

**Exploring Ideologies: An Analysis of Farmer
Protest Editorial News**



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Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “Exploring Ideologies: An Analysis of Farmer Protest Editorial News” is the record of bona fide work done by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. Tania Mary Vivera, Assistant Professor, Department of English and Centre for Research, and that no part of the dissertation has been presented earlier for the award of any degree, diploma or any other similar title of recognition.

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I hereby certify that this project entitled “Exploring Ideologies: An Analysis of Farmer Protest Editorial News” is a record of bona fide work carried out by Lakshmi Mohandas under my supervision and guidance.

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An Abstract of the project entitled
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No activity is devoid of meaning. There is no single reality, but multiple realities that rule this world. The structures of meaning embedded within social structures as well as social activities help promulgate this sense of multiplicity of realities. Hence no narrative is transparent or signify a single reality. Ideology is something that is present in every social activity and interaction. . Even though the word ideology connotes multiple meanings, John Storey's definition of it as something that 'distorts' or 'conceals' acquires significance (2-3). Newspaper is a medium that not only provide facts, but also specific ideologies. The perfect space that helps promulgate their ideology is through the editorial columns. Events that garner attention has the potential to bring a paradigm shift to the socio- political structures of society. Newspapers and media houses can be owned by political parties. Hence this can influence the narratives that they present. The readers subjected to this subtle influence, ultimately become aligned to the views they present. The primary objective of this project is to study how the repeal of farm laws news in newspapers reflect the ideological leanings. Newspapers taken for this study include, *The Wire*, *The Indian Express*, *The Hindu*, *The Statesman* and *The Telegraph*. Textual analysis is the method used to examine the papers.

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Introduction

John Storey in his Introduction to the work *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (1993), explicates on the definition of the word ideology. Even though he presents multiple meanings to the word ideology, one of it becomes significant in this context.

“ A second definition suggests a certain masking, distortion or concealment. Ideology is used here to indicate how some texts and practices present distorted images of reality. They produce what is sometimes called ‘false consciousness’. Such distortions it is argued, work in the interests of powerful against the interests of the powerless. Using this definition we might speak of capitalist ideology. What would be intimidated by this usage is the way in which ideology conceals the reality of domination.”(2-3)

The Britannica site defines ‘ideology’ as “ a form of social or political philosophy in which practical elements are as prominent as theoretical ones. It is a system of ideas that aspires both to explain the world and to change it”. The origin of the word is associated with French Revolution when a philosopher named A-L-C Destutt de Tracy introduced the term ‘ideologie’ as a term for ‘science of ideas’ (“ideology”). According to him ideology as a discipline would help people recognise their own biases. Down the ages the word took on different meanings. Michael Billings in his essay, ‘Discursive, Rhetorical and Ideological Messages’ (1997), notes about Terry Eagleton’s definition of ‘ideology’ as , “ an ideology comprises the ways of thinking and behaving within a given society, which make the ways of that society seem natural or unquestioned to its members” (217). . Whereas the most radical definition of ‘ideology’ was put forward by Althusser who said that ideology is “a system of representation composed of concepts, ideas, myths or images- in which men and women live their imaginary relations to the real conditions of existence”

(qtd. in Hall, 20). His view is radical in that he professes that ideologies have material existence in cultural practices, and consciousness is shaped by ideology in these practices.

Newspapers and magazines not just disseminate information but also helps in the construction of identities, nurture a shared sense of community and provide a space for advertising and promulgate opinions. The influence of newspapers is validated by the fact that E.P Thompson in his book *The Making of the English Working Class*(1963), in a mention about the significance of reading rooms and newsrooms in coffee shops, booksellers and inns during the industrial revolution, reveals that newspapers were read out aloud so as to not just increase their literacy but also to ground a working class consciousness (717-719). The newspapers read out would be mostly radical ones as *Register* and *Poor Man's Guardian*.

Media houses are also owned by corporates, or with particular political affiliations, we cannot say that newspapers are impartial or non partisan. In one of his analysis on media in the book *The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (1979), which he wrote along with E S Herman, Chomsky denies the long held notion that media is the fourth estate of democracy(157-198).

Media has played a crucial role in the freedom struggle and various other movements that happened in the course of history of India. The role of media is crucial in the forming of a public opinion and also the public engagement in participatory democracy. But since media is subjected to be influenced, it is a matter of great concern. The role of language in media comes in as important.

The main objectives of this project is to understand the way in which the ideology of the newspaper have a bearing on its editorial news. An editorial news is one area where the ideology or political affiliations of the newspaper board becomes apparent. In fact newspapers use this genre to intervene into politics and influence public opinion. Many scholars have undertaken

studies to understand the persuasive aspect of editorial news. The particular news taken for study is the repeal of farm laws. Since farmer protest has been a topic for almost a year, it was widely covered by media across the globe. It is well understood that no writing is transparent or unbiased. The media also plays a vital role in influencing the public opinions and affecting the political structure thereby. The particular news can be presented in various ways and therefore, the newspapers agenda as well as ideology intervene in its presentation.

.Farmer protest has now become a historic event in India. The protest that began as a result of the implementation of three farm bills has ultimately ended with the repeal of the farm laws. The three laws sought to put an end to the government intervention in agricultural trade. It will allow farmer's to sell their produce directly without the intervention of middlemen. The prime reason for the opposition to this bill is the hasty manner in which it was implemented. Especially since it was during the time of COVID and proper consultation with opposition or farmers never took place. Another reason is that it's implementation violates the federal structure. Since matters of trade and agriculture fall within the ambit of states, the government's decision was highly condemned.

The research methodology includes media studies under which textual analysis is taken. Textual analysis involves an interpretation of relationship between ideology and texts. Such approaches tend to dissect media texts as newspapers, film, music etc. for structures of meanings embedded in them. One of the central question that textual analysis pose the readers is that "how do we make and share sense about the world we live in ?" (McKee8). For this particular analysis, editorials of English dailies of *The Hindu*, *The Statesman*, *The Wire*, *The Indian Express* and *The Telegraph* are used.

One of the central point of textual analysis is also the fact that as Alan Mckee notes, “there is no single correct interpretation of any text. There are large number of possible interpretations, some of which are more likely than others in particular circumstances”(4). This underscores the fact that how readings can be influenced by structures of meanings embedded within the text, the context sensitivity of the text and interpretation undertaken by the observer and scholar. It dismantles the whole notion that texts reflects reality.

