Chapter 1
Introduction

The US invasion and occupation of Iraq has been one of the bloodiest global conflicts in recent history. Media played a vital role in covering the event in particular ways and also in the ‘agenda settings’ through ‘embedded journalism’ of global news agencies. Indian media also provided a wide range of coverage on Iraq war. This research on Globalisation of Media and Cultural Hegemony: A Critical Analysis of the Coverage of Iraq War in the Indian Media focuses on Indian media coverage of the Iraq war from a critical perspective.

The process of globalisation results in intensification of worldwide social relations. It has tremendous implications for social, economic, political, cultural, technological and environmental dimensions of global life. Media have been integrated through a global network of communication, transportation, and trade. The technological innovation dissolved the barriers of time and distance and enhanced free flows of information and entertainment. This integrates societies into a ‘global village’ and market-based capitalism. The major issues of the globalisation of media are trans-border data flow, cultural imperialism, the vertical flow of information, entertainment, media trade and advertisements. Global media produce, distribute, regulate major media outlets and play its part in global economics. Multinational corporations are the key actors in the globalisation of media systems; they produce goods, control markets and disseminate products through media and new information technologies.

Though global media opens up new horizons, it embodies the values of capitalism, including individualism, consumerism, hedonism and commercialism. It challenges and transforms the cultural heterogeneity and the autonomy of
cultural space of indigenous, traditional and minority communities. Media promotes a set of dominant views which involve the persuasion of power, control, authority and ideology. Such cultural hegemony of the media is potentially a threat to traditional values and indigenous cultures. Mass media plays a dominant role in constructing the cultural hegemony with a new media culture. Cultural imperialism or hegemony is a kind of cultural domination of the powerful capitalist societies. The cultural hegemony of the media advances the “One World, One Market” ideology of the powerful nations of the world.

The neo-liberal economic policies, post-colonial ideologies of culture, and the convergence of information and digital technology of telecommunication are the new modes of hegemony of developed nations. Thus the cultural hegemony is a domination of nation, group, institution or class and it operates through the complex systems of domination strategies. Mass media have the capacity to deliver the cultural hegemonic messages at the global level. The media coverage of Iraq war was one of the best examples for the cultural hegemony of global media.

In the first half of the 20th Century, mass media in India was part of the nationalist movement and social reform efforts. Initial decades of Indian independence also witnessed the media serving the nation-building process. For the last few decades, global media has transformed the Indian media from the national concerns and values to the capitalist market ideologies. Indian mass media system is transformed by the technological revolution from the last two decades, and it has a massive impact on processing, dissemination, and consumption of news. Indian media provided a wide coverage to the Iraq war and it reflected the complexities of the new age as well as new interests.

On 20 March 2003 (IST), the US and its allies launched a direct ground attack on Iraq. The US and British troops entered Baghdad, the capital of Iraq on 9 April 2003. On April 15, President Bush declared that “the regime of Saddam Hussein is no more”. The US thus came to dominate 25 million Iraqi people and the world’s second largest oil reservoirs. The Iraq war coverage in the Indian media shows how the cultural hegemony perpetuated through the global media
percolated to the Indian context as well. This study analyses the coverage of Iraq war in the Indian media and the particular interests involved in the coverage in both English as well as the regional language newspapers.

**Review of Literature**

A lot of literature has been available on globalisation, media, war and terrorism since the 1990s. The advent of new media and information technologies have transformed the global media landscape. *Many Voices One World* was a classic work of UNESCO by Seán MacBride (*MacBride Report*). Its aim was to analyse communication problems in modern societies, particularly relating to mass media and news, to consider the emergence of new technologies, and to suggest a kind of communication order to diminish the problems and to further peace and human development (MacBride 1982).


The media coverage of ‘war and terrorism’ is an on-going debate in media studies. In the media coverage of the Iraq war, a large body of literature, critical reviews and content analyses are available. In media coverage, multi-dimensional literatures are also available. Since the 1990s, media studies produced a lot of research in the field of war coverage. The following literature review looks only the pioneer works on media, Iraq war and its coverage.

