

**DECISIONS TAKEN BY BCCC
(APPEALS FROM 16 SEPTEMBER 2021 TO 31 JANUARY 2024)**

TOTAL APPEALS - 89

A. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 106TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 11TH JANUARY 2022

APPEAL-1

CHANNEL: Star Plus

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Vidrohi-Baxi Jagabandhu' (Trailer released on 21 September 2021)

NATURE OF APPEAL: Against the TRAILER of unreleased series 'Vidrohi-Baxi Jagabandhu'. It is an upcoming historical programme which portrays Buxi Jagabandhu as Odisha's hero in historical context of the state's Paika Rebellion (1817-18). The complainant has alleged that the channel has all intentions to indulge in undeserved glorification of a criminal (Buxi Jagabandhu) to the detriment of Odisha's culture and history. The complainant, through his advocate, had filed a grievance with Level-I (Star TV) on 17 September 2021. He received a response from the channel on 05 October 2021. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 13 October 2021.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL:

1. The complainant alleges that through the trailer, the channel has orchestrated a make-believe story to attract viewership, consequential and incidental monetary benefits; and has deliberately flouted and continues to flout discretionless prescriptions in law.
2. The complainant alleges that the Broadcaster has all intentions to indulge in undeserved glorification of a criminal (Buxi Jagabandhu) to the detriment of Odisha's culture and history, which includes glorification of a great heroic past and an archaising spirit.
3. The complainant has referred to certain excerpts from historical records available with Odisha State Archives (Attached Annexure 1): "He remained turncoat throughout his life; intended acting and in fact acted to the detriment of Odisha. In the name of patriotism, he kept fellow citizens in dark."
4. The complainant has cited relevant extracts of Rule 6 of the Programme Code:
'(c) contains attack on religions or communities or visuals or words contemptuous of religious groups or which promote communal attitudes;
'(d) contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half-truths;
'(e) is likely to encourage or incite violence or contains anything against maintenance of law and order or which promote anti-national attitudes.'

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

1. The complainant is not satisfied with the channel's response as the channel neither discloses the historical books it is referring to nor names of the said historians who allegedly offered expert advice in support of the programme.
2. The complainant submits that it is not the channel's claim that needs to be judged; the point in issue is the impact and impression caused or likely to be

caused by a programme, which, in the instant case, is militating against culture and history of Odisha.

3. The complainant in response to the channel's statement - that the series "must be judged in its entirety from the point of overall impact and not on the basis of certain dialogues or scenes in isolation and without due context" - requests BCCC to direct the broadcaster to organize showing the programme.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council upon considered viewing of specific episodes concluded that the series is a fictionalized representation of the historic Paika Rebellion of the Khurda Province of Odisha against the British East India Company in 1818. While some creative liberties have been taken on the depiction or presentation of characters, the historical facts have been verified by the channels panel of experts and extant sources and references cited to justified the claim that there have been no distortions that warrant disciplinary action or further censure.

The Council also noted that the show had completed more than 80 episodes and no denigration of any person is evident.

The Secretariat also briefed the Council that during the last winter session of Parliament (2021-22), the Union Government placed a written reply in the Rajya Sabha refusing to accept the 'Paika Vidroha' (Paika Rebellion) of 1818 as India's First War of Independence. The Odisha Cabinet, under Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, had passed a proposal to formally urge the Centre to declare the Paika Rebellion, which took place 50 years prior to India's First War of Independence in 1857, to consider the rebellion as India's first struggle for freedom against the imperial rule in which people of Odisha had actively participated. Though the Centre did not accept the demand of declaring this rebellion as India's first war of independence, it decided to include it in the NCERT history textbooks in Class VIII, as an important example of popular uprisings against the British Colonial rule.

Keeping all the above facts in mind, the Council decided against any intervention in the matter. The Appeal was DISMISSED.

APPEAL-2

CHANNEL: Star Plus

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Yeh Hai Chahatein' on 15.09.2021

NATURE OF APPEAL: Mental and physical abuse towards a child.

The complaint was sent to the channel Star Plus (Level-I) on 13 Oct 2021. The complainant didn't receive any response from the channel despite a follow-up. Therefore, the complaint is being taken up as an appeal by BCCC.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL: A boy character named Saransh is forced by his adoptive mother Ahana to behave and dress like a girl. The complainant alleges this is mental and physical abuse towards a child.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The complainant did not get any response from the channel

BCCC DECISION: *The Council viewed the episode and concurred that the 'cross-dressing' in the episode is a disguise and integral to the story-line of concealing the real identity*

of the child, Saransh. As such no mental or physical form of child abuse can be inferred. The Appeal was DISMISSED.

APPEAL-3

1) **CHANNEL:** Star Plus

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Yeh Hai Chahatein' on 12/10/2021

NATURE OF APPEAL: Crime/violence involving children.

