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A story worth recalling

Feb 18, 2015 | Age Correspondent

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A screengrab of the website —(Photo: Asian Age)

Created by the students of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Remembering 1992 is a website that documents the impact of the 1992-93 riots today

While reams of news space have been dedicated to the 1992 riots, professor K. P. Jayasankar of Tata Institute of Social Sciences realised that his students (born in the early 1990s) do not know much about the event that rocked the country. "History is forgotten today, and a lot of it, I believe is made up by memory. For instance, when we spoke to students about the 1992 riots; they thought that riots started in Mumbai, when it was actually a reaction to the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition in Ayodhya. I thought this was a good time to make the students learn about what really happened." He adds, "They were infants at that time. I don't blame them if they have little understanding of what transpired."

The students and the faculty of the School of Media and Cultural Studies at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences came together to create a website which recorded the events of the riots. The website — Remembering 1992 (www.mumbairiots.tiss.edu) — presents a timeline between December 6 and February 7 in which about 900 Mumbaikars lost their lives.

The website is based on the Justice Srikrishna Commission Report and also includes an interview with the jurist himself. Their work of labour took about two years to work on this project. Professor Anjali Monteiro and Jayasankar spearheaded the initiative.

Remembering 1992 includes documentaries (created by the students), news reports and interview transcripts and explores the consequences of the event. Jayasankar says, "We wanted to explore these ideas and thought it would make sense to if had more than one voice on these issue." Centered around five broad themes, the site explores issues such as dislocation, ghettoisation, formation of stereotypes, and struggles for justice and citizen initiatives to bring a change. The website also includes links to interviews with survivors, writers, photographers and journalists who archived or witnessed the event. Some of the films include: Framing '92 that deals with how the riots continue to be represented in art and media; Ek Akhri Panah looks at the "mass upheaval" and displacement of people from Muslim communities in localities like Mumbra.

The professor hopes that this initiative will serve as a one stop solution for those looking to research on the riots, if not start a dialogue. He says, "I have realised that the riots are treated like a folktale; only what is convenient is remembered. It is important to deal with these violent memories. There was so much information we had that we found it difficult to consolidate them as films, and that's where the learning continues."

The professor admits that the team did experience a few hiccups while working on the project, but it all panned out eventually. He says, "There were difficulties,

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Columnists

Of change, will & inner voice



Paulo Coelho

The word "change" is generally confused with Lampedusa's famous phrase: "better to change a little so that everything can stay the same." And when we feel that the time has come for a change, we uncon

Looking east



Dilip Cherian

China obviously looms large on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign policy agenda.

for instance, building the website took longer than expected. There is always this distrust that comes with working with them, but their enthusiasm and commitment surprised us.”

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