



Date: November 14, 2022

To,
Times Now,
Grievance Officer,
Kirtima Maravoor
Email: legalnow@timesgroup.com

Subject: Complaint against debate segment “'Madrassa Jihad' पर बड़ा खुलासा, मजहबी तालीम का '491 तंत्र'” aired on Times Now Navbharat on November 11

Dear Madam,

We, at Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP), are writing to you with regards to a news segment aired on Times Now Navbharat on November 1, 2022, titled “'Madrassa Jihad' पर बड़ा खुलासा, मजहबी तालीम का '491 तंत्र'”. The show is based on a survey carried out by the UP government on Madrassas in certain districts of the State, Reportedly, it was found that Bahraich city, which is close to the Nepal border, has 792 madrassas out of which 491 were found to be running “without license”.

The debate show can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IICgiBGCOK>

Over this news, the channel held a debate and declared that something called “madrassa Jihad” was taking place in Bahraich. It is best known to the hosts and the channel what this term “Madrassa jihad” means and an explanation or definition of the same would be much appreciated, in response. In any case, it is pertinent to mention here, if the channel is not already aware that using such terms is both denigrating and demeaning towards the Muslim community, besides perpetuating stereotypes that can create attitudes and actions therefore which can cause harm and mischief. It would also be interesting to know the “source” of this news tid-bit so that the channel, the esteemed NBDSA and the complainants can test it for authenticity. Reporting on news involves an exercise of imparting information. Questioning of the bit of news information in a prejudicial or hysterical way, without any rational basis to that questioning, with an intention to pitch views of only one segment/community amounts to stigmatizing the section that is thus portrayed. Laws, statutory guidelines and evolving jurisprudence have tested and assessed this kind of portrayal and held it to be in fact creating an unequal, partisan playing field that both demeans right to life and right to life with dignity of

that particular targeted section. In practice, therefore it attacks the right to equality and non-discrimination, too.

The segment starts with a large display in the background which reads “*Bahraich me Madrassa Jihad*” (Madrassa Jihad in Bahraich) and the hosts state that a “survey” has revealed that 491 illegal madrassas are being run in Bahraich out of the total 792 madrassas.

The following text is repeatedly displayed throughout the debate which suggests that the intention of the channel was to spread stigma, even hatred against the Muslim community. This also amounts to creating a narrative that is anti-Muslim’ to add fuel to the existing, perpetuated animosity against a minority Indian community that has been widely prevalent, conspicuously due to reportage such as this example. The channel must be aware that the “mainstream”, “commercial” media, which it is also a part of, has been responsible for disseminating such a stigma-driven for several years now leading to sharp, recent remarks from the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India (September-November 2022).

- UP me Madarsa Jihad par bada khulasa (00:05)
- Jaha Owaisi gaye waha awaidh madarse ugg aaye? (00:53)
- Bahraich ka M Factor (04:32)
- Bharat-Nepal Sarhad ... Kisne banaya ‘gadh’ (00:30)
- Bahraich me 34% Muslim aabadi (04:27)
- Akramankari Mahmood ghaznavi ka bhanja tha Masood (05:30)
- Bahraich me Salar Masood Ghazi ki dargah (28:50)

The host, Nanina Yadav questioned how these madrassas are being funded, the speaker, a Muslim scholar, said that Muslims all over the country themselves fund the madrassas to which she questioned “*akhir aisa kya hota hai madarso me ki itna bada dil dikhate hai*” (How is it that they display such ‘generosity’ only when it comes to Madrassas?)”



The above imagery clearly shows how one side of the screen, a Hindu side “guru” and on the other, a Muslim scholar were asked to “present their views”, they exchanged opinions at odds with each other; and this image is displayed with two swords that have been placed between them to depict two warring ends. This makes the channel’s intention to pitch the two religions against each other even more clear. This is not only objectionable per se but clearly suggests that the channel is using such imagery to propagate a communal face-off.

The State Minority Welfare Minister, Danish Azad Ansari was interviewed by a reporter at the end of this debate and despite the reporter repeatedly prompting him about the impact of these “illegal” madrassas along the Indo-Nepal border, he refused to fall in that trap and maintained that the state received cooperation from the Madrassas that were surveyed and also that the survey was conducted to help the government make better policies for minorities and to ensure that proper facilities are available in these madrassas. This was far from the interpretation given by the channel, however.

Clearly, while even the state government was not interested in falling into this trap of goading an anti-Muslim narrative, the channel was trying to push this. With your vast viewership, this prejudicial view has already reached large sections of the people through the TV channel and also through your social media platforms including Youtube, Twitter and Facebook. This persistent stigmatization and attack on the minority community to drive home the point that Muslims are always up to sinister activities by terming everything they into “jihad” is harmful to the social fabric of this country.

If the channel truly cared about values of secularism and fraternity, it would abide by them. However, it is clear that in utter disregard of these constitutional values, the channel has brazenly forwarded its anti-minority narrative and gone full throttle in showing Muslim community in a bad light. Without questioning the legitimacy of the data that the channel must have accessed from the Madrassa survey, we are only raising concern over the manner in which or the approach chosen to deal with this data. Using terms like “**Madrassa Jihad**” and “**the ‘M’ Factor**” the channel has resorted to cheap tactics to spread communal tension and hatred which is unbecoming of a news channel that should be adhering to the Fundamental principles of Self-Regulation and other guidelines issued by the National Broadcasting & Digital Standards Authority (NBDSA). By resorting to such kind of reportage, the channel also has committed offences under the Indian Penal Code.

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, hurting religious sentiments 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.

We are sure that a channel such as yours is aware of the recent matters pending in the Hon'ble Supreme Court, wherein specifically the role of television channels and anchors has come in for sharp questioning.

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