The complaint was sent to the channel on 13 October 2021. The channel sent its response to the complainant on 09 November 2021. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an appeal with BCCC on 09 November 2021.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL:

1. The child character named Anvi (age less than 10 years) is instigated by her parents to murder another child Saransh (similar age) by a car accident.
2. Instigation aside, Anvi went ahead with the plan by pulling out the stone under a car so that Saransh gets killed in an accident.
3. The complainant questions, "Can kids of tender age be shown in such dark shades? Also, how far is it right to show parents poisoning kids' brain and teach such negative things?"
4. The complainant urges BCCC to watch the episode, take stringent action and ensure that similar content is not repeated in other shows.

REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

The complainant feels the channel defends manipulation of children under 10 and encourages scenes which involves plans of murdering another child.

The complainant says the makers should respond against such portrayal and not the channel. The channel's response on behalf of the producer shows their surrendered approach.

BCCC DECISION: *The Council had issued a NOTICE to the channel. In its reply, the channel stated that 'Yeh Hai Chahtein' is a romantic drama that thrives on the various twists and turns in the lives of its lead characters - rockstar Rudraksh and Dr Preesha. Time and again, they face seemingly insurmountable challenges only to overcome them with courage and a belief in doing the right thing. The channel explained the track featured in the episode(s) - in which the child has been shown to be committing an age-inappropriate act or an act of malice or villainous nature - cannot be viewed in isolation. The channel also elucidated such myopic viewing of selective scenes creates a rather one-sided and misleading perception. But if the narrative is seen in a larger context over the course of subsequent episodes, the frame of reference gets more unhindered.*

The channel further stated that the story arc of Anvi committing an atrocious act gets a satisfactory ending if the subsequent episodes are watched. Anvi's story has been presented as a reminder of a child's innocence, trusting nature and their susceptibility to manipulation at the hands of loved ones, in this case, her own biological parents. Her parents' character has been established as that of habitually criminally minded people. To extract vengeance from Preesha and Rudra, they are willing to use their own daughter as a pawn. On every occasion, the little Anvi has been misled her reaction is proportionate to what a child may feel and not that of a hardened criminal.

Whenever her parents egg her on, she becomes sad, disappointed, and upset - unlike the reactions of adults which may be to feel angry or vengeful. She expresses her

childlike jealousy towards Saransh in wanting him to go away and never mouths a wish to physically harm him. Even the incident with the car was not premediated. Once Anvi realizes the harm she has unknowingly done, she immediately regresses into a sense of deep guilt, shame and regret which are all very realistic childlike reactions. She literally runs to Preesha to confess the truth because despite her parents' misdirection, the values that motivate her confession are those taught by Preesha - that is, to always tell the truth. Though Preesha and Rudra are shocked to hear Anvi's confession, they know that the best way to handle a misled child is by providing them with corrective therapy and support. They embrace Anvi and Preesha is determined to end the misunderstandings between the two young children. In fact, very soon, Preesha manages to barter real truce between the two children, and they embrace each other as best friends and siblings when they fight a group of bullies together.

The channel also clarified that the very nature and speed of daily shows is such that singular episodes hardly ever hold a conclusive end to a track. Anvi's character arc changes dramatically within four episodes. In its written submission, the channel reasonably argued that the show rather than endorsing manipulation of children or misleading them into taking extreme actions, does the exact opposite.

From the content creation perspective, the channel said that young performers are counselled properly by both the production team and their parents before performing complex actions or dialogues. Most child performers, the channel said, are not aware of the full context of the scene and there is no threat of real physical danger.

After going through the channel's reply and detailed discussions, the Council decided to accept the explanation furthered by the channel with a reminder that the channel ought to be more sensitive to the larger impact that such content may have on impressionable minds. The Appeal was DISMISSED.

APPEAL-4

CHANNEL: Star Plus

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Yeh Hai Chahatein' on 11/10/2021

NATURE OF APPEAL: Crime/Violence involving children.

The complainant was sent to the channel on 18 October 2021. The channel sent its response to the complainant on 09 November 2021. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an appeal with BCCC on 13 November 2021.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL: A child is instigated to kill another child. She is being fed that if the other child dies, she will get all the attention.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

1. The complainant points out that in its explanation, the channel gave the synopsis of the whole plot. He says he had not didn't complaint about the plot but only one specific episode in which a child is instigated to kill another child. Was it that important to support the plot with such extreme situations?
2. The complainant feels it is equally bad for the child artist portraying the character along with the one's who are watching it.

BCCC DECISION: *The Council had issued a NOTICE to the channel. In its reply, the channel stated that 'Yeh Hai Chahtein' is a romantic drama that thrives on the various twists and turns in the lives of its lead characters - rockstar Rudraksh and Dr Preesha.*

Time and again, they face seemingly insurmountable challenges only to overcome them with courage and a belief in doing the right thing. The channel explained the track featured in the episode(s) - in which the child has been shown to be committing an age-inappropriate act or an act of malice or villainous nature - cannot be viewed in isolation. The channel also elucidated such myopic viewing of selective scenes creates a rather one-sided and misleading perception. But if the narrative is seen in a larger context over the course of subsequent episodes, the frame of reference gets more unhindered.

