

Decision dated 18.7.2017 regarding alleged violations by 10 news channels showing a video of a woman allegedly beating up a 18 month old baby on 20.12.2016 on News 24, India 24x7, News Nation, ABP News, Aaj Tak, India Today, CNN News 18, News18 India, ETV Rajasthan, India TV.

EMMC report stated that the above news channels had broadcast on 20.12.2016 a news item on a woman badly beating her one and half year old child in Delhi's Geeta Colony. The news report was that after an altercation in the family, she got so angry that she thrashed her child inhumanly, using her legs, hands, and chappals, slapping and punching her child. Visuals of this incident were captured from the CCTV installed in the house. The mother-in-law of the woman lodged a complaint with the Delhi Women Commission which the Commission forwarded to the Delhi Police. The Delhi Police registered case against the woman under the POCSO Act. EMMC report stated that though the news broadcast was with the object of protesting against the mother's act, the channels ought to have stopped with showing the video clip once or twice to substantiate the news; and that it was inappropriate to show the video clip of brutality with the child again and again and can disturb the mind. It was heart rending. The channels should have blurred the video before broadcasting it.

NBSA at its meeting held on 24.4.2017 considered the report of the EMMC, responses given by all the broadcasters justifying the broadcast with or without disclaimer and viewed the CD's. NBSA was of the view that showing the visuals of an infant being beaten up without morphing and repeatedly was not in good taste. NBSA was of the view that the broadcasters had violated the NBSA Specific Guideline 3.7 which states that "Violence must not be depicted solely for its own sake, or for its gratuitous exploitation or to pander to sadistic or other perverted tastes. Scenes with excessive violence or suffering such as close-up shots of persons being subject to brutality, torture or being killed and visual depiction of such matter should be avoided". NBSA decided that in view of the above violation all the broadcasters be requested to appear for a hearing at the next meeting of the NBSA. Therefore, the broadcasters were called for a hearing on 18.7.2017.

Mr. Hemant Sharma, being an interested party, recused himself from the proceedings.

The following persons appeared for the hearing:

1. News24 Broadcast India Ltd. [News 24]

1. Mr. Kaushik Moitra, Head – Legal
2. Ms. Jyoti Lata, Company Secretary
3. Mr. Prakhar Shrivastava, Output Editor

2. Zee Media Corporation Ltd. [India 24x7]

1. Ms. Ritwika Nanda, Advocate
2. Ms. Petal Chandhok, Advocate
3. Mr. Gulshan Kr. Sachdev, AVP – Legal

3. News Nation Network Pvt. Ltd. [News Nation]

1. Mr. Sarvesh Tiwari, Editor
2. Mr. Ajay Verma, Editor
3. Mr. Ansil Bhatnagar, Advocate

4. ABP News Network Pvt. Ltd. [ABP News]

1. Mr. Kishan Singh Rawat, Head – Admin & Regulatory Affairs
2. Mr. Vikram Paul, Manager – Legal
3. Mr. Arunabha Deb, Advocate
4. Ms. Anju Juneja, Executive Editor

5. TV Today Network Ltd. [Aaj Tak & India Today]

1. Dr. Puneet Jain, Chief Law Officer
2. Mr. Vishal Pant, Executive Editor
3. Mr. Manish Kumar, Executive Editor

6. TV18 Broadcast Ltd. [CNN News 18, News18 India, ETV Rajasthan]

1. Mr. Radhakrishnan Nair, Managing Editor, CNN News18
2. Mr. Gautam Dubey, AVP – Legal
3. Mr. Anurag Singh, Executive Editor, News18 India
4. Mr. Apurv Narula, Manager – Legal
5. Mr. Shalinder Wango, ETV News

7. Independent News Services Pvt. Ltd. [India TV]

1. Mr. Ajit Anjum, Managing Editor
2. Ms. Anita Sharma, Asst. Managing Editor
3. Ms. Ritika Talwar, Legal Consultant

All the broadcasters present at the hearing submitted that airing the CCTV footage was in public interest. It was stated that by airing the video, action was taken by the police and other authorities to end the brutality being meted out to an eighteen-month infant presumably by a mentally disturbed mother.

However, they all agreed that repeatedly showing the visuals of an infant being beaten up without morphing was not in good taste; that the constant looping of the disturbing visuals could have been avoided.

In view of the assurance given by the broadcasters that they would be more careful in future, NBSA warned the channels to be careful and informed that any future transgressions would be viewed seriously. NBSA decided to close the matter and inform broadcasters and EMMC accordingly.
