

Television News, Political Choices and Voting Behaviours in Anand Nagar Slum Bhopal: An Ethnography Study

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Abstract: This paper examines the diverse relationships of different publics within Anand Nagar slum with these news programs and political discourses, detailing how many men and women in the slum watched and engaged with what they see as political communication on television. Following the qualitative methodological approaches specifically ethnography conducted in slums of Bhopal, the paper detailed how youth watch television news for political information and does these watching has little correlation to their electoral choices and voting decisions in their everyday lives.

Keywords: News, Television, Slum, Politics, Voting, Ideas.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Objective

There is today a vast body of work on the relationships between television news programming and political ideas amongst different publics in different national contexts. Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw's in their study "The Agenda-Setting Functions of Media" during the American presidential election in late 1960s tested the hypotheses that mass media sets the agenda for political campaigns, and influence attitudes toward political issues¹ (1972, 177). Bernard C. Cohen, (1963, 13) [3] following McCombs and Shaw's work, claimed that as many people seem to get their news from radio and television as from the newspaper. They pointed out that the press "may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (as cited in McCombs and Shaw 1972, 177) [14][15]. In the mid-eighties, David B. Hill in a study of "Viewer Characteristics and Agenda Setting by Television News" in America examined the influence of audience characteristics and modes of experience of television news, arguing that television news recall, comprehension, and opinions on several factors may influence the agenda-setting process (1985, 340) [10].

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¹ Ten US presidential elections (1968) ago in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the agenda of issues that a small group of undecided voters regarded as the most important ones of the day was compared with the news coverage of public issues in the news media these voters used to follow the campaign (McCombs 2005, 543).

Shanto Iyengar in their study "How Citizens Think about National Issues [8]: A Matter of Responsibility" carried out in three Village areas of Suffolk County (Eastern Long Island, New York) claimed that "most Americans possess but meagre information about current issues or events and virtually all their sense of political issues is beyond the range of personal experiences" (Iyengar 1989, 878) [11].

More recently, studies of political cognition and socialization have extended this line of research, exploring how news enters into individuals' everyday awareness and readiness to act on social, economic and political issues (Gamson 1992; Graber 1984; Neuman et al. 1992, as cited in Jensen 1998, 4) [5][6][9][12]. For instance, William A. Gamson and David Stuart pointed out that "the media, in this view, provide a series of arenas in which symbolic contests are carried out among competing sponsors of meaning"² (1992, 55) [18][19]. Neuman et al. in their work "Media Discourse as a Symbolic Contest: The Bomb in Political Cartoons" examining how citizens in democracy come to make sense of the political world around them describe the interaction between media messages and what individuals already know and believes about the world (Neuman et al. 1992, 1).

The intersections of television news programming with the contexts, ideas and everyday lives of audiences have been a significant field of inquiry, with scholarly contributions that have re-defined in many ways both the scape of examination, and knowledges about the 'field' (Gerbner 1985; Iyengar 1989; Morley 1992; Just and Crigler 2000) [7][13][17]. In recent decades, there have also been important studies that have provided understanding of these engagements in contemporary India (see Rajagopal 2001; Mehta 2008; Batabyal 2012; Vasanti and Kumar 2016;) [2][20][21]. However, there are limited qualitative studies that have provided understanding of news programming and its relationship with the voting behaviour of people in slums of Bhopal

Within this context, the objectives of this paper are:

1. To look closely at the relationship of news programming with everyday lives of people in Anand Nagar basti (slum) in Bhopal, examining closely how

² Participants in symbolic contests read their success or failure by how well their preferred meanings and interpretation are doing in various media arenas. Prominence in these areas is an outcome measure in its own right, independent of evidence on the degree to which the audience is being influenced (Gamson 1992, 56).



news and political discourses are read and how meanings are constructed by men and women in different contexts, and how these interpretations and meanings then relate to the political choices and voting decisions.

2. This paper aims to explore the significant relationship with television viewing in Anand Nagar slum Bhopal based on different television situation and readings of particular genre (such as news/political discourses) in context to everyday lives.