The channel further stated that the story arc of Anvi committing an atrocious act gets a satisfactory ending if the subsequent episodes are watched. Anvi's story has been presented as a reminder of a child's innocence, trusting nature and their susceptibility to manipulation at the hands of loved ones, in this case, her own biological parents. Her parents' character has been established as that of habitually criminally minded people. To extract vengeance from Preesha and Rudra, they are willing to use their own daughter as a pawn. On every occasion, the little Anvi has been misled her reaction is proportionate to what a child may feel and not that of a hardened criminal.

Whenever her parents egg her on, she becomes sad, disappointed, and upset - unlike the reactions of adults which may be to feel angry or vengeful. She expresses her childlike jealousy towards Saransh in wanting him to go away and never mouths a wish to physically harm him. Even the incident with the car was not premediated. Once Anvi realizes the harm she has unknowingly done, she immediately regresses into a sense of deep guilt, shame and regret which are all very realistic childlike reactions. She literally runs to Preesha to confess the truth because despite her parents' misdirection, the values that motivate her confession are those taught by Preesha - that is, to always tell the truth. Though Preesha and Rudra are shocked to hear Anvi's confession, they know that the best way to handle a misled child is by providing them with corrective therapy and support. They embrace Anvi and Preesha is determined to end the misunderstandings between the two young children. In fact, very soon, Preesha manages to barter real truce between the two children, and they embrace each other as best friends and siblings when they fight a group of bullies together.

The channel also clarified that the very nature and speed of daily shows is such that singular episodes hardly ever hold a conclusive end to a track. Anvi's character arc changes dramatically within four episodes. In its written submission, the channel reasonably argued that the show rather than endorsing manipulation of children or misleading them into taking extreme actions, does the exact opposite.

From the content creation perspective, the channel said that young performers are counselled properly by both the production team and their parents before performing complex actions or dialogues. Most child performers, the channel said, are not aware of the full context of the scene and there is no threat of real physical danger.

After going through the channel's reply and detailed discussions, the Council decided to accept the explanation furthered by the channel with a reminder that the channel ought to be more sensitive to the larger impact that such content may have on impressionable minds. The Appeal was DISMISSED.

APPEAL-5

CHANNEL: Star Plus

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Yeh Hai Chahatein' on 19/10/21

NATURE OF APPEAL: Cheating wives and killing partners

The complainant was sent to the channel on 20 October 2021. The channel sent its response to the complainant on 11 November 2021. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an appeal with BCCC on 11 November 2021.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL: The complainant alleges that the programme shows non-family content. The content is about cross sleeping with wives and killing of partners. The complainant urges to check episodes 12 to 19 October 2021.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel did not find the the content to be in violation of the BCCC Code and disposed of the complaint.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

The programme shows multiple marriages, violence and only strategies. It misguides the viewers. The old version of this programme was a healthy one.

BCCC DECISION: *The Council viewed some of the episodes and found that the programme is a romantic drama which thrives on various twists and turns of the lead characters. There are machinations both by the male and female antagonists in almost every episode, like mixing something in the juice which leads to Rudra not being able to sing, creating disturbances in the form of leaking pipes in the honeymoon suite in which they are staying. But every episode also shows some positive outcomes like Preesha immediately providing succour. The couple Rudra and Preesha are shown as upright in dealing with the challenges that they confront in almost every episode and they do so convincingly with courage and integrity.*

The Council felt that it was not its remit to prescribe the plot and story-line to channels who have the right to make informed choices on these matters. The Appeal was DISMISSED.

APPEAL-6

CHANNEL: Star Plus

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Anupama' on 23/09/2021

NATURE OF APPEAL: Generic complaint about extra-marital affairs.

The complainant was sent to the channel on 13 October 2021. The channel sent its response to the complainant on 11 November 2021. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an appeal with BCCC on 15 November 2021.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL: The character is above 50 years of age and involved in extra-marital affairs. He is giving divorce to his wife. What message do producer and director of this serial want to pass?

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submitted that the content was not found to be in violation of the BCCC Code.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

As per the complainant, the programme is pathetic and shows stupidity on the channel.

BCCC DECISION: *The Council viewed the episode and found that the story of Anupama on the whole carries a positive message on the journey of self-empowerment of a divorcee who fights back to regain her personhood and self-respect. Keeping the totality of the context in mind rather than focus merely on select exegetical readings, the Council did not find the Appeal maintainable considering that the story focuses more on the protagonist's resilience than her suffering. The Appeal was DISMISSED.*

APPEAL-7

CHANNEL: Colors

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Udaariyaan' on 25/09/2021

NATURE OF APPEAL: The programme is continuously degrading the image of married women and the sacred institution of marriage.

