

# Beef festivals hurt ICSSR chief

**RASANT KUMAR  
MOHANTY**

**New Delhi, July 14:** The new head of a premier social science research organisation today dismissed virtually its entire body of research as ideology-driven, and accused the media of exaggerating what he claimed were isolated instances of cow vigilantism.

Indian Council of Social Science Research chairperson Braj Bihari Kumar, 76, argued that the cow was an emotional subject for 90 per cent of the country's people and that events like beef festivals hurt them.

Kumar said that some historians portrayed Hindus in a bad light because of their ideological orientation.

"The orientation of the social science studies is not India-oriented. Many a time,

social science studies carry the burden of ideology. This burden must be thrown off," he told a seminar on the "Challenges of growing inequalities in India," organised by the Council for Social Development, a think tank.

Kumar said he was unhappy with the social science research done so far with the support of the ICSSR and the country's 700-odd universities.

"I'm not happy with the ICSSR about whatever research has been done by it. We have to change our culture of social science research. Inconvenient facts, many of which counter the (researchers') ideology are ignored," he said.

Kumar said the trend had been to carry out hundreds of studies on particular areas of a subject while ignoring other areas completely.

"Besides, society must go

in from such studies. What is happening is that after the students complete their research, they and their institutions and the ICSSR hold on to the copies of the theses. Nothing percolates to society — this must be changed," he said.

Kumar said the media was portraying isolated attacks on people ferrying cows as the general behaviour.

"The media is creating an impression as though society is on the warpath. (When) a man is killed, the culprits should be punished by the state. But beef festivals hurt the sentiments of the rest of the population who are not party to the crime," he said.

Kumar claimed there was no untouchability in India in ancient times and that the caste mosaic was vastly different.

He said that AI Bhrami, a



**Braj Bihari Kumar**

Persian scholar who visited India around a millennium ago, had written only about four layers in the then Hindu society.

"How come that thousands of castes exist now? It could be because of two reasons — local marriage and marriage within endogamous groups," Kumar said without explanation.

He disapproved of criti-

cisms of Mannu, the scholar believed to have codified the four-caste bulwark of Hindu society some two millennia ago.

"Many people are referring to Mannu. Cannot we refer to Vidur (Hastinapur Prime Minister and sagely uncle of the Pandavas and Kauravas) from the *Mahabharata*? Vidur's mother was a slave," he said.

Historian D.N. Jha told **The Telegraph**: "Unless ideology interferes in the research, there is nothing wrong in following an ideology. Has he (Kumar) not been appointed on ideological considerations?"

Kumar, editor of the quarterly journals *Dialogue* and *Chintan Srjtan*, was appointed to his current post by human resource development minister Prakash Javadekar in May.

In the January-March issue of *Dialogue*, Kumar had written: "(The) BJP is acquiring new ground, for example in Manipur in the last elections.... It was the endorsement of Prime Minister's policies and actions.... The electoral win is the endorsement of the organisational capacity of the BJP and the RSS and that of party president Amit Shah."

In a pre-recorded and televised message, Javadekar attributed the inequality in the country to thousand years of invasion, foreign rule and various social issues. Council for Social Development president Muchkund Dubey said the Constitution had made the first concerted effort to remove the inequalities in society. Still, Indian society was riddled with inequalities in several spheres..