

Decision dated 6.12.2019 regarding complaint dated 13.5.2019 of Mr. Arihant Kothari - Sun News on 11.5.2019 at 10 pm received from MoI&B

Complaint:

Complainant stated that he came across a new interview telecasted by Sun News channel on 11.5.2019, which according to the complainant, was intended to show a community in bad light and use that podium/platform to encourage violence thoughts against a community.

Response from Broadcaster:

The broadcaster stated that the programme “Nerukku Ner” pertains to “increase in inflow of ‘North Indians’ in Tamil Nadu”, which is taking away the chances and opportunities from the Tamils in Tamil Nadu. The two participants, put forth views favoring inflow of North Indians in Tamil Nadu and another put forth his counter views stating that it is not the case and that any citizen of India is entitled to work or do business in any part of the country. The channel had ensured that it was a well-balanced and un-biased programme with equal opportunity provided to both parties and the anchor was only a moderater between them. Hence, there is no substance in the complaint that Sun News is propagating violence through this programme.

Decision of NBSA at its meeting held on 10.7.2019:

NBSA considered the complaint and the response from the broadcaster. NBSA noted that the content of a ‘report’ or ‘story’ fell within the editorial discretion and an individual’s (complainant’s) view or perception of an issue cannot be a ground to take action against a channel, unless there was a violation of the Guidelines. NBSA therefore decided to close the matter and inform MoI&B and the broadcaster accordingly.

Decision of NBSA at its meeting held on 6.12.2019

Since the complainant was not satisfied with the decision of the NBSA taken at its meeting held on 10.7.2019, the broadcaster and the complainant were directed to appear before the NBSA for a hearing on 23.9.2019. Accordingly, Notice was issued to both the parties to appear for a hearing on 23.9.2019. On behalf of Sun TV Network Ltd. [Channel Sun News], Mr. Abhishek Malhotra, Advocate, Ms. Shilpa Gamnani, Advocate and Mr. P.D Ramakrishnan, Correspondent, Sun TV, were present . They were informed at the hearing that the complainant has expressed his inability to attend the hearing. He however had submitted a letter dated 19.9.2019, and requested the NBSA to consider the points raised in the letter during the hearing . Since, the letter couldn’t be circulated to the broadcaster prior to the hearing (as it was received during the weekend), NBSA decided that the letter be first circulated to the broadcaster for comments and thereafter the complaint would be considered at the next meeting of the NBSA.

Decision of NBSA at its meeting held on 24.1.2020

NBSA noted that upon receipt of the decision of the NBSA at its meeting held on 6.12.2019, the complainant did not accept the closure of the complaint and desired that the matter be relooked at. NBSA decided that the matter will not be reopened again as the complainant had not raised any fresh issues in his letter, which merits reconsideration/ review of the decision taken by the NBSA at its meeting held on 10.7.2019.

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