II. RESEARCH QUESTION

Television has come to occupy significant role in Indian public life. Nalin Mehta points out that regardless of its actual impact on the voting public, it assumes an important role, becoming central to the political process beyond often argued political economy equations, as the growth of Indian news television can only be understood in the context of a society with a strong argumentative tradition of public reasoning (Mehta 2008, 34) [16]. In my long ethnographic engagement (from December 2013 to July 2018) with Anand Nagar people, in relation, in Anand Nagar,

1. I explored how political communication is influential in political participation; and analysed various dimensions of television viewing, role of local news and mediated communications in state campaign coverage, its readings and the shaping/shifting of ideas of political participation, voting decisions etc.

I detailed the relationship of political histories of Anand Nagar slum with their past voting patterns and political participation.

2. I explained how and in what ways watching political news and discourses on television had no correlation with their voting behaviour. Considering their political information needs and participation as narrated by them.
3. I explained how and why political news is not an issue of discussion in the lives of women audiences in Anand Nagar, but yet these women do vote.

They relate voting participations with happiness and equality, and by giving vote they see themselves as being treated as equal to men in their society. In addition, I emphasised on unmediated or interpersonal modes of communication as both men and women in basti were involved in such forums of communication for political information such as '*maha jan sabha*' or '*jan sampark*' that were often correlated with their political choices and voting behaviours.

4. I also detailed how both men and women relate their participation in events such as '*jan sampark*' with their political choices and voting decisions because they feel that as citizens, their engagement in the political process somehow related with their own development.

For women, television news is not always useful so they have their own networks of local news; therefore, finally

5. I explored how and in what ways '*apni khabren*', the news based on their personal life and surroundings was important for them.

III. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative and interpretive approach are used in this study to gain more realistic understandings and explanations of men and women and their social realities in Anand Nagar because study found it related with an empathic understanding of human behaviour. During the course of fieldwork, researcher lived in a rented room in Anand Nagar basti, to understand how representations and their interpretations are influenced by social world. So, it helped to approached the field and establish a routine to meet and discussed with the respondents as an insider as suggested by Alfered Schutz (1967). Researcher spent nearly three and a half years in Anand Nagar field in alternate intervals and enjoy the privileges of access to Anand Nagar people and their lives in their social world. This study in Anand Nagar slum was conducted mainly with the aid of techniques of participant observation, and in-depth interviews.

The field work was begun with pilot study³ and this was adopted to check the scope of research problems in term of methodology, sampling and data collection. The field work in Anand Nagar was begin in November 2013 and ended in July 2017. The fieldwork was conducted in four phases, including the first phase pilot study. However, recently in 2020 researcher visited the field (for 15 days) to check the recent political development and changes in media habits of basti people in relation to political news. Overall, 50 Families are selected as a sample, where 80 people were interviewed including 49 women and 31 men. They belonged to age group of 16 and above, with the oldest person being in the late 80s. A systematic questionnaire and open questions were used to collect data; in addition, separate field-dairies were maintained to record the given responses of each selected sample. Using these techniques in the study researcher followed flexible format of question while interviewing the respondents.

The open-ended question approach gave tendency to make account of all that was happening in the field and the respondents were always allowed to take discussion in any direction according to their own interest. Also questions on behaviour or their action were also asked as it takes place subsequently and the observations were noted/recorded as fieldnotes in separate dairy to support each respondent account and try to create as complete picture of event as possible. In addition, single significant theme was emerged from the analyses (detailing their own network of news '*Apni Khabren*', how they see themselves as a leader, perception for discussion platform '*Jan Sampark*' and perception for their own Electoral Choices). Findings are discussed in terms of statements given by men and women in Anand Nagar in relation with television viewing and corelation (if any) with voting habits or choices.

³A pilot study has been conducted in the area to get the preliminary understanding of television access, viewing habits and ownership pattern understand media history of the slum. This preliminary study has been done from conversation with several of the people residing in the Anand Nagar Basti and preliminary field report is given to this proposed study.



