News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Authority

Order No. 198(2025)
Complainant: Citizens for Justice & Peace
Channel: Times Now Navbharat
Programme: "Sankalp Rashtra Nirman Ka: कराची का लिटरेचर..भारत के मदरसों में क्या कर रहा ? | Hindi News" and "Rashtravad: भारत का मदरसा...पालकस्तान का लसिबस? | Priyank Kanoongo | Bihar Madarsa | Hindi News
Date of Broadcast:19.08.2024

Since the complainant did not receive a response from the broadcaster within the time stipulated under the Regulations, the complaint was escalated on 06.09.2024 to the second level of redressal, i.e., NBDSA.

Complaint dated 26.08.2024

The complaint concerned two shows which were on the issue of *"Teaching in Madrasas in Bihar"*. Both shows were based on the statement made by the Chairperson of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), Mr. Priyank Kanoongo, who had alleged that the government-funded Madrasas in Bihar were teaching from a so-called *"Radical curriculum"* titled *"'Talimul Islam"* and using *"Pakistan-Published books"*. He highlighted certain controversial questions in the book, claiming they describe non-Muslims as *"Kafir"* or those who do not believe in Allah. He further alleged that Hindu children were enrolled in these Madrasas, but the Bihar government had not provided official data on their numbers. He also raised concerns about the curriculum containing books printed in Pakistan, criticizing UNICEF for its involvement and labelling it as *"appeasement."* He argued that Madrasas are unsuitable for basic education and called for their dissolution, suggesting that children should instead attend regular schools. His post included a picture of another book, *"Sabil-e-Sakina,"* published in Latifabad, Hyderabad Sindh, Pakistan, and claimed that it was also being taught in Bihar's Madrasas.

In both shows, the narrative was framed in a skewed manner, painting Madrasas across the country as suspicious places, which were attempting to brainwash children, thereby creating the image of the Madrasas and their respective teachers as enemies of this country.

1. Sankalp Rashtra Ka Show:

The show began with the question *"Karachi's literature. What is it doing in India's Madrasas? Poisonous syllabus in Madrasas? Brain mapping of Hindus in Madrasas. Conspiracy grows? Who brought the brainwashing book? What kind of Jihad in Madrasas? The atmosphere in UP-MP has tightened. What is Bihar doing?"*. While these questions were posed by the anchor, images of the Bihar State Madrasa Board and Madrasa students and teachers

studying and offering namaz were shown in the background. These images and the music attempted to villainize the students and teachers.

Later, the following questions were raised by the anchor on the screen: *"Is a big conspiracy being hatched in Madrasas? Pakistan's plan has come to India!", "Lessons of fundamentalism being taught in Madrasas", "Pakistani books being taught in Madrasas! Non-Muslims are being told, 'who is a kafir'!Hindu children are being brainwashed!".* The usage of words such as *"conspiracy", "Pakistan", "fundamentalism", "brainwashing"* and *"Kafir"* at the beginning itself, built a uniquely stigmatising environment. The anchor then showed a bite, showing a book on screen titled *"Lessons in Islam, authored by Talimul Islam"* and flagged the following questions- *"A big revelation has come to light; a big conspiracy has come to light". "What kind of books are being taught in the madrasas run with the aid of the government? "Why is a person who believes in more than one God being called a Kafir?"*

The language used was Islamophobic as it perpetuated harmful stereotypes and fostered suspicion towards the Muslim community. The unsubstantiated implication that Madrasas were involved in conspiracies while questioning the content of their educational materials through unfair portrayal of Islamic schools as breeding grounds for extremism was not just and neutral coverage of an important issue. This generalisation ignored the diversity within Islamic education and promoted a narrative of fear and mistrust. Additionally, the use of terms like *"Kafir"* in a negative context vilified Islamic beliefs and suggested an inherent hostility towards other religions, further alienating Muslims.

It promoted an *"us vs. them"* mentality, deepening divisions between Muslims and non-Muslims. It cast suspicion on the Muslim community and misrepresented their beliefs, leading to their marginalization and discrimination and encouraged hostility, making it harmful and divisive in social and political contexts.

