Role of Indian Broadcasting Federation in Preventing Inappropriate Contents in TV Programmes

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ABSTRACT
This paper shows the reality on TV which are commonly seen eliminating the physically handicapped persons in spite of their talent. There are not sufficient guidelines for channels to avoid them playing with the sensibilities of the disabled.

Keywords--- IBF, ASCI, ASCI

I. INTRODUCTION
Now a days watching TV has become an essential element in everyday life of every person of every age group. Senior citizen want to see some news programmes or religious programmes while children want to enjoy some cartoons, sports or music channels. On the other side ladies want to see daily soaps or enjoy music or movie etc. Male members usually devote their time in news or sports channel. So whatever is the taste TV has now become a life member of everyone. Its programmes have a considerable effect on our attitude, understanding and on our activities. The Supreme Court in its landmark judgment on “Airwaves” depicted the significance and importance of television in the modern world by stating as follows--“Most people obtain the bulk of their information on matters of contemporary interest from the broadcasting medium. The television is unique in a way in which intrudes into our homes. The combination of picture and voice makes it an irresistibly attractive medium of presentation. It has tremendous appeal and influence over millions of people. Television is shaping the food habits, cultural values, social mores and what not of the society in a manner no other medium has done so far…..”

And now the question arises that what are the options available to us if there are some malpractices being broadcasted through these TV programmes. These malpractices broadcasted through the contents of the TV programmes can have an adverse effect on our attitude, understanding and on our activities. To have a check on these malpractices there are some authorities in India. For news programmes we have News broadcasting authority [NBA]. While on the other hand to prevent malpractices in field of advertising whether advertising is through print media or electronic media, there is Advertising Standards Council Of India [ASCI]. For movies there is Censor Board of Certification. And for the content being shown / broadcasted on Radio or TV there is a regulatory authority called Indian Broadcasting Federation {IBA}. In this article we are concentrating only on IBF.

II. PROFILE OF INDIAN BROADCASTING FEDERATION
Indian Broadcasting Foundation was established in 1999. It is India's premium apex organization of television broadcasters. IBF consists of major broadcasters with more than 250 TV Channels. IBF enjoys a unique position as the accredited spokesman of the broadcasting industry. IBF has played a significant role in a short span of time in protecting and promoting the interests of its members and freedom of electronic media in the world's largest democracy. IBF identifies and pursues growth opportunities for its members and ensures that the members present a strong collective voice regionally, nationally and globally. IBF, as the apex industry association of the Broadcast industry, plays a critical role in building consensus on major issues across the industry.IBF strives to provide the best service to its members and deliver greater value through membership benefits, resources and services.

III. COVERAGE OF IBF CONTROL
IBF control malpractices only in Non-news and Current Affairs Programmes on TV and other broadcasting media. Advertisement activities on these TV programmes are controlled by Advertising Standards Council of India.

IV. GRIEVANCES REDRESSAL SYSTEM OF IBF
IBF has laid down two tier Grievances Redressal System. The first tier is at Channel/Broadcaster level and the other is at The Broadcasting Content Complaint Council.

[a] Channel/Broadcaster Level
At the first level, each channel/broadcaster will establish a department of Standard & Practices. A head to this department will be assigned or for this department a post of Content Auditor will be created. The responsibility of this head/content auditor will be of
internal check on the contents aired by them. Complaints will also be entertained by this department.

Any person may complaint to the above mentioned officer regarding the objectionable programme. The application may be handwritten or printed containing the full detail of the complainant and the complaint. The objectionable matter and the reasons of objection should be clear. It must be submitted within one week of the broadcasting of the objectionable content. An acknowledgement is sent to the complainant within two days of receipt. The Head of S & P department/Content Auditor will look into the complaint and if he thinks that complaint is right and violation of the self regulatory guidelines of IBF is done, then he directs his channel/broadcaster to modify or withdraw the objectionable content. Information to the complainant is sent within seven days about the action taken. But if the complaint is found frivolous, vexatious or motivated/ biased etc., then no action is taken and a letter is sent to the complainant of this regard.

(b) BCCC Level

The second level is The Broadcasting Content Complaint Council. The Broadcasting Content Complaint Council (BCCC) of IBF would examine complaints about television programmes received from the viewers or any other sources, including NGOs, RWAs, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting etc. and ensures that the programmes are in conformity with the Self Regulatory Content Guidelines issued by IBF. The Broadcasting Content Complaint Council is a body of thirteen members consisting of a Chairperson being retired Judge of the Supreme Court or High Court and 12 other members.