'Apni Khabren', 'Jan Sampark' and Electoral Choices

Anand Nagar came up in 1986 on land that was then in the possession of Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL). Its residents recall several struggles in the early years, but in recent decades, the area has seen much development. Part of the Govindpura assembly constituency in Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) has been the ruling party here since the 1980's. Other political parties in the fray here have been Indian National Congress (INC), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), The Janata Party (JNP) and a new entrant in Bhopal politics Aam Adami Party (AAP). In recent decades, there has been increasingly fierce competition for votes among parties, which residents believe has resulted in accountability and the area's development. Residents say political leaders have always looked at the slum as their 'special vote bank', though the local BJP party worker and Manish Yadav, a 46-year-old who lived earlier in Anand Nagar resident but now shifted to Ratna Giri, insists they are not merely a vote bank. "*Maine apni zindagi ki shuruat yahin se ki thi ye log hamara pariwar hai* (I started my own life from here these people are our family)". Manish says '*yahan BJP ka apna rajnitic itihas hai*' (the BJP has its own rich political history in the area). Lalit Gupta, 24 years, a postgraduate student of political science in DAVV (Devi Ahilya Vishwa Vidyalaya) Indore, met me occasionally during his university vacations when he came home. Being a student of political science, he was interested in the political activities of Anand Nagar, so I had particularly benefited by talking to him on political issues related to Anand Nagar because he not only helped me to know the area's political histories but also provided me with the local perspective on political issues.

Lalit explains that Anand Nagar is one of the most 'politically active' slums in Bhopal because it is adjacent to the BJP's grounds where often BJP '*maha jan sabhas*' (conventions) are held, and because of its proximity, people of Anand Nagar do participate in these *maha jan sabhas*. These meetings in recent years have been organised primarily to contact the public on political issues by the incumbent chief minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan. In addition, many young men say that the live and recorded telecast of these meetings are also televised on channel Zee Chhattisgarh and DD Madhya Pradesh in their news bulletins but they do not like watching them as they do not telecast the detailed versions of the proceedings. People say they would rather attend the original platforms for more detailed information. Lalit says, "Prior to the elections, these *sabhas* or general public meetings are held in BJP grounds near our basti. Millions of people gather from far-flung areas of M.P. to participate in political discussions. Many people from our basti get involved in these meetings... I also go (*basti ke bohut se log jate hai, mai bhi jata hun*) ... I get political information of my state and our leader Shivraj" says Lalit.

Lokesh Kumar a 24-year young man preparing for competitive exams said that the meaning of politics in their basti is slightly different: everyone living in the slums becomes a '*neta*' (leader) when they participate in this *jan sabha* as they not only get to listen to the speech of their leader, but they also participate in group discussions held in these meetings where the government takes opinions from

them on issues and sometimes also takes decisions based on those from their opinion. "*Hum khud ko neta ke roop main dekhten hai* (we see ourselves as leaders)". Om Prakash, a 62-year-old, retired government driver since knew the place from its earliest times, so as a voter for a long time, he was aware of the political conditions of that place. He says here political activities are operated through '*jan sampark*' (mass contact) between public and government. Rather than television promotions, these *jan sampark* programmes, he says, are a better platform for political connections for '*hamare jaisi garib jantaa*' (poor people like us) to connect directly with the government for their daily life issues. Many men say they find it helpful to go and attend these public meetings. At the same time, they say it does not mean that they do not watch television for political information. Television is the only window for them that connect them with national leadership images but for their own immediate interests and development needs, they mainly trust these large gatherings.

Women in the basti, however, said that they had their own trusted internal networks for local news and that was more valuable than television news⁴. References were frequently made to listening to and reporting 'news' in networks that they called networks of '*apni khabren*' (own news). These networks, women reminisced, were now not as strong as they used to be once but were not still extinct. Women recall that whenever any bad incident took place somewhere in Anand Nagar on any specified day, it would spread like a fire among families through gossip. As they say, they enjoy listening to their *apni khabren* (own news) and do not get that pleasure from watching television news. Kamla, a 50-year primary passed women who sell '*chudiyen*' (Bengal) in Anand Nagar market remembers, "Whenever there was something good or bad that happened in someone's house, the information would also go from house to house in the form of news, and in this way the people in the neighbourhood knew about the mutual affairs of surrounding areas. And this is the news for us (*hamare live yahi khabar hoti hai*)."⁴ Whereas women in basti say they rely on these collective rumours for (more relevant) local news, men here use and get involved with rumours for 'political entertainment'. They say they also have their own network of 'buzz' which they use to discuss political issues, though, for political decisions, they often rely on rumours spread through television.

