

**News Broadcasting Standards Authority**  
**Order No. 41 (2016)**

**Order of NBSA on the letter dated 12.1.2016, received from the Under Secretary (BC.II), MoI&B regarding “telecast of alleged objectionable news reports by NDTV 24x7 and NDTV India TV Channels on lynching of a man in Nahan, Shimla, allegedly for smuggling cattle” on 16.10.2015, at 17:28 and 18:27 hrs.**

MoI&B had informed NBSA that NDTV 24x7 and NDTV India channels had telecast objectionable news reports on 16.10.2015 (at 17:28 and 18:27 hrs), in the context of an incident involving a man being beaten to death in Nahan, Shimla, allegedly for smuggling cattle.

The complaint was forwarded to the broadcaster for a response. The broadcaster in its response dated 6.5.2016 stated that a perusal of the footage would show that the said news report was a completely valid reportage of a person being killed in Nahan, allegedly over transporting cows; and that the bulk of the report was a phone interview with the Superintendent of Police, Nahan. It was also submitted that this news was reported by several other channels and newspapers.

NBSA at its meeting held on 11.3.2016 considered the complaint, response and viewed the footage. It noted that the major part of the report was a phone interview with the Superintendent of Police, Nahan. It noted that though the SP, Nahan, while confirming the incident of lynching, did not attribute it to any religious outfit or group, the channels (NDTV 24x7 & NDTV India) prominently displayed headlines on the screen that “Bajrang Dal, Gau Rakhsha Dal men allegedly attack 5, lynch one”; “Police probe alleged hand of groups Gau Rakhsha Dal, Bajrang Dal”; “FIR registered, police probing alleged Bajrang Dal”; “FIR registered Bajrang Dal, Gau Rakhsha Dal hand being probed”; “आरोपी कथित तौर पर बजरंग दल, गौरक्षा दल के”, thereby attributing that some religious groups were behind the lynching.

NBSA was of the view that the broadcaster appeared to be in breach of Specific Guidelines Covering Reportage relating to “Accuracy”, “Objectivity” & “Racial & Religious Harmony”. Therefore, NBSA decided to issue a show cause notice to the broadcaster for violation of the above guidelines and directed them to file a response and also to appear before the NBSA.

Accordingly, in response to the communication for a hearing Mr. Manoranjan Bharti, Political Editor and Mr. Souvik Sinha, Assistant Manager, Legal appeared before the NBSA on 21.5.2016 .

Mrs. Manika Ahirwal Raikwar, Member of NBSA, being an interested party recused herself from the proceedings.

Mr. Manoranjan Bharti stated that the headlines both on NDTV 24x7 and NDTV India were based on the FIR lodged and also from the version given by the family members and they had reported the news in a normal manner as is done with all other news reports. He also drew the attention of NBSA that NDTV India while reporting the incident had used the word "कथित" meaning "*allegedly*". It was stated that this was exactly what the deceased man's family had alleged and was also reported by newspapers along with other news agencies.

NBSA again viewed both the broadcasts in the presence of the representatives of the broadcasters, at the hearing. NBSA noted that the report consisted of a telephone interview with SP, Nahan; though no reference was made by SP, Nahan of any religious outfit or group being responsible for the incident, NDTV 24X7 (English channel), without any verification, had prominently displayed headlines on the screen attributing the lynching to some religious groups, which was unwarranted. On the other hand, the report on "NDTV India" (Hindi channel) was balanced, the reporter's statements were careful and guarded, even though in the headlines attributed the lynching to religious outfits, which had no confirmation from the SP, Nahan.

NBSA was of the view that both the channels NDTV 24x7 and NDTV India had violated the "Specific Guidelines Covering Reportage relating to accuracy, objectivity and racial and religious harmony".

NBSA decided that the broadcaster (both channels) be directed to air its regret/apology for attributing the lynching to some named religious groups, apparently without verification of facts. The content of the apology and the date and time of the broadcast would be given to the broadcaster by NBSA.

It is clarified that the finding of NBSA, and the regret/apology to be expressed by the broadcasters, in pursuance of this decision, are only in the context of examination by NBSA as to whether there was any violation of Broadcasting Standards and Guidelines and shall not be construed as a finding against, or admission by, the broadcaster, of any other wrong-doing giving rise to a civil or criminal liability.

NBSA therefore directs that New Delhi Television Ltd on their channels NDTV 24x7 & NDTV India ,to tender the following apology on 25.7.2016, prior to the commencement of the 9.00 pm news, the following text (static) on full screen in large font size with voice over (in slow speed) expressing regret for the said telecast by stating the following:

NDTV 24x7 regrets and apologizes that in its news reports on 16.10.2015 at 17:28 in the context of an incident wherein a man was beaten to death in Nahan, Shimla, allegedly for smuggling cattle, NDTV24x7 had displayed headlines on the screen that “Bajrang Dal, Gau Rakhsha Dal men allegedly attack 5, lynch one”; “Police probe alleged hand of groups Gau Rakhsha Dal, Bajrang Dal”; “FIR registered, police probing alleged Bajrang Dal”; “FIR registered Bajrang Dal, Gau Rakhsha Dal hand being probed”, though the SP, Nahan, while confirming the incident of lynching, did not attribute it to any religious outfit or group were behind the lynching.

**Text of NDTV India to be translated in Hindi**

NDTV India regrets and apologizes that in its news reports on 16.10.2015 at 18:27 hrs. in the context of an incident wherein a man was beaten to death in Nahan, Shimla, allegedly for smuggling cattle, NDTV India prominently displayed headline on the screen that “आरोपी कथित तौर पर बजरंग दल, गौरक्षा दल के”, though the SP, Nahan, while confirming the incident of lynching, did not attribute it to any religious outfit or group were behind the lynching.

The video of the said programmes, if hosted, on the website of NDTV24x7 or NDTV India or other links must be removed immediately.

The broadcaster shall submit a compact disc containing the telecast with particulars of the date and time of the telecast, within one week of telecast, as proof of compliance. After such CD is submitted by the broadcaster, the matter will be closed.

NBSA further directs the NBA:

- a) To send a copy of this order to the MOI&B and the broadcaster;
- b) To circulate this order to all Members, Editors & Legal Heads of NBA.
- c) NBA to also host this order on its website and to include it in its next Annual Report.
- d) Release the Order to media.

**Sd/-**  
**Justice R.V. Raveendran (Retd)**  
**Chairperson**

**Place: New Delhi**

**Date: 18.7.2016**