Chapter-1

Media Studies and Textual Analysis

Media studies is a wide academic discipline that seeks to understand the nature, content, history and social impact of various media including mass media such as film and television. New media studies is one of the many disciplines of humanities revolutionized by new disciplines such as cultural studies. Media studies has a long history. Before its association with cultural studies, media studies was shaped by rhetorical theory and criticism, influenced by German critical social theory and defined in opposition to a sociologically oriented behavioral research methodology.

Hence the domain of media studies is a complex domain and it makes a point of discussion about aspects as difficult problems of production, textuality, and audience. A part of the complexity can be attributed to the incoherent nature of the domain. Incoherence of a particular kind characterized by the conjunction of three dominant methodologies and theoretical paradigms: mass communication, the media environment and the historical/interpretive .

A predominant part of twentieth century, contemporary media studies was dominated by a paradigm of empirically driven, ahistorical and effects oriented perspective. The researches dealt especially with media effects, media violence, media uses and media and children. Even as this perspective progressed, various complex theoretical formulations were imbibed so as to study how individuals use mass media, what “gratifications” they achieve and how media selection influence attitude and behavioral change. The second paradigm is an influence from the Continental critical social theory and one of its example being the Frankfurt School. Here the researches were quite less pessimistic about the impact of media industries and less deterministic than first generation of critical theorists. Their perspective was such that communication technology interacts with people and institution to change human perception and cognition. They consider media as shaping society

and human interaction, that they argue that humanity is all together changed because of the influence of electronic media.

A third paradigm sees itself as historical/interpretive and oppositional to dominant perspectives. Researches of this particular realm focused primarily on speech communication. They were greatly influenced by the humanistic and classical tradition and hence they became interested in the aesthetics, social/political effects of oratory and of other media forms. But now this is influenced more by the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies . Therefore the researches now see media as sites of, and weapons in struggles over social, economic, symbolic and political power, as well as struggles over control of and access to media itself. This paradigm shares much of what is to be seen today as part of humanities. It's objectives include: attempting to explain the relationship between expressive forms and social order, working within the field of discursive practices, sharing an interest in how ideologies are materialized in texts, explaining how these structures are actually effective in the point of consumption, discussions about topics as textual practices as forms of power and performance. Interpretive media studies is closely linked to cultural studies in the mode of analysis how texts are produced (intent), what are they(textuality), and what they do (consumption/effects).

Communication studies emerged quite late in the American academic realm. It was originally called 'speech communication', it gradually subdivided into field specializing in communication science, communication arts. Researches in communication arts focused on public speaking where it dealt with the role of engaging with matters pertaining to public concern and developing an appreciation for civic responsibility. Taking its impetus from literature, history and anthropology as well as rhetorical studies, this approach advocates a hermeneutic and interpretive method. Even though scholarly efforts were more directed towards historical studies of speeches

of great personalities and great speakers, studies were also conducted on emerging media and how best to study them. Some of the early media scholars engaged with “talking pictures” and radio speech making, including, broadcasts of Huey Long and Franklin Roosevelt. Their studies recognized the role played by media in advancing cultural traditions and reinforcing shared values and attitudes.

This underscores the interest of communication studies in critical media work. But it is also important to note that the traditional rhetoricians primarily dealt with the historical cases of platform oratory. Three historical events paved the way for radical changes. The first one being, Kenneth Burke’s introduction to the field of speech communication, provided an impetus to the social criticism of media and added emphasis on the symbolic action to be found across media forms. Second, by the late 1960s, a dissatisfaction with traditional criticism as embodied in Edwin Black’s *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (1978) put an end to the field’s exclusive focus on platform oratory as object and individual speaker as subject. Both these changes gave rise to a third key moment. As a response to the changes in the field, two national communication conferences led to a general consensus for an increased attention to diverse media forms and use of new critical and interpretive tools to help understand these new contemporary media texts.

It is also significant to note that many fields related to media studies were also in a process of transformation. At that time, there was a growing interest in academic film studies in literature departments of US. As similar to the concept of ‘film auteur’ in literature, film analysts began to study film directors and their oeuvre. This method was dominant until the introduction in the late 1960s and 70s of the structuralist especially semiotic approach to films.

Alongside the development of film studies, academic studies on television began to emerge. It focused initially on the artistic force of television and later on television formulas and genres. The

legitimacy of television studies was established with the publication of Horace Newcomb's influential collection, *Television: the Critical View* (1976). Later a shift in this critical approach was brought on by James Carey. He laid the foundation for all cultural approaches to media in the US. He posited a new approach in which "reality is brought into existence, is produced by communication ; that is by the construction, apprehensions, utilization of symbolic forms" (Carey 12). Thus he offered a meaning centered approach to contrast to the mass communication effects version. Carey proposed two ideas, one being 'transmission view' which says that communication is best seen as extending control and influence and delivering this power via media. He also professed another view that is 'ritual view'. It's interest lies in the preservation of community and the making of shared meanings. His argument was that, ritual view revealed how communication shaped culture and how it accounted for the creation and maintenance of social institutions. His views stress on the need for recognition of history and context in understanding media .

Carey's views were supported by other academicians who converged on the idea of a cultural dimension to communication. Among them many media critics were set to draw upon critical concepts from fields as Literary studies, popular culture, dialectical analysis, rhetorical-vision analysis, Burkean dramatism, structural functionalism, ideological analysis and mythic-archetypal analysis for the delayed historical/interpretative analysis of media. But over the long run, these methods proved to not be suitable to the dynamics of media studies. The need for a more sophisticated theory at that moment was fulfilled by the publication of John Fisk's and John Hartley's book *Reading Television*, 1978. Their work was in line with Carey's call for textual and contextual approach to media. Here they survey existing television studies and critique the mass communication effects paradigm and propose alternative perspectives which includes application

of semiotics to television texts. By applying the notions of cultural myth, they explicate how television builds meaning through signification and how media functions as society's "bard".

Soon the entry of Cultural Studies largely sponsored by Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies in USA made possible the proliferation of alternative perspectives. The foothold of Cultural Studies was further established when young academicians disillusioned by the 1960s wholeheartedly took over the field. The legitimation of it was further signaled when the Speech Communication Association authorized a new journal, *Critical Studies in Mass Media Communication*. The association between Cultural Studies and Communication Media Studies was also critiqued by many academicians. One of the major criticism being that the absorption of cultural studies into Media Studies has resulted in the deforming and depoliticizing of cultural studies. This articulation between cultural studies, media studies and critical theory has resulted in a cultural, social and political practices from the standpoint of communication. The various approaches in media studies are thus. Contemporary approaches in cultural/critical studies of media is categorized into one that treat media texts for what they are (textuality) and how they are produced (economics/intent) and what they do (consumption/effect).