Many men in basti believe that media almost ensures the victory of any leader. During elections, they say, media opinion polls make peoples' opinions and provides public spaces for the political rumour. People watch these opinion polls on news channels, start conversations around them, and thus the media generates a party wave among the general public. A 38-year-old man Rakesh who lived in

⁴ *Apni khabren* refers to news mainly about events that happened inside the slum and these events are normally not part of television news. It includes internal news about someone failures, disappointments or success stories in the basti.

semi-kutchra house, but it was difficult to imagine his house with his personality, whenever I met him, his personality put me in a surprise, that despite being less educated; he was working as a sales executive in an international company. He told me that earlier he did not live in the slum but, because of a deficit of a few years ago, his everything was sold out and he had to live in slums with his family. Rakesh, for instance, says when he hears people discussing the victory of a leader it motivates him to participate in the discussion. He remembers that a few years ago when he heard the rumours of a one-sided victory of a certain political leader, a fear of wasting his vote made him giving his opinion in favour of the same leader.

Women in the basti say they still do not watch many political discourses on television, and also feel shy to go outside to attend the '*Jan Sampark*' meetings. But they feel comfortable attending gatherings inside the basti where the female political representative of BJP and INC from their own area addresses them. Nisha a 26-year-old secondary pass woman, she learns a course in beauty and skin and is currently running her own beauty parlour in Anand Nagar market from last three years in her own shop. During the time of the pilot study, the set-up work of her parlour was in progress but now it is completed. Nisha says "*Isse aurten bhi khulke charcha kar pati hain*" (this is done so that women in basti can openly discuss) ... we talk of issues related to managing the kitchen and home in '*kam paisa*' (less money) ... these issues can't be discussed in the general meetings". Nisha, adds: "not all the women here go to attend such meetings I also do not go there (*mai bhi nahi jati*). Party workers sometimes organise these meetings in our locality where we can discuss everyday local problems". The young women in basti connect their own political engagement with interest to resolve issues of their development, equality, and security. Many women like to be part of these social groups because their problems would then be discussed and that they say is not possible through the mediated discourse of television. Along with this, there are open discussions on issues like women education, women health, and their safety. They affirm that in Anand Nagar, the BJP government is creating equal spaces to enable women to participate in political interventions and in the larger public sphere through these discursive open meetings.

Electoral divisions of caste and religion are not visible in the contemporary political history of Anand Nagar. Instead, emerging economic or professional equality seems to play a special role in the participation in the political process in the basti. During fieldwork, this researcher found that the BJP was popular among the Muslim community as well in the basti. Though they are less in numbers in the area and are belong to low-income groups, they have always played an active part in the elections. Shahid Ahmed, a 38-year-old, illiterate Muslim man working as an Artisan in lehenga factory (Indian bridal skirt) where he embroidered on '*lehenga*' (long skirt). He often became emotional during the conversation and said '*Aisa nahi hai ki wo hamare bina jeet nahi sakte*' (it is not that the BJP cannot win without our votes) ... but our few votes are also important to the government". Shahid Ahmed adds: "Politics is not just about winning elections the party wants to build a relationship

with the public (*sirf jitna hi jaruri nahi hai*). This is not a one-time victory or politics; they want to take everyone together so that development will happen sooner (*vikas jaldi hoga*)."

Shabana, 24 years, an illiterate woman, who lives in Anand Nagar from last eight years in a separate cluster where about seven Muslim families live together in a rented home. She says their families are not conversant with Hindu families: '*Hamara ana jana nahi hai*' (we do they come into each other's homes), but her brothers, she says, have some Hindu friends whose houses sometimes they go to. These Muslim families in the basti say they feel secure under the governance of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh. From last fifteen years, she says, "We have hardly seen any religious political discourse or commentaries against us by our state government on television or in political rallies during the election". Arvind Rajagopal has discussed the functioning of television, and its influences in India in his book "Politics after television: Religious Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Indian Public" arguing that "In most critical accounts, television is understood in terms of its ideological power, by virtue of the ruling order it springs from, and in terms of the ideas it helps circulate. A certain abstraction characterizes these arguments, so that domination occurs without viewers being aware of it, and despite the fact that viewers' own experience of television (including that of critics) does not imply such an outcome" (Rajagopal 2001, 3-4). Many women in basti say they do not watch political news or discourses on television, never discuss political issues and say political news does not seem interesting to them yet they do vote. Many men in basti pointed out that women's participation in voting has increased in the last several years in basti⁵. They recall those earlier women in the basti did not vote, as their elders did not consider it right for men and women to go out together in the society, but this difference is changing; now many women in basti vote.

