



Date: October 10, 2022

To,

Kshipra Jatana  
Group General Counsel, TV18 Broadcast Limited,  
Express Trade Tower, Plot  
No. 15 & 16, Sector 16A, Film City Noida,  
Uttar Pradesh 201301  
Email id: [complaint@network18online.com](mailto:complaint@network18online.com)

**Subject: Complaint against News India 18 show “*Desh Nahin Jhukne Denge Aman Chopra के साथ*” aired on October 4, 2022.**

Dear Madam,

We, at Citizens for Justice and Peace, are writing to you to raise concerns over a hate-filled and inflammatory show aired on News India 18 called “*Desh Nahin Jhukne Denge Aman Chopra के साथ*” on October 4, 2022.

At the outset we would like to state that the said show, hosted by Aman Chopra, was an example of a brazen display of hatred towards one community merely over questioning their entry into *Navratra Garba pandals*. Through the entire debate, the members of the panel brought into question not just the various principles of Islam as a religion but also mocked speakers belonging to the Muslim community by asking them to hail Hindu gods on national television.

The complete show may be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZQe7qwP0WY&t=5694s>

### **What the show entails**

The show started with the host visibly cheering the Gujarat Police for beating men publicly with a stick for allegedly having pelted stones at a Garba event. The host says, “*Aapko Gujarat Police ka Dandiya dikhte hai* (We will show you Dandiya played by Gujarat Police)”. Then he goes on to cheer them more as the beatings continue and the victims, visibly pained and begging for mercy saying “please forgive us”. The host then goes on repeatedly, “*Gujarat Police ne unke saath dandiya khela* (Gujarat Police played *dandiya* with them)” and “*Gujarat police ne unka ilaaj kia* (Gujarat police police cured them)”. Thus openly encouraging such unlawful acts right in the beginning of the show, which clearly indicated what kind of narrative was to follow. At this point we would like to point out that as the host is visibly lauding the police for flogging Muslim men publicly and calling it ‘dandiya’, when, thanks to the public uproar, the head of the Gujarat police, director general of police, Ashish

Bhatia, has ordered an enquiry into the matter to be conducted by Kapadvanj Deputy Superintendent of Police V N Solanki.

The host then starts the “debate” taking opinions of his speakers where one of the speakers, speaking about celebration of festivals together said that be it any festival, Hindus and Muslims should respect them and celebrate together because in this country we live together with love. The host then eggs him on, “*Koi aur tyohar garba kea lava jisme interest ho muslim ladko kea?* (Is there any other festival in which Muslim boys are interested?)”. At one point Rashidi and Atiqur Rehman, the two speakers belonging to Muslim community even pointed out that other festivals like *Holi* and *Raksha bandhan* are also celebrated by all, but the host is not interested in taking the same point forward.

Since the speaker said that festivals should be celebrated together, the host commented, “*Karnatak ke idgah me ganesh utsav nabi manane dia tha.. tab kaha gaya tha secularism* (they did not allow *ganesh utsav* to be celebrated at the idgah ground in Karnataka. Where was secularism then?) [The point of issue here was not collective or joint celebration but the perceived super-imposition of one faith on the minority place of worship, however].

Throughout the debate, the host openly forces one of the speakers Sajid Rasheedi to say *Jai Shri Ram*. He also makes a generalized, even stereo-typical statement against Islam saying, “*Vande Mataram bhi Islam me varjit ho jata hai*” (*Vande Mataram* is also forbidden in Islam).

“*Aisa kya mil raba hai garbe me ki Islam ki sari rigidness khatam ho jati hai* (What is it about *Garba* that all rigidness of Islam vanishes)” the host questioned Rashidi.

There are also repeated tickers running through the show:

“*Hamare garba me tumhara kya kaam hai?*” (What have you got to do with our *Garba*)

“*Garba par pattharbaji – apradh ya jihad?*” (*Garba* and stone pelting – Crime or Jihad?)

