

2276

Loaded and Distorted News.

It is fortunate for the television news viewer that he has other sources for his news. Otherwise Doordarshan would be misinforming him on a number of issues. A warped sense of priority leads them to clutter news with Zail Singh releasing a book on Bramavidya or Ramesh Bhandari inaugurating an exhibition of Ranganathan's cartoons but omit news on Chinese encroaching Indian territory in Arunachal Pradesh or police firing in Arwal or Harijans. An honest and balanced coverage of an issue is rare. Their coverage of the opposition bandh in February drew fire from all sides. The eminent critic Amita Malik criticised the ~~xxxxxx~~ "ostrich like coverage" of the Delhi bandh. In this case seeing should not be believing.

Projection of one point of view is regularly carried on in their broadcast of news. That is why there was no proper evaluation of the functioning of a body like the Non-aligned at Harare. Dhiren Bhagat in his article in Sunday Observer reveals to us how Khomeini's speech was totally blacked out at the NAM, speaks for all their tall ~~xxxx~~ claims on encouraging a free media.

Again if listened to the broadcast on 4.8.86 the news on the Commonwealth laid greater emphasis on Rajiv's itinerary rather than the failure of the Commonwealth to force Britain to impose sanctions. Broadcast of news on South Africa has also been dissatisfactory. Though one supports the cause of the black majority, there is little evaluation of the problems faced there. The day to day events broadcasted in its political system.

Most of their broadcasts on economic issues are exercises in newspeak. We are constantly bombarded with news about the success of the 20 point programme (20.6.86), share market boom, all high investments (21.5.86), record output of potato crop at (8.7.86), W.B. lands Indian system of buffer stocks (8.7.86) or how crop insurance schemes have been adopted by 15 states (18.5.86), 5.7% increase in oil export, 11% increase in minimum wages for miners (28.6.86). Totally omitted are news items like the one which appeared on 20.5.86 on the T.O.I., as how crop insurance scheme is likely to be a big drain, crop insurance plans in Bichaulags (19.5.86), Rs.350 crores oil lost at Bombay High (T.O.I. 22.5.86), ONGC ineptness hits private firms (25.5.86), FCI's wheat becomes unfit for consumption (23.4.86)

Why is it that Doordarshan only interviews people who ~~endorse~~ endorse the governments point of view? At the time of the Kumbh mela tragedy none of the pilgrims interviewed found fault with the police machinery which all news paper reports printed out had broken down. When Charles Sobhraj escaped from Tihar jail the broadcast failed to mention it and later there was no harsh indictment of security lapses. On 4.5.86 when bread with morphine hidden in it was discovered being passed out one of the prisoners Kapur spoke to Doordarshan about how jail administration had been stepped up and further improvements in jail administration were taking place. Nothing was permitted to go into jail without being checked and re-checked. In recognition of good work the Sub-inspector and constable would be promoted. Not that it could have done much to improve their image in the eyes of the public.

Are newspapers always sensationalising issues or is it that Doordarshan conveniently only sees what it wants to see and thinks that presenting facts may result in adverse publicity. On 28.7.86 the TV news broadcast told us that shops and business establishments in Delhi were closed. Few instances of deflating tyres and stone throwing occurred. There was an attempt to burn buses and ended with Bhuta Singh thanking the people for having maintained their cool and congratulating the police for maintaining law and order. The Times of India on the other hand reported that violence marred the bandh in Delhi, 35 buses were damaged and that a deputy commissioner of police and two others were stabbed. When TV news, on 27.7.86 reported Delhi peaceful the T.O.I. reported that there was fresh army alert as Delhi stayed tense. Again TV reported Punjab peaceful when T.O.I. reported Punjab Government fears backlash and that the Punjab cabinet was called for an emergency session.

A criticism of something is not an attack on it. Unfortunately for the viewer doordarshan seems to think so. So there is one point of view and only one point of view presented that is the government's point of view. Therefore the educational policy did not benefit from any real discussion on it. It was either the P.M.'s Statement or Moshina Kidwai's point of view. We would have definitely liked to know what our educationists thought of the black board urdution and model schools in the policy. If there has been any fundamental change or only change in the lexicon?

Neither has the coverage of news on Punjab been satisfactory. It has become so mechanical "so many killed", "so many shot" that the viewer mechanically accepts whatever is being said. So also with views on Sri Lanka. Little effort is made to really inform, to go beyond the day-to-day event.