Sudhir a 35-year-old man is an owner of the mobile shop at Bijli Nagar colony just opposite to Anand Nagar. According to him, he came from the village Sonda with his family 15 years ago to live in Anand Nagar. At that time there were few *jhuggis* later this land was occupied by people. Then, to make their vote bank, the government has given us these land rights legally and now people are breaking kuccha-houses to build pucca-house. Sudhir says in his family, women do not watch the political news and do not know whom to vote for, but what is important for them is that they go out with their husbands to vote. '*Unhe ahsas hota hai*' (they realise) they (women) have the same rights as men '*unke paas purushe ke saman adhikar hai*'. Ajay adds, "Though my wife is not interested in the political issues but

⁵ Voting percentage of female voters increased in Bhopal in the second phase of Lok Sabha elections for 10 parliamentary constituencies compared to the Lok Sabha elections of 2009. Percentage of female voters was 36.16 percent in the year 2009 while it was 54.61 percent in elections held on April 17, 2014, which is 11.02 percent more (voting percentage of male and female voters increased, Saturday, 19 April 2014, *The Pioneer*).

voting out with me gives her happiness (*mere sath vote dene se use khushi multi hai*). Many young men point out that the context to women living in Bhopal slums is different from the women living in the Delhi or Mumbai slums. Very few of them are educated, even fewer work outside the house, so their understanding of the political issues is not comprehensive. Many women acknowledge that they are not interested in the politics, and for voting decisions they depend on their husbands, but going with their men, standing in line, and voting on the 'modern machine' gives them happiness. Yashoda is a 48 years old widow who came to Bhopal with her two sons and a daughter after the death of her husband and later staying in Govind Puri for some time, she settled down in Anand Nagar. For the past twelve years, she is working as a sale woman in a company appointed through vendor she goes home to home and sells promotional products (such as soap, oil, diapers etc). Her elder son Rinku is doing the same work with her while younger son Goldy and younger daughter Sonia are still studying. Yashoda says, 'vote dena acha lagta hai (it feels good to vote)'. She remembers the day when the first time she went to vote with her husband, it made her feel that she had done something that was larger than life. Yashoda adds: "As I do not watch election campaigns or political news so, 'mujhe pata nahi kise vote dena sahi hai', (I don't know whom to vote) so I discuss with men about voting and take joint decisions (*milkar faisla karte hain*)". She says her husband said that she should vote for BJP So she voted for BJP. Before my marriage, her father used to tell her to vote but now her husband tells her who to vote. Many women in basti explain that they do not vote on their own will, and that their voting decisions depend on the decisions of men in the family: men in the family would generally discuss with each other on voting issues and they would listen and learn from their discussion on voting issues⁶.

Scholars such as Nalin Mehta have claimed that television news or discourses have an actual impact on the voting behaviour of public and become central to the political process. He understands television news in the context of a society with a strong tradition of public thinking (2008, 34). Many women in Anand Nagar basti, however, cited less knowledge of the political issues and said they really did not know who the right candidate would be to vote for, so they asked their menfolk before they voted. At the same time, most women were not interested in watching programmes on the political issues or debating issues-based politics, and for them, therefore, watching television was not useful in mediating political awareness and influencing voting decisions. For voting decision, most said they trusted their close community and social groups and family discussions with the menfolk. For most (older) women then, who were neither interested in wider political issues and did not watch political news programmes, their voting decision was hardly mediated by television programming. Their participation in family social groups and listening in to political talk of men

