

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1303

ANSWERED ON:10.12.2003

OFFENSIVE PORTRAYAL OF HINDU GOD

ASHOK KUMAR PATEL;DINESH CHANDRA YADAV;PADAMSEN CHAUDHARY;RADHA MOHAN SINGH;RAM JEEVAN SINGH

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

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(a) whether the Indian Hindu community in the U.S. had recently petitioned to the Prime Minister protesting against the nude image of Lord Ganesha printed on the cover of a book containing many offensive passages;

(b) if so, the facts of the said matter; and

(c) the action taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH)

(a) & (b) An internet petition signed by members of the Indian Hindu community in the U.S. recently protested against the cover image of Lord Ganesha as well as against some of the passages and interpretations contained in the 2001 edition of Paul Courtright's book Ganesha: Lord of Obstacles, Lord of Beginnings published by M/s Motilal Banarsidas Publishers Private Limited. The petition was addressed, inter alia, to the Prime Minister.

(c) The Government, through the Indian Embassy in Washington DC, is in touch with the Indian American community and the matter has been taken up with the author as well as with the Emory University where the author is employed at present. Subsequent to the internet petition and protest emails, the publisher has withdrawn the book and issued an apology. The author has confirmed that he had no role in selecting the book cover and also said that he was "distressed that anyone found his discussions of Lord Ganesha offensive."