There must be other people who have valuable comments to make on issues other than the ministers. On TV news broadcast on 22.7.86 we had Bhafdiraj tell us that the U.S. jurisdiction in Bhopal was in our farms. No comment was made on how not a paise had been paid to Bhopal victims, how the 50 cr. spent was relief not compensation or that Union Carbide had sold a division. All which was part of a news item on page one of the T.O.I.

One can understand when restraint is shown so as not to inflame communal passions but while one can remain from making certain comments one does not have to lie. On 25.7.86 we had TV broadcasting Bhuta Singh's statement in Lok Sabha on the Muktsar tragedy. It said there was a rumour saying that members of only one community were killed. Bhuta Singh stressed that members of both community were killed.

If television wants to establish any credibility with the viewers it is time that it stop being the mouthpiece of the official point of view. It is necessary that there is a balanced and more critical presentation of news.

Television news does its own bit to promote "national unity and integrity" and this consists in including long film clips of id, or Buddh purnima or Ganesh utsar being celebrated. It consists in having Jain muni praying for peace, or sharing satsangs and having ministers presiding over yoga demonstrations by some or the other or releasing books on Brahma Vidya. Religion cannot be equated with ritual. And it is high time that we did some rethinking on the concept of secularism. In some cases lack of discretion can even add fuel to communal fires. Kuldeep Kumar in an article in Sunday Observer tells us that V. N. Gadgil came in for a lot of criticism over telecasting

a clip which showed the celebration at the Ram Janmabhoomi temple after it was unlocked on February 1. The increasing communal tension all over the country particularly in Kashmir, then, was attributed to it.

It is not only in the content of news that we find Doordarshan falling short as far as professionalism is concerned but also in the format. The way it throws different events together with no sense of priority. You sometimes have even more than thirty events being mentioned in a broadcast of half-hour. How much of it will register? Why not delete the less important items and concentrate on events of national concern. And national does not mean Delhi. On 31.7.86 the news broadcast consisted of more than 32 items. Top priority was given to a "massive" tree plantation scheme launched by the P.M. at Shahtistal. It was followed by a new award in the field of forestation being instituted, followed by the government announcing that Reliance would not be given any loans. The ninth item in the broadcast was about curfew banned Delhi and then about the Mizo National front. The nineteenth item was about Chinese having entered Arunachal Pradesh which incidentally got front page coverage in the T.O.I. The 108 hour bandh in Darjeeling was the twenty-second item (front page T.O.I.) To add the foreign flavour the pot pourri we had Aquino murder case to be re-opened, British Cabinet supports Thatcher's opposition to sanctions, OPEC reduces price, then art was thrown in, in the form of a one man exhibition of Sudhir Dar's and finally to flex our muscles - sports. Totally omitted was a Punjab minister's accusation against Bhuta Singh of having proxy rule in Punjab, through para-military forces, U.S. being jittery of P.M.'s Mexico trip when it came to security (4 cols: 40 cms in T.O.I.). When you have 32 items on a broadcast it is more of an exercise in packaging than communicating.

There is improfessionalism even when it comes to the treatment meted out to their staff. Its bureaucratic functioning is a deterrent to any new entrant. An interesting case of social discrimination (Devil quoting scripture?) has been related by Amita Malik in her column on the media, in the Indian Express. One of the newsreaders was removed from his job because he was not fair enough for doordarshan. What can we do, if we cannot we teach?

Namedia in its seminar "A vision for Indian Television" in March this year spoke of the need to treat news as a process not merely as an event, as a fact and not as an act. It is a worthwhile effort to bring about this transformation for here is a medium which can at the same mement reach millions of people and unlike print does not call for "previous preparation for animilation".

|                            | 29.4.86                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 26.7.86                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 12.8.86                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Projection of Ministers | Seven news items, six of them with film footage. One news item on the Janata Party National Conference with no film footage. The six items are:<br><br>i) The P.M. addressing the Council on the educational policy which according to him is a forward looking one and will solve our problems. (film footage)<br><br>ii) Chidambaram spoke to Doordarshan on Sri Lanka and the four member delegation to Sri Lanka. (f.f.)<br><br>iii) In Punjab police to be equipped with sophisticated arms: Barnala (f.f.) | Five items, three with film footage. The five items are:<br><br>i) P.M. asks for strong action to be taken against terrorists. Barnala asked to organise army march on Border areas.<br><br>ii) Thrilling air display: Arun Singh present. (f.f.)<br><br>iii) Venkatraman inaugurates Industrial Conference. (f.f.) communal harmony Nagaland C.M. speaks. (f.f.) | Five items, two with film footage. The five items are:<br><br>i) Shiv Shankar calls upon members of SAARC to solve their problems. (f.f.)<br><br>ii) Bhula Singh in R.S. Govt. to assume special powers, border areas to be specified. |