are more significant influences to voting behaviour. Quite different from Mehta (2008), many women also say political promotions are not necessary and do not influence their decision. They say that television does not engender face to face interaction between voters and leaders and so watching these leaders on television they say is not a 'trustworthy' interaction for them. They say such interaction becomes a more trustworthy experience through interpersonal communication '*amne samne batchit*'. Saroj says, '*mujhe nahi pata*' (I don't know) whether television is effectively promoting leaders during elections or not I do not watch such promotions '*main nahi dekhti*'. Saroj adds: "They often visit our place... I rely more on these visits. There is a difference between looking at television and seeing the person in front of you (*TV par dekhane aur saamane milane mein farq lagata hai*)". She relies more on she says on the interpersonal visits of leaders in their areas. Though '*unka aana*' (their interpersonal visits) do not necessarily have a direct influence on voting decisions, but these visits are a source of information. Women in Anand Nagar basti are more dependent on these social groups for political awareness and say they place more trust on interpersonal communication for political awareness. They like visiting and attending the *jan sampark* public meetings and *maha sabha* organised by BJP, however, they had asked their husband before voting. Vanita Leah Falcao [4] claimed two points are often made with regard to the urban experience of elections in India: firstly, urban voters are less enthusiastic about voting's; and secondly, that they vote more for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) giving the BJP an identity of being a party of urban interests (2009, 99). Many women watch soap but do not watch the political news as not politically independent seemingly their voting patterns and behaviours are influenced by their negotiations and interactions in '*Jan Sampark*' or public sphere. As compared to women, most men in basti say they are interested in watching and discussing political issues. Even they, however, say that watching political discourses or leaders' promises on television have no influence on their voting decisions. As Rakesh says, who they have to vote for is their own decision (*ye mera apna faisla hai*). Many men say that before they vote they think about their previous experience of that leader that they say they built from common visits and meetings of the leader with basti people. '*Kya unhone basti ka vikas kiya hai*' (has this politician doing something for the basti or not). Therefore, it seems that voting decision is influenced by their past experiences and the positive actions of leaders who successfully related to the reform of their own everyday lives. Bhagwandass say seeing news related to politics does not make any difference to decisions and says as a voter, '*sabke khudke faisle hoten hai*' (everyone has their own voting decisions). It is important for them, he adds, that the leader work for them (*hamare liye kaam kare*). It seems that peoples immediate, localised, past experiences are much more powerful in this context than media awareness in regard to political or voting influences. In the basti, while voting, many say they keep that previous experience in their minds.

⁶ Agarwal (2006) argues that the election process in India is full of male patriarchy and dominance which acts as obstacles for women's involvement in the political issue. The lack of political voice and the poor representation of women in Parliament is the result of exclusion on gender basis (as cited in Rai 2011, 47).

Many young men, similar to women, say they trust 'Jan Sampark' or general meetings for local and state political awareness; however, for perspective on national political issues and leadership, they do watch television programs. They say they attend public meetings, watch television news and discuss political issues with other men at home in the family, neighbours', and friends, and then vote. Gaurav points out that he watches the political news only on matters concerning national politics; for state politics, he relies more on attending general meetings held in the area and says '*soch samajh ke vote deta hu*' (I think carefully before I give my vote). Many younger men say they vote to elect a government who work for their welfare '*jo hamare vikas ke liye kaam kare*'; they say their vote is powerful and they know their voting can change the government. As Gaurav says, '*neta apne aap jeet nahi sakta... hamare vote par nirbhar hai*' (a leader cannot win himself... his winning depends on our voting). Gaurav adds: "Promotion is necessary. It gives an idea to us about new parties, prominent leaders, and their working status. We can estimate who we should vote for (*ham andaaja laga sakate hai ki kise vote dena chahiye*). If political parties would not visible on media how people will come to know about them".

