.

Besides a non-participant mode of observation that was deployed through the period of fieldwork to understand the role of journalists in the process of newsmaking in conflict affected areas of Chhattisgarh, in depth interviews were conducted with a total number of 27 journalists. All the journalists interviewed had primarily worked in Chhattisgarh in their lifetime, either in various cities of Chhattisgarh, or in the remote rural areas. Most of those interviewed belonged to the Maoist affected areas of Bastar and its adjoining regions. While many journalists in Chhattisgarh are from other states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh, a batch of young journalists have also emerged from the rural remote areas of Chhattisgarh. While in Chhattisgarh, female participation in agricultural labour activities is more than that of males, employment of women in the organised sector remains dismal, with just 2 percent of women employed on a regular salary basis as compared to 5.7 percent men (Census 2011). Amidst all the 27 respondents interviewed, there is only one women journalist, who belongs to Gondi adivasi community.

Following Table 19 gives the lists of number of journalists from different social backgrounds based on caste, religion or tribe.

Journalist's Caste/ Religion/ Adivasi	No. of Journalists
Upper Caste	16
Other Backward Caste	5
Scheduled Caste	1
Scheduled Tribe	1
Muslim Community	3
Christian Community	1

The journalists interviewed included belonged to upper caste households, the Dalit community, the Muslim community, or from the local community who prefer to be called as local *Bastariya*⁷¹ and identify themselves as superior status to both adivasis and Dalits. In terms of their income type, these journalists can be categorised into salaried, retired, freelancers, and stringers. Some of them, particularly those coming from remote areas, are local stringers, not employed on full time basis and with no regular salary; on the other hand, some are full time employees, getting regular salaries, while few are retired journalists and editors and freelancing on part time basis. Few of them have variable income, depending on the amount of advertisement space of a newspaper they can sell successfully in a month. Those with no regular salaries were more vocal about the prevailing situation in Chhattisgarh and felt freer to make political statements. Of the journalists interviewed, those residing in the city of Raipur, worked in prestigious and big newspaper brands like Dainik Bhaskar, Times of India, and those working in towns like Jagdalpur and inner areas, were working for medium and small scale newspapers like Deshbandhu, Dandakaranya Samachar, Hindsat, Prakhar Samachar, Bastar Impact, Highway Channel, and others.

Since the time Dandakaranya Project ⁷²was started in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh by the then undivided government of Madhya Pradesh in the 1970s, it opened a huge amount of employment opportunities for job seekers, which resulted in the migration of people from the rest of India to this region in hope of better livelihood options. The migrated population settled down there and their next generation secured employment in educational sectors like teaching, lectureships, government jobs, contract work, and journalism. So, in the present scenario, most of the journalists in Bastar come from educated middle class families, who see journalism in Bastar as potentially a decent job to settle down with, which gives proper income, reputation, and power as well. There is also a section of journalists coming from remote areas, from poor families, some belonging to indigenous communities, who despite often having lesser educational qualifications, try to learn the ropes of the profession. In absence of any regular

⁷¹ Bastariya in local language of Bastar region is referred to the local people who belong to dominant caste of this particular region. In Bastar region and particularly in villages, the dominant caste mostly constitute of people who are recognised and categorised as 'Other Backward Caste' in Census of India.

⁷² Dandakaranya Project was implemented in 1958 by government of India to rehabilitate the displaced people of East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) who came to India after the division of India and Pakistan in 1947. The project was implemented with the purpose to rehabilitate the displaced people and for integrated development of the area with the aim of promotion of the interest local adivasi population.

income to journalism in remote areas of Bastar, people often join this profession with the aspiration of enjoying influence in government offices and with the lure of getting government contracts. The situation in Maoist affected remote areas is such that due to strict police vigilance many of them think that the job of a journalist helps to secure themselves and their family from unwanted police restrictions and atrocities.

Twenty-seven journalists interviewed here had their unique reasons to join and struggle to find a place in this profession. In Bastar, most of the adivasi community people who get caught by the police and security forces for reasons which seem incomprehensible to them, tend to look up to journalists for getting them out of trouble. This is also a reason which motivates many journalists to struggle and be vocal for their people, either against the Maoists or against the security forces.

The following section describes the associations of the social background of journalists and their work patterns. The various sub-sections try to analyse the relationship between the social background of the journalists and their various work trajectories. There were a range of factors such as ambition, political opportunities, sense of service, job seeking, business opportunity, nativity, caste/ social superiority, emotional factors such as anger, frustration, pride, and power which inspired respondents to be journalists. These factors have been categorised under sub-heads to understand the relationships between the background of the journalists and their their work. It is pertinent to study the relationship between the social background of the journalists and their work trajectories because it gives insights into their day to day struggles, constraints, and personal and professional negotiations. These relationships play an important role in the constitution of news.

I. Social Contexts of Journalists and their Work

To understand the relationships of social backgrounds of journalists with the trajectories of their work in left-insurgency affected Bastar region of Chhattisgarh, the data gathered through interviews with and observation of the sample of 27 journalists in the study are examined along the following axes: Proximity to the Maoists affected region; Ideological Stand point; Political

Affiliations; Educational Qualifications; Financial obligations; threats from Maoists and Police; Nexuses between police, journalists and other administrative officials; and Caste.

i) Proximity to Maoist Affected Area

Regional proximity to the Maoist affected areas inspires the journalists to write more about Maoist related incidents because they often witness these incidents personally or have acquaintances who do so. They may be connected with these events emotionally, and tend to get involved in small and big Maoist based news. City based journalists on the other hand can analyse and report the incidents even as they maintain a distance from the episode.

The various reasons which relate to their work preferences and reporting about the Maoists related incidents, have been categorised under two sub-heads which describe proximity of journalists to Maoist affected areas: city based journalists and remote area journalists.

a) City based Journalists: Out of a sample of 27 respondents, 19 journalists were mostly city based, or were residing in the city. Out of them, nine journalists claimed that they make regular visits to the remote areas of Bastar and adjoining Maoist affected areas to report about the Maoist based incidents, and the remaining 10 belong to the category of editors and retired journalists who had extensively reported during their initial phase of career and visit these inner areas occasionally. Of these nine journalists regularly visiting the inside areas, most of them say that their keenness that what is happening inside the jungles and sufferings of the innocent people drive them into the passion towards writing about the various incidents happening in Maoist areas even if it means risking away their lives. Many among these journalists who dare to enter into the deep jungles to listen to the adivasis version of Maoist incidents had to face many difficulties and challenges. For example, when The Times of India (TOI) journalist Joseph Jhon tried to report about an incident in which four villages were burnt by the Special Police Officers⁷³ (SPOs) in Bastar, he faced fierce resistance from the local SPOs. On asking what made him take that risk, he says that it was part of his job responsibility and his interest in the region that drives him to cover such areas. He also explained that he went there with Swami Agnivesh⁷⁴ who after listening about the incident rushed to meet those affected people. His visit was opposed by the local SPOs by blocking his way and

⁷³These SPOs were local youth appointed by the Chhattisgarh police to guide the police and security forces in deep jungles of Bastar while police patrolling and security check.

⁷⁴Swami Agnivesh is a social worker who works in the field of social harmony, child protection etc.

throwing stones. Joseph said that the next day he filed the story about the entire incident instead of only the interviews with the affected villagers. He stated that it is the personal interest of the journalists along with the editorial and organisational support which makes journalists do investigative reporting about the Maoist insurgency in Bastar.

Since many of the incidents claiming surrender and 'encounters'⁷⁵ of Maoists are either fake, or villagers are made to surrender as Maoists in the lure of some financial supports, it becomes pertinent for journalists to go deeper into such matters. So, in this particular case which Joseph reported, a series of claims and counterclaims surfaced in the media, with different sections of media telling the story from the perspective of SPOs that Maoists had burnt the villages and few from the side of villagers. There is another instance of a journalist from Jagdalpur city, Devsharan Tiwari, who works for the Hindi newspaper Deshbandhu. Tiwari in search of the news story tried to enter into the Abujhmad area of Bastar which is populated by the Abujhmaria tribes. Since being a Maoist affected area, police and administration have reserved the rights of a common man to enter this area without prior permission. When Devsharan entered Abujhmad, he was asked by the local police to immediately leave that place and was even asked that how come he managed to enter so deep. As the journalist was well aware of the geography of this region, he managed to reach the desired spot and was able to carry out his work freely. In Devsharan's opinion, police interference of this extent badly jeopardises their work of bringing genuine stories from inside of the jungles to the public platform. Since Devsharan and Joseph both belonged to well-known media houses Deshbandhu and The Times of India, they were capable enough to manage the difficult situations and come out of them unharmed.

As city based journalists usually work with big media banners, they enjoy more power in relations with the government, bureaucracies, and police so it becomes comparatively easier for them to report about any Maoist incidences as compared to their colleagues in remote areas. Bigger the city they work in, the more power they often enjoy. This, however, does not mean that they are not stopped from going inside the Maoists affected areas. The harassment of Malini Subramaniam by right wing group in Jagdalpur who was reporting about the establishment of

⁷⁵ Here word encounter means encounter killing of the Maoists by the police or security forces.

TATA steel plant is an example which signifies the extent to which a journalist may risk their life.⁷⁶

b) Remote areas journalists: As compared to city based journalists, the remote area journalists tend to be involved with these Maoist related incidents on a daily basis. Some of their news reports find some place in newspapers, but many reports are killed. Most of the remote area journalists interviewed had studied only till secondary and higher secondary level. Primarily they played the role of an informer, who informs the higher ranked journalist based in the city or metropolis. They are the one who accompanies the journalist coming from a metropolis like New Delhi to remote villages where any newsworthy incidences or anything related to the Maoists happens. One of the remote area journalists said that higher rank journalists are mostly city based, and enjoy more honour among the public officials than those coming from remote areas. Also, because in Bastar, the profession of journalism is not just limited to procuring news; apart from this they have to bear the extra burden of bringing advertisements from the government officials and other sources on regular basis, and it becomes difficult for them to write any piece of news free handedly. A journalist from Dantewada narrated one of the incidents in which there was so much official pressure to hide the news that no one in Chhattisgarh broke the story. Finally the news was released by a Delhi based journalist. The incident had happened in 2017 when CRPF personnel had gone to celebrate Rakhi in one of the government based residential schools for girls in Palnar village and on this occasion, some of the CRPF personnel allegedly tried to molest some school girls. All journalists in Bastar got to know about the incidence but none dared to report it because the very next day after the incident, an indirect threatening message was circulated by some of the PRO offices of the government which mentioned some newspaper stories about the incident, mentioning that the place of incident, name of the children affected and faces should not be published under POCSO Act, as doing so will be punishable. In the same case, the adivasi human rights activist Soni Sori, had tried to enter the school to speak with those girls but was not allowed to do so and was allegedly harassed by the police. So, my respondent (the journalist) said that no one in Dantewada and Jagdalpur filed any report about this incident and the same happens in

⁷⁶Malini was harassed by the right wing vigilant group Agni in Jagdalpur city. She was labelled as sympathiser of Maoists and someone against the interest of common people of Bastar. Her house and vehicle was stoned and vandalised by the Agni group.

