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Interpretations are normal, but tampering the fact isn't: Hans

Arushi Srivastava

The evidence for the Taj Mahal being built over the ruins of a temple has long ago been refuted by many historians the world over as they were based on perceptions, said the renowned historian Rohan Anirudh Singh Hans.

"This theory could never be confirmed but because it rang an emotional and perceptual bell within certain quarters, they think it to be true," explained Hans.

The recent revisions made in the school textbooks of Karnataka have attracted criticism from educationists, professors and historians, for misrepresenting history. Speaking about the significance of adhering to facts in writing history he said, "In the contemporary era, communists, centrists and the rightists, all have their own versions of history. So, different interpretations of the history are normal, but the situation becomes worrisome if the facts start getting ignored or twisted," said Hans.

Describing the method of ascertaining the facts he said, they shouldn't be established on hearsay. "The facts are not established on the basis of perceptions or just one writer claiming something happened which other contemporary writers of that time have not mentioned."

Multiple sources must have either seen the occurrence or a happening must be quoted by different sources to consider it to be a fact of history, he added.

Religious tolerance is a facade and skin deep

Every possible situation has been utilised by the Indian media to demonise Muslims. From the coverage of Tablighi Jamaat, blaming Muslims for the spread of COVID-19, to spreading conspiracy theories about 'Love Jihad', or even banning the hijab in schools, there have been enough instances in the media where journalists continue with their hateful rhetorics, making it a platform for vilifying Muslims.

Nupur Sharma, the now-suspended BJP spokesperson got into a controversy by commenting about Prophet Mohammed allegedly in a derogatory manner on a TV debate. An FIR has been lodged against Sharma by Irfan Sheikh, Joint Secretary of Raza Academy, for promoting enmity between the religions. Since her remarks, BJP has been working hard to distance itself from Nupur Sharma. Moreover, the Editors Guild

of India has also pointed out how this controversy could have been avoided if the TV anchors were more sensitive.

The derogatory remarks on Islam or Muslims are not new in Indian Television. However, the difference now is that countries like Oman, Qatar, Jordan, Indonesia and many others have publicly condemned the remarks of Sharma, summoning Indian ambassadors to their respective countries.

The BJP since then has been under international pressure to convince the world that they respect all religions equally, and have labelled Nupur Sharma as a 'fringe element'.

The fact that can't be missed is most of the countries which have condemned the remarks are also the ones that supply oil to the world which clearly explains BJP's quick response.

For now, it seems that the



Screengrab of Nupur Sharma on The News Hour debate

Times Now

perception about the issue has been kept under control, as the foreign minister of Iran has said that there was an adequate response from the Indian government. But this has

given quite a lot of ammunition to the opposition parties, with Shiv Sena and Congress already terming it as an international embarrassment.

At the end of the day, no

one should be fooled by this, it is only the perception they want to change, not the ground realities.

Siddhant Garud

Press freedom in shambles as Modi govt celebrates eight years

Mukesh N

As the Modi government completes eight years in office the newspapers and social media platforms are filled with advertisements publicising the achievements of the government but quite ironically those who work in the media are at the receiving end as the World Press Freedom Index released by Reporters Without Borders (RSF) last month painted a grim picture of the press freedom. India has fallen to the 150th position.

Quoting the Ministry of Home Affairs and National Crime Records Bureau, a

news organisation Article14, reported that 96 per cent of the sedition cases booked against 405 Indian citizens for criticising political leaders in the previous decade were filed after the current government took office in 2014.

According to the report by RSF in 2021, Narendra Modi along with Kim Jong-un and 35 other heads of the state was termed as 'Predators of Press Freedom', for curbing the press freedom under their administration.

Abbu Bakkar, Senior Video Journalist, Daily Salar News and a former Journalist from NDTV said, "The constitution

is so beautiful that it has given me the right to ask questions against the government, but the BJP government wants to change the constitution, they want to change Ambedkar (thoughts), so that the basic rights can be questioned and if journalists speak against the government, their voice is being suppressed with the Sedition and UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act) laws."

Explaining the symbiotic relationship between the media and the government he said media willingly succumbs to the governmental control and this is a convenient way to de-

flect the audience's attention from the real issues.

This murky relationship will save the media from taking an uncomfortable stand against the government

"BJP government wants to change the constitution, they want to change Ambedkar (thoughts)"

Roll back NEP, bring back old textbooks: AISA

Moksha Garg and Bincy Joseph

Falsifying history will diminish the rational thinking in society and manipulates students to accept the dominant ideology, said Aratrika Dey, a member of the All India Students Association (AISA).

A signature campaign against the saffronisation of education was organised by members of AISA on June 10. They demanded the government continue with the old textbooks, roll back National Education Policy (NEP) and provide universal free education. This petition has been signed by more than 600 students, including intellectuals, activists and academicians.

Dey said, "Education has been used as a key mode of propaganda in fascist states. NEP promotes Indian culture, but the country has no single culture." Expressing concern over what kind of ideas will be promoted, she said, "The seeds of saffronisation are in NEP itself."

The memorandum with the list of signatories was submitted to the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, BC Nagesh on Wednesday, she said.

Holding the mirror to PM's claim!

Niharika Bajaj

It has been barely a week since the prime minister addressed the occasion of World Environment Day, applauding India's consistent efforts to combat climate change, truth is led bare with India being ranked the last in the Environment Performance Index (EPI) 2022.

The international ranking system released an eye-opening report on Thursday that ranked India at 180. The index has evoked a mixed response from various stake-

holders.

While India has refuted the report, Dr Vijay Nishant, a Bengaluru-based environmentalist, said, "The government should clear the controversy and present correct data to challenge this report. They just can't dodge it."

The EPI index brought out by researchers at Yale and Columbia University has evaluated the countries on parameters like ecosystem vitality, biodiversity, habitat, ecosystem services and grassland loss. India has con-

sistently ranked lowest on all the fronts.

Expressing concern, Shankar Singh, Founder of Environmental NGO, Vrikshit Foundation, said, "The rejection might have been backed by valid consideration as this index may not be completely reliable; though India is a developing nation, we know that we are not performing well enough. It's not about achieving a rank in an index, it's our life." The problem is we do not have strict laws for offenders, he added.

Clean and green, is it mean?

Sutapa Dhara

While there has been a lot of hype on electric cars being environmental friendly, there is very little we know about the hideous cost of this venture, said Yogesh N, an environmentalist and an ecologist.

Speaking to the Beacon on the flip side of the electric vehicles, he said, "There is a difference between what is clean for the environment and what is not. Electric vehicles hide a shocking truth (of) extreme poverty, and child labour under the myth of sustainability."

He further explained that with all these lies and cover-ups, almost the entire world has been fooled into believing that green energy is the solution. But renewable energy from electric vehicles will require the extraction and processing of billions of tons of raw materials for which the planet is exploited for cobalt, nickel, and lithium, he said.

"Electric vehicles are stealth rain-forest killers!"