Furthermore, the show also featured an interview of Mr Priyank Kanoongo with a reporter wherein he showed Page 6 of the book in question, namely *"Taleem-ul-Islam Book 1- Lessons in Islam"* on a screen. Highlighting these questions, the NCPCR Chairperson told the reporter that they had discussed with State Governments, stating that it was inappropriate for Hindu children to stay in Madrasas. According to him, Madrasas were not meant for non-Muslims, and even Muslim children were being deprived of their right to basic education. He emphasized that these children should attend regular schools. The NCPCR had also engaged with the Bihar state government multiple times on this issue. However, the Bihar State Government replied that their syllabus had been prepared by UNICEF and would not be changed. (Time Stamp: 3:58 – 4:51)

The complainant understands the concerns about the curriculum of Madrasas and similar religious schools. These institutions must ensure that their teachings align with educational standards, including critical thinking, scientific inquiry, and civic responsibility. However, the news segment had exaggerated and twisted these concerns to the point of portraying Madrasas as institutions that are solely focused on brainwashing Muslim children and encouraging a divisive agenda.

In the broadcast, the reporter questioned the Deputy Director of the Bihar State Madrasa Board, Mr. Abdul Salam Ansari, about allegations of radical education in Bihar Madrasas. Mr. Ansari denied that the syllabus was part of the Madrasa Board, stating that the syllabus follows SCERT-approved material from classes 1 to 8. Regarding NCPCR Chairperson Kanoongo's claims, he said no official information was received. When asked about UNICEF certification, Mr. Ansari confirmed that a committee, including UNICEF, helped prepare the syllabus in 1920, calling it a good syllabus and advising against making jibes. (Time Stamps: 5:27–6:27, 6:28–6:45)

In relation to the NCPCR's claim of inaction by the government, the reporter stated that *"it is being said by them (NCPCR) that many attempts were also made to contact the government. But no further action has been taken by the government, now they will take the help of law and are even talking about going to court" (Time Stamp: 6:46 – 6:57)*

The anchor cited Uttar Pradesh's Chief Minister's action against the alleged illegal Madrasas in the state of UP. He further stated that UP CM does not tolerate threats against the national interest, and has recently tightened the noose on the alleged illegal Madrasas. (Time Stamp: 9:54 – 10:07)

Later, the anchor played a clip from the impugned broadcast where a reporter is seen talking to a teacher and the students in a Madrasa in Patna, Bihar. The reporter asked the Madrasa teacher about the controversy regarding the book's content, and the teacher said, *"No, it is not taught here, it is not in our syllabus". (Time Stamp: 12:04 – 12:14)* The reporter then asked the student the meaning of the word *"Kafir"*. One student answered that the word Kafir refers to farmers who sow seeds inside the soil, thereby concealing them and is a term that is used for anyone that conceals anything. The child also stated that this is not a wrong word; it is an Arabic word. The reporter further asked the student whether the book *"Talim-e-Islam"* mentioned that if someone believes in two Gods and Goddesses, then that person is a *"Kafir"*. The student replied to the same by stating that the word *"Kafir"* which has been used for a farmer is not in any bad sense, rather is used for anything that is done to hide the truth is called *"Kafir"*. Another student noted that *"Kafir"* is an Arabic word mentioned in the scriptures. and should not be mis-used to further the Hindu-Muslim divide or any political agendas. (Time Stamp: 12:27 – 13:31)

The anchor had intentionally narrated the whole theme of the show with hateful and fake propaganda against the educational institutions of Muslims and deliberately attempted to show Madrasas in the country as a place of radical education and anti-national activities. The coverage was biased, as it selectively emphasised points that aligned with a preconceived narrative while disregarding key clarifications provided by those interviewed. Despite Deputy Director Ansari's assurance that the curriculum in Bihar's Madrasas was aligned with the government-approved syllabus and the contributions from students and teachers who clarified the meaning of the term *"Kafir"* in a non-divisive context, the anchor chose to ignore these insights. The anchor promoted a one-sided narrative that suggested Madrasas in Bihar, and by extension, across the country, were systematically promoting radicalism, without presenting any concrete evidence to support this claim.