The complaint was forwarded to the channel (Level-I) on 13 October 2021. The complainant received a response from the channel on 27 October 2021. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an appeal with BCCC on 27 October 2021.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL: The complainant alleges that the male protagonist brings another unmarried woman in his house and gives her more importance than his legally married wife. Even his mother supports him. Small words like sex are censored but such programmes, where married women are portrayed in negative light, are being supported by censor bodies. The content eulogises illegal live-in relationships. The complainant requests to stop the telecast of the programme.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

1. The complainant finds the channel's response to be incorrect as the programme portrays both the husband and his girlfriend indulging in wrong activities against the married woman.
2. The complainant states that in every episode, the married woman is being degraded in all respect by her husband's girlfriend. It is a mockery of the respected institution of marriage. All episodes are eulogising the girlfriend and her wrong actions.
3. The complainant feels that the 'National Woman Cell' should be informed about this programme being aired by the channel.

BCCC DECISION: *The Council viewed the episodes.*

The Council was of the opinion that the show is a fictional drama with several twists and turns that focus on the emotional equation between two people who marry not for love but owing to extraneous circumstances. The programme also portrays that the married woman gets the desired respect of her husband and his family whereas his girlfriend is shown to be a scheming, conniving character.

The Council felt that none of the episodes it viewed, undermined the sanctity of the institution of marriage. The actions of the characters can neither be a comment on societal values nor is it meant to be a barometer of good behaviour. The characters have been shown as fallible which is the creative liberty of the channel and any intervention made could be tantamount to dictating storylines to channels which is not BCCC's mandate. The Appeal was DISMISSED.

APPEAL-8

CHANNEL: Colors

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Bigg Boss' on 04/12/2021 (9:30 PM)

NATURE OF APPEAL: Defaming doctors

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL: The complainant alleges that the episode defames doctors on national television. They are being insulted even after their selfless work done during the Covid pandemic. BCCC has received several similar complaints where Umar who is a contestant on 'Bigg Boss' and has been called 'aggressive doctor' by Salman Khan in context to his fight with another contestant Prateek.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

1. As per the complainant, when Simba had pushed Umar in the pool then Salman did not say 'aggressive actor' but now why only 'aggressive doctor'? This incident was not even discussed. It was conveniently ignored.
2. As per channel's response, Umar tore Pratik's shirt and that is why Salman Khan tried to make Umar understand by calling him an 'aggressive doctor' not 'aggressive Umar'. Is tearing a shirt more aggressive than throwing someone in the pool? If torn shirt is the criteria, why was Sidharth Shukla not called out in Season-13 or is it also the channel's convenience?
3. The complainant questions if the channel has not disrespected doctors, why was the same thing repeated in the next 'weekend ka war' episode?
4. When Salman Khan was charged with cases, nobody said he is a bad actor. Then why is Umar called an 'aggressive doctor'? Irony of the situation is that the channel has completely ignored the aggression of other housemates. One doesn't need to abuse a person over his profession and drag his family.

BCCC DECISION: *The Council viewed the episode. During the show's weekend edition, 'Weekend ka War', host Salman Khan counsels all Bigg Boss House members on what transpired through the week. The undercurrent of mutual sparring bordering on enacted 'aggression' is the leitmotif of the show Bigg Boss. Given the basic design of the show, this particular episode does not attract any untoward attention or warrant special reprimand. The medical profession per se is not being disparaged. The apparent objective was to make the contestant, Doctor Umar understand the serious implications of his behaviour and demeanour as a medical practitioner. The Appeal was DISMISSED.*

APPEAL-9

2) **CHANNEL:** Sony

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Kaun Banega Crorepati', Episode 62

NATURE OF APPEAL: Promotion of Pseudoscience and Superstition.

Complaint filed by Dr Narendra Nayak, President of Federation of Indian Rationalist Associations (FIRA). The complaint was sent to the channel on 22 Nov 2021. The channel sent its response to the complainant on 29 Nov 2021. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an appeal with BCCC on 30 Nov 2021 and 02 Dec 2021.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL:

1. The episode mentions about children reading with blindfold and identifying colours by touch. The claim is likely to mislead parents that their children can be trained to see without light from the object falling on the retina.

2. This is a totally fraudulent claim. Its clipping has been used by companies teaching such courses and portraying that their courses have been endorsed by no less than Amitabh Bachchan.
3. The complainant says he has been exposing such claims for decades and has also given few reference videos. Many fraudulent companies have sprung up in various parts of India claiming that they can “increase” children’s “brain power” or make them “geniuses” through a course in which they would “activate the midbrain”. The proof of children’s midbrain being “activated”, they claim, is their ability to see when wearing blindfolds. Gullible parents who fall for this propaganda end up paying amounts as high as Rs 25,000 per child.

CHANNEL’S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I): The channel submitted the episode has been pulled off from all platforms and the scenes suitably edited. The channel said it has sensitized the team to be more vigilant and avoid such interactions in the future.

REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

1. The complainant says the objectionable content about blind-folded seeing, which was promised to be removed, still continues. The complainant has attached a screenshot of the channel’s Facebook page.
2. Since the episode has been widely shared by some commercial interests, the complainant feels just removing the part from the episode is insufficient action. “We need to remove the impression created in people’s minds.”