A major approach of study of media text is based on textuality and meaning. Textual analysis have a special interest in examining the relationship between ideology and texts. Such approaches tend to dissect the media texts for the deep structures of meanings that are embedded in them. It concentrates not on canonical texts but examines popular media forms for underlying values, ideologies and particular views of what is made to seem 'natural', politically, economically and socially. This approach is based on the assumption that media manifests the society's power structures, value system and beliefs. Many of these studies have found the concepts of myth and archetype to be useful ways of explicating popular media texts. The implicit assumption is that

popular entertainment forms have become popular because they cater to the beliefs and values of the public. So we can gain insight into a society by examining these materials.

In most of the researches the underlying idea is that the reading being proffered by the researcher is the “preferred” if not the “true” meaning of the text. It is the meaning that will be found by the majority of the people since there are it is assumed rules and codes within a text which tend to influence the individual to take up that “ preferred” reading. But this view is now highly contested and critics believe that media texts are more open and there are multiple perspectives from which it is read by different members of the audience. While other researchers take a more skeptical view and argue that media is more than just simple mirror of social belief. Here scholars use Gramsci’s concept of hegemony to explore television’s role in the promulgation and maintenance of dominant ideologies through which social relations of domination and subordination are maintained. Again such researches are based on the idea that media texts have embedded messages that serve to support and perpetuate current power structures and social relations of society. A specific research on black male images in prime time comedies came with the idea that the impact of these images is to “deflect attention from the persistent of racism, inequality and differential power” (Gray 380) . Likewise the application of feminism in media works identifies the structures of patriarchy in entertainment, news and documentary programing.

Another approach to ideology is on the grounds that how media texts can influence ideology. A study by Janice H Rushing, in her work, “The Rhetoric of the American Western Myth”, 1983, examines the interaction of cultural artifacts (50). For this she studies films, 1950s television programs, presidential campaign discussions and interactions in political and popular culture. Another trajectory of study of media texts is based on production and intent. A second major division in media studies is the exploration of why media texts are the way they are. To be

specific, interpretive media scholars analyze media texts within their system of production and distribution, which is referred to as political economy of culture. When media texts are contextualized on the basis of the system where they are produced and distributed, this will help highlight the features and effects which might have been left out through textual analysis alone. Research in this area focused on the assumption that systems of production determines the kind of texts that will be produced, limitations of the media content and what sort of audience effect the text may garner. The term political economy does not refer to economics alone, but it also tries to examine the relationship between political, economic and other elements of society. So the term acts as a link to connect culture to its political and economic context and grounds media studies in history and politics. Often political economy is viewed as a countermeasure to textual studies that focuses exclusively upon textuality, and confines the analysis of structures of meanings of real material and economic conditions of the world and peoples lives.

This version of contextualized critical studies is based on the assumption that media texts are shaped by culture itself. Such media texts offer analysis of various ‘intertexts’ and discourses which might shape the meanings of the media text. Sometimes such an approach explains the interaction in terms of cultural traditions or discursive formations. A perfect example for this is Thomas Benson’s tracing of the cultural traditions that can be explored in Frederick Wiseman’s movie *Primate* (1974).

The study of process of production discloses how media institutions shape the nature of news and entertainment. Since film and television production in US is controlled by huge corporations inclined towards profits, both these fields are dominated by popular artifacts. This kind of economic determination explains the reason behind the homogeneity found in products produced within a system of rigid generic codes, formulaic conventions and defined ideological

boundaries. Certain other researches examine the ideology and meaning . And they have found out that Western media promotes a cultural colonialism which might overtake indigenous and native culture.

There is also a historical/interpretation approach that use elements of production approach in examining the popularity of entertainment personalities and programs.

Based on consumption and effect numerous studies have been conducted of media texts. This approach seeks to understand the consumer of culture – the reader or the audience. There are two major strands for this method- inferring the behaviour of readers from the text they study and studying the behaviour directly. Media studies that analyse through textual analysis stress the interaction of audience with the texts they encounter. These studies place narratives, visual or editing structures within texts to identify ‘ideal’ readers or spectators who are positioned into particular media texts and thereby able to discern their own meanings. Earlier such studies were influenced by reader response theories of literary criticism and psychoanalytic/feminist model of film studies.

The other strand tries to examine the audience. Researches use methods as participant observation and ethnography from qualitative sociology and anthropology. They record actual audience responses and meanings of texts as they are constructed by the audience. For instance studies on rewritings of media texts, fan websites wherein the most ardent fans rewrote media texts to their own needs. Such audience centered approaches have examined the multiple ways in which members of different sub cultures create different meanings from the same media text. Fiske points out two approaches that he calls ‘ethnosemiotics’ and ‘audiencing’. The former combines the critics responses with ethnographic data and with a structural/semiotic analysis of the media text. Mainly the way it exists and it’s value in what he calls “cultural economy” (Fiske 31) New media

forms have widened the field of media studies as well as opened new possibilities. Media studies in the mid twentieth century was dominant by print journalism and television advertising. Whereas now it is taken over by studies on the production, consumption and regulation of texts as cell phones, computer games, blogs, satellite radio, social networking sites, cinema etc. These media forms raise questions about how to define texts, prompts us to move beyond the concept of traditional artifacts of media industry and towards textuality, audience and the uses of media by people in their everyday life.

A deeper study into the methodology of textual analysis is imperative since it is used for this particular analysis, specifically English newspapers. Textual analysis is a research method that involves understanding language, symbols, pictures present in texts to gain information regarding how people make sense of and communicate life experiences. Visual, written or spoken messages provides ample clues through which communication may be understood. When we carry out an interpretation of multiple texts, we actually discern the multiple interpretations possible of that text. But it also foregrounds the fact that there is no “single”, “correct” interpretation, but, certain interpretation happen to be probable in certain conditions (148). Alen Mckee in his book, *A Beginners Guide to Textual Analysis* (2001) observes that there is no such thing as “accurate” or “inaccurate” representation of any text nor can we say that it mirrors reality. We can never assess text against reality because every description of reality is just one version of it. This happens within the same language as well as in different languages (1-22).

