CBFC culls Documentary

Why in news?

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Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has refused to clear a documentary on Amartya Sen called 'The Argumentative Indian' until words such as "Cow", "Gujarat", "Hindutva" and "Hindu Rashtra" are either expunged or beeped out.

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What is the reason behind?

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- The organisation, set up to protect the public from the excesses of cinema, now presumes to cull the thoughts of one of India's foremost public intellectuals.
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- In this case, the CBFC is upset over Sen's views on cow vigilantism and concomitant lynchings, the Gujarat riots and the project to spread Hindutva ideology.
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- So, CBFC says that the documentary **shouldn't jeaopardize the security in Gujarat.**
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- "Gujarat" is not the first place name that the board has objected to. Nihalani had earlier issued a list of banned terms which included "Bombay".
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- The arbitrariness had caused the CBFC much embarrassment when the list was leaked.
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What does it imply?

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- CBFC, nowadays, is showing an unhealthy enthusiasm **for censoring rather**

than certifying, which is the statutorily defined purpose.
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- The matter is already being painted as a **move to curb free speech.**
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- This government has been seen to be impatient with its critics.
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- It has even allowed a disabling environment to develop which favours authorised versions, and **it curbs or trashes alternative opinions**.
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- It is having a stifling effect on creative expression in cinema, reflecting the attenuation of the public discourse.
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- This hounding of authors and filmmakers has been **damaging for democracy**.
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What is CBFC?

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- It is a **statutory body** under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, regulating the public exhibition of films under the provisions of the Cinematograph Act 1952.
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- Films can be publicly exhibited in India only after they have been certified by the Central Board of Film Certification.
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- The Board consists of non-official members and a Chairman (all of whom are appointed by Central Government).
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- It functions with headquarters at Mumbai and has nine Regional offices.
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Source: The Indian Express

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