Maoist based incidents as well. He even pointed out that if a journalist in small areas like Dantewada goes on to publish such things, then their relatives doing some contract work with the government in Dantewada will be impacted. The same journalist points out that since Dantewada is such a small place with less vigilance mechanism and scrutiny, the rulers here are police, not even city officials. He pointed out that when 75 CRPF officials were killed in 2010 near Tadmetla village in Dantewada, senior police officials acted with very high handedness, and even the Collector of Dantewada was not allowed to enter the spot, so forget about the journalists. As remote area journalists are the ones who are present on the spot when any Maoist insurgency related incident happens, it becomes easier for them to report what they are witnessing but because of they have so little power, it becomes difficult for them to investigate these incidents with autonomy.

On the other hand, due to physical proximity they are able to report on the insurgency in the most timely way. Journalist Santosh Yadav⁷⁷ is one such example from Darbha (a small village on the outskirts of Jagdalpur). Santosh, being a native of Darbha, a Maoist affected area, is a matriculate and is a stringer with several Hindi newspapers of Chhattisgarh. Santosh narrated that when the Congress convoy was attacked by the Maoists on March 25, 2013, near Darbha, he was able to reach the spot along with his colleague Naresh Mishra. After the Maoists went away, many allegations were leveled on the duo fromr being Maoists' informers to being their sympathiser. Such allegations hinder the zeal of a journalist to freely report any story because immediately the questions could be raised on them that how they managed to reach when police could not reach. Santosh recalled “during the attack when they went to nearby police stations, police men had locked the police station from outside and were sitting inside. Police even ignored their call to rescue the victims.” In absence of proper police response and poorly trained police staff, questions were raised on those who did not hesitate to move about in the Maoist areas.

Pushpa Rokde is another journalist who is a native of Bastar and the only adivasi women journalist in Bastar. Pushpa belongs to the Kanker district area of Bastar and her sentiments towards local people are the main factor that drives her into this tough terrain of Bastar to

⁷⁷ Since the case of Santosh Yadav has been widely discussed in media and is known to public, so Santosh Yadav had hesitation about expressing his views and experiences by his name.

explore and write. Pushpa is in charge of news reports of *Prakhar Samachar* from the Bijapur area. Once she happened to get to know about an incident in a very remote village of Bijapur, in which police had opened fire on adivasi villagers who had come together to celebrate at one place. On the occasion, when one of the villagers played *bigul* (traditional tool of trumpet) police openly fired on them thinking that they were hinting to Maoists about the police presence. She said that the incident had happened in such an interior area that it was difficult for this news to come out if she had not come across it. She said many innocent villagers were killed and the next day when she went to meet the responsible police authority, he said not to make news out of it. She simply said to that officer, “*Mere logon ko kuch hogana to main chup nahi rehnewali!*” (If my people will be affected then I won’t sit quietly). She said villagers residing in such remote areas look up to the journalists for help and justice. She reported about the issue in her small newspaper *Prakhar Samachar*.

Pushpa is a daring journalist who explains her commitment to the adivasis welfare by citing an instance when she led the investigation team set up by the Human Rights Commission to investigate the case of rape of adivasi women by the security and police personnel in the remote villages of the Bijapur district in Bastar region in the year 2015. She recalls how the police team decided to torture the members of the investigation team by insisting them to walk several kilometers to the village on foot because four-wheelers could not reach there. She said while all the journalists were asked to stay away from the investigation team, she somehow and unknowingly met the team while she was crossing through Bijapur on her bike. She carried the women members of the team one by one to the village where the adivasis women who were victims of the rape were staying. She says, “Chhattisgarh police in 2016 tried everything to ensure that free and fair trial could not happen in such cases and tried to portray every such claim as propaganda against the police”. Since she went with the inquiry committee members, she was able to file a report about the entire incident. The fight between the Maoists and police forces in Chhattisgarh becomes a struggle for the local people as well as for the journalists who want to expose such sufferings of the people. On one hand, they enjoy certain immediacy which helps them to reach any spot even in dense jungles in a short time, and on another hand, being less known in the journalistic circle they remain vulnerable as well. Unlike their city counterparts, journalists from remote areas do not have the privilege of being known in the networks of high

profile political and administrative personalities as a result they get easily targeted and harassed by the police. One example of this is Prabhat Singh from Dantewada, who as a stringer started writing about the fake Maoist encounters and claims of police, and as a result, many counter charges of being a sympathiser of Maoists were filed against him. Prabhat simply states, “This could not have happened with a higher rank journalist living in a city. Most of the time we people are blamed by the police to have connections with the Maoists because we can easily enter inside villages and we know the lanes and roads which lead to different villages.” Also, in a remote area, journalists are the ones who help their city counterparts to reach the spot of the incident, so they are the ones being first targeted by the police.

Some of them have the opinion that only portraying Maoist issues in media is not going to solve the issues. Like Yogesh Panigrahi from Jagdalpur, who reports as a freelancer for the inside areas of Bastar thinks that in the case of Chhattisgarh there is a difference of perspective between the journalists who are witnessing the present situation of Bastar from inside and from outside, particularly those coming from bigger cities. He sounded critical about outsider journalists and national media who write only about the Maoist issues and neglect other primary issues like education, development, corruption, high-handedness of officials, children, and women's health. He thinks that negligence of these issues acts as a building base for Maoists to gather support in Bastar. While others have an opinion that since in Chhattisgarh and particularly in Bastar, media is only writing what the police claims about Maoists such as Maoist encounters, Maoists surrenders, and other such incidents, the situation has turned into one sided reporting and the other side of the narrative is missing.

Like Pushpa, Santosh, Prabhat, and Yogesh many journalists are working in remote areas, with minimum salaries but having the ability to expose the truth. Although, they have their hindrances such as less educational qualifications, comparatively less exposure to the outside world, and more vulnerability to police and Maoists, they are still managing in their capacities to report and work as a backbone of the news culture in Bastar. They are the backbone because they are the ones who initially find out and report about an event and then it goes to senior journalists for further editing.

Irrespective of the fact that most of them are comparatively less educated, the fact that they are closer to the Maoist affected areas, plays a significant role in exercising their options to report about the Maoist related issues. Recalling his experiences of journalism in Bastar, Santosh says that city reporters are often corrupt and many of them are in nexus with police and government officials. When village reporters do any story of corruption, the stories are killed and counter charges of blackmailing of government officials are sometimes imposed on them. He narrated an incident of Darbha, where there was non-availability of doctors in the block level hospital, and when the Block level Medical officer came to know about his inquiry, he offered some money in place of not writing. When Santosh had refused to take money, the officer by contacting some senior reporters stopped the story from reaching the editors' desk, and a counter case of blackmailing was filed against him. Santosh recounted that he had been slapped with fabricated charges on several occasions by police for exposing the fake Maoists 'surrenders', which is discussed in more detail ahead in the chapter (in a section on the nexus between police, journalists, and administrative officials in Chhattisgarh).

ii) Ideological Stand Point and Political Affiliations: As it is a well-known fact that Indian newspapers are consumed by politics (Stahlberg, 2006: 52), journalists who work in conflict affected areas cannot stay untouched by this. Political stand and ideology is a very subtle thing which irrespective of the fact that journalists try to maintain complete objectivity, somehow creeps in. To maintain objectivity, journalists sometimes avoid going deeper into political issues (Patterson, 2007: 226); and journalists in Chhattisgarh are no exception. Out of 27 journalists, nine considered themselves neutral or think that every political party is corrupt in their own ways. Seven are staunch supporters of Congress, including some who are Congress workers, affiliated to the party and holding official positions as well. Six identify themselves as closer to the ideology of BJP, including some who have worked in their youth for the party. Five of them see themselves as ideologically closer to the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Those closer to Congress, Left parties or BJP also often have very different ideological positions related to Maoists insurgency. Ideological stand among the journalists creates a problem of disharmony among the co-workers and particularly affects those who are in hierarchically subordinate positions. For instance, in one of the newspapers in Chhattisgarh, a stringer went on to report about the falseness of police claims of Maoist

encounters and the senior editor had allowed the reports to be published in the newspaper. But when the stringer was arrested by the police under false claims of being a Maoist sympathiser, the stringer received no help from his senior editor who was in fact in a position to intervene and help him. The stringer said that when he called his editor on phone the editor simply said that, “*Tune kuch galat kiya hoga tabhi tujhe pakadke le ja rahehai!* (you must have done something wrong, that’s why they have caught you!)”.

On the other hand, those with ties to Congress ideology, usually report about the Maoists' issues with focus on the atrocities being perpetrated on villagers in the name of eradicating Maoists. Their particular concerns is the villagers and targeting the BJP. They are also concerned about the villagers who suffer due to the perils of Maoist insurgency and police surveillance. For example, one of the well known journalists of Chhattisgarh working with a Hindi newspaper, who has done extensive village reporting, interviewed the Maoist leaders and even talked about the negotiations with the previous Congress government of Chhattisgarh, said that, “Maoists usually appropriate the causes of adivasis. Now they are no more a Robinhood kind of people out in the jungles to protect the rights of adivasis. They indulge in contract killings, take commissions from the big businesses, and even in settling the prices for *tendu patta* (tendu leaves) they are biased towards the traders now. So, we cannot keep on glorifying them all the time. There was a time when their intentions were clear but things are not going well these days.” Another stringer who is a Congress worker in Jagdalpur said, “*Yahan media sirf maowadiyon ke bare me news chapna chahtie hai! Khaskar bahar wale jo dilli se attae hai. Yahan adivasiyon ki bahut samasyaen hai jinke bare me koi baat nahi karta! School nahi hai, pani nahi hai, jungle kaate ja rahe hai dhokhe se! Jan Adhikari bhrast hai, koi in sab maslo pe nahi baat karta* (Here media wants to write news about the Maoists only! particularly, those coming from Delhi. There are lots of issues such as lack of schools, proper water, and irrigation facility, government officials are corrupt and trees are being felled rampantly but no one wants to raise all these issues in their writings)”.

Political affiliations or their absence can lead an individual journalist to write critically against the government which is in power, or to maintain a neutral stand, or to write favourably about the government. In Chhattisgarh, those journalists having an ideological allegiance with

BJP go on to justify every action of the then BJP government be it the arrest of their colleagues or rampant killing of villagers by security forces in the name of catching Maoists. Those affiliated with right wing ideology are generally considered in Chhattisgarh as patriotic and those adhering to communist ideologies are easily labeled as Maoist sympathisers because they do not hesitate to raise questions on police and administration. Also, the ideological differences between the senior and sub-ordinate journalists create a fear of being identified as Maoist sympathisers. Many of the journalists particularly in remote areas based, expressed fear that being recognised as a Maoist sympathiser among their seniors is the biggest untold threat to them.

Those working in remote areas often describe themselves as associated with the leftist ideology. Although they maintain a stand that they do not support Maoist violence but they think that whatever the development policies the government is applying here is not reaching the local villagers and hence their resentment towards the government is justified. In their reporting, they are different from Congress supporters in that they find the Maoist issues and their agendas as the most burning issues of the time; villagers protests for stopping the mining work, fake encounters and killings, police high handedness on villagers remain their direct concerns and they do not hesitate to lock horns with the police and administration. One of the examples is of the Chief Executive Editor of Deshbandhu newspaper, late Lalit Surjan, and some of his associates who unhesitatingly accept that their news reports have annoyed the government officials and friends in high rank but despite that, their newspaper went on to publish critical reports about them.