BCCC DECISION: *The Council had issued a NOTICE to the channel with a direction that such content should immediately be removed from all its platforms. In its reply, the channel stated that it does not claim that the impugned act of “sensory substitution” displayed in ‘Kaun Banega Crorepati’ is authentic. All views, opinions and comments expressed by the contestants are their own and the channel does not subscribe or propagate the same. This was clarified as a part of the disclaimer for the show. The format of the show is such that in order to acclimatize the viewers about the contestants, the channel allows the contestant to showcase any talent or skill that they might possess, especially when they are on the hot seat. Accordingly, the channel allowed contestant Vanshi to display her skills, as they have done with other child contestants. The channel also clarified that immediately after feedback about this particular episode was received, it took all remedial steps to edit the episode and the same was taken down across all platforms, respecting the sensibilities of the viewers. The channel stated that it has further sensitized the team to be more vigilant for all future episodes. In view of the above explanation from the channel, the Council decided to DISMISS the Appeal. BCCC also directed the channel to be more mindful of viewer sensibilities as any such unreasonable depiction could have ramifications.*

APPEAL-10

CHANNEL: Sony

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: ‘The Kapil Sharma Show’

NATURE OF APPEAL: Request to stop telecast of the programme on the ground of vulgarity, sexual harassment and discrimination against women.

The complaint was filed with BCCC and other bodies on 02 November 2021. Prior to that, the complainant wrote to the channel on 25 and 31 October 2021.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL:

1. The complainant alleges that the show violates several laws in the name of comedy. Analysis of the past episodes reveals that its host is a ‘sex maniac’, requiring arrest

and punishment. The complainant alleges that the responsibility lies on the channel as it is promoting the show while several channels have discarded the host.

2. The actor playing the role of Bhuri was insulted/humiliated as comments were passed on her lips, her looks and her parents. Similarly, Ms Archana Puran Singh is victim of perceptual sexual harassment at workplace. In the name of comedy, each and every word spoken against her lowers women's dignity. Though she may not complain due to the fear of losing work, the channel has to be impartial and warn Mr Kapil Sharma. Since the channel does not raise objection, it supports the view that it has approved all objectionable telecast.
3. Character of Mr Kapil Sharma could be seen from the fact that he prefers to ask his own mother whether his father was romantic or similar question with Ms Sonakshi Sinha, Ms Gauhar Khan or Ms Parineeti Chopra, who have tied *rakhi* as symbol of brotherhood, but he prefers to flirt with them. He does not know the morality and sanctity of mother-son and brother-sister relationships.
4. As per him, all women are his wives as if he lives in a system of polyandry and polygamy. The entire team of script, research and dialogue writers and Mr Kapil Sharma himself cannot think comedy beyond female organs and consider all females on his set as sex objects/sex mates.
5. In an episode with three actors of the 1990s - Ms Juhi Chawla, Ms Ayesha Jhulka and Ms Madhoo - Ms Chawla said that several jokes (unwanted and sexist comments) are made against Ms Archana Puran Singh and so her salary should be doubled.
6. The programme should be stopped in public interest as it is humiliating women and is a soft verbal pornography show.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I): The channel says the complainant has failed to substantiate any allegations made by him and merely makes groundless threats and baseless allegations. The channel vehemently denies the contentions and asks the complainant to refrain from making such groundless and frivolous allegations in future. The channel strongly denies that "*The Kapil Sharma Show*" is in contravention of any law and/or legal provisions.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT: The complainant has referred to the channel's response of 29th October 2021:

"The main argument put forward by the Head of Standards & Practices of Sony Pictures Networks is that, the show is very popular. Popularity is managed through money spent on promoting any programme with an objective of earning more profit. But no law confers any immunity and absolves individuals from criminal offences of the past, present and future merely because programme and individual is more popular. In other words, popularity has nothing to do with crimes and offences committed under the cover of popularity."

BCCC DECISION: *The Council found that this episode, like most others, is rife with misogyny and sexist innuendo. There are several inappropriate remarks made on the spouses of the team on the show as well as on female team members. However since these were staged, with the ostensible consent of the participants, the Council observed that while the episode did not reflect good taste there were no strong grounds for intervention. The Appeal was DISMISSED.*

APPEAL-11

CHANNEL: Sony Sab

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Ziddi Dil' on 16/11/2021

NATURE OF APPEAL: Depiction of wrong map of India.

The complainant was sent to the channel on 17 November 2021. The channel sent its response to the complainant on 17 November 2021. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an appeal with BCCC on 18 November 2021.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL:

1. The programme depicted wrong map of India. The UTs of Ladakh and J&K were manipulated as some part was shown as part of China and Pakistan.
2. It violates orders of the Supreme Court. It violates the Constitution. The entire J&K with Aksai Chin, Gilgit and Baltistan are totally, absolutely, and undoubtedly an integral part of the Union of India.

REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

1. Complainant is dissatisfied with the channel's response. He feels it is not a small mistake and violates court orders and the Constitution. Such portrayal of wrong map degrades the pride of martyrs and also weakens India's position in the world.
2. The complainant says removing the content is not a solution and demands an apology from the channel by depicting the full map of India with a visible and audible apology during the start of the programme for a day as a matter of tribute to the map of India.

