

11 October 2025

To  
Governor Phil Murphy  
State of New Jersey  
United States of America

Subject: Concerns Regarding Event "Hindutva in America: A Threat to Equality and Religious Pluralism"

Dear Sir,

We, Centre for Integrated and Holistic Studies (CIHS), a leading independent and non-partisan think tank based in New Delhi, Bharat, express our deep concern regarding upcoming event "Hindutva in America: A Threat to Equality and Religious Pluralism," scheduled to be held on October 27th at Rutgers University, College Avenue Campus.

CIHS strongly believes in values of academic freedom, open discussion and would like to stress that this freedom must be used with academic integrity, neutrality and responsibility. As is evident, this event does not meet those standards.

The way the event is set up and kind of people who will speak, it seems to promote a biased and hostile view of Hindu identity and community life, especially against Hindu students and groups under broad and politically charged label of "Hindutva."

The language used in its promotion could make people think that Hindu cultural expression is the same as extremism which would unfairly label an entire faith community.

These narratives are not just ideas in the air. On a university campus with large number of South Asian and Hindu students, this messaging can make people feel scared, alone and distrustful. It can also make people feel justified in being suspicious and biased against students who practice Hindu beliefs, traditions or practices like yoga and meditation.

As incidents of Hinduphobia, including temple vandalism and online harassment of students, are on the rise, colleges and universities have a moral and intellectual obligation to make sure that their platforms are not used to spread hate or false information in the name of scholarship.



We want to bring a few important things to your attention right away:

- Title and framing of the event show that it is not academically neutral, encouraging political activism instead of balanced scholarly research.
- It is very concerning that US taxpayer money is being used to support an event that spreads religious bias instead of solid research or interfaith understanding.
- Rutgers University has moral duty to make sure that its departments and platforms are not used to politicise or attack Hindus and Asian coloured communities.
- The said event could make Hindus and Indian-origin students feel unwelcome which goes against the university's stated commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Our concern is not about stopping debate but being honest and responsible with your mind. Academic freedom cannot be defense for bias. Scholarships require research based on evidence, variety of points of view and respect for faith and diversity.

Involvement of people like Audrey Truschke and Nikayta Malhotra that are known for present one-sided interpretations of Hinduism and Indian society is of serious concern.

This also raises further ethical and academic questions. Without Rutgers' institutional endorsement such an event would not be recognised for what it is: a politically motivated campaign rather than a legitimate academic discussion.

Towards this, Rutgers University should:

1. Separate its name and facilities from this event so that university spaces are not used to promote religious bias.
2. Initiate a formal review of department in charge and speakers to see if they have followed academic and moral standards.
3. Make a public statement that condemns Hinduphobia and says that the University is committed to keeping Hindu students and faculty safe, respected and included.

Hindu organisations and cultural groups throughout United States have a longstanding history of civic engagement, humanitarian efforts and interfaith collaboration.



It is both academically dishonest and socially harmful to call them threats to democracy or pluralism without evidence.

We trust Rutgers will take appropriate steps to ensure that its academic spaces remain centers of genuine inquiry, mutual respect and integrity—not platforms for bigotry disguised as scholarship.

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K.A. Badarinath  
Director & Chief Executive  
91-9810401275

CC: Dr. William F. Tate IV, President, Rutgers University  
Ms. Francine Conway Chancellor, Rutgers New Brunswick  
Dr. Keena Arbuthnot Chief Academic Officer, Rutgers University  
Ms. Anne Newman, Dean of Students, Rutgers University  
Dr. Brian Ballentine Chief of Staff, Rutgers University