Another case is of a Raipur based freelancer, who has worked extensively as a journalist with some of the prominent Hindi newspapers of Chhattisgarh. He identifies as a staunch supporter of communist ideology. To bring out the truth about a fake police encounter, he traveled deep into the jungles even when he received threats and hints from his foes and friends respectively that his life could be jeopardised. On condition of anonymity, he recollected his experiences with one investigative story he had been trying to work on. It was in February 2016 when he tried to enter a remote village in Bijapur district of Bastar to investigate an encounter case. He said that the police had planned to kill him because they had the view that if one journalist got killed, it would be a lesson for all. While recollecting what had happened that day

when his life was under threat, the journalist said that to know more about the facts of the encounter killing of Maoists by the police, he asked the then Inspector General of Police (I.G.) S.R.P. Kalluri and the then Superintendent of Police (S.P.) R.N. Das that if any encounter had happened. As per the journalist's account, when the police got to know that he knew about the encounter and was in Bijapur, they went after him and his friends who had taken him there. The police tried every tactic to know that who took him to the site of the encounter and finally when they got to know about this journalist's aides, the aides were tortured by the police to the extent that till date they never answer his calls. And the very next day this journalist received a message from the IG and SP that they cannot take his calls, because they have a batch of more patriotic and dedicated journalists who wished to serve the nation unlike him who chose to always write against the police. According to this freelancer, ideological stand point played a pivotal role in these kind of conditions that determined how much a journalist would be willing to take a risk against the Maoists or against the police to come out with a story about Maoist insurgency related issues.

iii) Threats from Maoists, Police, and Stringent laws: Threats from the Maoists and police is a serious issue that has crippled the reporting work in Chhattisgarh. While many experienced journalists who were interviewed said that they had never received any threats from police or Maoists, those who were working in remote areas, had faced threats either from police, or the Maoists, or politicians as well. Out of 27 journalists interviewed, 12 said that they had received police or Maoist threats directly or indirectly and 15 accepted said they never received any threats from either Maoists or police. While those who received threats are the ones working in remote areas or who often visit forested areas of Bastar; those who have never received threats belong to the category of chief-editors, senior editors, city editors, those who had worked during the onset of Maoism in Chhattisgarh but do not take an active interest in the issues now.

Threats from police, administration, and Maoists are not a new phenomenon in Chhattisgarh. As mentioned in the second chapter, Kirit Doshi, a famous journalist of Chhattisgarh who had extensively reported on issues of adivasi rights was ousted out of

Chhattisgarh in the year 1992 for advocating in favour of the imposition of the 5th Schedule⁷⁸ and 6th Schedule⁷⁹ of the Constitution for the adivasis well-being. TADA⁸⁰ (Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act) was imposed on him and he had to flee out of the Chhattisgarh state. Threats from police are a very prevalent practice particularly in the remote areas of Bastar. According to the news report of the online website Firstpost, Maoists had released one audio clip of 30 seconds to Bijapur based journalists in which the Bijapur Superintendent of Police is heard saying to his subordinates, “Stay on high alert. If any journalist is spotted covering Maoists, kill him.” As per the local journalists of Bastar, such commands became a very often phenomenon particularly after the appointment of SRP Kalluri as the Inspector General of the Bastar region.

The debate about being a Maoist sympathiser or police supporter is very prevalent in Chhattisgarh and the entire journalist community can be divided based on this factor. Whosoever writes in favour of Maoists are labeled as Maoist sympathiser and those who write in favour of police and government are labeled as anti-Maoists. Hemant Kashyap, a journalist from Jagdalpur, who identifies himself as the one committed for the welfare of adivasis, unhesitatingly clarifies that many a time he has received threats from Maoists in their Jan Sabha for not writing in favour of them. So, he usually avoids writing about them but goes on to write about the villagers’ account of many atrocities performed by the Maoists or by police on them. He says that, “*Maowadi ab Bastar ke lalu ban gaye hai! Hamesha kuch na kuch Karamat karte hain media ka attention pane ke liye!*”(Maoists have now become Bastar’s Lalu Prasad as they always tend to do something to be in news).

⁷⁸ 5th Schedule of the constitution is Article 244(1) which mentions about the administration and control of areas as defined by the constitution of India as scheduled and tribal areas of any state of India except the north-eastern state of Assam, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalya. It is presently applied in all Indian state except the four north-eastern states. Under this article PESA (Panchayat Extension to the Scheduled Areas) 1996 has been applied in all adivasi populated areas. PESA guarantees that half of the elected seats in Panchayat governing bodies are reserved for adivasi community people.

⁷⁹ 6th Schedule of the constitution is Article 244 (2) mentions about the administration and control over the Scheduled and tribal areas of four north-eastern states namely, Assam, Meghalya, Tripura and Mizoram. At present, it has been only implemented in above mentioned four north-eastern states. The article empowers the adivasi populated citizens of these area to have their autonomy over creation of laws related to land, forest, public order, health, agriculture and other things. If 6th schedule will be imposed in Bastar, it will empower the local governing bodies like Panchayats and local district management to have their own laws regarding management of land, forest, water and natural resources.

⁸⁰ Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act (TADA) was anti-terrorism law imposed by government of India between 1985 to 1995. It was initially started to counter Punjab insurgency and was extended to whole of India.

Similarly, once a journalist in Bastar, Sai Reddy who mostly advocated about the adivasi rights was killed by the Maoists in 2002 because, the Maoists claimed that by gaining access to the forested areas, he was performing the dual task of being a journalist a a police informer. Many of his colleagues claimed that he had accumulated an immense amount of wealth by blackmailing investors in the name of Maoists which proved costly for him. Many opine that it is difficult for a journalist to maintain his safety by staying in these remote areas, and it is likely they would be victimized by e either the Maoists or by police.

Another case is of Prabhat Singh who was expelled from the television channel E.Tv⁸¹ for which he used to supply videos as a stringer. Prabhat, being a journalist from Dantewada, had access to most of the remote areas of the region which is under Maoist influences. He recalls that the police asked him to become a police informer, as he had access to the inside villages which are Maoist strongholds. His refusal to assist the police landed him in big trouble; he was charged under section 61 of IT Act 2000 and was jailed for three months. Police had not prepared any charge sheet against him which played as a hindrance in getting him bail from the court. He thinks that such episodes can deter anyone from writing about the fake claims of police and disclosing anything about Maoists. Presently Prabhat still does the job of stringer and supplies stories to those seeking such Maoists based news but this is his part time job which he does as a passion. Similarly, another journalist from Kanker, who did not want to be identified, recalls that once in 2005, he had made a story about the fake Maoist encounter by the police. When police personnel came to know about this, some of them came to his house in his absence and kept a rifle in the presence of his wife and children, and called his neighbours to witness the presence of this rifle. When this journalist finally went to the policemen who had done this, they insisted him to drop the story or face the consequences. This journalist recalls that it was only after the interference of his editor who talked to the DGP in Raipur that these fabricated case against him was dropped and finally that story got published. This journalist says that because he intensively writes about the police atrocities and fake police encounters in the name of Maoists, he has faced such instances many times. As such things often happen in his life so he never resides at his home because he thinks it can be harmful to his family.

⁸¹E. TV channel is managed by the business Tycoon MukeshAmbani.

Santosh Yadav from Darbha area which is near Jagdalpur city was harassed by the police and jailed for several months on charges of being a Maoist supporter and informer in 2015. He was arrested on grounds of being a Maoist sympathiser, under Chhattisgarh Public Safety Act 2005. In this case, police atrocities extended to his family as well.⁸² His ordeal started when Santosh helped some media persons working in news channels to reach the inner areas of the village *Vadri Mahu*, where the arrest of some Maoists was done by the police and these media persons had come there to investigate the case. Santosh explains that “the five villagers, who had allegedly surrendered were called by the then Inspector General S.R.P. Kalluri to Darbha on the condition that they would not be arrested but instead police arrested them and showed it to media as a Naxal surrender.” Santosh’s only fault was that he dared to speak up and expose the ongoing corruption and human rights violations happening to local people. From torturing his father, threatening and intimidating him, removing his clothes to check if he was supplying any material to Maoists, to branding him a Maoist sympathiser, every technique was used by the police to discourage Santosh from supplying news to outside journalists. When this was not enough, Santosh was taken by the police directly into the deep forest and his hands were tied and a revolver was placed over his head and they had planned to kill him and make it look like a Maoist encounter. However, their plan changed and he was sent to jail on the charges of supplying and distributing pamphlets of Maoists, and for recovering paints, brushes, and some Maoist pamphlets from his house. In jail, Santosh was kept without food for many days and was beaten by the jail inmates after being provoked by police to do so.

An editor of a local Hindi newspaper of Chhattisgarh, who did not want to be identified shared his thoughts about the prevailing condition of journalism in Bastar that journalists in Jagdalpur did not want to visit the interiors of the forests due to fear of the police, Maoists, and financial constraints as well. He considers that most of the reporters want to be in the safe zone of Jagdalpur. Explaining about the prevailing situations and conditions in Bastar, he says, “newspapers in Bastar are too much involved in yellow journalism, highlighting fake news, fake surrenders and all have become the victim of fake news being propagated by the Bastar Inspector General SRP Kalluri, who once claimed that 12,000 Maoists have surrendered, which is not the case at all.” Talking about his own experience as a reporter, he narrated that once he got a call

⁸² Based on interview with Santosh Yadav in Bastar

from a Maoist leader to meet him but a reporter friend of him advised him not to visit them at all because they will take the information about the entire family of the journalist and if a journalist does not publish their news, Maoist will follow the tactics of blackmailing. So, he clarifies that all Maoist's related news he does either through press notes sent by the Maoists or he will not do it because he does not feel the need to visit Maoists.

Also, sharing about his experience of doing 25 years of journalism in Bastar, he recalls that in Jagdalpur, whosoever is vocal about the adivasi rights has been insulted by the crowd, be it B. D. Sharma⁸³ who was very vocal about adivasi rights during the Sunder Patwa government or Bela Bhatia and other lawyers fighting for adivasi rights violations. Outsiders have ruined the peacefulness of this region because they have to do business and these activists by talking about the adivasi rights and welfare are considered as a big hurdle in their profit-making paths, he observed.

Nitin Rokde, another journalist from Dantewada, hesitatingly revealed that he was facing a case filed by a fellow women journalist for distributing her mobile numbers to the unwanted elements and for harassing her. All he says is that it was a trick to discourage him because he had recently reported a story of a fake encounter in Gumpur village of Bijapur district. A group of journalists, who belongs to AGNI group⁸⁴, had recently beaten him on the behalf of that women journalist and when he approached the police, instead of help, they filed an FIR against him for harassing that lady journalist. Nitin alleged that it was the police who was using that woman against him to keep him away from reporting about the fake encounters.

Sometimes, journalists are even harassed by the political parties to settle their scores, when in the process of writing news journalists expose the truths and facts of some politicians. Devsharan Tiwari, who had extensively written and exposed the truth about the deliberate capture of land around the Dalpat Sagar Lake⁸⁵ by some politicians and businessmen in Jagdalpur city of Chhattisgarh, was targeted by the police and politicians. Since he had openly supported the case of Malini Subramaniam, a freelance journalist who was harassed by the right

⁸³B. D. Sharma was a tribal rights activist and former collector of Bastar, who had worked extensively for the imposition of 5th Schedule in Bastar.