BCCC DECISION: The Council decided to issue a NOTICE to the channel. The Council was confronted with the twin issues of whether wrongful depiction of the Indian Map is a criminal act and whether BCCC is mandatorily required to report the wrongful depiction of the Indian Map by a channel?

In its reply to the BCCC Notice, the channel stated that the incorrect depiction of the Map of India was an inadvertent error and it deeply regrets the same. After the error was pointed out, the channel took immediate steps to edit the episode across all its platforms, respecting the regulations and sensitivities of the viewers. The channel also explained that it has sensitized the team to be more vigilant and avoid such errors in the future. The channel clarified that the inaccurate map of India was depicted on two occasions in the show for a duration of not more than two seconds.

The channel also clarified that in the context of this programme, there was no factual representation made with respect to the Map nor was there any intent to broadcast the same to create any law-and-order problem or incite violence or otherwise. The channel further stated that it immediately rectified the mistake when it was notified to them from all its platforms.

The Council made an attempt to understand the legal position with respect to the issue. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1990, had provided, "Whoever publishes a map of India, which is not in conformity with the maps of India as published by the Survey of India, shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to six months, or with fine, or with both." However, this law has since been repealed.

In 2016, in the aftermath of the Pathankot incident, the Ministry of Home Affairs prepared a draft of the Geospatial Information Regulation Bill, which curbed the use of digital geospatial information. This bill was never tabled in Parliament.

As far as court cases are concerned, the courts (Arun Prabhakar Rao Choudhari v. State Of Maharashtra And Ors. (1996) 98 BOMLR 909 and Surendra Khandelwal v. State of Rajasthan Criminal Misc (Pet.) No. 3006/2018) have examined current statutes such as

Prevention of Insults to National Honours Act, 1971 and State Emblem of India (Prohibition of Improper Use), Act 2005 and found them inapplicable on the Indian National Map.

More recently, an FIR was filed against the Twitter India Managing Director in Bulandshahr (UP) for wrongful depiction of the Indian Map under Section 505(2) of IPC and Section 74 of the Information Technology Act. These sections deal with creating or promoting enmity, hatred, or ill-will, and fraudulent digital signatures respectively. No update on the case has been reported so far and there is no judicial direction available about the usage of these statutes for National Maps.

The Delhi High Court order in Hindustan Times and Anr. Vs. State (2002 SCC Online Del 576 also takes into account the aspect of mens rea/intent and subsequent bonafide conduct of the accused entity should also be applied to the present case as well, considering the context in which the impugned image was broadcast and the subsequent corrective measures taken by the channel to take down the impugned image.

The Council was also of the opinion that the channel never intended to disrespect or cause any harm to the interest of the nation. The impugned depiction may not have been a result of any malafide intent but an error which the channel has regretted.

*The Council was also of the considered opinion that irrespective of the genre of the programme, The BCCC's 'Advisory on Depiction and Use of National Flag, National Emblem, National Anthem and Map of India in TV Programmes', issued on 03 April 2014, must be adhered to by the channel in letter and in spirit. In view of the above statutory provisions and the judicial pronouncements, it is not open for the Council to take a decision on this matter. The Appeal was **DISMISSED** on these terms with a clarion warning to the channel to exercise utmost caution in depiction of National Map of India and other National Emblems.*

APPEAL-12

CHANNEL: Sun TV

LANGUAGE: Tamil

PROGRAMME: 'Roja' on 20/10/2021

NATURE OF APPEAL: The complainant alleges that the programme is trying to 'bring down people with physical disability'.

The complaint was sent to the channel on 27 October 2021. The channel sent its response to the complainant on 29 October 2021. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an appeal with BCCC on 30 October 2021.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL: The complainant alleges that the makers are creating fear in the minds of those willing to marry the physically challenged. The impression one gets is that if you have married a physically challenged person, you'd suffer your entire life. Also, a pregnant woman is in immense pain and asking for help on the road, but nobody cares. In reality, autorickshaws are provided free for pregnant women. The makers are creating unnecessary sympathy for the actress.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

The complainant feels the programme is not only against physically challenged but also insults the people of Tamil Nadu. Is the channel trying to say if anyone marries a physically challenged person nobody would help them?

In this programme, the scenes involving physically challenged people are either to create comedy or sympathy. The complainant asks the channel to accept the mistake and give a warning to the makers.

BCCC DECISION: *The Council viewed the episode and found that a disabled person is shown to be helpless, while his wife is in labour. When the female protagonist Roja comes across the couple, she asks the husband why he is not taking her to hospital. The husband replies that his wife needs to be operated upon and he is unable to find any transport to take her to the hospital. He says he doesn't have money, while Roja tries to look for transport and manages to find a cart. With Roja's help, the husband is able to take his wife to the nearest hospital. Even though the husband walks with the help of crutches, he helps Roja in putting his wife in the cart and also pushes the cart to the hospital.*

The Council found that the spirit of the episode was positive rather than demeaning to the physically challenged (divyang) as alleged. The Appeal was DISMISSED.