Any person or group of persons may send a complaint to BCCC in handwritten or typed format containing the full detail of the complainant and the complaint. The objectionable matter and the reasons of objection should be clear. It must be submitted within fourteen days of the broadcasting of the objectionable content. An acknowledgement is sent to the complainant within two days of receipt. Complaints received by BCCC secretariat will be put before chairperson within three days. If the chairman thinks that the complaint is frivolous, vexatious or motivated/ biased etc., then he directs the secretariat to put this application in the next meeting of BCCC. Complaints against non-members of IBF will be forwarded to the ministry of information and broadcasting. But if the chairperson thinks that the complaint seems to violate the regulatory guidelines then he directs the secretariat to ask the concerned channel to submit their views on the objectionable content in written with one week from the date of receipt of letter from BCCC. BCCC may request for a tape or c.d. from the Electronic Media Monitoring Centre of the ministry of information and broadcasting. Reply of the concerned channel and the tape / c.d. is put in the meeting of BCCC. If BCCC thinks that complaint is right and violation of the self regulatory guidelines of IBF is done, then it directs the concerned channel/broadcaster to modify or withdraw the objectionable content within one week of such direction. BCCC may also insist on physical appearance of the channel representative in the meeting.

If a channel is found to telecasting any content highly inconsistent with public interest or national security or its continued telecast may create a serious law and order problem or incite violence, BCCC may pass an interim order directing immediate withdrawing of the offending telecast by the Channel and direct the Channel to send its justification within twenty four hours. If the channel defies the order of the BCCC, the matter may be referred to Ministry of Information and Broadcasting within the next 24 hours for appropriate action.

Final decision on any complaint will have to be taken by the BCCC within three weeks of receiving such complaint.

V. THE BROADCASTING CONTENT COMPLAINT COUNCIL

The Broadcasting Content Complaint Council is a body of thirteen members consisting of a Chairperson being retired Judge of the Supreme Court or High Court and 12 other members. The composition of other members of BCCC is as under:

- Four Eminent Persons from society out of non-broadcasting area
- Four Members from any national level Statutory Commissions
- Four Broadcast Members

The present Chairman of BCCC is Retd. Justice A.P. Shah. All directives by BCCC to IBF will be a binding and must be implemented with immediate effect.

VI. SELF–REGULATORY GUIDELINES OF IBF

IBF has issued some self-regulatory guidelines to its members. Fulfilment of these guidelines is mandatory to all its members. Through these guidelines IBF has categorized the programmes in two category firstly G category {It include those programmes which are meant for unrestricted viewing or those programmes which can be viewed under parental guidelines.} and secondly R category programmes{It includes those programmes which are not suitable for children and young viewers.}. Programmes under the 'G' category could be telecast at any time of the day, those with 'R' category would be aired only between 2300 hrs and 0500 hrs. The self-regulatory guidelines are of the following types--

- Guidelines to prevent excessive exhibition of Crime & Violence in TV programmes
- Guidelines to prevent excessive exhibition of Sex, obscenity and Nudity
- Guidelines to prevent excessive exhibition of Horror and Occult
- Guidelines to prevent excessive exhibition of Drugs, Tobacco, Alcohol and Smoking etc.
- Guidelines to prevent misrepresentation of any religion or community and the related aspects or feeling
- Guidelines to prevent excessive exhibition of harmful activities and offendable activities
• Guidelines to safeguard Indian Sovereignty, Indian constitution and related aspects.
If any broadcaster/channel disobeys the directions/orders of BCCC then BCCC may take the following action—
1. Issue a warning to implement directions within the next two days
2. May order to air an apology in the prescribed manner
3. May issue an order to IBF not to process the outstanding of that channel till further decision
4. May issue an order to IBF to expel that member
5. May recommend to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to take an appropriate action against that channel

VII. CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

Indian TV shows are not monitored before broadcasting. But the case is not same with movies. Movies are seen before their release by CBFC. The same should be with TV shows to avoid inappropriate contents being broadcasted.

IBF has become only a Unifying factor. It has no legal power. Each channel/broadcaster interprets self regulatory guidelines in its own way.

Reality shows on TV are commonly seen eliminating the physically handicapped persons in spite of their talent. There are not sufficient guidelines for channels to avoid them playing with the sensibilities of the disabled.

REFERENCES

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