⁸⁴Agni was a group of vigilante, anti-Maoist enthusiasts which was funded by the police in Bastar.

⁸⁵Dalpat Sagar is a natural lake in Jagdalpur.

wing activists of Bastar,⁸⁶ for writing against the establishment of TATA steel plant, Devsharan along with journalists like Malini were labelled as Maoists supporter. Devsharan opines that out of the political vendetta some local politicians used the police to file false charges against him and framed him in certain disputes occurring in the city where he was not at all present. Similarly, another journalist Ruchir Garg who was serving as a media adviser in the Congress government headed by Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, was harassed by the police and a local politician. Ruchir had extensively worked on adivasis rights and Maoists based issues. Once Ruchir was directly threatened by the Home Minister of Chhattisgarh in a marriage party where the minister publicly addressed him by saying, “Ruchir, our police is searching for you!”. The incident had happened in 2008.⁸⁷ While talking to the researcher, he also complained about being branded as Naxal sympathiser by the police and administration which acts as a pressure tactic to give up the genuine writings about the Maoists' related issues.

iv) Educational Qualifications: Educational qualifications of the journalists give them an edge over their remote area counterparts, as it becomes easier for an educated journalist to extract more information from the administrative and political persons. Many journalists come from the forested areas of the Bastar region with comparatively lesser educational qualifications but have the zeal to write more about what is happening in the deep jungles. Most of these people, their stories and ideas are stolen, rejected, or altered. Also, just because they cannot write their stories on their own, big newspapers houses mostly take the stories from them and do not give them their due recognition. Administrative officers give more preference to those who are educationally sound and work in big banner newspapers. For example, a journalist of Jagdalpur, who took a degree in Journalism from Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla University, Raipur, and is presently working in one of the most circulated Hindi newspapers of Central India, considers that administrative officials talk to him and give him interviews regarding Maoists issues because of his sound educational qualifications. As per the journalist's account in Chhattisgarh, when SRP Kalluri was the IG of Police for the Bastar region, it was a very prevalent practice that he used to talk with a selected group of journalists. Journalists considered two reasons for this; one was

⁸⁶A right wing group Agni which is mostly police funded and backed by right wing political parties attacked Malini's house and even pelted stones on her four wheeler vehicle. Her landlords were asked to force her to vacate her living place in Jagdalpur.

⁸⁷See Gulf News, “Reporters feel harassed by Police” At www.Pressreaders.com as accessed on 5.05.2019

education and the second was authority. Journalists belonging to big newspaper banners said that they never found it difficult to talk to him and those belonging to small, medium-scale newspapers and even freelancers with differing ideology, found it difficult to approach him and some of his subordinates. Similarly, Yogesh, who has a bachelors degree from Raipur in mass communication thinks that often those journalists with less educational qualifications are treated badly by the administrative officials because they do not know how to ask questions and may also try to blackmail the officials, and as a result they face a sort of official censorship. So, educational qualifications play a determining role in setting the work trajectory of journalists as the more qualified ones can easily talk with the officials and get through to them.

v) Financial Obligations and Market Pressures: Central India is a hub of several big, medium and small newspaper houses. With this factor, a peculiar responsibility that journalists of several small and medium newspaper houses perform is to collect the advertisements for the newspaper and thus earn rewards for their collections. In Chhattisgarh, particularly in smaller areas of Bastar, this dual responsibility of collecting news and advertisement acts as a hindrance for the journalist to write any story. Often it happens that the client from which the journalist collects the ads are the ones against whom they have to write news stories sometimes related to Maoists, sometimes any other story which acts as a hindrance in their main work. Many journalists complain that their news stories related to Maoist issues are stopped just because it involves the client through whom the newspaper has huge earnings.

The bureau chief of a highly circulated daily (in Bastar region) and one of the largest Hindi dailies of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, on condition of anonymity, said his job is to look after the day to day reporting, editing, and revenue collections from the advertisements for the newspaper. He had struggled a lot to reach the level of bureau chief in Bastar. He has worked in Dainik Sawdesh published from Raipur for nine years, in Dainik Bhaskar for 12 years, and then he joined this daily where he is continuing till now. However, he unhesitatingly admits that his financial condition changed only when he started working as a Life Insurance Corporation agent in 2002 but before that income was always from hand to mouth. He considers journalism in small places like Bastar as a very low paying job and is very clear that he will not want his son to join this profession at all. Talking about his experiences of journalism in Bastar, he says that

journalists here are not paid well, and only the commission they get on every advertisement is the source of income for them. He thinks that under such conditions it is difficult to work with a true sense of responsibility.

He says since he has to run a family and due to an abject crunch of money he feels constricted in his job. There is a lot of pressure for the collection of advertisements, which decides a part of his salary and also because the basic salary is as low as rupees 10,000 per month. Talking about the salary and advertisement pressure he said that since these days bureau chiefs of newspapers are only '*baniya*' (business) community people in Jagdalpur, so there is no good journalism but only money making. Many of his stories about the rural people and Maoists related were rejected on the basis that it could disturb the administrative officials and thus hamper the advertisement revenue collections and sometimes the contracts also.

The editor-in-chief of Deshbandhu newspaper, late Lalit Surjan also pointed out that since journalism is a low paying job and adivasi community people who are educated enough have better opportunities available in the job market, so they opt out of this job. Moreover, he stresses that in present day scenario, newspapers operate under certain kinds of market pressures. Talking about the prevailing perceptions of newspaper reading, he points out, "If any serious news is published, people think here that the newspaper is spoiling the taste of their morning tea. So, for serious reporting, there has to be serious audience".⁸⁸ It is important to point out here that most of the Hindi and English newspaper readers in Chhattisgarh belong to non-*adivasi* communities who shifted to this state for different job opportunities. There is very less number of *adivasi* families availing newspaper services and most of them reside in the city. The majority of the population of Chhattisgarh, around 80 percent belongs to rural communities.

Market pressure becomes one of the major forces to determine the topic which a newspaper chooses to publish. One of the TOI journalists recounted that once in TOI there was a senior editor who carelessly said that '*Bastar is dead now*' by which he meant that since the newspaper has no audience there, so not much reporting is required. However, he pointed out

⁸⁸In Raipur and rest of the Chhattisgarh, most of the public belongs to business class, government services, politicians and rest are illiterate and unaware. Although things have started changing slowly and the village population particularly those living in troubled areas have slowly started taking interest in newspaper reports as well as in journalists who they consider as their trouble solver or atleast as someone who can take their matter to higher authorities.

that many a time it depends on the person as well. Recollecting his job experience in another newspaper organisation, he said in Indian Express his senior editor used to say, “Go and sit in Bastar to bring out some relevant stories from the Maoists affected areas.” He explains that today there is a new fashion among the corporate journalists to go and stay in Maoist hit areas for a month and two and come out with a book to become specialists on Maoist insurgency, but he wondered if these books had some in-depth content . Similarly, Virendra Mishra, who heads the Patrika newspaper editorial unit in Jagdalpur, pointed out that in a big newspaper there is not much financial pressure but every now and then they are asked to withhold some stories going against some officials or organisation until the advertisement bill is cleared. After the bill clears, they are free to publish any story.

Dilshad Niyazi, who owns Hindsat, a small newspaper in Hindi language said that “in Bastar, newspapers are dependent on advertisement revenue and maximum part of it comes from government advertisement, local officials and very less from private businesses. Moreover, these private firms have a mindset that once they have given advertisement in any newspaper, they behave as if they have bought that newspaper.” So, in such a precarious environment where the newspaper managers had to opt between the necessary revenue and any social issues such as Maoists based happenings, the revenue becomes the priority. In fact, Dilshad readily accepts that all newspapers in Jagdalpur have a sense of understanding with their advertisers and if something contentious comes up about them, the matter is ignored.

Finances and markets play an indirect role in letting any Maoist based stories be published because, in one way or another, they affect the newspaper finances, and to run the business, the newspaper firms, as well as their journalist, try to avoid such stories. Sometimes, minor Maoist incidents are related to any business firms, administrative officials, and local politicians, and they are readily ignored to save the finances of the firm.

vi) Nexus between Police, Administration, and Journalists: In Chhattisgarh, the area which is most affected by Maoism is Bastar, a thickly forested area with difficult terrain and small villages situated in the deep jungles. Corruption is a very prevalent practice in this region and often to extract money in this less vigilant system, local politicians along with police and administration indulge in corrupt practices. In one of the instances in Bastar, when local

journalist Santosh Yadav in Darbha had reported about the non-availability of doctor in the block level hospital and when the block level Medical officer came to know about his enquiry, he offered some money in lieu of not writing. When Santosh had refused to stop the story, the officer by contacting some senior reporters stopped the story from reaching to the editor's desk and a counter case of blackmailing was filed against him. Santosh recalls that some senior journalists are corrupt and work in connivance with local administrative officials for the want of their benefits.

Imran from Dainik Bhaskar modestly said that sometimes while doing stories of corruption, negligence, and fraudulence, he gets a call or two from government officials to 'cooperate' but he never takes these calls seriously. He laments that in small places like Jagdalpur, bureaucrats and high-ranking officials are lords and according to their directions sometimes newspaper organisations have to act in some selected matters.

Virendra Mishra, who is bureau chief of Patrika newspaper explains that in small places like Bastar, the bureau chief of the newspapers, sometimes acts in nexus with the police and administration. He laments that one of his contemporaries who is a businessman and not a newsman has encroached the land of Dalpat Sagar lake in Jagdalpur in nexus with politicians and whosoever dares to report about it, he uses the police system to torture them. When senior journalists, and editors join hands with politicians and bureaucrats, the outcome is detrimental to the stories of corruption, or human rights violations which could give the true picture of what is happening inside the Maoist affected areas. The instances of injustice, corruption, and administrative high handedness motivate the remote area stringers to report such issues as they cannot bear to see their peoples sufferings but the nexus between the senior ranked editors with the corrupt officials lead to the dumping of the stories which could be a general story or related to insurgency.

vii) Indirect Political Pressure: Indirect political pressure on newspaper firms having non-affiliations to the ruling political party is another tactic to stop the reporting related to news disclosing about the Maoist incidences. An example is of Deshbandhu newspaper, which maintained a critical stand towards the police disseminated propaganda that Maoists are surrendering. Deshbandhu and many other small and medium newspapers chose to be critical

towards the fake claims made by the police such as the burning of Chintalar, Morapalli, and Tadmela villages by the Maoists when exactly it was done by the SPOs in March 2011 in Sukma district; and in the case of rapid surrender of Maoists, when exactly villagers were surrendering in the lure of some financial benefits. Such critical reporting by most of the newspapers firms in Chhattisgarh resulted in a lesser amount of awarding of government advertisement. Most of the newspaper business in Chhattisgarh is dependent on revenue which they get from advertisements awarded by the Directorate of Advertising Visual Publicity (DAVP). Reduction in allotment of advertisement means a reduction in revenue and hence financial pressure. Deshbandhu, the newspaper having a critical stand towards the BJP government policies, once chose to advertise a Congress party advertisement that directly attacked the then BJP Chief Minister Raman Singh and questioned his credentials. The newspaper advertisement was targeted exactly on the day, when the then BJP chief Amit Shah had to land in Raipur for a political roadshow in August 2017. While none of the newspapers, including big banners newspaper, chose to advertise this advertisement, Deshbandhu along with some small newspapers went ahead with this advertisement, and as a result, the newspaper had to suffer in terms of allotment of advertisements from the government organisations.