APPEAL-13

CHANNEL: ETV Telugu

LANGUAGE: Telugu

PROGRAMME: 'Jabardasth' on 25/11/2021

NATURE OF APPEAL: Misogyny, body-shaming, violence, cross-dressing, double-meaning dialogues, racist remarks

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL: The episode is full of misogyny, violence against women and cross-dressing (men dressed as women). Every week, the show portrays body-shaming and double-meaning dialogues. It normalises body-shaming and insults based on skin colour. Violence towards women is shown to be normal by portraying it in a funny manner. This has a negative impact on viewers, especially children. Either ban the show or heavily censor the visuals of violence against women and verbal insults on physical appearance. This will destroy the confidence of young men and women with similar physical appearance and they will always find it as their weakness.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

1. The complainant says the channel has only briefed the outline of the skits and not the content in the skits.
2. The channel has explicitly shown content involving body-shaming, remarks based on skin colour and hitting women. They even normalise prostitution in scenes involving the actors Sudigali Sudheer and Aadi on a regular basis.
3. They are selling content to the audience in the form of insults based on physical appearance. This is shown on a regular basis. Once it can be ignored but during every promo of the show, the same thing repeats.
4. It is requested to censor such content since the same is censored in movies shown on television.

BCCC DECISION: *The Council had issued a Notice to the channel. In its reply, the channel stated that in the skit in question by Adire Abhi, there are three main male characters, Abhi, Naveen and Ramu. After an introductory scene, Abhi says he has to massage the feet of his wife and has to leave. Then Naveen says men should control their wives and that he keeps his wife under his control. Naveen also demonstrates that (beats his*

wife. Later, Naveen's wife prepares idlis and for no reason, he beats her demanding her to prepare square-shaped idlis. Naveen beats his wife for coming out of the house when someone whistles. This person collects trash from the neighborhood and to alert the householders about his arrival, whistles so that they put the trash out. In the next scene, Abhi is searching for his wife, and finds a letter at the threshold of his house which says that on account of her ill-treatment, she is leaving him. The letter also says that there would be no use searching for her, since she is eloping. Abhi is upset and wonders why his wife left him, when he was taking good care of her, providing biryani when she only asked for idlis and providing number-9 slippers while she only asked for number-7 slippers. Someone calls Abhi. So, Abhi throws the letter (which falls in Naveen's hands) and rushes into his house, to avoid the caller. Naveen's wife tells the judges that she is going to the temple to pray for the reformation of her husband. Naveen comes out of his house for newspaper and finds the letter. He reads the letter and thinks that his wife left him. In the meantime, he hears someone calling him and throws the letter, which falls in front of the house of the third character Ramu, and runs into his house. Ramu finds the letter, reads it and starts crying, calling Naveen. He also knocks the door of Abhi says his wife has eloped. Abhi comes out and says, that even the wife of husbands who take good care are eloping. Then Naveen says even the wife who is kept under control by constant beating has eloped.

Then a fourth character comes to enquire about the issue. Ramu says his wife has eloped. The fourth character says those who cannot take good care of their wives have no right to live in society. Abhi diverts the topic and the fourth character leaves the place along with another character who just enters. Ramu asks Abhi what to do, and Abhi himself is clueless (since it was his wife who eloped). Suddenly Abhi remembers that Ramu was not even married and so his wife's eloping is ridiculous. He then asks for the letter and Naveen shows the letter, which was the same letter that Abhi found in front of his house which he read and threw, and it had fallen in front of Naveen's house. Ramu is happy that he is not married and therefore his wife did not elope.

The fifth character enters and Ramu joyfully tells him that he was not married. Then Naveen starts crying that his wife eloped, but Naveen's wife returns from the temple and tells him that she did not elope but went to temple to pray that her husband should reform and stop ill-treating and beating her. When Naveen confronts his wife with the letter, she says she has not written it. Then the fourth character deduces that it was Abhi's wife who had eloped. Then, Ramu asks how could his wife write the letter as she was illiterate. Then the fourth character sees the letter and recognizes that it is his wife's handwriting. This is the twist in the story.

The channel explained that the skit is primarily intended to be humorous, and it did not encourage or glorify misogyny or ill-treatment of women. There is no body-shaming, no double-meaning dialogues and the wife-beating was shown only to cater to the skit's demand. The channel said it respects the viewers' sentiments and would exercise all care and caution in such matters in the future.

In view of the explanation tendered by the channel, the Council decided to DISMISS the Appeal but cautioned the channel that there is very thin line between humour and obscenity or objectionable content and that this line must not ever be crossed. While cautioning the channel to be more mindful, the Council was also of the considered opinion that sensibilities and sensitivities vary from individual to individual in this

particular case, the channel has been appropriately and adequately admonished to adhere to extant regulations and guidelines.

APPEAL-14

CHANNEL: Zee Marathi

LANGUAGE: Marathi

PROGRAMME: 'Man Udu Udu Zal' on 15/11/2021

NATURE OF APPEAL: Promotion of dowry.