“*Garba me zyadatar Muslim Naam badalkar kyu aate hai?*” (Why do so many Muslims change their identity to play *garb*)

“*Muslim ilaakon me aayojan kyu nahi*” (Why is [*garba*] not organized in Muslim localities)

“*Tob Muslim betiya shamil kyu nahi hoti?*” (why do muslim girls not participate [*in garba*])

“*Mazhab chipayenge ab patthar bhi barsayenge?*” (Hiding their religion, now pelting stones too?)

The show also depicts an animated image of a man wear a skull cap holding a stone in his hand.

The host then forces Rashidi to speak on behalf of those Muslims who go to play/dance the *garba* to say where their faith lies; whether they are followers of Islam or do they believe in Ma Durga. Despite him refusing to speak on behalf of them, the host pushes him and asks him repeatedly to answer for somebody else’s faith or belief.

Further, the debate veers away to Gyanvapi mosque dispute which is a sub-judice matter and then even Ayodhya Ram Mandir as well, both of which are controversial and completely unrelated to the



topic which was sought to be debated upon. This clearly indicates that the news point was merely an excuse for bringing divisive view points to the fore in the midst of a festival, to egg people on and incite them against the Muslim community.

The objective of the debate from the very beginning was amply clear that the host wanted to pitch Hindus against Muslims using incidents of alleged stone pelting during *garba* celebration in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh stating that stones were pelted by Muslim boys or that they tried to enter *garba pandals* (stages or platforms for the dance) by changing their names or identity. Through the show, the principles and tenets of Islam were brought to question, faith of people of Muslim community who wish to celebrate *garba* is brought to question, the unlawful action of the Police seen flogging Muslim men holding them to a pole is lauded, tickers (as mentioned above) severely hurting religious sentiments are flashed throughout the show and overall a narrative of a divisive nature has been created.

There is not an iota of doubt that the intention of the host was to incite Hindus against the Muslim minority by questioning why Muslims should get involved in *garba* celebrations, by justifying the unlawful police action of flogging Muslim men publicly, by picking one or two incidents to show that Muslims are acting against Hindus by stone pelting or by entering *garba* celebrations to eve tease Hindu girls, by posing baseless questions like why Muslim girls do not celebrate *garba*.

The opening remark itself being brazenly divisive and the narrative of the show carries on with the same to a whole another level. The host has made no attempts to mask his and his channel's prejudice against Islam and its followers or his brazen attempts to openly pitch Hindus against Muslims. The concept of the syncretic and harmonious celebration of different religious and cultural festivals apart from our inherent quality (Indians) of unity in diversity has clearly been lost upon the channel and its host and they seem to have forgotten that in India all festivals are celebrated by households and in the public sphere by people belonging to all religions. In fact, one can find more stories of harmony in festivals than any other time of the year and it is festivals that bring people together irrespective of their religious background or otherwise.

### **The channel and impact**

News18 India has 14.9 million subscribers on Youtube and the channel has a reach though national television as well. The video itself has more than 3 lakh views on Youtube alone with more than 1,000 people having commented inciteful messages in the comment section on Youtube. Majority of these comments hail the vile contents of the show which also reveal –in an extremely worrying and concerning way-- the influence that this host and the channel has on its viewers and subscribers. In a country like India where people from multiple cultures and religions have been living together as one nation since independence, shows with content like these seek to divide them along communal lines to destroy the harmony that has largely prevailed all these years.



## Conclusion

Through the content of the show, the channel has acted in complete violation of the Code of Ethics & Broadcasting Standards issued by the NBDSA and few other guidelines pertaining to maintenance of religious harmony. It further amounts to certain offences related to hate speech, misinformation and promoting enmity under the Indian Penal Code. As such, in view of the elaborate and detailed complaint made herein above, we expect your channel to take responsibility of the grievances raised herein and act upon the same responsibly.

In view of this, it is in best interest, that you remove the above-mentioned content from all social media accounts of your channel and your own website, and issue a public apology for the communal reportage. In an event we do not receive a satisfactory response from you, we will be compelled to submit a complaint to the NBDSA. You are also put on notice that failure on your part to satisfy the complainants with an apology on your news channel may result in legal consequences for your channel at the appropriate fora, at your risk to costs.

Yours sincerely,

Nandan Maluste, CJP President

Teesta Setalvad, CJP Secretary