Similarly, Dilshad Niyazi, the owner of Hindsat, a small scale newspaper enterprise, expressed that since their newspaper does not readily write about the news related to Maoists' surrender, his firm had to suffer from many political and police pressures. The amount of advertisements which were being awarded to the newspaper was reduced and other newspapers which were writing favourably about the Maoists' surrender witnessed a whopping increase in their advertisement revenue from government organisations like DAVP. In another instance for not writing favourably about the police activities in Maoist hit areas, Niyazi was asked to sit in the office of the Superintendent of Police, Jagdalpur for several hours which he said was like torture and finally, the officer asked him indirectly that why is he not happy with his teamwork. Niyazi felt that it was some sort of torture which he had to bear for not writing in favour of the police when exactly thousands of innocent lives are being compromised. Hence, indirect political pressure does play a determining role amongst owners and editors of the newspapers when it comes to coverage of Maoist insurgency as it can be sensed from the above mentioned

case that not writing favourably about the police initiatives to counter Maoists can also land these newspaper firms in trouble.

viii) Caste: The following lines by KL Sharma depict the contemporary situation of caste in India:

“In the present day, caste is becoming more of a state of mind of an individual. Contemporary changes have reshaped the caste. The policy of reservation based on caste has made it alive and vibrant. Protests against caste-based reservations have also contributed to the continuity of caste. Caste may be an elusive force for those who have distanced themselves from social and cultural root but for those who continue to live in a village and town, caste is enduring and it is continued to be practiced in one way or another” (Sharma, 2012: 246).

In cities like Raipur and Jagdalpur, most of the population consists of non-indigenous people, while most of the indigenous population resides in villages and deeply forested areas. Those working in the field of journalism, mostly belong to the upper castes. Out of 27 journalists interviewed, 16 belongs to socially forward caste, five belongs to the local community of Bastar, called ‘Bastariya’, which in the census is identified in the category of other backward caste. A single woman journalist belongs to the Scheduled Tribes; one belongs to to the Scheduled Caste and one belongs to the Christian community and two journalists are Muslims. It is an irony that none from the indigenous community of Bastar, has ever worked at decision making posts such as the editor or as senior correspondent.

In Chhattisgarh, caste remains in the mind of an individual and not just in practice. The above data about the caste and creed of journalists interviewed speaks volumes about the abysmal representation of indigenous voices. Many journalists claimed that their caste does not come in any way in conflict with their work, but some of them expressed disappointment against the imposition of the 6th schedule in Bastar which has turned the entire Bastar’s political posts as reserved either for Scheduled Tribes (adivasi) or the Scheduled Castes. Naresh Kushwaha of Jagdalpur believes that each and every political post from Sarpanch (Village Head) to MLA belongs to indigenous people and they are not capable enough to think about their good. He believes that the support to Maoists by some villages is an agenda created by the communist supporters who comes once in a while in Bastar and writes a book about it. Naresh says that “These indigenous community people holding high posts indulge in corruption and when

journalists try to expose them, they indulge in maligning their image by using 6th schedule as their shield.” It can be noted here that Naresh himself belongs to a local community of Bastar, hierarchically considered superior to adivasis and Scheduled Caste. After the introduction of the 6th Schedule, many of them lost their past glory and often show anger and frustration towards the indigenous community through the above lines. Naresh also pointed out that “since he has a higher degree of MA in Law from Jagdalpur University and in Bastar persons with such a high degree but no reserved status do not have a better job opportunity other than journalism, so he joined it.” Being a local journalist, Naresh ideologically supports BJP and holds a view that Maoists should be erased out of Bastar, and media, as well as journalists, should stop giving media coverage to Maoists as it is simply an act of glorification. Naresh is also a member of the Agni group which is a right wing based vigilante group in Bastar.

Similarly, Deepak who hails from a Brahmin family of Raebareli, Uttar Pradesh, complains that, “System is very corrupt from head to toe, whichever matter you will take to point out- either adivasi rights, corruption, administration or politics, in every case they will find some reasons to threaten and to discourage you.” He started working as a journalist because it was a regular paying job and associated with prestige. His grandfather was a District Education Officer in Jagdalpur, and Deepak thinks that journalism is a job that is equally dignified. He starts with the lines, “Here in Bastar, journalism is a very thankless job. On whatever matter you write, people will come running to your house with weapons to teach you a lesson.” Narrating his experience of writing one story of Bakawand village where his family lives, he said, local people there had killed a dog because he had bitten someone and after extracting the heart of the dog, they cooked it for eating purposes. He had made a story on it. He said, “My concern was only to show that people were indulging in unhygienic activities but the Sarpanch along with the villagers attacked my home to thrash me for I had written against their community. They had made it a cultural issue.” Deepak believes that his caste and community difference became the cultural issue. Often the caste difference in fact lead to cultural differences which lead to misrepresentation of the adivasi and Scheduled Caste people of that area. In the journalist fraternity of Chhattisgarh, it is many a time repeated that adivasi community of Bastar, particularly Gond adivasis are an inherently violent tribe. Such remarks point towards the deep cultural differences between the reporters and the indigenous people.

Also, there were journalists in Bastar, who said that since in Bastar all the political posts were reserved for the indigenous community people, so they gave up their dream of joining politics and joined journalism instead. Although, journalism is not a well-paying job in Chhattisgarh and particularly in Bastar, but it has the potential to build good relationships with the powerful community of politicians and wealthy businessmen. Manish Gupta who is an editor for a Hindi newspaper Navbharat said that “in his youth he was passionate about joining politics because then Bastar was not a reserved constituency.” He started his journalism career with the desire to serve the people and was very active, which further inspired him to serve his people by acquiring higher political posts through which he could directly help them. He gave up this idea after he got to know that the 6th schedule has been imposed on Bastar which made the entire Bastar region except for Jagdalpur a reserved area. Since Manish belongs to upper caste, he was not eligible to fight for any political post from his area which is a village adjoining Jagdalpur. After being an active member of Akhil Bhartiya Vishwa Hindu Parishad (ABVP) in his college days, he left politics and joined journalism. After joining journalism, Manish worked on many issues of villagers and even reports on the Maoist insurgency, but he strongly believes that Maoism is not the solution for Bastar as they can only divide the country and create violence. Asking whether his views come in way of his work, he said that “it never happens but he prefers to refrain from unnecessary and unauthentic news reports about Maoists.” Although Manish’s caste is not directly linked to his reporting preferences his ideological stand which is basically against the Maoists and communist ideology directly leave a mark on his perceptions about the prevailing Maoists situations in the Bastar, which could be seen in his preferences for reporting any Maoists based issues.

Moreover, since there are fewer numbers of adivasi and indigenous people involved in the reporting work, it results in a lack of sensitivity towards the adivasi community. For example, one reporter from Dantewada said, “*Polcie wale sabhi gramini ko naxal samajhte hai!* (Police consider all villagers as Naxals)” Often such reports are available in the newspapers where for many Maoists based incidents of violence, villagers have been accused of helping them.

The chief editor of Deshbandhu, while talking about caste issues said, “Caste is irrelevant in case of Chhattisgarh. Many of my reporters do not belong to adivasi community but

they are doing a good job.” He pointed out that in Chhattisgarh there are many lucrative offers for well-educated adivasi youngsters, so instead of joining a low paying job like journalism, they prefer to join better paying government jobs. As discussed earlier caste issues may not be playing any superficial role but it can be observed that since fewer numbers of indigenous people are involved in reporting work, the perspective of those opposing the government policies and of those who are unsatisfied with it, is comparatively less in numbers.

Thus the chapter tries to look into the relationships of factors like proximity to the area, caste, political ideology, or education, with the work trajectories of journalists working in the Maoist affected areas of Chhattisgarh. The social background and experiences of the journalist play a crucial role in shaping their work preferences. The journalists from remote areas prefer more to be vocal and active on the Maoists' issues because they often witness these things from within the vicinity while those working in cities mostly do it out of professional sense of duty.

II. Conclusions

The social contexts of journalists have a significant influence on their reporting preferences and shaping of news. In the case of those reporting in the Maoist affected areas in Chhattisgarh, the social and economic background of journalists often has relationship with whether the issue is reported in-depth or superficially. For example, it has been elaborated in the above sections that how the identity of city based journalists gives them more credibility amongst the local government officials and how local journalists are avoided by these officials thus putting them at a disadvantage. Also, it is the local journalists who take the risk of offending both the Maoists and police to carve out a story and send it to the city offices. To survive in a difficult financial situation the local journalists, on one hand, sell their stories to newspapers without the sense of recognition and on the other hand, they are the ones availing government contracts to earn their livelihoods. Because of these dependencies and owing to their poor educational background, they are not taken seriously by the officials and sometimes they end up getting tortured by the police or the system.

Remote area journalists negotiate with the city based journalists by giving them clues and hints about the possible chances of stories and city based journalists being more powerful act upon these hints to bring out stories. It could also be concluded that city based journalists, owing to their educational background, political connections, the backing of big newspaper firms, editors, and civil society, enjoy more power than these remote area journalists. This again gives them an advantage while carrying out their work.

Factors such as caste and class, and family background also play an important role in influencing preferences for the kind of reporting which they choose to do. For example, there is strict police vigilance mechanism on the journalists who write about the Maoist issues in Bastar. Journalists from relatively better economic or poor backgrounds both get intimidated by the police but the rich ones can resist the police intimidation while the poorer journalists are often caught by the control mechanism and punished. This is because those who are economically strong have other backing like social networks, professional networks, friends, and political connections when compared to the poor. The work of journalists in Bastar are also divided by political allegiances. A maximum number of journalists are politically aligned either to the Congress party or Bharatiya Janta Party. Based on their political alignment they have made different groups to represent the journalist community of Bastar.

Likewise, factors such as their own lived experiences, proximity to the Maoists affected areas, factors such as belonging to the same tribe prominently drive the journalists in Chhattisgarh to take risks and bring out stories.. Though there is a strict control mechanism by the government to control the news related to Maoist insurgency but journalists motivated by above mentioned factors often find themselves eager to report on such issues. Sometimes, their stories get through the system, sometimes they are killed. Many times they associate themselves with the journalists of the metropolis to bring out the stories related to serious issues such as human rights violations. Also, the journalists in Bastar are divided ideologically which sometimes leads to division amongst them whenever any serious issues occur such as protests against civil society members, harassment of outsider journalists, or outsiders who try to enter the Bastar region with interest in Maoist insurgency related issues. These factors, negotiations, and ideological differences amongst the journalists constitute the everyday struggles of the

journalism field in Maoist affected regions of Chhattisgarh. Only after going through these ups and downs of news production processes does any story related to Maoist issues appear on the pages of local newspapers.

Chapter-5

CONCLUSIONS

This research was conducted with purpose to examine and locate the contemporary histories and significant shifts in reporting of the Maoist insurgency in regional newspapers in Chhattisgarh. Its findings derive from diverse methodological approaches, including both interpretive approaches to study the life histories and self-accounts of the journalists working in Bastar region of Chhattisgarh, as well as systematic quantitative analyses of representations of Maoists in selected Hindi newspapers in the region. With the aim to understand history of print media and its growth in Chhattisgarh, the study also includes archival research on some of the earliest newspapers in the region.