29.4.86

26.7.86

12.8.86

- iv) Khalistan announced in Golden Temple - panthic Committee condemned by Bhuta Singh
- iv) Link road declared high-way: Tiwari on development of Mizoram (f.f.)
- iv) Ghulam N. Azad assures Lok Sabha members terrorists will be arrested.
- v) 52nd convocation of Aligarh University held - Zail confers degrees. (f.f.)
- v) I.L.N.A. meeting Gadgil presides. (f.f.)
- v) B. R. Bhagat and Sheila Kaul leave for Moscow.
- vi) European parliamentary ministers meet Bhagat. (f.f.)
- vii) Kamaladuri Chattopadhyaya - issues plea for education of women. (f.f.)
2. Suppression and Censorship of inconvenient news
- i) No mention of the Major Nuclear Mishap in Russia, which Venkatraman inaugurating an occupied the front page in the Industrial Conference and T.O.I. On the other hand the lead Tiwari on the development news on T.V. was the P.M. address of Mizoram and declaring sing the council on the education a trunk road as a high-nal policy which occupied a major way, the broadcast omits part of the news time.
- i) While mention is made of Supreme Court judgement - No compulsion on singing of national anthem.
- i) Omitted news on the front page news on Jagmo-han being against elections

29.4.86

26.7.86

12.8.86

ii) Also omitted was Tripathi's ii) Curfew clamped in statement "I" will be loyal till Ahmedabad also finds no death" when dissidence in the place in the broadcast. Congress received front page coverage. The T.V. gave greater priority to Indo U.S.S.R. agreement on computer technology and Chidambaram's views on the 4 member delegation to Sri Lanka, which incidentally was given 6cms. coverage each in T.O.I.

ii) No mention of C.B.I. to aid Vaidya probe which was given 36 cms space in the T.O.I. or of Security norms being violated in the Vaidya case.

iii) New items on Rigid rules cost enchequer dearly Statehood for Arunachal Pradesh are also omitted.

iii) Also omitted ONGC cancels tenders thus disallowing private units to undertake oil hunts and about how an Hindu group gains support forcefully exploiting anti-sikh feeling. On the other hand the T.V. broadcast included news items on Sheila Kaul & Bhagat to leave for Moscow,

29.4.36

26.7.86

12.8.86

M.D. of Public Sector Devl.  
Corpn. on profits earned  
and something even as irre-  
levant as authorities in  
Italy collecting coins from  
a fountain every Monday. .

### 3. Loaded & Distorted

Coverage\

Reagan to impose limited sanction on S.A. Not covered in the T.O.I. of that day which instead mentions Reagan's SDI bait to Soviets, a 40 cms report (No. attempt to comment on the effectiveness of the sanctions which were largely unimportant. -

29.4.86

26.7.86

12.8.86

Infact the mention of Vaidya's death came as a part of Lok Sabha news with the minister making a statement and came only eighth as far as the priority of the items is concerned. It was preceded the T.V. news broadcast on 13.8.86 mentions on the eleventh item Bhuta Singh's statement in Parliament that centre asks CBI to look into Vaidya's killing, also into security failure. Preceding it are items on PM's inauguration of National Convention of Girl students, All India Mahila Congress function, SAARC, Conference on Tourism etc. by news on SAARC inauguration, Quami Ekta Seminar on Peace and a programme in Kohina, Nagaland for communal harmony.

2. Pune Peaceful was the ninth item broadcast with no film clip to assure us that it was so. The T.O.I. carried the

29.4.86

26.7.86

12.8.86.

news item 'Frightened Sikhs may  
quit Pune' on the middle page. The  
report mentioned that business  
establishments belonging to Sikhs  
were looted and damaged.