Over the past 30 years, especially after the Iranian revolution, coverage of West Asia has greatly increased in the Western press (Said 1981; Sheikh, Price and Oshagan 1995). Edward Said’s *Orientalism* is a crucial study of the nineteenth century roots of the West’s continuing (mis) understanding of the Middle East.
Edward W. Said and Luann Walther (1997) look at how American popular media has used and perpetuated a narrow and unfavourable image of Islam. Edward Said charges that Western media coverage of Islam not only simplifies complex cultural and historical causes and consequences into journalistic clichés, but is also often marked by ethnocentrism and even racism. Michael W. Suleiman (1983) finds that Western media easily generalise and distort the images of Arab leaders and organisations. Analysing the news coverage on ABC television and in *The New York Times* from 1979 to 1987, it is found that coverage of Muslims and Arabs focus on negative events. Critics have argued that Western media’s treatment of Islam and of Arabs is ideologically laden and presents an incomplete image that hinders true understanding (Sheikh, Price and Oshagan 1995).

In the case of media coverage of Iraq war, there are different views in media studies. Most of them were reflecting the coverage analysis based on different perspectives and approaches. Bennett (2007) and Lynch (2008) have done pioneering work about the media coverage of Iraq war. In *War and the Media: Reporting Conflict 24/7*, Thussu and Freedman (2003) critically examines the changing patterns of media coverage of war and consider the complexity of the relationship between mass media and governments in wartime. *Embedded: Weapons of Mass Deception: How the Media Failed to Cover the War on Iraq* (Schechter, Danny and Amherst 2003); *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Mythmaker from the Crimea to Iraq* (Knightley 2004); *Tell Me Lies: Propaganda and Media Distortion in the Attack on Iraq* (Miller 2004) are the prominent works on media coverage of Iraq war. Ralph D. Berenger edited the book on *Global Media Go to War: Role of News and Entertainment Media During the 2003 Iraq War* (2004) and it contains 45 essays written by media scholars from around the world. It is the most comprehensive analysis available of the media's role in the 2003 Iraq war.

*Embedded: The Media at War in Iraq, An Oral History* (Katovsky and Carlson 2004) focuses on the embedded media programme during the invasion of Iraq. Howard Tumber and Jerry Palmer’s work *Media at War: The Iraq Crisis*
(2004) is an essential reading. They examine the phenomenon of embedded Journalism out of the more than 3000 journalists covering the invasion of Gulf War II. They analysed how journalists covered and reported the Iraq war and its aftermath. It offers a critical review of the pre-war, war and post-war phases. It provides an invaluable framework for understanding how the media and news organisations operated during the Iraq crisis. These prominent books conclude that embedded flow of information contributed to distorted coverage of Iraq war.

In *Media and the Path to Peace*, Gadi Wolfsfeld argues that media play a destructive role and it disturbs the peace both in society and in people. Wolfsfeld's central argument is that there is a fundamental contradiction between news value and the nature of a peace process. This often leads the media to play a destructive role in attempts to make peace, but variations in the political and media environment affect significantly in exactly how the media behave. *Bring ‘Em On*: *Media and Politics in the Iraq War* (Artz Lee and Yahya R. Kamalipor 2005) maintains that the mainstream media in the United States manufactured consent for the Iraq war and how various media served to advance the Bush administration's Iraq intervention.

The books like *Now They Tell US: The American Press and Iraq* (Massing 2004); *The War in Iraq and Why the Media Failed US* (Dodge 2007); *When the Press Fails: Political Power and the News Media from Iraq to Katrina* (Bennett Lawrence, Livingstone 2007) focus on the experiences of embedded journalists during the initial invasion of Iraq. Dodge examines how pressures from the Bush administration, pressures from corporate consolidation of media ownership, patriotism and self-censorship, and other factors affected in the war reporting.

