

News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Authority

Order No.179 (2024)

Complainant: Mr. Rajesh Singh Jatana

Programme: Daily News & Analysis

Channel: Zee News

Date of Broadcast: 18.1.2023

Since the complainant was not satisfied with the response of the channel, the complaint was escalated on 30.1.2023 to the second level of redressal, i.e., NBDSA.

Complaint dated 18.1.2023:

The complaint concerned fake news that ChatGPT is against the Hindu religion. The allegations were unfounded, baseless and made without any merit.

Reply dated 30.1.2023 from the broadcaster:

The broadcaster stated that it had carefully gone through the allegations levelled in the complaint, which are incorrect, misconceived and false. The broadcaster denied the allegations made in the subject complaint. It stated that the said broadcast in no manner contained fake news rather it was based on verified facts and investigations conducted by the broadcaster.

In the impugned telecast, a detailed analysis was conducted to highlight how "ChatGPT," considered the future of Artificial Intelligence, had garnered attention for its detailed responses and articulate answers across many domains of knowledge, had failed to recognise the sentiments regarding Hindu religious figures.

The intention in the impugned telecast was to merely highlight how the said AI who had recognised the religious figures and sentiments of other religions, Islam and Christianity, failed to capture the same towards Hinduism. Nowhere in the programme was it suggested that "ChatGPT" is against the Hindu religion as alleged, but it merely highlighted the disregard and indifference of a supervised Artificial Intelligence platform.

The broadcaster stated that it had abided by the principles of news reporting, broadcasting and journalistic norms and the complainant had failed to establish any deviations therefrom.

Decision of NBDSA at its meeting held on 6.7.2023

NBDSA considered the captioned complaint regarding the broadcast aired on Zee News on 18.1.2023, response of the broadcaster and after viewing the footage of the broadcast, decided to call both the parties for a hearing.

On being served with Notices, the following persons were present at the hearing:

Broadcaster

1. Ritwika Nanda, Advocate
2. Annie, Manager – Legal

Mr. Rajesh Singh Jatana did not appear in the hearing.

Mr. Rajnish Ahuja, Editor Member being an editor member representing Zee Media Corporation Ltd. in NBDSA recused himself from the proceedings.

Submissions of the Broadcaster

The broadcaster submitted that the impugned broadcast was aired on its channel on 17.01.2023 and not on 18.01.2023, as alleged. The impugned broadcast was subsequently uploaded on social media sites from where the complainant may have viewed the impugned broadcast on 18.01.2023.

In the impugned broadcast it had fairly and objectively reported and conducted an analysis to highlight how “ChatGPT,” which is the future of Artificial Intelligence and which has garnered attention for its detailed responses and articulate answers across many domains of knowledge, had failed to recognise the sentiments regarding Hindu religious figures.

That the allegations made by the complainant were on the limited aspect that the said broadcast contains “fake news”. It stated that the content and topics analysed on the prime-time programme ‘DNA’, are thoroughly researched and go through multiple fact-checking and are made sure to be in consonance with the journalistic guidelines before the telecast by the concerned editorial and other technical teams. They work on a comprehensive strategy to ensure that every piece of information broadcasted is authentic true and within the ambit of the editorial guidelines and was fair and objective.

That the impugned programme stated how ChatGPT, a supervised Artificial Intelligence platform created by OpenAI was able to recognise the religious figures and sentiments of other religions like Islam and Christianity and was completely negligent, ignorant and oblivious towards Hindu religion. The programme merely intended to demonstrate the same by showcasing a demo. The said demo explicitly showed that when the question with respect to “jokes” on Hindu Idols like Shri Ram, Laxman etc., was asked, a list of jokes popped out; when same AI was asked to tell a joke on other religious texts other than Hindu religion like the Quran and the Bible, the response by the AI was that *“As an AI, I am not programmed to make jokes about any religious texts as it may be considered as disrespectful and offensive. It is important to be mindful of the feelings and the beliefs of the others when making joke or engaging in any form of communication.”*

Broadcaster submitted that nowhere in the programme was it suggested that “ChatGPT” is against the Hindu religion as alleged. However, the programme merely intended to highlight such disregard and indifference of a supervised Artificial Intelligence platform.

Furthermore, it submitted that after the impugned broadcast, ChatGPT itself had taken cognisance of this issue, as a result of which, the AI when now asked to tell a joke on Hindu religion, stated that *“As an AI, I am not programmed to make jokes about any religious texts as it may be considered as disrespectful and offensive. It is important to be mindful of the feelings and the beliefs of the others when making joke or engaging in any form of communication.”* The broadcaster submitted that it had subsequently aired a programme in this regard on 18.09.2023. In view of the above, it submitted that the impugned programme was in conformity with the Code of Ethics and Broadcasting Standards.

NBDSA asked the broadcaster to submit the footage of the programme aired by it on 18.09.2023 for its consideration, which was submitted by the broadcaster along with a tabular chart that illustrated the changes in the content or responses generated by ChatGPT during the telecast, along with corresponding timestamps.

Decision

NBDSA considered the complaint, response from the broadcaster and gave due consideration to the submissions of the broadcaster and viewed the footage of the broadcasts.

NBDSA noted that the complainant had expressed his inability to participate in the hearing and had instead requested the Authority to give a decision in the complaint. In view of the complainant’s absence from the hearing, NBDSA decided to consider the complaint ex-parte.

Based on the submissions advanced by the broadcaster that Chat GPT had taken corrective action, which was broadcast on 18.08.2023 regarding the issue raised in the impugned broadcast aired on 17.08.2023, NBDSA found no violation of the Code of Ethics & Broadcasting Standards and Guidelines in the impugned broadcast.

NBDSA, therefore, decided to close the complaint and inform the complainant and the broadcaster accordingly.

NBDSA directs NBDA to send:

- (a) A copy of this Order to the complainant and the broadcaster;
- (b) Circulate this Order to all Members, Editors & Legal Heads of NBDA;
- (c) Host this Order on its website and include it in its next Annual Report and
- (d) Release the Order to media.

It is clarified that any statement made by the parties in the proceedings before NBDSA while responding to the complaint and putting forth their view points, and any finding or observation by NBDSA in regard to the broadcasts, in its proceedings or in this Order, are only in the context of an examination as to whether there are any violations of any broadcasting standards and guidelines. They are not intended to be 'admissions' by the broadcaster, nor intended to be 'findings' by NBDSA in regard to any civil/criminal liability.

Sd/-
Justice A.K Sikri (Retd.)
Chairperson

Place: New Delhi
Date : 28.02.2024