Furthermore, by referring to the actions taken in Uttar Pradesh, an unfounded parallel was drawn with the situation in Bihar. This not only generalized the issue but also stoked fear and suspicion towards Madrasas on a national scale. The coverage lacked objectivity and fairness, ultimately contributing to the furthering of a divisive and Islamophobic narrative. The tickers aired further showed how the host made a deliberate attempt to connect Indian Madrasas with Karachi's literature; this has been done by malafide intention.

2. Rashtravad Debate Show

The impugned show was based on the report above. The debate show began with the host introducing the question that *"Is Pakistan's radical syllabus being taught in Indian madrasas?"* and *"Are lessons of hatred being taught to children in madrasas in the name of religion?"* (Time Stamp: 0:31 - 0:51)

Throughout the introduction, the host raised the question regarding the controversy of *'Pakistan's Syllabus teaching in Indian Madrasas'*. The host highlighted the same questions, questioning the content that was being taught in Madrasas. (Time Stamp: 0:41 – 1:06)

Before the debate, a report featuring images of students studying in Madrasas was shown while controversial questions were raised, seemingly to create suspicion in the minds of the viewers. For instance, when the anchor questioned whether a *"Pakistani agenda"* was being promoted in Indian Madrasas, implying a connection between the students and the alleged conspiracy, thereby casting them as potential threats. (Time Stamp: 1:43 – 2:12)

In the debate, the host echoed the same sentiments. He highlighted allegations that Pakistani textbooks are being used in Indian Madrasas, where non-Muslim students

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are allegedly taught that those who do not believe in Allah are *"Kafirs" (non-believers)*. (Time Stamp: 2:25 – 2:50)

The report presented by the host contained the same statement of NCPCR Chairperson Mr. Priyank Konoongo, . The report also included statements made by a Madrasa Principal, Mashroof Ahmad Qadri Nadvi, wherein he could be seen responding to the reporter by stating that the present controversy was being created without any reason and was a distortion of the understanding of the Islamic scriptures. Regarding the meaning of the word 'Kafir,' Principal Nadvi explained that it is an Arabic word meaning *"denial."* and is someone who denies God or other truths.

Another teacher of the Madrasa can be seen as responding to the reporter by stating that they only follow *"Quran"* and *"Hadith"*, and in the Quran, the word has been used for a farmer. The teacher stated that "the word *"Kafir"* is an Arabic word for farmer. (Time Stamp: 5:06 – 6:12)

What the show entailed

Following this, the host set the premise of the debate by posing questions for the participants to discuss, "*Why fundamentalism is being taught in Madrassas?"; "Why are calling non-Muslims infidels and spreading bigotry?"; "Justifying the Kafir ,aren't sowing the seeds of hatred?"; "Even non-Muslims in Madrassas, then why the lesson on "Kafir"?";* and *"Whoever worships more than one God-goddess, what is called?". (Time Stamp: 10:51 – 12:11)*

The participants of the debate were: Mohammad Faiz Khan (RMM), Vinod Bansal (VHP), Maulana Sajid Rashidi (Islamic Scholar), Mumtaj Aalam Rijvi (Islamic Scholar) and Syed Jawwad (Political Expert).

The host asked Pawan Bansal whether teaching Muslim children that those who worship more than one deity are "Kafirs" was not, in itself, spreading poison. Instead of directly addressing the question, Bansal accused Maulana Rashidi and Islam of sowing poison in Madrasas, and further labelled the opposing panellist as a member of *"Jihadi Sanskriti*". The host did not intervene against Bansal's abusive language and even fuelled the discussion by stating, "*The lesson being taught in Madrasas is not simple.*" (Time Stamp: 16:03 – 19:38)

The host then turned to Mumtaj Alam Rizvi, who began explaining that for those who are religious and believe in Allah, Ishwar, or God, the word "Kufr" (unbelief) does not carry any punishment. However, the host interrupted Rizvi, questioning whether the chapter in question is being taught, whether it is instilling hatred in the minds of children, and if Madrasas have been created to teach such hatred. The host then directed the same question to Mohammad Faiz Khan, who responded by calling

