



Date: January 5, 2023

To,

Times Now,

Grievance Officer,

Kirtima Maravoor

Email: legalnow@timesgroup.com

Subject: Complaint against show titled 'Rashtravad | 2024 में Ram Mandir का उद्घाटन... अभी 'हथौड़े' की बात क्यों?' aired on December 30, 2022 on Times Now Navbharat

Dear Madam,

We, at Citizens for Justice and Peace, are writing to you about our concerns regarding the debate show 'Rashtravad | 2024 में Ram Mandir का उद्घाटन... अभी 'हथौड़े' की बात क्यों?' aired on December 30, 2022 on Times Now Navbharat and available for viewing on the Youtube channel as well.

The show may be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mjxNHrNMGU>

The entire show debates on some inflammatory and inciteful statements made by one Sajid Rashidi who is generally known for making such statements to grab attention on TV news. He made certain comments about Ayodhya and Ram Mandir which have the potential to blow up into a communal disharmony. By picking his statements as a news point and a opint to conduct an hour long debate upon, your channel chose to be partial and promoting a communal narrative.

WE would like to point out that the show began with the following tickers which kept flashing throughout the show:

Hindustan me 'gazwa-e-hind' ka plan? (0.12) (Gazwa-i-hind being planned in India?)

Maulana Musalmano ko bhadkayenge (0.16) (Maulana will incite Muslims)

Ram mandir todne ko uksayenge? (0.20) (Will he incite them to destroy ram mandir?)

Musalmano ko ukxa rabe hai sajid rashidi? (0.24) (Is Sajid Rashidi inciting Muslims?)

Islamic rashtra wali sazish decode? (0.27) (Conspiracy of 'Islamic' nation decode)

2024 me ram mandir ka udghatan abhi bathode ki baat kyun? (5:07) (Ram Mandir will be inaugurated in 2024 then why are they talking of a 'hammer' now?)

After Rashidi's problematic comments were played out, the host Rakesh Pandey asked Rashidi (present in the studio with 3 other speakers), “*sabse pehle jo apne baate kahi.. Mughal shasan kaal aa jayega.. ram mandir tod diya jayega. Kya aap desh ke musalmano ko bhadka rabe hai?* (5.48)” (first of all what you said that Mughal reign will return, Ram Mandir will be destroyed. Are you inciting the Muslim in this country?). Rashidi went ahead and denied he said anything about a Mughal reign.

Further, (between 10.00 to 11.00) Acharya Vikramditya is abusing Rashidi which was censored (beeped out) by the channel and the host tried to pacify Acharya. Then again (between 17.12- 18.00) Acharya abused Rashidi and Rangrez (another speaker supposed to be an Islamic scholar) which was again censored by the channel. At one point Acharya charged at Rangrez (19.57) and a scuffle broke out between the two. At this point the show should have been stopped and the speakers should have been dispersed and boycotted from the show. Instead, the channel started plying out the transcripts from Rashidi's statement, which was the subject of the debate.

At one point the host even made an allegation (14:23) “*aap chahte hai Islamic rashtra ban jaye 2047 tak*” (you want an Islamic nation by 2047).

At one point (21:5) Rashidi and Rangrez walked out from the show and Acharya called them terrorists and Talibani (21:48- 21:57). AT this point the host tried to salvage the situation and reprimanded Acharya for making such comments, which went on for a while. The Host clearly stated that the channel does not endorse such comments and that Acharya has no right to call any a terrorist. Yet, even after this the Acharya during the rest of the show tried to justify his statements. Yet, even after this, he was allowed to speak on few occasions

At a later point in the show, (40.15) they started displaying all problematic comments made by Maulanas as shown below:



Thereafter, some more tickers were displayed during the show, as the debate continued. Rashidi also mocked some Hindu rituals of cremation during the show for which the host reprimanded him.



All in all, the debate show which brazenly picked up a communal statement and made it a point of debate, further exacerbated the same by calling speakers with radical views and allowing them to hurl abuses at each other and also physically assault each other. Any responsible channel would have debarred such speakers from its platform and stopped the show then and there. Yet, the host continued with the show while making some extremely problematic statements towards the end as shown above saying, “by 2047 there will be an Islamic nation” “Plan to capture the country by increasing population”. All this while displaying a picture of skull-cap clad crowd.

There is no doubt that the intention of the show from the word go was to play with the communal angle since the statements made by Rashidi to the channel alone, were inflammatory and were not desirous to become a point of debate. It is natural that by making it a point of debate, the ensuing debate would fan the flames of communal tension, which, no matter how much the channel claims to be neutral, was the intention of the channel. While we take note that the host refused to endorse certain extremist and disparaging views of the speakers, the intention behind the debate show itself and behind choosing the topic for discussion cannot be overlooked.

We would also like to state here that the channel stands in violation of the Code of Ethics of the National Broadcasting Association and certain specific guidelines relating to conducting debates on TV news channels. 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