TV DATE: 29.4.86

- 8 -

NEWSPAPER

24

| SUBJECTS<br>PRIORITY | LISTED IN THE SAME AS ON TV                                                                | TV FILM FOOTAGE | T.O.I. COVERAGE                             | I.E. COVERAGE |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1.                   | Education policy look forward to solving problems - P. M. Speaks - Addressing the Council. |                 | Pg 1, Col: 2, 20 cms                        | £             |
| 2.                   | Kohl trade links with India, extradition treaty                                            |                 | Pg 1, Col: 1, 10 cms                        |               |
| 3.                   | India & U.S.S.R. protocol, computer technology etc.                                        |                 | Pg 9, Col: 1, 6 cms                         |               |
| 4.                   | 4 member Indian delegation to Sri Lanka                                                    |                 | Pg 9, Col: 1, 6 cms                         |               |
| 5.                   | Chidambaram spoke to Doordarshan                                                           |                 |                                             |               |
| 6.                   | In Punjab police to be equipped with sophisticated arma - Barnala                          |                 |                                             |               |
| 7.                   | Terrorists kill one bus bomb                                                               |                 |                                             |               |
| 8.                   | J.P. national conference begins near Pune                                                  |                 |                                             |               |
| 9.                   | Agnivesh & Chandra file papers                                                             |                 |                                             |               |
| 10.                  | Khalistan announced in Golden Temple -                                                     |                 | Pg. 1, Col. 2, 26 cms                       |               |
| 11.                  | panthic committee condemned by Bhuta Singh                                                 |                 | (Janata for conscience vote on Muslim bill) |               |
| 12.                  | 52nd convocation of Aligarh University held -                                              |                 | Pg11, Col: 5, 45 cms                        |               |
|                      | Zail confers decrees.                                                                      |                 |                                             |               |
|                      | European parliamentary ministers meet Bhagat                                               |                 |                                             |               |
|                      | Kamaladevi Chutlo issue plea for education of women                                        |                 |                                             |               |
|                      | In Manipur sudden spurt of looting -                                                       |                 |                                             |               |

- - 9

| SUBJECTS<br>PRIORITY | LISTED IN THE SAME AS ON TV | TV FILM FOOTAGE | T.O.I. COVERAGE | I.E. COVERAGE |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|

|     |                               |  |  |  |
|-----|-------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 13. | Jhansi ki Rani being salvaged |  |  |  |
| 14. | Algerian & Indian trade colla |  |  |  |

Pg 9, Col: 1, 3 cms

|       |                                             |  |  |  |
|-------|---------------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Pg 1  | 1. Major N. mishap in Russia                |  |  |  |
|       | 2. I'll be loyal till death Tripathi        |  |  |  |
| Pg 9  | 3. Pranab for free vote on bill             |  |  |  |
| Pg 16 | 4. Centre rejects plea: drought<br>spending |  |  |  |
| Pg 20 | 5. Pac. poll clashes rising in Dhaka        |  |  |  |

TV: 26.7.86 NEWSPAPER: 27.7.86

|    |                                                                                                               |                                                    |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | Violence spreads to Delhi<br>Ved Marwah Sathe - H.K.L. Kapurs appeal                                          | Pg 1 & 9. 9 cols. 105 cms                          |
| 2. | Bandh deserved in Punjab, Chandigarh Total<br>no untoward incident.                                           | Pg 1, Col: 3, 60 cms                               |
| 3. | P.M. aks - strong action take against<br>terrorists - Barnala asked to organise army<br>march on border areas | Pg 1, Col: 1, 6 cms<br>Barnala ( army news) Pg 189 |
| 4. | Thrilling air display - Arun Singh present                                                                    |                                                    |
| 5. | Venkatraman inaugurates Industrial Conference                                                                 |                                                    |
| 6. | Linghrood declared highway - Tiwari<br>of Mizoram                                                             |                                                    |
| 7. | India to receive aid from Denmark Women in<br>Agriculture                                                     |                                                    |
| 8. | I.L.N.A. meeting Gadgil inaugurates                                                                           |                                                    |
| 9. | Ha aks for Mandela to be released Mandela<br>& Tutu refuse to meet him                                        | Pg 3, Col:3, 24 cms                                |

10. Reagan to impose limited sanctions
11. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Hydel Project
12. Wagon workshop - Railway vehicles
13. Rajasthan - 4 killed in flash floods

14. Forest fire in Southern France
15. Sports

Pg. 1

1. Jagmohan not for elections
2. Curfew clamped in Ahmedabad area
3. Assam minorities protest at evictions

4. Statehood for Arunachal
5. Veteran Diplomat dead
6. Rigid rules cost exchequer dearly:

Pg. 7

purchaser

- Pg. 2 7. Reagan's SOI bait to Soviet

Pg 1, Col: 2, 16 cms  
Floods hit normal life in  
many State

Col: 2, 20 cms (present situation unsuitable)  
Col: 1, 8 cms  
Col: 2, 20 cms. (Delegation of United  
Minorities front came to Delhi to draw the  
attention of the Central authorities to the  
serious sites created by the eviction of same  
40,000 minority families taking advantage of  
certain clauses in the Assam  
Col: 1, 4 cms  
Col: 1, 3 cms, Obit Pg 7 - 2: 19 cms  
Col: 3, 24 cms. (Indian council general -  
request to buy a building for his missionaries  
San Francisco - delay of 4 yrs - buy an older  
building - unnecessary expenditure of Rs.50 lakhs  
Col: 3, 40 cms.

