

CHAPTER – I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Political communication or campaign through media is now turning into a basic paradigm of Indian elections. Now media is more capable of shaping public opinion and influence voting behavior. At present India have 832 permitted private satellite Television channels out of which 406 are News & Current affairs channels, and 426 are Non News & Current affairs channels¹ . Media is the means where by voter's forms opinions on the ability of political leaders or political parties. Politicians and political parties are now keen to use websites, blogs, wikis or having listening on social networking sites like as a way of reaching voters. As a result voter choice is now more heavily affected by short term factors such as campaign events, issues and candidate appeal. The emergence of electronic news media as a source of power to enjoy political influence over the electorates at this age can be termed as a new trend of electoral politics after Liberalization.

The emergence of satellite TV in the 1990's and now the internet in new millennium, the volume of communication of the electronic news media in particular has been expanded. The sphere of influence of media is increasing day by day as the coverage of news is very wide these days. More importantly media plays the role of facilitator of development, disseminator of information and being an agent of change today media is considered the fourth estate of democracy all over the world. In the context of a biggest democracy like India with the proliferation of media, their accessibility and wider reach, they have become a handy tool for politicians and political parties in reaching out to a large number of audience at a speed unknown a few decades ago. Whether the media should restrict themselves to the role of informing and educating the society on issues that are crucial to the people or set agenda for larger debate and deliberations are issues on which scholars as well as academicians have different views. However the truth is that media have become an inevitable part of the political process especially during elections and election campaign.

The role of media in contemporary society and politics holds two different conceptions of democracy. One conception of democracy has it that a democratic society is one in which the public has the means to participate in some meaningful way in the management of their own affairs and the means of information are open and free. The other conception of democracy is that the public must be barred from managing their own affairs and the means of information must be kept controlled (Chomsky, 1991). It may sound like an odd conception of democracy but it's important to understand because it has long been not just in operation but even long in theory. This theoretical discussion in this chapter is to understand how that kind of alternative conception of democracy emerges on the basis of media's role in politics and how the problem of media and disinformation enter with in that context. Walter LippMann who was the dean of American Journalists also a major theorist of liberal democracy argued that, what he called a revolution in the art of democracy could be used to manufacture consent in politics. The use of innovation's in communications to bring about agreement on the part of the public for things that they didn't want. So the use of the new techniques of propoganda in a political system here implies the role of media in societies how it can drift people from one position to another without any particular sense of change that is how media controls the public mind.

The role of media in mobilizing citizens for political participation is an important act of enhancing democracy in the state played by the news media channels. This relationship between media and mobilization needs better understanding relating it to the complex political environment where media has to function. The political actor always seeks for positive coverage by the media to win the support of the common masses as their agenda of establishing connections to the media houses. On the other hand media always holds their own agendas keeping an eye to their two distinctive objectives, political gain and the profit maximization as an industry they also have to looks after it. With this complex political environment again the whole media system is not a homogenous one it has internal diversities as belongs to different language s, different ownerships and different scope of their functions as national or local. But the close observations on media impacts on public opinion helps to understand the role of media in such a complex environment with so much of diversities that media holds

the possibilities of mobilizing people when people are exposed to diverse media and became familiar of using media as a source of political information in democracy.

The emergence of private TV news channels in Kerala has opened new ways through which people opinion and voting have been link. All this contained immediate, wide and multiple sources of information to the voters of a region thirsting for reliable and speedy access for information. The role of these private TV news channels when it has been criticized by scholars, media critics and academician, but as a source of political knowledge and information they are now influential factors to the electorate and their voting behavior. This has brought a vital change in the mood of political communication in the state. This research work will seek to analyze the impact of media on voting behavior in electoral politics of Kerala.