

**Scholar:** M SHAHID SIDDIQUI

**Supervisor:** Dr. Padmanabh Samarendra

**Dept./ Centre:** Dr. K. R. Narayanan Centre for Dalit and Minorities Studies

**Title:** Portrayal of the Minority Communities in Select Media in Contemporary India

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### ABSTRACT

#### Major Key Findings;

With more than 70,000 newspapers and 839 satellite channels (including 407 news channels) in several languages, Indians are seemingly spoilt for choice and diversity. India is already the biggest newspaper market in the world - over 100 million copies sold each day. Advertising revenues have soared. In the past two decades, the number of channels has grown from one - the dowdy state-owned broadcaster Doordarshan, to more than 500, of which more than 80 are news channels.

But in the recent months, media has taken some flak for being shallow, inaccurate and sometimes damagingly obtrusive. Today it is only in an abstract sense that free press can be considered to be a component of democratic liberty. Far from being 'independent' and 'neutral' purveyor of information the press has become an instrument of manipulation and indoctrination. This is the result of the linkages of media institutions with the wider cleavages in society.

The study reveals that a number of forces combine in varying degrees to shape the final output of the media. Hence, the 'informing-function' for which the media has been highly exalted is a value-laden process. The different case studies (*Gujarat riots, Kandhamal riots, Batla House encounter and 26/11-Mumbai attack's media coverage*) has been able to show that

so long as the media institutions are connected with the real holders of political and economic power they would interpret and reflect on reality in such a way as to defined the political, economic and social agenda of powerful who dominate both society and the State. The media does this by framing issues and keeping the tone within a particular framework, by attracting and directing attention and mobilizing opinion in favour of those issues that find favour with the privileged and powerful and by keeping the debate within the broad contours of elite consensus.

However, as the study has also shown, the economies of news business makes them dependent on certain 'sources' who would give their own version of reality and this obviously cannot be called the true media therefore are rarely in a position to establish the truth.

The print and electronic media as instruments of propaganda and both act as the tools of the ruling classes. Even though the English language press has played the role of a relatively secular alternative to the overtly communal vernacular and language press, there have been instances, like the post- Gujarat riots and Kandhamal riots when they too have been seen as vehicle of communal propaganda.

While, 26/11- Mumbai attacks radically transformed the Indian media's attitude towards covering terrorism. The media tracked the event from the word go extensively. Given the findings in Gujarat, Orissa, Batla House or Mumbai attacks, it is imperative to conclude that the Indian media has been plagued by as systematic myopia facilitated either by the advent of the saffron forces or Islamic radicals in the country.