

Hindu Conference holds information session By Lachman Balani

On Aug 26, The Hindu Conference of Canada (HCC) in conjunction with the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) held an informative session at the North York Central Library in Toronto, to address the issue of Hinduism being misrepresented in North America.

After a brief introduction and overview of the HCC from Ms. Falitaa Chabria, Ms. Sheetal Shah, from the US and spokesperson for the HAF, took the podium and informed the congregation of the ongoing battle that the HAF is enduring to correct 6th grade school textbooks in the state of California, wherein the books claim that the highlights of Hinduism are the caste system and maltreatment of women. Several more unrealistic and disparaging remarks are also written regarding the religion, boiling it down to the 3 C's, "caste, cows and curry" (as one in the audience commented "in light of the recent AIDS conference, they probably will add a 4th 'condoms'!"). Whereas thousands of corrections were readily made in the textbooks for equivocations

about Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the 160 corrections requested by the HAF for Hinduism in 2005, have been reduced to endless and senseless arguments without the issue being resolved till date, leading to lawsuits being filed.

When the floor was thrown open to a question and answer period, a lady from the Toronto School Board, informed us that should any of us feel that textbooks inaccurately portray Hinduism, we should take the matter up with the 'equity committee' of the school. Several other attendees also briefly presented their views.

The mission of the HCC, headed by Venkat Nagarajan and Ron Banerjee, is to identify and remedy false propaganda and unfair stereotyping of Hindus in Canada. For further information please visit www.hccanada.com.