‘Text’ in textual analysis is something that is used by researchers to interpret in order to derive meaning from it. This can be a book, an article, television program, film, magazine, ornaments, furniture, digital devices and so on. This text can also be social events where people interact. The interaction can be ‘linguistic’ and ‘non linguistic’ (Fairclough, 21). Hence textual

analysis comes across as a method wherein researchers collect information regarding how people make sense of the world and interprets or analyses it and attaches meaning to it. It foregrounds the fact that text is analysed for the production of meanings. This method is widely used by scholars in disciplines as Cultural Studies, Media studies, Communication Studies, Sociology, Philosophy and so on. In textual analysis, the researcher considers every interpretation as valid. But rather than relying on other interpretations, the researcher attaches his own meanings to the text based on the context of his analysis. The important factor in this method is selecting the appropriate text and deciding on which method to use. There are multiple perspectives from which a text can be analysed. They are rhetoric perspective, critical studies perspective and discourse analytic perspective.

The rhetoric perspective primarily depends on the language in analysing the interaction between the actual text, the producer of the text and the readers of the text. Through this perspective, the researcher explains, analyses and evaluates the persuasive aspects of the text. One of the basic assumptions of rhetoric perspective is that text carries a meaning with which it influence people. VanderStoep and Johnston in their book *Research Methods for Everyday Life: Blending Qualitative and Quantitative* (2009), opines that people who employ textual analysis as a method for research believes that text influence people's belief, attitude, behaviour and texts also serves as a medium through which culture is experienced. Through texts we study traditions, values and identity.

The rhetorical perspective also focuses it's attention on identifying persuasive ideas within texts and hence functions as a pedagogical tool to guide people on persuasion and how it works. Another aspect of rhetorical perspective is that it aids in understanding the cultural, social and historical contexts, thereby also facilitating to analyse society through social criticism.

Critical studies perspective is widely used by researchers belonging to other disciplines as Sociology, Philosophy, Cultural Studies and Communication Studies. In this approach 'text' is seen as a domain of power struggle. Popular cultural media forms as films, magazines, news and music tend to embody messages which disclose who has power and who does not. Researches depend on this methodology to explore hidden hegemonic ideas and bias. The basic assumption of this perspective is that the text serves as a purveyor of ideologies of a particular group. One of the main tasks of the researcher is to find how this gets manifested through language. Critical studies perspective involves an investigation into the use of language and how particular phenomena as selection of words, structure of sentences, metaphors, strategies are employed to portray a specific standpoint. The researchers link analysis of language with various contexts as social, historical and political contexts.

Discourse analytic perspective involves understanding of a phenomenon by an analysis of discussion and narratives. The basic premise of this approach is that communication is necessary for an understanding of meaning. VanderStoep and Johnston in their book *Research Methods for Everyday Life: Blending Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (2009), puts forward two kinds of analysis- conversational and narrative analysis. Conversational analysis is used for examining human interaction in society. It involves the interpretation of discourse that occur in a natural environment. This approach analyses verbal, written or physical communication to examine the structure of conversation and the function the specific utterance presents. Narrative analysis concerns itself with an analysis of story telling. Here the researcher uses a set of principles and seeks to exhaust the meaning of the text using specified rules and principles, but maintains a qualitative textual approach. Through this perspective the researcher intends to explore the

structure of the story and how it helps in the formation of communities, maintaining relations, the establishment of identities and values.

Chapter-2

Newspaper Industry in India and Aspects of Editorial Journalism

The credit of establishment of newspapers in India as we see today goes to James Augustus Hickey, who established the *Bengal Gazette* in 1780. But before Hickey, there were practices of present day journalism like that of newsletters, an earlier form of newspaper issued during the Mughal period. The printing press was established in Bombay in 1674, a second one in 1772 and a third in Calcutta in 1779. The *Bengal Gazette* describes itself as “ A weekly political and commercial paper open to all parties but influenced by none”. Even though the British had played it's part in the establishment of newspapers in India, they were suspicious of its activities. The eventual decline of *Bengal Gazette* can also be attributed to this fact. He incurred heavy losses subsequently and that led to it's closure.

Later several newspapers came into the scene in several parts of India like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. But all these papers existed only for a short duration. By this time the East India Company became conscious of the contents in these newspapers and started to force regulatory measures on them. A number of newspapers like *The Madras Gazette*, *Bengal Journal*, *Indian World* and *Bengal Harkaru* had to face the wrath of the establishment. Soon after regulations were imposed on the press. But this did not prevent from the proliferation of newspapers. Several newspapers as *Dig Darshan*, *Samachar Darpan* and *Friend of India*, a forerunner of present day *The Statesman* came up in Bengal.

An important regulation on media is the Adams regulations of 1818. Vehement protests from various corners were raised against this strict watch. Especially noteworthy where the

contributions of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and James Silk Buckingham. The first Indian owned newspaper is Gangadhar Battacharya's *Bengal Gazette*. The significant role of press during the Indian Independence Movement is indispensable. The inception of major English newspapers as *The Times of India*, *The Pioneer*, *The Statesman* and *The Hindu* are associated with the independence movement. It was not just the English dailies that gained prominence but vernacular dailies as well. Even major political leaders contributed greatly to the press. Some notable politicians in this field are Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Aurobindo Gosh, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad. The press also had to endure strong repression even after independence. The period of Emergency is considered to be a harsh period in the history of Indian press.

The Hindu is regarded as one of the most influential dailies of India. It was established in 1878 as a weekly but later changed to a daily in 1889. The newspaper is published from Chennai by the Hindu Group Publications. Earlier the newspaper was described as a "national newspaper with a southern accent" (Vardhan). *The Hindu Business Line*, *Sportstar* and *Frontline* are the other publications of the group. As mentioned above the emergence of *The Hindu* is closely tied to the freedom struggle. The paper is known for its leftist leanings. For instance the online portal *Newslaundry* reports, "The Hindu is closest to the institutionalised Left-tilted "common sense" that permeates the academic curriculum and dominates the discourse" (Vardhan).

The Wire is an online news website established by a former editor at *The Hindu*, Siddharth Varadarajan. It has tie up with news agencies like Press Trust of India and Indo Asian News Service for content. The news website was launched to promote independent journalism, free of commercial and political pressure. The online news portal *Newslaundry* reports "this was reinforced when, two years later, Varadarajan founded *The Wire*, a left-wing news portal known

for its focus on anti- Modi narratives” (Vardhan). This underlines the fact that *The Wire* caters to the views of leftist ideology.

The Indian Express was founded by Ramnath Goenka in 1932. Goenka was an RSS ideologue. The newspaper was formed during the time of Independence Movement and hence has a pivotal role in the history of Indian press. But after the split of The Indian Express Group, now there are two newspapers with contrasting loyalties. *The Indian Express* supports congress whereas *The New Indian Express* is loyal to NDA and right wing politics (Thakur) . Hence it can be said that it is in line with centrist ideology.