Rashidi a "*Kattarpanthi" (extremist).* The host made no effort to stop the derogatory language used by the panellists and further escalated the debate by bringing Hinduism into the discussion and reading the text of the book as a critique against Hinduism. (Time Stamp: 20:41 – 23:16)

One-sided coverage like this creates a deeply problematic and biased narrative that fosters division and perpetuates stereotypes. By focusing solely on controversial and inflammatory questions, such as whether Madrasas are teaching a *"Pakistani agenda"* or spreading hatred towards non-Muslims, the debate disregarded the nuanced explanations provided by Madrasa representatives and Islamic scholars. The selective presentation of facts and the lack of balanced perspectives contributed to a distorted understanding of the issue, reinforcing negative perceptions of Madrasas and the Muslim community. This not only misrepresented the intentions and teachings of these institutions but also unfairly stigmatized an entire religious community, sowing fear and mistrust among viewers.

The host's failure to moderate the discussion fairly, allowing derogatory language and accusations to go unchecked, further exacerbated the problem. By not challenging or correcting the inflammatory statements made by participants, the host implicitly endorsed a narrative of extremism and radicalism being insubstantially associated with Madrasas.

Through a distorted portrayal of Madrasa education, the shows emphasized sensationalism over balanced reporting. The use of provocative questions and visual imagery was aimed at generating fear and suspicion among viewers.

Both shows failed to provide a fair and nuanced exploration of the issue, focusing instead on sensationalism and divisive rhetoric. By presenting Madrasas as breeding grounds for radicalism and using biased framing, these broadcasts contributed to the spread of Islamophobic sentiments and distorted the public's understanding of Islamic education. The portrayal of Madrasa education as inherently problematic, without acknowledging the diversity and context of these institutions, underscored the biased and harmful nature of the coverage provided by both shows.

Violations

The impugned shows violated Fundamental Principles No. 1, 4, 5, 6 and Principle of Self-Regulation concerning Neutrality under the Code of Ethics and Broadcasting Standards, the Specific Guidelines covering Reportage related to Racial & Religious Harmony and the Specific Guidelines for Anchors conducting Programmes including Debates.

Reply dated 16.09.2024 by the broadcaster

1. The channel had not violated any rules and regulations in telecasting the two debate programmes on 19.08.2024. In the programmescomments/views and responses were taken from various guests/speakers, experts on a specific, pointed, and focused issue. An equitable platform was provided to panellists to put forth their views freely.

2. The allegations of bias and unfair reporting are denied as being misguided and unfounded.

Facts

i. By virtue of the two broadcasts, the channel sought to bring to light the issues raised by Mr. Priyank Kanoongo, Chairman, NCPCR relating to the inclusion of Pakistani textbooks in the curriculum of Madrassas in Bihar. AThe channel merely fulfilled its journalistic obligations, and in no way encouraged the Islamophobic rhetoric or targeted any community. The impugned episodes were neither intended to polarise citizens nor to spread any negative propaganda, or to encourage violence against any class of people in the country.

ii. In a live news debate, connected issues are invariably raised by the panellists. Multiple views and opinions are put forth and dissected, which is essential to have a free debate on the chosen topic.

3. Considering the aforesaid, it is pertinent to state that a news channel is well within its right to present the news event and current affairs of extreme public and national importance in the (i) manner that it deems appropriate, without violating the restrictions contained under Article 19(2) of the Constitution of India, (ii) discuss the same leading to a fruitful discussion amongst the participants, and (iii) present unpopular views for the public to review the same.

4. The debates/ programmes impugned in the complaint did not violate any code of ethics, rules, regulations of NBSA, NBA in any manner whatsoever, as alleged or otherwise or at all.

5. In the complaint, selected comments made by the anchor(s) and the participant(s) have been highlighted to level allegations . It focuses only on one side of the spectrum and does not appreciate that a counter argument is equally relevant, important and critical for viewers to form their opinions, specifically when popular beliefs and criticisms are challenged. Raising pertinent, strong and pointed questions, however unpopular it may be, cannot be brushed aside with the allegation that they 'peddle a narrative'.

