How to deal with Hate Speech?

Why in news?

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A former DG of Kerala police was arrested recently on charges of promoting communal enmity.

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Why was he arrested?

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- It is a case of gross misuse of the law.
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- The state police had booked him under Section 153(A) of the IPC.
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- It is a legal provision against hate speech.
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- This was for remarks he made in an interview to a Malayalam magazine in July.
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- In the interview, he presented what appeared to be a prejudiced view of the state’s Muslim community.
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- He claimed that population growth in the state was skewed in favour of Muslims and that a section in the community promoted religious conversion through “love jihad”.
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What should have been done?

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- His views are undoubtedly controversial, even bigoted.
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- The fact that such a person headed the state police is indeed a cause for concern.

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- However, to book him under hate speech provisions is uncalled for.
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- Such views cannot be banished by wielding hate speech laws.
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- They call for greater political engagement and debate.
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- Skewed ideas about communities will have to be confronted with arguments and facts.
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- It is undemocratic to demand the curtailment of the right to freedom of expression by raising the spectre of communal disharmony.
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- It would set a precedent for curtailing future dissents against the government.
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- He also had a fraught relationship with the ruling regime.
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- The present government had removed him from the DGP’s post after it won the election last year.
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- Hence the current move questions the real intentions of the government.
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- Ideally, his remarks need to be challenged in the public sphere, not through criminal action.
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Source: The Indian Express

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