The Statesman is an influential daily published from Kolkata. It was established in 1875 by Robert Knight as an offshoot of another newspaper *The Friend of India*. The latter was started by a missionary William Carey, but later Knight acquired it’s ownership and published both newspapers simultaneously. It was owned by the British till 1960. The papers ideology is said to be left and anti establishment (Thakur). *The Telegraph* is owned by the ABP group of Kolkata. The headquarters of the newspaper is Kolkata. It is known to support centrist to left ideology (Sharma).

One of the important aspect of a newspaper is the editorial. The practice of editorial journalism is exclusive to newspaper industry and it relates to write articles also known as leading articles. These articles together constitute the editorial column. Editorial articles usually bear the name of the newspaper rather than the journalist. They serves an important function in that it is identified as the collective opinion or public voice of the newspaper. In other words, it is acknowledged as the ‘institutional view’ of the newspaper. It has considerable difference from the op-ed pages, commentary pages, columns and guest contributions.

The historical developments of editorial journalism dates back to a time when journalism was emerging as a distinctive discipline with its own ethos, guidelines and principles. It's demands on non-partisan press, separation of fact from opinion, objective reporting, all paved the way for editorial journalism. The origin of the practice of editorial journalism can be traced to the Victorian age.

A paradigm shift in the field of journalism happened when, the U S press reporting lay bare it's allegiances to political parties. Then over late 19th and early 20th centuries, press houses decided to cut off their links with political parties. One of the most significant steps undertaken by the press was it's decision to stay unbiased and move towards objective reporting. They insisted on its role as an independent and powerful voice in public deliberations. Hence the inception of editorial journalism helped delineate fact based, 'objective' journalism from opinion.

At times the newspaper industry use editorials to make inroads into politics and influence public opinion. For instance, political parties can endorse candidates or particular party during elections. This persuasive style of editorials has been subjected to numerous studies by scholars through various approaches as historical, content framing and discourse analysis. One of the important factors that make editorial journalism unique from the traditional fact based reporting and opinion pieces, is that, it represents the views of the newspaper as an organisation (Firmstone).

Chapter-3

A Reading Beyond Facts

A watershed moment in Indian political history of recent times would undoubtedly be the farmer's protest. The protest that began from December 2020 reached its zenith when the protesting farmers marched to Delhi and camped there for more than six months. The situation was in a state of limbo for many months as the government and protesting farmers refused to concede to any of the demands and pleas. But all seems to be settled for the moment as the government have decided to repeal the controversial farm laws. To understand more into the protest that have since garnered world wide attention, it is imperative that we divulge into the factual elements of the matter.

On the month of September the central government passed 3 farm laws that stipulated major changes to the workings of agriculture. According to the government, the reformed farm laws allow the farmer's to sell their produce directly to the private buyers and even enter a contract. Or in other words it allows the farmers to sell their produce outside the stipulated 'Agricultural Produce Market Committee' or APMC mandis without paying taxes or fees. But the farmers want the APMC mandis to be restored since it plays a significant role in the agricultural trading system. They have also demanded to restore MSP or 'Minimum Support Price'. MSP is the minimum rate irrespective of the market rate, at which government buys the farmer's produce. All turned upside down with the passing of the farm bills by parliament. Raising slogans as 'Dili chalo' thousands of farmers marched to the capital city of Delhi, only to be later resisted strongly by the police.

The farmer's protest was covered intensely by media houses around the globe. In fact it was the central discussion in newspapers and media channels for many months. Media does have

an overwhelming presence in our lives. It is often cited as the fourth wall of democracy and therefore is instrumental in shaping public opinion. Walter Lippmann's book *Public Opinion* (1922), explicates on this idea of how public opinions are formed by the news media especially in a democratic society. Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw's "Agenda Setting Theory" is also linked to this idea of how media plays an indispensable part in influencing "political reality" (176-187). Influence of media can have both negative and positive sides. For media houses and newspapers could be owned by corporates, can have affiliations to political parties or follow particular schools of thought and ideology. There is a likelihood of newspapers and news channels manipulating news to promulgate their views or ideology to the public. James Curran's views about news media becomes a focal point in this context. In one of his essays titled *What Democracy Requires of the Media* (2005), Curran posits about about five key roles of media: 1) media should represent organised groups 2) should facilitate debates about ideas and activism 3) should control conflicts by promoting dialogue and reciprocity 4) should acts as a check on state as well as non state forms of power 5) empower citizens by providing variety of balanced information (120-140). Hence the domain of media in society acquires paramount importance.

Newspaper industry in India is a flourishing domain, given the number of readers as well as the umpteen number of newspapers in regional languages. As detailed by Tara Nair, "the Indian daily press started off on its dynamic growth phase in the 1920s, though by then many newspapers that came to wield significant influence on the social and political realms in the late colonial period had begun their publication. This acceleration in growth can be explained in terms of the general political awakening and heightened political activism as well as the emergence of- in whatever stunted fashion- an indigenous capital class, who has accumulated considerable wealth through its collaboration with foreign capital and the colonial government"(4182). The role of media can

never be divested of its political and economical engagements. Hence media can be biased to certain ideologies or can be aligned to political parties. Even the progress of newspaper industry in India is linked closely to the Independence Movement.

The main objective of this project is an analysis of the presentation of farmer protest news especially the editorial news in different English newspapers and how the ideology of the newspaper is reflected in their news reports. The newspapers include *The Hindu*, *The Wire*, *The Indian Express*, *The Statesman* and *The Telegraph*.

An editorial is defined in Cambridge dictionary as a statement in a newspaper or magazine or on radio or television that expresses the opinion of the editors or owners on a subject of particular interest (“editorial”). Julie Firmstone opines that “editorials allow newspapers to make allegiances known; support and oppose individuals; speak on behalf of their readers; speak to readers; and speak to politicians, parties and other organisations”(“Editorial Journalism and newspaper’s editorial opinion”). The methodology used for analysis is textual analysis. According to Alan McKee, textual analysis is a methodology that helps us understand the role that media plays in people’s lives, especially the way in which their messages help in the cultural construction of our view of the world. For this ‘texts’ as newspapers, television programs, films, magazines and radio programs are analysed (138-149). As Roland Barthes rightly pointed out in his seminal book, *‘The Death of the Author’*, “a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological meaning’, but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash”(146). Again Alan McKee’s observation that text is something that is analysed for the production of meanings becomes significant(138-149).