The second chapter of the thesis constitutes a historical study of the earliest newspapers in undivided Madhya Pradesh before independence, tracing the trajectories of reports related to the insurgency that started appearing in regional newspapers. The primary aim was to understand the nature of news coverage which was being done at the beginning of newspaper publishing in the region. Also, in order to better locate and understand the present-day reportage of Maoist insurgency, a thorough study of three historically prominent events provides a view of critical trends in media reporting of insurgency in Chhattisgarh. The important events considered are a) Beginning of SalwaJudum b) Killing of 75 CRPF personnel in Dantewada by Maoists and c) Killing of prominent local Congress leaders, including Mahendra Karma by Maoists. To study the reportage around these events, the news reports appearing in three different newspapers, *Dainik Bhaskar*, *Deshbandhu*, and *The Times of India* were analysed.

The chapter traces how the formation of Chhattisgarh state became the critical point from where shifts in the media reportage of Maoists insurgency started. The timing of Chhattisgarh state formation was at a significant juncture when rapid expansion of the local Hindi newspapers business was going on, especially in the untapped market of rural areas. The event of formation of Chhattisgarh state, followed by the beginning of Salwa Judum provided an impetus to newspapers to fill up its pages with local news which could arouse the interest of local people in

newspaper reading, thus helping in the expansion of newspaper readership and market. In the past, local print media like *Deshbandhu*, *Dainik Bhaskar*, *Dandakaranya Samachar*, and small newspapers like *Hindsat* were frequently writing about the issues of Maoists, their aims and context to the insurgency, the insurgents' point of view about the regional developments of Chhattisgarh, detailed reports about adivasis' standpoint and views about the Maoists, and their reasons to support Maoists. In fact, different newspapers with different ideological viewpoints used to write with diverse critical approaches about both the Maoist movement and the government's stand over the issues at stake. But with the formation of the Chhattisgarh state, the discourse about the social context to the insurgency started drifting and limited itself towards its negative aspects, particularly its image of being an obstacle in the state's development.

These significant shifts were guided particularly by the introduction of the Chhattisgarh Special Public Safety Bill in the legislative assembly of Chhattisgarh in 2003. The bill was in tandem with a formal declaration by the government that meeting Maoists, taking their interviews, and writing freely about them would not be acceptable to the state anymore.⁸⁹ The seizure of presses for printing Maoist pamphlets and their literature started happening in the same year. The control over media was imposed not only by laws and regulations but also through restrictions and financial control over the distribution of advertisements to several newspapers. The Chhattisgarh government tapped the capability of local newspapers to spread government propaganda in the rural areas of Chhattisgarh and put stringent curbs on writing any news about the Maoists which could build their positive image. In this effort, the government got full support from the local newspapers which along with the financial support of the government (through advertisements) were in dire need of news stories that could fill up the inside pages of several sub-editions of these newspapers for markets such as Jagdalpur, Narayanpur, Kanker, and Dantewada.⁹⁰

With the beginning of Salwa Judum in 2005, the government's propaganda that adivasis are fed up with Maoists and are willing to fight them through violence came to a peak. Full media coverage was given to the political and social movements like '*Jan Jagran Abhiyan*' carried out by Congress leader Mahendra Karma against the Maoists with the help of newspapers

⁸⁹ An announcement towards this was made by the then Home Minister Arvind Netam in 2003.

⁹⁰ In an interview, the senior editors and journalist of Raipur, shared his observations regarding Salwa Judum

like *Dainik Bhaskar*, *Patrika*, and other local Hindi newspapers; and these newspapers in turn were also willing to get support in the form of advertisements from the government. Salwa Judum was the phase that was remembered by many as causing deep moral dilemmas among the editors and owners of newspapers about what and how much to write about the false claims of the surrender of Maoists and how to avoid writing about it. This was particularly the case for the small newspapers which were highly dependent on government advertisements for their financial support. One of the owners of these small newspapers, on condition of anonymity, revealed that he was badly tortured by the police for not writing about the Maoists' surrender and about people's movements against Maoists. He said that he felt that writing about these fake surrenders would only aggravate the sufferings of those villagers who were lured by the police to surrender in return for some financial favours and support.

The big banner newspapers, particularly English newspapers like Times of India and Hindustan Times were able to avoid it because their businesses are comparatively less dependent on government backing and they have stronger national and international civil society support. But the local Hindi newspapers which had to run their businesses on advertisement revenues were dependent on the Chhattisgarh government as well as local political leaders. They were the ones who were caught in a do or die situation, and to run the businesses they often opted to run the news about SalwaJudum, fake surrenders, and local people rising against the Maoists. Almost every Hindi newspaper including *Dainik Bhaskar*, *Patrika*, *Deshbandhu*, *Dandakaranya Samachar*, *Hindsatt*, *Nayi Duniya*, or *Nav Bharat* were caught in this situation, but the number of news items about the SalwaJudum, positioning of the news, page placement of news stories, etc., varied from newspaper to newspaper.

The third chapter of the thesis examines the political economy of news making in regional newspapers; the influence of factors such as ownership, pressures to keep the newspaper firm running, and ideological compliances with state and business interests on final news produced. To study political economy in the representation of news on the Maoist insurgency in Chattisgarh, a comparative analysis of three Hindi newspapers has been done through the method of content analysis. To analyse the role of political economy in processes of news making, a study of some of the newspaper houses with attention to their ownership structure, the pattern of

revenue collection, advertising revenue, and recent trends in advertising and revenue collections has been done. Using perspectives of framing and agenda setting theories to locate the findings of content analysis, the chapter analyses the kind of news being produced in three Hindi dailies of Chhattisgarh, various influences on the news, sources of these news, and frames being used in these news stories.

The findings of this chapter describe how the political economy plays a significant role in the coverage of the Maoist insurgency in Chhattisgarh. It determines the level of expenditure, amount of labour input in the news coverage of Maoists insurgency, and gate-keeping. In particular, the flow of money in the form of advertisements to the local Hindi newspapers houses in Chhattisgarh is controlled by the state government and thus what content these local dailies would produce about the Maoists insurgency is indirectly in hands of the state government. Also, there are several local dailies of Chhattisgarh having their business stake in mining, transportation, real estate, and other industrial activities. Through the production and distribution of news products, they try to maintain control over the dissemination of information and also over the thinking process of the masses. Instances of Hindi local dailies using their pages to gather public opinion in favour of their sister companies have been elaborated in this chapter.

The state's indirect control over the print media in Chhattisgarh also indicates the nature of power relations between both. Through this study, it could be concluded that the state exercises abject power over the press besides reinforcing the dominant views and values in society. Although little deviation from the standpoint of the government (i.e. Maoists are a hindrance in the development of Bastar) could be seen to create neutrality and objectivity of reporting, but taking extreme view or talking about the reason behind the Maoist movement is directly proportional to losing businesses, thus making losses. Owing to their dependency on a state backed advertisements, usually, local dailies cover the Maoists' incidences in terms of who, what, when, and where; and rarely look into the aspects of 'why'. Also, for some local dailies, since their subsidiary companies are involved in the mining of coal and other natural resources, it is understandable that they provided full support to the state in their anti-Maoist rhetoric because Maoists and their supporters are considered as a great obstacle in getting clearance over the mining rights and land acquisition. Instances of Hindi local dailies having subsidiary companies

and their involvement towards propagating government propaganda about Maoists insurgency as the biggest hurdle in development, also point out towards the nexus between the state government, big businesses, and print media conglomerates in reinforcing the dominant views of the society on marginalised population of Chhattisgarh. In Chhattisgarh, these nexuses also suggest that the local Hindi newspapers and especially the big banner newspapers are easy to be controlled because they are caught in the net of profit maximisation.

Amongst the most critical objectives of this study was to study the social locations and backgrounds of the journalists to understand their life-histories as well as the wider work culture they find themselves to be part of; to study the agency of journalists involved in reporting about Maoists insurgency and mediations of journalists in this effort to report and produce news in this region; to trace the major structural constraints such as social, educational, cultural, institutional, economic and political for the journalists in their endeavour of news production in the conflict areas respectively. Towards these objectives, an ethnographic study was done among the journalists of major newspaper houses like *Dainik Bhaskar*, *Patrika*, *Deshbandhu*, *Haribhoomi*, *Hindsat*, and *Dandakaranya Samachar* for one month in Bastar district of Chhattisgarh. This included several visits to their offices, field visits to their reporting areas, in-depth interviews, and non-participant observation. The fourth chapter is based upon these works and looks into the process of production of news and how these processes of production lead to the final shaping of news about Maoist insurgency.

The social, educational, geographical, and economic background of the journalists has a significant influence on their reporting preferences and shaping of news. In the case of reporting in Maoists affected Chhattisgarh, the social and economic background greatly determines the ability of journalists to report the issue in-depth or superficially. For example, in the fourth chapter, it has been elaborated how the city-based journalists find easier access to local government officials and how local journalists are avoided by these officials, thus putting them at a disadvantage. Yet, it is often the local journalists of these Maoist affected areas who take the risk of offending Maoists and police in order to locate a story and send it to the city offices. In fact, to survive in difficult financial situations, the local journalists, on one hand, sell their stories to newspapers without the sense of recognition; and on the other hand, they are the ones often

simultaneously working for government contracts to earn their livelihood. And because of such dependencies and owing to their poor educational background, they are not taken seriously by the officials and sometimes they end up also getting tortured by the police or the system. In other words, in the negotiations between the local journalists and city-based journalists, the former sometimes bring out the most hidden information and later act upon it. In some cases, this kind of negotiation goes on between local area journalists and editors, and as a result major stories of human rights violations, killing of adivasis that are attributed to the Maoists or police come out in newspapers. Whereas in news organisations where this understanding or relationship is lacking, most of the local journalists end up in jail or face police intimidation. Moreover, factors such as caste and class, the family background also play an important role in determining their preferences for the kind of reporting which they choose to do. For example, while there is strict police vigilance on the journalists who write about the Maoists issues in Bastar, and journalists from both rich or poor backgrounds get intimidated by the police, but the rich ones can resist police intimidation whereas those from poor sections of society are caught by the system and punished. Similarly, those from influential backgrounds can resist arrest either through political connections or due to their networks with journalists, but poor and less privileged journalists are nabbed by police. While there is a network of journalists in Bastar, members of whom do often come forward when any one of their colleagues is in danger, they do not function similarly for everyone. Factors such as political ideologies, class standing, private interests, etc. often act as a hindrance in their expressions of solidarities.

Factors such as the lived experiences of journalists, proximity to the Maoists affected areas, belonging to the same adivasi community often have very significant relationships with the willingness of few journalists in Chhattisgarh to take risks and bring out stories closer to the complicated realities in the region. In the course of my work, I also met with journalists in Bastar who had been threatened and intimidated by the Maoists, and they described the Maoists as ‘Bastar’s Laloo⁹¹’, who to grab media attention, keep creating fuss now and then. These journalists believed strongly that the media should stop writing about them and publicizing their side of stories. On the same hand there was another journalist I met in the region, who is from

⁹¹ Laloo Yadav is former chief minister of Bihar state of India, is widely famous for giving humorous and sometimes controversial quotes to media.

the adivasi community herself, and said that no matter what, she could not choose silence when it comes to 'her people'. As compared to the city-based journalists who report on the insurgency, the journalists from remote areas were vocal and actively engaged with writing with depth on the social dimensions of the Maoist insurgency because they often had witnessed and experienced these dimensions themselves.

