



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Lord Tony Hall
Director-General
British Broadcasting Corporation
Broadcasting House
2-22 Portland Place
Fitzoria, London
W1A 1AA

27th May 2014

Dear Tony,

Re: BBC Newsnight Coverage, 16 May 2014, on the Indian Election

I refer to the BBC broadcast of its Newsnight programme on 16 May 2014 and understand that you have already received numerous requests to fully investigate the contents of the programme, its delivery and partisan approach to journalism that was portrayed in the segment covering the Indian election.

As Chair of the APPG for British Hindus, I have also received a number of complaints and am obliged to write to you as a matter of concern, similar to other various national Hindu organisations and MP's including Priti Patel MP. You are bound to have understood the sentiments of the Hindu community, and therefore there is no necessity to repeat them here, however for the avoidance of doubt if not made clear before, I would like to bring to your attention, the following points:

1. The sweeping success of the BJP in the Indian general elections is reflective of Indian sentiment and groundswell view of the global Hindu diaspora.
2. The anti-Modi rhetoric used in the Newsnight programme, especially the views of Mr Anish Kapoor have already been played out to the masses many months pre-election. Such sentiments did not sway the voter and neither did the Hindu global diaspora believe it for good reason namely, the Indian voter wanted change and were simply fed up with the untruths and unjust statements of opposing factions.
3. It seems that various fringe groups, included those that have links to the opposing political parties attempted in desperation to malign the Modi campaign.

What ought to have been a report on the success of achieving such a majority and the reasons why, Newsnight decided to latch onto the thoughts of fringe groups that are not reflective of the Indian electorate and failed to investigate the links of those fringe groups, its associations and associations with anti-Hindu sentiments in general. This would have been proper and reasonable under the circumstances and not a continuous attack on Modi, his character and the alleged part he played in the Gujarat 2002 riots. I would like to remind you that such events occurred 12 years ago and India has definitely moved on since then.

PTO

The BJP came across as a party that can deliver and has overwhelming support globally. By way of your corporation's journalism, it has damaged its reputation and integrity and the British Hindu community have no option but to continue to challenge the BBC, unless and until the BBC offers an apology after full investigation into the bias that was shown.

Before any such programme is planned, prepared and broadcast again, we trust that the BBC in future will seek proper and reasonable opinion and guidance from the British Hindu community first. The allowance of such a programme has hurt the British Hindu community and will not tolerate its affiliations to be tarnished any further.

As far as they are concerned, the election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP was needed, called for and supported by the mainstream Hindu community. The BBC ought to bear this in mind and be reflective in its reporting of such support as a matter of fact, the BJP has secured the best mandate the Indian population could ever have provided to a political party. Your corporation has failed to understand and appreciate Hindu sentiments therefore such journalism was lazy, incredible and uncalled for.

By behaving in the manner which it has, the BBC has cast an adverse inference on the intelligence of the British Hindu community, global Hindu population and the Indian electorate. I am sure that you will agree that this is unacceptable given the fact that you have reported against the tide.

If anything when addressing the contents of this letter, I would appreciate it if you could simply answer the following specific question, please.

How will you now deal with rectifying the position created by the BBC in showing the Hindu community how prepared you are to broadcast the actual and real position of the Hindu community's acceptance of Narendra Modi and the BJP and the reasons for this acceptance?

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully,



Bob Blackman MP

Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for British Hindus