6. The choice of news debate is entirely within the editorial discretion of the channel. There was no cherry picking and no interest groups were being served by such debates.

7. A perusal of the video footage of the debate/ programme would make it amply clear that there was no such violation of Fundamental Principles 1, 4,5 and 6, Section 2- Principles of Self-Regulation, Guidelines 9, 9.1 and 9.2 of the Specific Guideline covering Reportage and Specific Guidelines for Anchors conducting Programmes including debates, as alleged or otherwise or at all.

8. Throughout the episode, the hosts moderated the discussion with utmost professional integrity, and tried to ensure that the episodes are conducted in a professional manner, without hurting the feelings or marginalising any particular community. All parties present during the episodes were afforded equal opportunities to present their stance. Whenever the panellists seemed to be getting aggressive, the host intervened and tried to placate the situation, so as not to let the debate go astray. Furthermore, by way of the impugned episodes, the channel has in no way, casted aspersions or targeted any one community or individual or attempted to influence or mislead the opinion of the viewers in any manner, whatsoever.

9. Considering the aforesaid principles, the channel ensured that the debate was attended by people from various political parties, including independent political analysts, as per details below:

A. Programme telecast on 19.08.2024 titled - Sankalp Rashtra Nirman Ka : Brief of the programme

The episode in question was a news report on the issues raised by Priyank Kanoongo related to the curriculum of government funded Madrassas in Bihar. The report merely questioned the curriculum of state funded Madrassas of Bihar. Towards this end, the news report interviewed Mr. Priyank Kanoongo, wherein he talked about one of the books on the curriculum of the Bihar Madrassas, titled *as 'Talim-ul-Islam' (Lessons in Islam),* which has been published in Pakistan. Mr. Kanoongo further explained how the said textbook terms non-Muslims, or those who do not believe in Allah as *'Kafirs'*. The report further questioned why such divisive books were allowed to be included in the curriculum of state-run Madrassas in Bihar. Further Mr. Priyank Kanoongo, raised the issue of safety of Hindu students residing and studying in such Madrasas, as well as the impact that such curriculum could have on the communal unity of the nation. The reporter interviewed other persons, including opposition leaders, (Time stamp: 9:00-9:53). The reporter also interviewed Muslim leaders and scholars, including

Sufi Kashish Varsi, National Head, Bhartiya Sufi Foundation as well as Maulana Kaisar Hayat Khan, National Joint Secretary, Muslim League, who were given a platform for putting forth their point of views freely. (Time stamp- 11:03-11:49). The reporter further interviewed students and teachers of a Madrasa in Bihar. The entire interview was broadcasted in the report, without any interference or alteration by the reporters. (Time stamp: 12:06-13:30). The report ends with the reports questioning the curriculum of Madrasas in other parts of the country and calling upon the respective governments to look into curriculums of the Madrassas and to prevent spreading of divisive ideology.

B. Rashtravad Debate Show : Brief of the Debate

The debate was a discussion on the issues raised by Mr. Priyank Kanoongo, regarding the curriculum of the Madrasas in Bihar. During the debate, the host posed several questions to the panellists, and each of the panellists was given ample opportunity to put forth their viewpoints. The host questioned the panellist upon the contents of Talim-ul-Islam, and use of the work *'Kafir'* therein. Viewing the debate makes it amply clear that whenever the panellists seemed to become aggressive, the host intervened and tried to placate the situation, so as not to let the debate go astray.

In view of the aforesaid, the broadcaster implored the complainant to withdraw the complaint at the earliest. Although a detailed reply to the allegations levelled in the notice has been made in preceding paragraphs, there are certain points that require specific denial, which are mentioned below.

10. It is denied that the impugned episode attempted to villainise a particular community. It is further denied that the language of the report was Islamophobic, or that such language was adopted to *'perpetuate harmful stereotypes and foster suspicion towards the Muslim community'*.

11. It is denied that by way of the report, Times Now Navbharat was attempting to endorse divisive politics or amplify the communal divide.

12. The impugned episode merely reported on the issues raised by Mr. Priyank Kanoongo, and put forth, without any bias, the viewpoints of the parties involved.