For men in Anand Nagar then, voting is related to the faith that they have the power to change the government and they can use their vote for their own interests. They say that political promotions on television are necessary for leaders and say it is important for both, 'us' (the citizens) and for 'them' (the leaders) because with these campaigns they say leaders can approach them and also, they get an idea about their leaders and the parties. In response to concerns often expressed in the public sphere about the 'personalization' of electoral promotions, where television programmes have really focused on the (often personal attributes of) candidates rather than the political debate itself. Maya Ranganathan, details how television coverage of political leaders and parties affects voting behaviour of people. She analyses the role of television in electoral politics in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu and pointed out how television acquired centre stage as an electoral issue in the 2006 Tamil Nadu assembly elections, even going to the extent of dictating poll alliances⁷ (Mehta 2008, 106) [1]. Quite different from Ranganathan's argument, many young men in Anand Nagar say that sometimes leaders adopt the strategy to buy votes and distribute gifts and cash to influence vote during elections and believe that people voted for these small benefits. However, they say, such benefits hardly change anyone's voting inclinations in the basti, because they say they know such leaders disappear once their motives get fulfilled. Rakesh says, "*Yahan paid vote ki strategy nahi chalti...achhi image jyada mayne rakhti hai* (the strategy of paying for votes does not work here as we have faith only on the work that is done for us...a good image is more useful)". In Anand Nagar, mediated political knowledge than did not seem to have had a significant

relationship with peoples' participation as voters. Television programming was not related by voters as having been important for their choices but other determinants like income, education, and age (though not gender) did have correlations with ideas and choices. Discussions and meetings emerged as the strongest factors in political participation among both women and men, with most citing histories of participation in programmes such as *Jan Sampark*.

IV. FINDING

For political information, men and women in Anand Nagar basti often collect news and information from a variety of sources. These sources involve both mediated and occasional non-mediated (face-to-face) communication. I found in field work, that men and women were involved in both mediated and non-mediated communication. For instance, for political information they always trust interpersonal or non-mediated communication while for other information they trusted mediated versions of televised communications. Being politically active in '*maha jan sabha*' they trust these occasional non-mediated meeting platforms for information regarding state and its '*neta*' (leaders). Sometime they see themselves in the role of a leader considering the fact that they able to give an opinion and thus their participation in these non-mediated political discourses provide them with an opportunity to engage with closely political scenarios of their state and political leaders that is not possible with mediated discourses such as television.

Men watch and trust televised political images of national leaders to connect themselves with national political spheres however for the local political information and development needs they mainly trust '*jan sampark*'. Women had developed their own network of news called '*apni khabren*' (own news). *Apni khabren* are the significant source of non-mediated news for them such as mutual affairs of everyday lives and participating in such interpersonal activities gave them 'pleasure'. So, while women generally did not watch news programmes, collective rumours are sources of 'pleasure' for women. However, for men these are the sources correlated with 'political entertainment'. Thus, the 'collective rumours', 'buzz' and *apni khabren* have different meanings for men and women in Anand Nagar, but for men these pleasures are mass-produced by television programming itself. Attending public meeting such as *jan sampark* made women more capable of participating in political forums where they could confidently and comfortably have discussions on issues (such as their security issues, inflation issues related to their everyday household living and other area of development) with their leader that are not possible through televised communication. These *jan sampark* (public meetings) serve as an open forum for political information and discussion for everyday life problems and solutions. I witnessed that women in Anand Nagar did not watch much political news on television, yet it gave them joy to vote in elections.

⁷ (see Maya Ranganathan, Give me a vote, and I will give you a TV set Television in Tamil Nadu politics, in Mehta 2008, Ch-6 106).

In some emotional statements given by women, it may be inferred perhaps that for women being politically active is an experience related to their happiness, independence and the same of fulfilment of rights that they feel they get from voting, while their voting choices are more influenced by men in the family. Listening to political talks of men in family and participating social groups are more significant in understanding political issues and influencing voting decision. On the other hand, many men in Anand Nagar believe that voting is their own decisions; they gathered information from different mediums but their decisions were only influenced by their own experiences. However, for opinions on national political information and on issues of 'national leadership', both men and women considered mediated images as a significant source.

V. CONCLUSION

Most men and many women in the basti nevertheless do watch news programmes on different channels, but this viewership they say has little correlation to political attitudes or electoral choices. Televised discourses for them are not the key sources for political information or awareness; they take their immediate past experiences into consideration while deciding who to vote for. Political news provides a platform for independent thinking and ideas on important political issues, but it does not influence voting. For women, true 'news' relates to events of importance in their everyday lives that are their '*apni khabren*', and for these reports, they do not need television. These local news experiences are related to their mutual interactions and sharing of everyday 'rumours' with other women in basti that are a source of comfort and 'pleasure'.

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