

**News Broadcasting & Digital Standards Authority**

**Order No. 221 (2026)**

**Complainant: [REDACTED]**

**Channel: ABP Majha**

**Programme "Bhyankar Bhyankar Bhyankar Shaliye Mulanche Krutya"**

**Date of Broadcast: 11.02.2026**

**Complaint dated 11.02.2026**

The complaint concerned a telecast relating to a highly sensitive matter involving minor children from one of the School, Sambhajinagar, Aurangabad. The matter pertained to allegations under the POCSO Act, which are presently under investigation and sub judice before the Hon'ble High Court. Despite the extreme sensitivity and legal safeguards applicable to minors, the channel broadcast a detailed news segment which violated statutory child-protection provisions as well as established media ethics.

Our specific grievances are as follows:

1. The telecast repeatedly portrayed minor children (aged approximately 11–12 years) as having committed a "serious crime," amounting to media trial and prejudicial characterization prior to adjudication.
2. The report disclosed identifying details by revealing the school area and the police station jurisdiction, thereby indirectly enabling identification of the minors involved.
3. The program included speculative psychological commentary, including views attributing alleged conduct to exposure to pornographic content, without any judicial finding or expert evaluation in the case record, thereby stigmatising the minors.
4. The overall presentation was one-sided in nature and lacked the editorial restraint expected in matters involving children.
5. It is further submitted that during the telecast, the channel aired an interview of the victim child's father, wherein he disclosed the first name of his minor child. The broadcaster failed to mask, mute, or edit this identifying information before telecasting the interview. Disclosure of even partial identity of a minor is strictly prohibited under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and relevant child protection and media ethics guidelines. By airing the child's

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first name along with contextual identifiers such as the school location and the police station's jurisdiction, the channel contributed to the indirect identification of the minor, thereby violating the child's right to privacy, dignity, and protection from media exposure.

6. The telecast was aired under a sensational title which portrayed the alleged act of school-going minors as a horrific crime. Such terminology is highly prejudicial, stigmatizing, and amounts to media trial, particularly when the matter is sub-judice and involves children aged approximately 11–12 years.

The broadcast appears to be in violation of Section 23 of the POCSO Act, 2012 – Prohibition on media disclosure and sensationalization involving minors, Section 74 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 – Prohibition on identification of children in conflict with law, NBDSA Guidelines on Reporting Involving Children and Sexual Offences and Principles against media trial and stigmatization of juveniles. Further, the telecast has caused severe mental distress, stigma, and reputational harm to minor children and their families.

In view of the above, we request the Hon'ble Authority to take cognizance of the broadcast and, (i) direct the channel to remove/modify the impugned content, (ii) issue appropriate advisory/warning to prevent recurrence and (iii) pass any other order deemed fit in the interest of child rights and media accountability.

It is also respectfully submitted that the matter is presently pending before the Hon'ble Court and is therefore sub-judice. In such circumstances, media houses are expected to exercise heightened restraint and avoid any reporting that may prejudice ongoing judicial proceedings or influence public perception regarding the alleged involvement of minors. The manner of telecast — including characterization of the children, speculative discussions, and disclosure of contextual identifiers — has the potential to interfere with the administration of justice and compromise the fair consideration of the case before the Hon'ble Court.

This complaint is being made in the paramount interest of protecting the dignity, privacy, and psychological well-being of minor children.

**Decision of NBDSA on 13.02.2026**

NBDSA considered the complaint and directed the broadcaster to submit its response within seven days and to appear for a hearing.

On being served with the notices, the following persons were present at the hearing on 23.02.2026:



### **Complainant**

1. Mr. Y. B. Pathan, Advocate
2. Mr. M. M. Mulla, Advocate
3. Mr. Sandeep Hambarde

### **Broadcaster**

1. Ms. Ashika Daga, Advocate
2. Ms. Sampurna Mukherjee, Advocate
3. Mr. Tejas Pradeep Vaidya, Legal

### **Submissions of the Parties**

The complainant submitted that the impugned broadcast pertained to an incident involving minors, for which an FIR was filed. The school conducted an investigation but found no evidence or CCTV footage of the incident. In the impugned broadcast, the broadcaster has, without considering the requirements under the POCSO Act and the NBDSA Guidelines, broadcast a fifteen-minute program disclosing the identity of the minor children involved in the case.

In response, the broadcaster submitted that its reporter was informed of the incident through credible sources. The reporter visited the school on 11.02.2026 and thereafter conducted an unscripted interview. During the interview, the victim's father inadvertently mentioned his son's first name, which was recorded. The reporter went live on the same day at 4:00 PM. However, upon realizing the inadvertent error, the broadcaster promptly removed the video from the platform. Further, the interview was conducted at a location situated 15 kilometres away from the school. The interview was conducted discreetly. The Counsel for the broadcaster submitted that to the best of her knowledge, only the first name of the victim was mentioned and immediately taken down on 11.02.2026.

### **Decision of NBDSA at its meeting held on 23.02.2026**

In view of the submission advanced that the identity of the minors accused were not disclosed by it during the broadcast, NBDSA directed the broadcaster to file an Affidavit to this effect.

### **Communication dated 11.03.2026 from the Broadcaster**

On behalf of the broadcaster an Affidavit was filed inter alia stating that the "*relevant broadcast relating to the incident was aired on ABP Majha on February 11, 2026 at 4:00 PM. At no material point in time were the names, identities or any particulars capable of identifying the accused minors disclosed, mentioned or broadcast, whether directly or indirectly, and no content was aired which could lead to identification of the accused minors by the public, in any manner whatsoever.*"

*Handwritten signature*

### **Decision**

NBDSA considered the complaint, the transcript of the broadcast, and submissions advanced by the parties during the hearing.

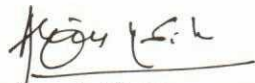
NBDSA noted that in the affidavit/document submitted by the broadcaster pursuant to the directions issued by the Authority during the hearing, it was stated that *“at no material point in time were the names, identities or any particular capable of identifying the accused minors disclosed, mentioned or broadcast, whether directly or indirectly, and no content was aired which could lead to the identification of the accused minors by the public, in any manner whatsoever”*.

Based on the transcript and the affidavit/document submitted by the broadcaster, and proceeding on the basis that they were faithfully given and contained no distortions, NBDSA was of the view that no identity of the accused minors was disclosed in the impugned broadcast. Accordingly, since no violation is made out, NBDSA decided to close the complaint and inform the broadcaster and the complainant 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 : 19-05-2026**