Another prominent factor is economic and financial consideration which is common amongst both the city-based journalists and local journalists in determining the kind of news stories that would be followed and how they would be shaped. Since journalism is a low paying job particularly amongst the Hindi newspaper houses, it is a common practice in regional areas such as Chhattisgarh to also in addition take on work other than that of reporting. Most of the reporters in Chhattisgarh also take some kind of contracts from the government offices or have their own side businesses. On one hand, their economic interest is entangled with their work of reporting because it gives them the advantage of making connections and on other hand, it plays as a hindrance because often their economic interests act as a weak point which hampers their free will to speak and write vocally. It was not possible to delve further into questions of how and to what level these entanglements of economic interest in fact lead to neglect of news stories related to different aspects of Maoists insurgency such as human rights violations. The correlations between those journalists who are directly or indirectly associated with government work, and the kind of stories they publish are an important subject of further research.

Contribution to Knowledge and Areas for Future Research

The print media industry has played a significant role in Indian society since independence and even before that.⁹² From performing its role in nationalist movements at the time of the freedom struggle to the present day, the gradual expansion and localisation of the news have played a vital role in lending voices to the marginalised sections of society in India.⁹³ This study

⁹² According to C.A. Bayly, during pre-independence period, India was literacy aware society, if not yet society of mass literacy. The elites and populace both used written media in complex and creative ways to reinforce oral culture and debate. For more details see, Article on- 'The Indian Ecumene: An Indigenous Public Sphere', in C.A. Bayly's *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp, 180-211.

⁹³ According to T.A. Neyazi, local Hindi newspapers through gradual localisation of the news, has played a significant role in lending voices to the marginalized section of the society in state like Madhya Pradesh through

specifically focuses on understanding the role of print media and especially local Hindi newspapers in the coverage of Maoist insurgency in Chhattisgarh state. The issue of Maoist insurgency in Chhattisgarh has been at the forefront of national and international debate. While there are many detailed studies related to the Maoists insurgency in India and particularly in Chhattisgarh, about the political economy of Maoists insurgency, history of Maoists insurgency in Chhattisgarh and other parts of the country but there is a dearth of literature work on the role of print media in coverage of Maoists insurgency in Chhattisgarh. The print media especially the local Hindi newspapers have a larger audience and wider reach that brings the news in the local Hindi language to its audience. This process plays a crucial role in creating a public opinion and informing the public about overall reasons for issues like Maoist insurgency and matters related to it.

The findings of this study are useful in understanding how the entire debate about the Maoist insurgency in print media of Chhattisgarh has sidelined the voices of the marginalised people. Print media and particularly the local newspapers are highly controlled by the Chhattisgarh state government through various control mechanisms such as financial pressures, concessions, sometimes through stringent laws in coverage of Maoists insurgency. Owing to stringent control over coverage of Maoist issues, the local Hindi newspaper lacks the necessary resources to objectively cover or critique the state and the capitalists. In most of the Hindi newspapers examined in this research through the method of content analysis, the narrative and representation about the Maoists issue are tilted in favour of the state. The study of the political economy of the print media in Chhattisgarh suggests that some of the big banner local newspapers and in a few cases the media persons have businesses stakes in mining and real estate businesses, which has played a restraining role in coverage of news related to insurgency. The entanglement of the business interests of media persons and media conglomerates in other private businesses of Chhattisgarh is a threat to healthy criticism and journalism because on one hand, it tends to influence public opinion and on the other hand it has a tendency to set the agenda for the public. The study of the political economy of print media in Chhattisgarh also points out the fact that irrespective of successive state governments with different ideologies,

widening of political and cultural space in the Indian public sphere which was previously dominated by the discourse of English newspapers. For details see, T. A. Neyazi, (2011). Politics after Vernacularisation: Hindi Media and Indian Democracy *EPW*. 46 (10). Pp. 75-81

there is a tacit nexus between big print media houses and government to maintain propaganda against Maoists insurgency to harness favourable ideological environment towards neo-development policies of the state. Overall, the entire process of print media coverage of Maoists insurgency is complex in Chhattisgarh and there are various minute economic, social and political interstices entangled in between. However, in this entire process of the print media coverage of the Maoists insurgency, the interest of the marginalised people of Chhattisgarh which is at the core of this entire debate about Maoists insurgency have been sidelined by the media as well as the state.

Since there is a strict control mechanism on the print media in Chhattisgarh, to counter these repressive measures, journalists who write about the Maoists insurgency have widely used the internet and online social platforms to voice their concerns. Wide usage of the internet to connect to the wider masses is a recent phenomenon in Chhattisgarh. Journalists come out with news stories related to Maoist insurgency, human rights violations on platforms such as youtube and Facebook. It could be further researched that how journalists and civil society groups are widely using the internet and online social platforms to echo their concerns regarding the issues of Maoists insurgency in Chhattisgarh. In the events of Salwa Judum, after the fake encounters and even when some journalists got falsely implicated by the local police administration, social media websites helped the journalist fraternity to connect to their counterparts in metro and big cities, which again helped them in their speedy trial and freedom from false implications. These aspects of the digitalisation of the news could not be effectively examined in this study.

Digitisation has greatly helped the local newspapers and civil society members in Chhattisgarh to express their grievances and in fast dissemination of vital information. Most of the newspapers presently in Chhattisgarh have digitised their news platforms. Small video clips of news and day to day happenings are released by TV channels and newspaper firms. For example, Deshbandhu and Dainik Bhaskar newspaper, along with its newspaper business, does have a website that regularly releases small video clips of news about the Chhattisgarh region. The owners of the newspapers opine that digitisation can serve a long way in making the Chhattisgarh print media field more open and transparent. Further, some journalists who find themselves not satisfied with the present scenario of print media, widely use social media

platforms like Facebook and Twitter to disseminate messages of human rights violations, administrative high-handedness, instances of corruption, rampant felling of trees, and illegal land acquisitions. While several print media firms in Chhattisgarh have vested interests in hiding some information and disseminating half information, digitisation of the news platforms have particularly over recent years offered avenues for voicing concerns, which remains an important area for further research.

Another important aspect for further research relates to the events of Salwa Judum. In the case of Salwa Judum it has been seen that it provided an impetus to the local newspapers to write more about the local issues and thus it further helped in expanding the market. It should be further analysed that what was the role of newspapers in relation to exercise of power (means how newspapers opted to present the two clashing sides) in Chhattisgarh society during the phases of Salwa Judum. How was the news about incidents related to Salwa Judum framed in some of the widely circulated newspapers of Chhattisgarh? Salwa Judum was a state-backed local movement against the Maoists and those who were supporting Maoists. It is pertinent to closely examine how the local Hindi newspapers framed the fights and clashes between the Maoists and the militia members of Salwa Judum- especially, related to the burning of villages and human rights violations to understand the role of media at such critical juncture of injustice. A comparative study between the small newspapers and big newspapers about the events of Salwa Judum and its framing of news could further help in ascertaining the role of newspapers in the representation of Maoists insurgency. It would help in understanding the role of print media in relation to the exercise of its power in conflict affected areas.

This study was limited to content analysis of only 23 days of newspaper content in three Hindi dailies *Dainik Bhaskar*, *Patrika*, and *Dandakaranya Samachar* (from August and September, 2017). Because of the fierce resistance at the time towards outsiders, it became difficult to continue fieldwork in Bastar; as a result only 23 days newspaper copies could be collected. For understanding the deeper aspects of print media representation of insurgency newspapers of a longer time duration could be taken. Most critically, this study is limited to the representation of news about insurgency through archival study, content analysis, as well as ethnographic study of the contexts to news production; it was outside the scope of this research

to delve into important questions relating to audience reception about these issues. Further research through study of these audiences could be done to understand the news readers perceptions about the representation of Maoist insurgency in Chhattisgarh

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ahuja, R. (2012). *Research Methods*. Jaipur, Rawat Publications
- Baran, S.J and Davis, D. K. (2009). *Mass Communication Theory*. Boston, USA, Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Bayly, C.A. (1996). The Indian Ecumene: An Indigenous Public Sphere', in C.A.Bayly's *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp, 180-211.
- Benerjee, Sumanta. (2009). Reflection of a one-time Maoists Activists. *Dialectical Anthropology*, Vol-33 (3/4), pp: 253-269.
- Banerjee, Sumanata. (1980). *In the Wake of Naxalbari: History of Naxalite Movement in India*. Kolkata: Sunrnarekha Publications.
- Berger, L.Peter and Luckman, Thomas. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality*. London: Penguin Books.
- Berger, A. A. 2016. *Media Analysis Techniques*. New Delhi, sage.
- Bagdikian, B. H. (2004).*The New Media Monopoly*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (1994) *Simulacra and Simulation*. Translated by Sheila Faria Glaser
- Bhattacharya, Srobona. (2013). Changing civilian support for the Maoist conflict in India. *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 24:5,913-834. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2013.866421> as accessed on 11.9.2017
- Brown, Robin.(2003). Spinning the War: Political Communications, Information Operations and Public Diplomacy in the War on Terrorism. In DayakishanThussu, and Des Freedman.(eds). *War and the Media: Reporting Conflict 24/7*. London: Sage Publications.
- Bryant, J. and M. B. Oliver. 2009. *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*. New York. Routledge.
- Chaudhury, Subhranshu. (2009). The Art of Not Writing. *Info change Agenda*. 14, pp-29-32. Quarterly journal published by Centre for Communication and Development Studies, Pune.
- Carter,J.M. (2013). The Hermeneutics of Frames and Framing: An Examination of the Media's Construction of Reality. *SAGE Open*. April-June, 1-12.
- Chomsky, Naom & Herman, Edward,S. (1987).*Manufacturing Consent*. New York: Pantheon Books.

- Chomsky, Noam.(2004). *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda*. Lahore: Vanguard Books and Seven Star Press.
- Chong, Dennis, & Druckman, J.N.(2007). Framing Theory. *Annual Review Political Science*. 10, 103-126.
- Cohen, L. 2007. *Research Methods in Education*. New York, Routledge.
- Cottle, Simon .(2006). *Mediatized Conflict: Developments in Media and Conflict Studies*. Berkshire, U.K, Open University Press.
- Cole, Benjamin (2006). *Conflict, Terrorism and the Media in Asia*. New York: Routledge Publication.
- Das, B. (2005). The Quest for Theory: Mapping Communication Studies in India. In Bernard Bel, Jan Brouwer, Biswajit Das, VibodhParthasarthy, Guy Poitevin (eds), *Media and Mediation*, Volume 1, (pp-35-65). New Delhi: Sage
- De Vreese, C.H. (2005). News Framing: Theory and Typology. *Information Design Journal, Document Design*, 13 (1), 51-62.
- De Souza, R. 2007.“The Construction of HIV/AIDS in Indian Newspapers: A Frame Analysis.” *Health Communication*. Vol- 21. No.3. 257-266.
- Donner, Henrike (2004) *The significance of Naxalbari: accounts of personal involvement and politics in West Bengal*. Occasional paper 14, Centre of South Asian Studies, Cambridge, UK. This version available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/21343/>
- Dunham, Jennifer., Nelson, Brat., and Aghekyan, Elen. (2015). Harsh Laws and Violence Drive: Global Decline. In Freedom of Press Report-2015. Available on www.freedomhouse.com as accessed on 10.10.2017
- Entman, R.M. (1993). Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43 (4), 51-58.
- Entman, R.M. (2007). Framing Bias: Media in the Distribution of Power. *Journal of Communication*. 57,163-173.
- Gamson, W.A. 1989.“News as Framing.”*American Behavioral Scientist*.Vol- 33. No. 2. 157-161.
- Goffman, E. 1979. *Gender Advertisements*. London, The Macmillan Press Limited.
- Gitlin, T. 1977. “Spotlight and Shadows: Television and the Culture of Politics.” *College English*, Vol- 38. No.8. 789-801.
- Gitlin T. 1980. “Making News: A Study in the Social Construction of Reality by Gaye Tuchman.”*Contemporary Sociology*, Vol- 9.No.1. 99.