13. It is further denied that the impugned episode attempted to depict Madrassas in an anti-national light, or as a breeding ground of radical education and anti-national activities. It is further denied that the coverage of the issue by the

reporters was biased, or based on any pre-conceived notions. It is submitted that the channel has always strived towards ensuring that truth reaches its viewers, and the averments of bias in the complaint were baseless and unfounded.

14. It is further denied that the debate endeavoured to spread a divisive agenda, or target a particular community. It is further denied that the debate selectively represented facts, wherein the fact of the matter is that the complaint selectively refers to certain snippets from the debate and attempts to paint the debate show the channel in a poor light.

Decision of NBDSA at its meeting held on 13.12.2024

NBDSA considered the complaint, response of the broadcaster and after viewing the footage of the broadcasts, decided to call the parties for a hearing.

On being served with Notices, the following persons were present for a hearing on 22.02.2025:

Complainant

1. Ms. Tanya Arora
2. Mr. Aman Khan

Broadcaster

1. Mr. Kunal Tandon, Senior Advocate
2. Ms. Kirtima Maravoor, Compliance Officer – NBDSA
3. Mr. Utkarsh Singh, News Editor, Times Now

Submissions of the Complainant

Both shows were based on the statement made by the Chairperson of the NCPCR, who had alleged that the government-funded madrassas in Bihar were teaching a book called *"Talimul Islam"* which was published in Pakistan and which called *'non-Muslims' Kafirs.* That Hindu children studying in such Madrasas were being brainwashed and criticized UNICEF for its involvement.

The show began with inflammatory questions, while in the background, visuals of students studying in a Madrasa were aired, which were further compounded by the anchor's use of loaded terms.

The complainant submitted that its grievance lay in how the subject was presented in the broadcasts. Instead of balanced perspectives, the shows employed provocative framing, inflammatory language, and selective reporting to incite fear and suspicion. The hosts failed to challenge misinformation or address derogatory remarks,

permitting communal accusations to go unchecked. By not acting as neutral moderators and amplifying divisive rhetoric, the shows undermined their credibility, neglecting their role as public trustees and promoting communal disharmony over informed debate.

Despite the students and the Head of the Madrassa Board asserting that the book in question was not included in their curriculum, which was based on the SCERT syllabus, and clarifying the religious meaning of the term "Kafir", the anchor chose to side with Priyank Kanoongo's version. Further, not only was there an absence of balanced reporting, but during the broadcasts, inflammatory and divisive language were used.

The broadcast did not emphasize the necessity of promoting a scientific temper in any religious educational institution. Instead, its focus was on misrepresenting Madrasas and students studying in Madrasas as extremists and against the national interest. The shows created a narrative that Madrasas were a place for radicalization and should be shut down.

The second impugned broadcast started with inflammatory questions. Further, the anchor failed to intervene when derogatory remarks were being made by the panellists. A one-way narrative was set in the broadcast, which was evident from the behaviour of the anchor, who not only interrupted the panellists, who were trying to offer clarifications, but also aggressively promoted the idea that Madrasa teachings were inciting hatred.

An entire community was vilified in the impugned broadcasts based on the allegations made by Mr. Priyank Kanoongo. The selective use of visuals, inflammatory questions, and failure to challenge communal rhetoric indicate that the coverage was designed to push a predetermined perspective rather than present a fair discussion.

Submissions of the Broadcaster

The broadcaster submitted that the impugned broadcast was based on the tweets made by Mr. Priyank Kanoongo, who had alleged that Talim ul Islam was being taught in the Madrasas in Bihar. Not only was the statement of the Maulana, who said that this was not happening in Bihar included, but also interviews of the children, who said they were taught the meaning of Kafir in the Madrasas, also included. Further, politicians like Mr. Pawan Khera and one of the Cabinet Ministers of Madhya Pradesh were also interviewed in the broadcast. The debate emerged from the tweets of Mr. Priyank Kanoongo.

The broadcast not only reported on what was happening in Bihar but also on the action taken by the Government in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. All statements made by the Government in this regard were also broadcast on the shows. The debate essentially centered on the Government's action. In the second debate, a diverse panel was present.

