

**News Broadcasting Standards Authority
Order No. 63 (2019)**

Order of NBSA on complaint dated 3.10.2018 from EMMC: Complaint relating to a programme titled “Main Rakshash Hoon” on Channel: Tez on 16.5.2018 (17:01:13)

The above complaint was received from the Deputy Director, Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC), Ministry of Information & Broadcasting vide letter dated 3.10.2018. The complaint relates to a special programme titled: “Main Rakshash Hoon” (I am a demon) on Tez News channel in which several videos (which had gone viral on the social media) of a man humiliating his mother, children being thrashed and daughters-in-law beating up their mothers-in-law were shown.

EMMC Report:

The channel aired a special programme titled: “Main Rakshash Hoon” (I am a demon) in which several videos (which had gone viral on the social media) of a man humiliating his mother, children being thrashed and daughters-in-law beating up their mothers-in-law were shown. In the first part relating to a video that went viral from Jodhpur, a person is shown dragging his mentally debilitated old mother on the road. The viewers were informed that the person had come to take his mother home, and when she did not agree to go back home, he dragged her on the road. In the second part of the broadcast, the channel had telecast the footage captured in the CCTV camera fixed in a house, showing a daughter-in-law (Sangeeta) mercilessly beating up her mother-in-law (Rajrani) in Bijnor area of Uttar Pradesh. The footage showed that in a fit of rage, the daughter-in-law was trying to smother her mother-in-law by tightening her *chunni* (scarf) around her neck and later attacking her repeatedly with a grindstone and trying to kill her mother-in-law by burning her with a water-heating rod. In the third part, a similar CCTV camera footage was aired showing a woman (Geeta, who hails from Kaushambi area of Uttar Pradesh) mercilessly beating up her 70 year old mother-in-law and later throwing her from the bed. In the fourth part of the programme, videos of young children being cruelly thrashed by their guardians and family members are shown. These videos include the visuals of children being stuffed in sacks and then thrashed, continuously slapped, pushed around, and their necks being pressed. The channel aired these extremely tormenting visuals for more than eleven minutes. EMMC was of the view that while the channel may be justified in airing the blurred versions of the videos that have gone viral on social media once, the repeated lengthy airing of such incidents of abuse of elders and children, that too without blurring, was not proper and could be counter-productive by inciting violence against elders and children.

Reply from broadcaster:

The broadcaster stated that the title of the programme, "Mein Hun Rakshas", showed that the intention of the channel was to highlight the heinous crimes that were being committed behind closed doors against aged relatives and children. The object of the broadcaster was to highlight the fact such heinous crimes are being committed by family members against their own parents/children/relatives, and thereby prevent the occurrence of such events by increasing the awareness and sensitizing the viewers against such atrocities. The broadcaster stated that its reporters/journalists are sensitized regarding such issues and disseminate news in an objective manner keeping in mind the ethical standards and norms of journalistic practices.

Issue of Notice of Hearing by NBSA

NBSA at its meeting held on 17.1.2019 considered the complaint, response of the broadcaster and also viewed the broadcast. NBSA was of the view that repeatedly showing the visuals of infants and aged being beaten up without morphing 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"*. Therefore, NBSA decided to issue notice to the broadcaster to appear for a hearing.

On being served with notice, Dr. Puneet Jain, Chief Law Officer of TV Today Network Ltd. [Channel: TEZ] was present at the hearing on 25.2.2019.

Dr. Jain reiterated the explanation given by the broadcaster in response to the EMMC report. He however submitted that he would bring to the notice of the editorial and the management of the channel, the need to shorten the duration of such disturbing visuals and the need for appropriate morphing while airing reports of such incidents.

Decision/Directions of NBSA:

NBSA was of the view that the purpose could have been achieved by the channel by reporting the news rather than glorifying the brutality being meted out to the elderly, women and children. NBSA was of the view that the channel had allotted disproportionately higher time to show the videos of such gruesome acts/brutality and that airing of the visuals of any brutality should be brief and illustrative. NBSA was of the view that it would have been appropriate if a programme was made on "domestic violence" and experts were invited to give their views on the psychological impact of such brutal acts on the elderly, women and young children, so that the programme would have been informative and credible. NBSA was of the

view that the editorial freedom and discretion do not permit showing such violence for long periods and that programmes should not be aired to sensationalise such issues and garner TRPs. NBSA therefore holds that the broadcaster has violated Guideline 3.7 extracted above.

NBSA therefore directs the broadcaster (Channel: Tez) to exercise greater care, caution and discretion in future while formulating news stories relating to depiction of violence or intimidation against children, elderly and women and warns that any future violations by the channel would be viewed seriously and action would be taken against the broadcaster.

NBSA decided to convey its concern to the broadcaster about the lack of sensitivity of the editorial personnel and to suggest to the broadcaster to hold refresher sessions for the editorial personnel periodically.

The video of the said broadcast, if still available on the website of the channel, or YouTube, or any other links, should be removed immediately and confirmed to NBSA in writing within 7 days.

NBSA directs the NBA to send: (i) a copy of this Order to the broadcaster and the EMMC; (ii) circulate this Order to all Members, Editors & Legal Heads of NBA; (iii) host this Order on its website and to include it in its next Annual Report; and (iv) release the Order to media.

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

Place: New Delhi
Date: April 2, 2019