Greetz, Clifford. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Inc. Publishers.

Gowing, Nik. (2003). Journalists and War: The Troubling New Tensions Post 9/11. In DayakishanThussu, and Des Freedman.(eds) *War and the Media: Reporting Conflict 24/7*. London: Sage Publications.

Grover, Vrinda. (2018). The Adivasi Undertrial, a Prisoner of War: A study of Undertrial Detainees in South Chhattisgarh. In Deepak Mehta and Rahul Roy (eds). *Contesting Justice in South Asia*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Hanitzsch, T. & Hoxha, A. (2014). News Production: Theory and Conceptual Framework. *Info core WPI Working Paper*. Also available at www.infocore.EU/results/

Hall, Stuart. (1997) The Work of Representation. In Stuart Hall (eds) *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage Publications.

Herman, E.S. and Chomsky N. (2002). *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books

Howitt, Dennis (1982). *Mass Media and Social Problems: Vol. 2 of International Social Psychology*. London: Pergamon Press.

Hout, Tom Van, & Jacobs, Greet. (2008). News Production Theory and Practice: Fieldwork Notes on Power, Interaction and Agency. *Pragmatics*. 18:1,pp: 59-85.

Jeffery, Robin, (2000). *India's Newspaper Revolution: Capitalism, Politics and the Indian-language Press*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Karl, Marx. (1859). *A Contribution to the Critique of the Political Economy*. New Delhi: People's Publishing House Ltd.

Knezevic, Milana. (2015). Reporting Rights?: A look at threats to journalism in the former Yugoslavia since the Balkans Wars. *Index on Censorship*. 2015; 44(3): 52-55. Also available on sage journal website <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306422015605716>.

Kennedy, Jonathan (2015). The Socioeconomic Determinants of Natural Resource Conflict: Minerals and Maoist Insurgency in India, *Society & Natural Resources*, 28:2, 149 Available at:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08941920.2014.941447> as accessed on 9.10.2017

Kubey, R. 2001. *Media Literacy in the Information Age: Current Perspectives*. New Jersey, Transaction Publishers.

List of Empanelled Newspapers of Chhattisgarh in Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity, under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. GOI.

Lynch, Jake, and Galtung, Johan. (2010). *Reporting Conflict: New Direction in Peace Journalism*. Brisbane: University of Queensland Press.

Mangla, Anuja. (2002). *Chhattisgarh: Patrakarita ki Sanskar Bhumi*. Madhav Rao Sapre Memorial, Newspaper Library and Research Institute: Bhopal.

Manning, P. (1992). *Erving Goffman and Modern Sociology*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

McCombs, M.E. and Shaw, D.L.1972. "The Agenda Setting Function of Mass Media." *Public Opinion Quarterly*. Vol- 36. No. 2. 176-187.

McCombs, Maxwell, & Valenzuela, Sebastian. (2007). The Agenda-Setting Theory. *Cuadernos de Informacion*, (20), 44-50. (fecha de Consulta 8 de Julio de 20201). ISSN: 0716-162x. Available At –<https://www.redalyc.org/article.oa?id=97120369004>.

McQuail, D.(1994). *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction*. London: Sage

Miklian, Joseph. (2009). The Purification Hunt: The Salwa Judum counterinsurgency in Chhattisgarh, India. *Dialectical Anthropology*, Vol-33, ¾,pp: 441-459

Miklian, Joseph and Carney, Scott. (2010). Fire in the Hole. *Foreign Policy*. No. 181, pp:104-

Mette, Mortensen. (2015). *Journalism and Eye Witness Images: Digital Media, Participation and Conflict*. New York: Routledge Publications.

Mody, Bella (2015). How well do India's Multiple Language Dailies Provide Political Knowledge to Citizens of this Electoral Democracy? *Journalism Studies* Vol-16,5, pp-734-749. Also available online on-www.tandfonline.com as accessed on 11.01.2018.

Mosco, V. (1996).*The Political Economy of Communication*.London: Sage

Mu'azu, A. and Ibrahim, M. (2016). Media and the Challenges of Peace Building in Period of Insurgency.*International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*. Vol: 5 (10), pp:01-09. Also available at: www.ijhssi.org.

Navlakha, Gautam. Manchanda, Rita and Bose, T.A. (1996). Political Situation in Kashmir: Duped by Media and Government. *EPW*. Vol-31, 29,pp: 1927-1931

- Nambiar, Prithi. (2014). *Media Construction of Environment and Sustainability in India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Neyazi, T.A. (2011). Politics After Vernacularisation: Hindi Media and Indian Democracy. *EPW*. 46(10), 75-81.
- Neyazi, T.A. (2014). News Media and Political Participation: Re-evaluating democratic deepening in India. In T. A. Neyazi, Akio Tanabe, Shinya Ishizaka (eds), *Democratic Transformations and the Vernacular Public arena in India*. Oxon: Routledge
- Ninan, Sevanti. (2007). *Headlines From the Heartland: Reinventing the Hindi Public Sphere*. New Delhi: Sage
- Nirmala, T. and Aram A. 2016. "Framing of Environment in English and Tamil Newspapers in India." *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*. Vol-9. No. 1.1-9.
- Nossek, Heilli. (2010). News. In *International Encyclopaedia of Communication*. Available online at www.communicationencyclopedia.com as accessed on-12.10.2018.
- Orsini F.(1999). What Did they mean by 'Public? : Language, Literature and the Politics of Nationalism.
- Ornerbig, Henrik; Karlsson, Michael; Fast, Karin; & Lindell, Johan. (2018).The Space of Journalistic Work: A Theoretical Model. *Communication Theory*. 28, 403-423.
- Peoples Union for Democratic Rights. (PUDR). The Chhattisgarh Special Public Safety Bill, 2005: A Memorandum to the President Of India. Available at: www.pudr.org
- Pfhol, Stephen. (1997). A Review of the Book *Gulf War Did Not Take Place* by Jean Baudrillard and Paul Ratton. *Contemporary Sociology*. Vol-26 (2), pp:138-141.
- Phanjoubam, Pradip. (2016). Manipur and Mainstream Media. *EPW*. Vol-51,30, pp:12- 14.
- Ramana, P.V. (2006). The Maoist Movement in India. *Defense and Security Analysis*. Vol-22:4, pp: 435-449.
- Rao, U.(2010). *News as Culture: Journalistic Practices and the Remaking of Indian Leadership Traditions*. New York: Berghahn Books, Oxford.
- Reese, S.D, Gandy H.Oscar, and Jr. Grant, A.E. 2001. *Framing Public Life*. London, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Rogers, E.M. 2003. *Diffusion of Innovations*. New York. Free Press

Roy, Arundhati. (2010). Walking with the Comrades. *Outlook*, 29, March 2010. Accessed online on 10.10.2017 through <http://www.outlookindia.com/printarticle.aspx?264738>.

Report (2016) by Committee to Protect Journalists. Available online on-<https://cpj.org> as accessed on 12-01.2018

Robin De Rosa. (2011). Introduction. In Robin De Rosa (Eds). *Simulation in Media and Culture: Believing the Hype*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Sapre, Ashok. (2010). *Chhattisgarh Mitra*. A compilation of the copies of Hindi Newspaper Chhattisgarh Mitra, published in 1900 in Central Province of Madhya Pradesh by KushaBhaoThakre Journalism and Mass communication University, Raipur.

Singhal, A. and Rogers, E.M. (2001). *India's Communication Revolution: From Bullock Carts to Cyber Marts*. New Delhi: Sage.

Shreedharan, C. (2009). Reporting Kashmir: An Analysis of the Conflict Coverage in Indian and Pakistani Newspapers, Ph.D. Thesis. London: Bournemouth University.

Speer, Isaac. (2017). Reframing the Iraq War: Official Sources, Dramatic Events, and Changes in Media Framing. *Journal of Communication* 67, 282-302.

Stahl, Roger. (2010). *Militainment, Inc.: War, Media, and Popular Culture*. New York: Routledge Publications.

Sundar, Nandini. (2016). *The Burning Forest: India's War in Bastar*. Juggernaut Books, New Delhi.

Sundar, Nandini. (2006). Bastar, Maoism, and Salwa Judum. *EPW*. Pp:3187-3192.

Sunder, Nandini. (2007). *Subalterns and Sovereign: An Anthropological History of Bastar (1854-2006)*. London: Oxford University Press.

The International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems (1980), 'Concentration', Many Voices, One World. In Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (eds), *The Political Economy of the Media*. (Pp-255). Vermont: Edward Elgar Publishing.

The Outlook Report, 'Challenges to the Journalism in Bastar', dated- 29.03.2016

Thomas, Pradip Ninan. (2010). *Political Economy of Communication in India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Thomas, Pradip Ninan. (2017). The Cost of Truth-Telling In India: Reporting in Context of Intolerance. In Ulla Carlsson and ReetaPöyhtäri (Eds) *Assault on Journalism: Building Knowledge to Protect the Freedom of Expression*. By Nordicom. Sweden.

Thussu, Dayakishanand Freedman, Des (2003). *War and the Media: Reporting Conflict 24/7*. London; Sage Publications.

Tuchman G. 1978. *Making News: A Study in the Social Construction of Reality*. New York, The Free Press.

UNESCO Report (2015). *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development: Special Digital Focus*. Published by UNESCO, France.

UNESCO Global Report (2017-18). *World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development*. UNESCO and University of Oxford, France.

Verghese, Ajay. (2016). *British Rule and the Tribal Revolts in India: The Curious Case of Bastar*. *Modern Asian Studies* .50,5 pp-1619-1644. Cambridge University Press.

Williams, Kevin. (2003). *Understanding Media Theory*. London: Arnold.

Wimmer, R. D and Dominick, J. R. 2011. *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*. New Delhi, Cengage Learning.

Wolfsfeld, Gadi. (1997). *Media and Politics: News from the Middle East*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Websites

- 1) Freedom in the World: <https://freedomhouse.org>.
- 2) People's Union for Democratic Rights: www.pudr.org
- 3) DB Crop: www.bhaskarnet.com
- 4) Deshbandhu Newspaper: www.deshbandhu.co.in
- 5) Dandakaranya Newspaper: www.dandakaranyasamachar.com
- 6) Haribhoomi Newspaper: www.haribhoomi.com
- 7) Reporters Without Borders: <https://rsf.org>.