The broadcasts must be viewed in their entirety rather than in a fragmented manner. Selectively isolating sentences or phrases without considering the broader context in which they were made may lead to a misinterpretation of the content.

The issues raised by the broadcasts were very important, and their discussion would inevitably lead to the posing of questions that may be uncomfortable for certain parties. However, the mere fact that such questions or responses may annoy or cause irritation cannot render them violative of any fundamental principles.

In rejoinder the complainant submitted that its objection was also with the manner in which the anchor behaved when certain inflammatory remarks such as *"Jihadi Sanskriti"* were made by the panellists and his failure to follow the guidelines laid down by the Hon'ble Bombay High Court in *Nilesh Navlakha &Anr. vs UOI & Ors (2021) SCC Online BOM 56* .

Decision

NBDSA considered the complaint, response of the broadcaster, gave due consideration to the arguments of the complainant and the broadcaster and reviewed the footage of the broadcasts.

NBDSA observed that if in Madrasas such hatred towards other religions or text/syllabus of Pakistan or fundamentalism etc. is taught, it is clearly wrong and against the constitutional ethos, as there cannot be any education in any educational institution which divides the society on the basis of religion and demeans other religions.

NBDSA noted that in the impugned broadcasts, an interview of Mr. Priyank Kanoongo, Chairman, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), was carried wherein he was given an opportunity to express at length his concern regarding the contents of a certain textbook *"Talimul Islam"* which according to him was taught in Madrasas in Bihar. In the impugned broadcasts, the version of Deputy Director, Bihar State Madrasa Board, Mr. Abdul Salam Ansari, and the teacher and students in a Madrasa in Patna (Bihar), who had denied that the textbook was part of the curriculum, was also included.

So far as these aspects of the broadcasts were concerned, NBDSA observed that no objection could have been raised if the broadcast was confined to these aspects alone, as in due compliance with the principles of impartiality, neutrality and objectivity, the broadcaster had presented both versions in the broadcasts.

However, the objection is with the questions raised by the anchors during the broadcasts. No doubt, Mr. Priyank Kanoongo had claimed that the contents of a certain textbook *"Talimul Islam"* was taught in Madrasas in Bihar. Again, no doubt, he is a responsible person being the Chairman, NCPCR. At the same time, the anchor should have also kept in mind that the Deputy Director, Bihar State Madrasa Board as well as the teacher and students interviewed had denounced that the textbook was indeed being taught and had refused to comment on the same without receiving any information/representation in this regard. In such a scenario, the anchor should have been little careful before proceeding with the presumption that all this was in fact happening. Even the Deputy Director, Bihar State Madrasa Board is also a responsible person and in view of conflicting claims, there should have been some verification by the anchor before accepting the version of one person and adopting a narrative in the programme on that premise. It is reemphasised that in this secular country governed by the Constitution of India, such kind of teachings have to be denounced. However, it is equally important to verify that in fact there were teachings in certain Madrasas in Bihar of that nature.

In view of the aforesaid, NBDSA is of the opinion that the anchor should be more cautious in broadcasting such programmes which have, otherwise, tendency to create the feeling of hatred towards a particular community and broadcasting of these programmes should not be without proper verifications of the contents.

NBDSA decided to close the complaint with the above observations and inform the complainant and the broadcaster accordingly.

NBDSA directs NBDA to send:

(a) A copy of this Order to the complainant and the broadcaster;
(b) Circulate this Order to all Members, Editors & Legal Heads of NBDA;
(c) Host this Order on its website and include it in its next Annual Report and
(d) Release the Order to media.

It is clarified that any statement made by the parties in the proceedings before NBDSA while responding to the complaint and putting forth their view points, and any finding or observation by NBDSA in regard to the broadcasts, in its proceedings or in this Order, are only in the context of an examination as to whether there are any violations of any broadcasting standards and guidelines. They are not intended

to be 'admissions' by the broadcaster, nor intended to be 'findings' by NBDSA in regard to any civil/criminal liability.

Justice A.K Sikri (Retd.)
Chairperson

Place: New Delhi
Date: 09.06.2025