One of the fundamental factors that help in this subtle promulgation of ideology is the pliable nature of language. As mentioned earlier, ideology is a term that has encompassed a whole

lot of meaning over the years. For instance, the word's origin is associated with French Revolution and at that time it simply meant "science of ideas" ("Ideology"). Later Marx defined it as "false consciousness" (Lukas, 50) and for Althusser in his essay, *Ideology and State Apparatus* (1970) defines it as "a practice that is all pervasive and generative in varying degrees in all the social activity" (1-60). So we can never divest any social structure and language of the trappings of ideology. One of the most effective to examine this influence is certainly textual analysis. The English newspapers included for this research is the online copy of print versions. All papers report the events concerned with the repeal of the three farm laws.

The first report from *The Hindu* titled "Seeds of hope: On farm laws repeal" explicates on the repeal of the farm laws, its consequences, supposed reasons for repeal etc. We should draw attention to certain words used in this report. This includes words as 'reform', 'reorganise', 'redesign', 'flexibility', 'revisit', and 'realignment'. The word reform is defined as "to make an improvement, especially by changing a person's behaviour or the structure of something" ("reform"). Whereas the word reorganise gives the meaning as "to organise something again in order to improve it" (reorganise). Redesign is defined as "to change the design of something" ("redesign"). Flexibility refers to the "the ability to change or be changed easily according to the situation" ("flexibility"). Revisit gives an idea to "to talk or think about something again, with the intention of improving it or changing it" ("revisit"). Alen Mckee's insistence on the "context" of the text to be subjected to textual analysis becomes significant. "This context, that is a series of intertexts- (related texts) is what ties down the interpretations of a text" (138-149).

All these words indicate an aspect of 'change'. The phrase, "seeds of hope" is evocative of a positive change ("seeds of hope"). It underlines the positive outcome of the resistance led by the farmers as well as a need for reform in the agrarian sector. Farmers hitherto occupied a liminal

position in the society. So a protest of their own without any representation from the political parties is noteworthy. One of the central points that this news article tries to bring forth is the protest of farmers and its implications to democracy. Marx had written at length about the inherent conflicts between the bourgeoisie class and of the proletariats. Another sentence reads as “the agitators were socially dominant, and economically and politically powerful groups” and this was also a reason for the withdrawal of farm laws (“seeds of hope”). It subtly hints at how in a democracy always a majority’s voice matters. People who occupy a liminal position has to have the support of the elite or majority. *The Hindu* is a paper that is perceived to have a Marxist affiliation. *Newslandry* reports that “Why The Hindu must be pushing civil service aspirants to the Left” explicitly states on the newspapers unwavering support to the ideologies of Left. A reference to “big companies” and “principles of market economy” (“Seeds of hope”) indicate the current ruling dispensations preference for corporatisation. It also hints at the leftist aversion to a market driven world. Marx had in his works critiqued the capitalist tendency to exploit human labour and how cooperation of labour is the basic work force behind capitalism. He had warned against the loss of workers’ individuality and how capitalism is solely focused on the development of human capabilities. But also made a point that too much insistence on enhancing human capabilities will only lead to the emboldening of capital forces and this will ultimately become detrimental to the workers as a result of the exploitation of social labour force. The report stresses on the need to bring reform into the agricultural field in line with the “federal democratic polity” of India. One of the bone of contention these days is the loss of federalist principles in Indian society. The central government is criticized for its refusal to engage in deliberations over the enactment of important laws. *The Hindu* report on the aforementioned fact, titled, “Spirit of federalism lies in consultation” points to this act by the government.

Robin Jeffrey in his work '*Culture of Daily Newspapers in India: How it Grows, What it Means*' (1987), reveals that "literacy, basic communication and adequate technology are essential to the development of a daily newspaper culture. But momentous events provide the link between these developments and politics- the link that seems to send circulations shooting upwards. People need the stimulus of exciting times to hook large numbers of them on the daily newspaper habits"(2004-2011). Hence large scale upheaval like the farmer's protest has the potential to create a large base of readership and encourages people to form a public opinion and hence be part of participatory democracy. Given that The Hindu is a paper preferred by civil service aspirants, it asserts the need for a "consultative decision making" that will augur well for a democratic country like India. Even as the newspaper stands in support of reforms to the sector, is critical of the manner in which it was implemented, the way in which the protestors were depicted and how it will influence Indian politics.

. Hitherto the dominant central party, Congress never made their ideologies explicit. Whereas the current ruling dispensation is vocal about their agendas. "The disappearance of the term 'post-ideological' tells you a lot about the centrality of ideology in electoral politics"(Vij). In short people are more inclined to parties with an ideological commitment. The results of recent elections are a testimony to this fact. Hence an established newspaper who understands this disposition of an Indian reader can influence their reader from time to time. It also underlines the fact that since people are swayed by the ideological tenets of a political party, they can also be easily governed by the ideologies embedded in the newspaper reports.

The Hindu newspaper published chiefly from Chennai is prominent among the educated, elite class of India. Some of the central ideas that govern a democratic set up is hinted by the paper. For instance, the repeal is presented as "triumph of democracy" and the laws were passed in the

parliament without any “deliberations or consultations with the state”. It also comments on the upcoming elections in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. This can be read as a call for concerted effort from the public’s side to make a responsible choice.

The second report of *The Wire* is again a summation of the protests and its consequences. But there is a considerable difference of this article from the rest. It discusses more about the technical aspects and the possibility of the stand off being extended. It details the exact date on which the decision to repeal the laws were made that is on the day of Guru Nanak’s ‘Dev Parv’. The next sentence reads as “ the government had promulgated an ordinance to implement the three farm bills in June 2020 at the height of the corona virus wave” (Kumar). *The Wire* is deemed as an online daily that is found on the premise to promote good and quality journalism. It mainly relies on the funding of its readers as well as independent foundations who are in support of public interest and democratic values. The editorial news is quick to pinpoint the farm laws as an agenda intended to favour ‘corporate sector’. In fact it is presented as a ‘victory’ of the farmers. It subtly refers to the positive implications of the repeal with regard to democratic society of India. The report reads as “ more so since the present ruling dispensation does not admit mistakes and pushes ahead with its agenda irrespective of what the opposition or democratic voices may say” (Kumar). Clearly the usage ‘democratic voices’ tends to ground the fact that the current ruling dispensation is not democratic in its functioning.