*Denial and Deception: A Study of the Bush Administration's Rhetorical Case for Invading Iraq* (Kennedy-Shaffer 2006) presents the first academic study of how President Bush bullied the nation into invading Iraq and why the White House no longer controls public opinion. *Framing Analysis of a Conflict: How Newspapers in Five Asian Countries Covered the Iraq War* (Lee and Maslog 2006) examined the coverage of the Iraq war by newspapers from India, Sri Lanka,
Indonesia, and the Philippines. It was framed according to the principles of war/peace journalism outlined by Johan Galtung. The findings, based on a content analysis of 442 stories from eight newspapers, suggest a slight peace journalism framing. Rajiv Chandrasekaran’s *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone* (2006) provides a critical look at the civilian leadership of the American reconstruction project in Iraq. He shares details of the events from the end of the invasion phase of the war until the official transfer of power to the Iraqis and the growing insurgency in the country. Patrick Cockburn’s book on *Muqtada Al-Sadr and the Fall of Iraq* (2008) is crucial in understanding the new political dynamic that governs today's Iraq in the aftermath of the US invasion of 2003, and the implications for Iraq's future of the newly empowered and hitherto repressed majority of the Iraq population, the Shi'as.

picture of war reporting that clarifies the understanding of the relation between media and political elites during wartime (Robinson 2012).

Thus the literature review based on Iraq war media coverage reveals that media played a biased role on the Iraq war and it challenged the ethics of journalism. Moreover the coverage of Iraq war depended on “embedded journalism” and Western media perspectives. The embedded media people disseminated war reports only from what they gathered from the American army in Iraq. It did not permit a full coverage of the real war and never fully criticised the unethical practices of the occupying forces. The Western media controlled the flow of information with hegemonic manipulations. The linkage between war coverage and Western hegemony becomes evident.

Objectives of the Study

The major objective of this study is to find out the ways in which cultural hegemony of the media operate in the age of globalisation. The following are the detailed objectives: 1. to analyse the nature of globalisation of media; 2. to examine how cultural hegemony operate through global media and 3. to find out the major elements of the coverage of the Iraq war in the Indian media. The research questions of this study are: What is the nature of the globalisation of media? How do the Indian media reflect particular interests in their coverage of events like the Iraq war? How does cultural hegemony reflect on the Iraq war reporting in the Indian media? What are the significant differences in the coverage of the Iraq war among the English and regional language newspapers?

Methodology

This research uses analytical and comparative research methods. Tools of communication research are also employed. Content analysis is used for analysing newspaper coverage of Iraq war. The study looks at the patterns of the coverage of the Iraq war in Indian media with four selected leading Indian newspapers: The Times of India, The Hindu, The Indian Express and Malayala Manorama. Among them, the first three are English daily newspapers and the last one is a regional
Malayalam daily newspaper. They were selected on the basis of national popularity of the Indian Readership Survey (IRS). The study covered 26 consecutive days of the above newspapers during the Iraq War from 21 March 2003 to 15 April 2003.

These selected newspapers were the primary data of the study. The secondary sources of the study are books, articles, reports and internet sources. A few interviews with journalists and academics were also undertaken.

Limitations of the Study

There are three limitations with regard to this study. The first limitation is selection of the media coverage time. The time of analysis is limited to the period between 21 March 2003 to 15 April 2003, which was the period of “active battle” beginning with the expiration of the US ultimatum for Iraq and ending with President Bush's declaration of the end of the ‘major battle.’ The second limitation is the number of media organisations studied, which is limited to four dailies including three from English and one from Malayalam. The third limitation is that even though this study is about Indian media, it has been conducted only on the selected newspapers in India excluding the television channels and the internet. Fourthly, detailed analysis of articles and reports on Iraq war coverage in the selected newspapers has not been undertaken; only space and headlines are stressed.

Scheme of Chapters

The thesis contains seven chapters including the introduction and the conclusion. The first chapter includes an overall view of the research work which includes the analyses of the conceptual terms and research framework of the study. The second chapter deals with the salient features of globalisation and the globalisation of media. The third chapter explores the theoretical framework of cultural hegemony and analyses the nature of linkage between globalisation and cultural hegemony that operate through the global media. It also discusses the global media strategies in the war coverage. The fourth chapter provides a brief political history of the events in Iraq and looks at the global media coverage of the
Iraq war of 2003. It also looks at different aspects of the Iraqi invasion and the role of ‘embedded journalism’ in the war coverage. The fifth chapter provides an overview of the Indian media in the context of Iraq war. It also deals with the post-colonial trends in Indian Journalism. The sixth chapter analyses the coverage of Iraq war in the four selected Indian newspapers. It examines the style of war reporting and the pattern of coverage in the Indian Media. The seventh chapter is a summary and conclusion.