SUBJECTS LISTED IN THE SAME PRIORITY AS ON TV      TV FILM FOOTAGE      T.O.I. COVERAGE      I.E. COVERAGE

1. SAARC meeting at Dacca begins Ershad inaugurates - Shiv Shankar calls upon members to solve their problems.  
Pg 9, Col: 2, 22cms
2. Bhuta Singh R.S. - special powers - only borders - to specify areas at apprehension of Opposition  
Pg 1, Col: 2, 24 cms
3. In Punjab - killing at Muktsar terrorist arrested.  
Pg 1, Col: 3, 39 cms
4. BSF - 4 miscreants crossing border killed  
Pg 14, Col:1, 10 cms.
5. R.S. - no question of PM visiting Pak - unless later takes the steps remove irritants
6. Seminar on national unity and Peace - Quame Ekta Samiti (Delhi)
7. Kohina - programme for communal harmony Nagaland - CM speaks  
Pg 9, Col: 1, 14 cms
8. Ghulam N Azad assures Lok Sabha Vaidya's terrorists will be arrested - Unfortunate death inspite of tight security measures.  
Pg 1, Col: 1, 5 cms  
Pg 9, Col: 1, 5 cms
9. Pune peaceful
10. Bihar boat capsizes
11. Lok Sabha - abolish - Legislative Council as T.N. - DMK walk out  
pg 14, Col:1, 6 cms
12. Nurul Husein Governor of Bengal
13. Lok Sabha passes bill pay of C.J.'s of Supreme Court & High Court
14. Sant Tulidas tributes - birth anniversary/  
L.K.Jha speaks (Delhi)

SUBJECTS LISTED IN THE SAME PRIORITY AS ON TV

15. Canadian & W. Bank assistance Idduki & Lok Sabha Lower Periyar projects.
16. Research Institute of Ahmedabad assertion oil field capacity with computers - Laboratory (Report)
17. Assam - Gas plant modernized achieve 100% capacity utilisation. (Report)
18. Manipur C.M. - 2 ministers given in resignations
19. Profits of Public Sector Development Corporation. M.D. spoke to Boordarshan
20. In S.A. - Natal - Court declares - ultra vires certain regulations of Emergency (Report)
21. B. R. Bhagat & Sheela Kaul leaves for Moscow
22. Prevent explosions - like those on Challenger
23. Authorities collect the coins from fountain every Monday morning in Italy.

Pg 1, Col: 1, 5 1/2 cms

T.O.I. COVERAGE

TV FILM FOOTAGE

I.E. COVERAGE

Distortion of fact.

1. Gulam Chatsi Azad - inspite of tight measures of security - Vaidya killed in Lok Sabha
2. Pune Peaceful. Frightened Sikhs may quit Pune - Shops and business establishments belonging to Sikhs looted and damaged. T.O.I. page 9, col: 2.

Time factor

3. Pune Bandh
4. Lok Sabha abolish Legislative Council as T.N. 2DMK members walk out.

Film Clips

5. No film clips Bihar ~~Smx~~ boat capsized
6. Pune Peaceful

Omitted Pg. 1.

1. No compulsion in singing anthem : SC: 1 col: 12 cms
2. CBI to help in Vaidya probe 4 cols: 36 cms.
3. ONGC cancels tenders No private unit in oil hunt cols: 2, 9cms. (The much publicised scheme of promoting Indian private sector in the field of oil exploration has received a harsh blow at the hands of the ONGC.
4. Hindu group gains support forcefully : 1col : 10 cms  
(In Budhlada - police ~~sm~~ smashed a gang of ~~Winda~~ Hindu Surashtra Samiti activists. The gang was allegedly engaged in sending threatening letters to political workers and eminent traders of Budhlada belonging to the Hindu community to create a panic among them and to demand their support. Letters purported to have been written by Sikh terrorists.

Pg 189, 3 cols, 28 cms

5. Security norms violated (Vaidya's murder)

Pg 17 (Delhi)

6. Where leprosy hit again self respect 4 cols, 48 cms
7. Cadaver solution for kidney shortage : 2 cols, 20 cms.