The analysis of the report in *The Wire* clearly gives an anti establishment picture. The daily seems to be more on the side of the farmer and like minded people. A who is aware of the socio-political backgrounds of Indian polity can be influenced to some extent by this report. *The Wire* being an online news portal dependent on the fundings of the public to an extent can represent the people’s perspective. Since *The wire* has affinity to left ideology we can say that it almost presents

the protest as a revolutionary step but it's results are again caught up with the bourgeoisie elite power wielders.

There are also references to previous policies of the government like 'demonetisation and 'GST' which was not mentioned in *The Hindu* article. References as 'choice', 'consensus', 'voice' tends to underscore the idea of consultation and deliberations, important aspects of a democratic process that were not included in the passing of the farm bills. This article mainly aims to rather educate the readers about the aims of this unprecedented step. In this article there is a clear demarcation of people, especially as- 'poor', 'rich- farmers', 'farm-workers', 'marginal', 'small farmers' etc. *The Wire* is quite particular and deliberates on why there had been no protest by the poor even during the worst situations. It treats the protest as a one of its kind agitation that will surely have a bearing on India's future prospects.

The report does not present the government's act of repelling the farm laws in a positive light. There is no neutral approach that *The Wire* intends to present. References as "dispassionate" speech of PM and his comments on the bills as something intended for the "betterment of small farmers" is indicative of criticism against the purpose of the repeal. As in *The Hindu*, *The Wire* is also quick to point out the reasons for the hasty repeal of the farm laws. The impending elections in various states is cited as one of the reasons. They assert that the farm laws are not 'reforms' but 'deforms'. There is generous use of words as 'marketisation', 'corporatisation' and 'mechanisation'. But *The Wire* is also quick to point that it is high time that reforms be implemented with due recognition of "workers" and "marginal farmer".

The editorial of *The Indian Express* reads as "It is not important why the government retreated in face of farmer's protest. It must know in democracy winning majority isn't enough". Right away the editorial news deems the repeal of the three farm laws as 'fitting'. It does not try

to put up an image of a winner. Rather it stresses on the fact that the “government is listening” and “compelled to do so by the people” (“Its not important why.... isn’t enough”). The papers explicitly conveys the flip side of just winning elections. The farmers are shown as a representative of the people. Whereas the government is presented as structures of power that implemented laws for the well being of the people. The paper does not find fault with the implementation of farm laws, but only with the manner in which it was pushed through, without any deliberations. *The Indian Express* underlines the need for a farm law to alleviate the farmers condition. The report aims to boost the image of the farmer. “The farmer is evocative and resonant a symbol” underscores this point. The old version of India is juxtaposed with its modern conditions is created by the reference to “industrialising economy and urbanising country” and the farmers. Even though the ruling dispensation supports “polarisation” and “majoritarianism” the report conveys that it preferred to comply. An image of how a healthy democracy functions through deliberations is stressed. Since the current ruling dispensation has been accused of not complying with the democratic ethos that once India stood for, these particular reports tend to stress on the need to reclaim those lost ideals.

. The *Hill Post* reports that *The Indian Express* was established by Ramnath Goenka an RSS affiliate but later sided with the Congress (Thakur). Hence the newspapers can be said to be aligned to a centrist viewpoint. The elections conducted during the time after Independence, Indian National Congress emerged as the dominant party and hence a centrist ideology and policies gained traction in Indian politics.

The news report mentions about the undemocratic manner in which the government wanted to disrupt the protests by calling them ‘aandolanjeevi’, ‘puppets of the propagandist left’, ‘khalistanis’ etc. The epithets speak volumes of the government’s intolerance towards dissent and agitation. In some way we can say that *The Indian Express* is trying to bring to fore the importance

of a political party that heeds to the stipulations of a democratic society like the Congress, which is slowly losing significance in the current scenario. An ideal reader at this juncture can be forced to know about the flip side of a democratic election and that is explicitly stated in the heading itself, that a majority in elections can never guarantee that the ruling party be democratic in its working. Further the report reads as “Even in an industrialising economy and urbanising country, it (farmer’s) belongs to the very centre of national imagination”. Congress since Independence was known for its socialist policies, but later by the early 1990s it embraced economic liberalisation. Hence this can be seen as a reassurance to the farmers of their relevance in their (Congress) agenda. The insistence on minority, majority becomes more pronounced here. One of the fundamental reasons for the exit of Congress from Indian politics is said to be its lack of an ideological base. From the time of independence, the Nehruvian government even though was a centrist party, brought to its fold the ideas of socialism. But the BJP’S rise to power was marked by extreme focus on right wing ideologies. Therefore the newspaper is trying to boost the image of the grand old party.

The reference to “laws are not as good as their enforcement by state machinery but only as good as their capacity to win people’s trust” is a subtle hint at how important it is to have the trust of people. The term ‘pro-corporate tilt’ is significant in that the current government is accused of trying to appease the big companies and their act of privatisation is also viewed with suspicion.

News representation is a pivotal aspect of media studies. The way in which the protesting farmers are presented, the aspects of the problem that they chose to highlight, the way in which the opposition, especially in a protest is presented, all has a bearing on the way in which public shapes its opinions. Moreover the newspapers ideology and the ways in which it is presented by manipulating language is an important factor.

The Telegraph reports, “Sweet Harvest”, with a sub headline, “Narendra Modi’s decision to repeal the contentious farm laws signals the importance of the “Vox populi”. The paper was more towards left politics but now showcases a soft spot for centrist parties as well (Sharma,). The word ‘vox populi’ garners the attention of the readers immediately. In fact it is a term that is defined as opinions and beliefs of the majority. The literal meaning of the Latin word is “voice of the people” (“vox populi”). Electoral politics is at the centre of discussion in this report. The reasons for the hasty repeal of farm laws, the newspaper reports could be the elections in various states as well as the ruling party’s defeat in by elections. Here farmers are presented as “sons of soil” while the current ruling dispensation as an authoritarian “regime”. Farmer’s are presented as the “vox populi” or the majority. The ruling government is a “majoritarian autocracy” that threatens a “pluralist heterogeneous republic” whose voice is symbolised by the farmer’s. *The Telegraph* is also involved with the dimensions of democratic politics. It encourages participants like the opposition, middle class, students, workers, labourers to come together. The newspaper owned by the media group ABP is a staunch critic of current central government (“Battacharya”). Moreover the newspapers especially English in West Bengal are more in line with liberal ideologies and has always gone to support the left wing.

