

**Decision dated 6.12.2019 regarding complaint dated 13.5.2019 from Mr. Ravindra Ambedkar on ABP Majha programme on 10.5.2019**

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Since the complainant was not satisfied with the response given by the broadcaster, to his complaint he escalated the same to the second level i.e. the NBSA.

**Complaint:**

Complainant stated that ABP Majha conducted a programme on what ‘Sharad Pawar’s stars forecast’ in the Elections 2019, will he become PM and so on. The complaint alleged that the show was anchored in an astrologer costume. He stated that the channel has a permission from the MoI&B for a news and current affairs channel and star forecast according to the complainant, was not news. He stated that these type of programmes are spreading superstition, are illegal in Maharashtra under anti-superstition law, it is also unethical to discuss anybody’s fate on the basis of Stars, Zodiac signs and fortune. Complainant also forwarded copy of the MoI&B circular dated 22.5.2019 regarding the Policy Guidelines of TV channels from India 2011, which states that the Ministry gives permission under two categories i.e. non new and news.

**Response from broadcaster:**

The channel denied that its anchor conducted the show in “astrologers costume”. The anchor wore a kurta, which does not and cannot qualify as “astrologers costume”. The channel also denied that the programme spread any superstition, let alone violate any provision of law; programme, or sought to influence voters, as the complainant seem to have imputed. Regarding the complainant’s subjective opinion that the channel ought not to air programmes of this nature, broadcaster stated that its content will not necessarily resonate with all viewers all the time; and it has noted the complainant’s concern and will keep it in mind. The channel stated that it had neither violated any code of the NBA nor any provisions of applicable law.

**Decision by NBSA at its meeting held on 10.7.2019:**

NBSA considered the complaint, response from the broadcaster and also viewed the CD of the alleged broadcast. NBSA found no violation of its Regulations or Guidelines in regard to the said broadcast, as the content of the broadcast was within the editorial discretion/freedom. NBSA therefore decided to close the matter and inform the MoI&B and the broadcaster accordingly.

Since the complainant was not satisfied with the decision taken by NBSA at its meeting held on 10.7.2019, he desired a hearing in the matter. Accordingly, with the consent of Chairperson NBSA, the broadcaster and the complainant were directed to appear before the NBSA **for a hearing 23.9.2019**. On receipt of the notice for the hearing, the complainant vide letter dated 20.9.2019 requested for a postponement of the hearing. He requested that the hearing be held after the Maharashtra Assembly elections. The NBSA agreed to the request and decided to call both the parties for a hearing at the next meeting of the NBSA.

**Consideration by NBSA at its meeting held on 6.12.2019:**

On being served with notices, the following persons were present at the hearing on 6.12.2019 :

**Complainant was not present at the hearing and neither responded to the notice issued for the hearing.**

**ABP News Network Pvt. Ltd. [Channel: ABP Majha]**

Ms. Disha Sachdeva, Legal Executive

Mr. Shambo Nandy, Advocate

NBSA noted that the complainant had not availed the opportunities given to him to appear before the NBSA. The NBSA reiterated that complaint will be closed with the same decision taken earlier that *“NBSA found no violation of its Regulations or Guidelines in regard to the said broadcast, as the content of the broadcast was within the editorial discretion/freedom”*.

NBSA therefore decided to close the matter and inform the complainant and the broadcaster accordingly.

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