It’s place of publication also comes to be of relevance because Calcutta, a place with legacy of communist politics is sure to influence the readers. The people exposed to decades of communist ideologies can be politically and socially informed. Therefore the harsh criticism of the establishment can have a bearing on the readers. The report presents the farmers as “key stakeholders”, which was not very evident in other news reports.

The Statesman reports on the farmer protest as “Graceful end”. The paper which played a major role from the colonial period supports left ideology. The newspapers bold interventions

against the government during the days of emergency is well known. The report (“Graceful end”) mentions at multiple instances on the diversity of India. For instance the title mentions, “If the ruler of the day is prepared to accept there is divergence between his thoughts and the views of intended beneficiaries, and is prepared to step back, democracy to that extent, must be said to work”(“Graceful end”). The word “divergence” comes in as important in the context of the words used in other sentences as “polarised reactions”, “large and heterogeneous community”, “pluralist heterogeneous community”. The report highlights the diverse voices that is sure to arise in a democratic country like India. It praises the “political bravery” that the government showed in accepting their flawed judgement. References to farmers as “stakeholders” highlights the role of Indian farmers in Indian economy. ”. Again the paper lauds the democratic engagement between the farmers and government without realising the undemocratic manner in which it was passed. The reference to multiple criticism that can come up for instance is also highlighted. But the newspaper also acknowledges the indomitable spirit displayed by the farmer’s. The reference to Gurupurab, the day on which the decision was announced to the country about the repeal is also suggestive of its motive to get hold of the Punjab territory which was at that point of time preparing for assembly elections. The word ‘consensus’ also places the democratic principle of deliberative democracy.

The Statesman tends to promote the role of the farmer’s in the success of this protest. Traditionally, The Statesman has been a left-wing, anti-establishment paper (Thakur,). For instance, it reports, “this obduracy was substantially responsible for the acceptance of their demand”. A reference to the grit and determination showcased by *The Statesman* newspaper. The paper published from Kolkata, a place which was formerly communist but now the party is on the brink of collapse. Hence the paper’s soft stance on the flawed policy of the government may be a

result of the diminishing communist relevance. Rather than overtly demanding that the laws can be harmful to the workings of the farmers, they report that the failure to come to a consensus on the issue to be the real reason behind the withdrawal. In Kolkata the communist party which had strict regulations on land politics was ousted from power once it began to change its policy. Had the central government been in power in the state, the result would also be similar.

One of the dominant discussion point in all these newspapers were the dimensions of democracy that this repeal of laws highlighted. In a democracy consultation and deliberations have a major role. But the representation is mainly focused on the role of the ruling government and the people. The role played by the bureaucracy is undermined. All papers have a pro democratic stance and also focuses more on participatory democracy.

Conclusion

“ Any ideological product is not only itself a part of a reality (natural or social), just as in any physical body, any instrument of production, or any product of consumption, it also, in contradistinction to these other phenomena reflects and refracts another reality outside itself. Everything ideological possesses meaning: it represents, depicts, or stands for something lying outside itself. In other words, it is a sign. Without signs there is no ideology. A physical body equals itself, so to speak; it does not signify anything but wholly coincides with its particular given nature. In this question there is no ideology”.(Voloshinov et al. 9)

Ideology is an indispensable part of society. Even as institutions claim to be wholly non partisan the grip of ideological interventions is difficult to break free from . Media lends voice to society. But as John Storey’s definition of ‘ideology’ highlights, media can also conceal or present a false sense of reality. The multiplicity of meanings that a word can connote as well as the structures of meanings that a metaphor can convey, all affect the messages or information that media conveys. Hence media can distort or conceal structures of meanings in their texts. One of the effective methods to analyse a text to understand it’s ideological implications is textual analysis. Textual analysis according to Alan Mckee presents the fact of how there is no single reality but only versions of it. There can be multiple interpretations where certain interpretations come to be more likely than others. Likewise there can be multiple ways in which incidents are reported or newspapers convey particular news.

One of the central discussion points of this project was how media and it’s ideology influence the presentation of news especially it’s editorial opinions. Editorial Journalism is an important aspect of the newspaper where interests of editorial board and owning corporates can influence the presentation of news.

The five English editorial columns taken from multiple newspapers manifests how it's ideology gets presented subtly through their editorial columns. In fact as Alan Mckee says newspapers can only provide versions of reality where the reader can identify or agree to certain versions (6).

The Hindu had a neutral approach but somewhere subtly it's leftist ideology especially with regard to the state and the workers gets manifested. Given the influence the paper has on civil service aspirants, the ideology of left is sure to influence their opinions. Whereas *The Wire* an independent online news portal is harsh towards its criticism of the government. Nowhere does it present a positive picture about democratic ideals being upheld. Since *The Wire* is committed to independent journalism, it's criticism of the government is noteworthy.

The Indian Express has affiliations to centrist ideology and therefore it's editorial implicitly calls for a party that supports or honours the democratic ethos of Indian society. A subtle reference to centrist parties as the Congress. Even there is a presentation of left ideology as propagandist. It is critical of the electoral majority politics. It highlights the ways in which centrist policy is more towards encouraging the diverse voices that is present in a democracy.

The Wire is one online portal that is overtly leftist in its ideology. It makes its criticism against the pro-corporate policies of the government more vocal. Rather than putting an end to the protest *The Wire* calls for a continuation of the protest for any constructive changes to happen. Criticisms against the decisions that supports market policies and since it is a paper committed to the public it is highly critical of the policy decisions of government.

The Statesman has a centrist to left ideology. It is a newspaper published from Calcutta. Therefore it is supportive of the laws but critical of the manner in which it was implemented. It gives relevance to the multiplicity of voices in a democracy. *The Telegraph* on the other hand is

critical of the one-sided decision of the government. In fact it highlights the flip sides of a majoritarian democracy. The 'vox populi' or farmer's in fact a socially, economically dominant group gained access to the corridors of power as a result of their majority. It voices the need to bring in all kinds of people with no share of majority or social or economic dominance. One of the common threads that link all these editorial columns is that it explicates in detail how this change can affect a democratic polity like India.

The tenets of textual analysis is what comes in as importance in the analysis of these editorial columns. Especially the insistence of textual analysis on context. If the reading was to be done on the basis of another context the results would be entirely different and to an extent be validated. Hence context specific reading generates results that is required of the reader provided it is substantiated by proper proofs and materials. It validates the specification of textual analysis method on how it generates only versions of reality and not single or correct reality. Since, prior to the analysis we were aware of the political affiliations, it was easy to identify the structures of meaning embedded within the texts.

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