The complainant was sent to the channel on 17 November 2021. The channel sent its response to the complainant on 29 November 2021. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an appeal with BCCC on 29 November 2021.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL: The show promotes dowry which is an offence.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

1. 'Man Udu Udu Zala' is a fictional and drama serial which showcases a roller-coaster ride of love, drama, and disagreement. At times to make a point in a show, creative techniques of thesis and antithesis are used.
2. In this storyline, to establish a negative character, the scene was shown around antagonist Snehlata's son Vinay (who is playing an NRI). This story plot was shown only to portray antithesis' point and these antithesis learn a lesson for their wrong behaviour, which will be shown in upcoming episodes as the show's storyline progresses and the show carries positive message.
3. The channel said it neither promoted dowry nor glamorised a wrong custom.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

Promoting dowry in programmes gives wrong social message. This should be stopped.

BCCC DECISION: *The complaint was sent to BCCC Member Ms. Pallavi Joshi for her comments. She viewed the entire episode and suggested to the Council that the complaint pertains to a scene where a mother-in-law insults the parents of her daughter-in-law and asks for a gold necklace. Based on the suggestions of Ms. Joshi, the Council decided against any intervention, on the grounds that the progression of the show, which is essentially a romantic comedy does not suggest endorsement of the practice of dowry or retrogressive customs. The scene has to be viewed in context. The Appeal was DISMISSED.*

B. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 107TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 25TH FEBRUARY 2022

APPEAL -15

1) **CHANNEL:** Colors

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Bigg Boss' on 18/12/2021 (10:30 PM)

NATURE OF APPEAL: Host's insensitive behaviour on a potential sexual harassment issue.

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 20 December 2021. The complainant received a response from the channel on 30 December 2021. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 11 January 2022.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL: Host Salman Khan made an attempt to justify a potential sexual harassment issue. Devoleena, a contestant, was asked for a kiss four times and the host

repeatedly held the victim responsible for not drawing the line. The time of the conversation starts at 31 minutes into the programme and goes all the way upto 50 minutes.

Salman makes comments like ‘*Yahi dastoor hai*, when someone tries to act creepy or tries to touch you etc.’ He goes on to say, “Ignore it once, twice and thrice after which the person will back off, this happens in real life.”

He also said it was a joke and that the offender Anhjit Bhijukles’ intentions weren’t bad. The episode was managed with zero sensitivity and it was irresponsible of the channel and the host to do so. There were multiple regressive comments and the thought process was primitive. This episode has surely conveyed wrong things and goes against women.

CHANNEL’S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submitted that:

1. Contrary to the complainant, Salman Khan has taken a strong stand against Abhijit Bichukale’s behaviour and warned him of stern action if such instances recur in the Bigg Boss House. He has always unequivocally made it clear that well-being of the participants is of utmost importance and any contestant making others feel distressed or uncomfortable will not be tolerated.
2. *Bigg Boss* is a reality show containing unscripted situations and actual occurrences between a group of people who live in a closed environment away from all external influences. Although the conduct of contestants themselves cannot be wholly guided by the channel, host Salman Khan assesses their behaviour during the weekend episodes and holds them responsible when they err.
3. Devoleena and Abhijit previously shared a friendly relationship inside the Bigg Boss House and were often seen engaging in affable banter with one another. However, while Devoleena treated the encounters merely as filled with good natured wisecracks, Abhijit took things a little too far by asking her for kisses in return of stealing artifacts during a task, thus making Devoleena uncomfortable.
4. Given the gravity of the allegations levelled by Devoleena, Salman Khan decides to address the issue and plays some footage from the incident for the housemates. In the footage, Devoleena is clearly seen asking Abhijit to stop asking for kisses and after watching it, all contestants opine that Abhijit’s behaviour was inappropriate. Salman Khan clearly tells Abhijit that he was wrong and no amount of justification can explain his behaviour. Salman Khan says he is getting into more trouble by speaking when he tries to expound his side of the story and strongly shuts him down. He tells Abhijit that while he might think his actions were in jest, when a woman asks him to back off, he should do so immediately and he cannot disrespect any women, be it inside or outside the Bigg Boss House.
5. Salman Khan says Abhijit must understand that he has crossed the line and if asking for kisses was his strategy of appearing interesting in the game, he has failed miserably; rather his actions looked abominable.
6. To understand the situation better, Salman Khan asks Devoleena why she did not raise her voice against Abhijit at the very first instance. When Devoleena says that initially she thought he was asking for kisses merely as a joke, he advises her to call out anyone who makes her feel uncomfortable at the slightest immediately and not wait for things to get out of hand. He advises all the other girls to do the same.
7. Some other female housemates like Shamita and Rashmi, on being asked, say they were not too comfortable with Abhijit’s behaviour and therefore have maintained a distance from him. Rashmi says she had asked Devoleena to do the same, but the latter had maintained that Abhijit was a friend. On hearing Shamita and Rashmi’s accounts, Salman Khan says he feels Devoleena, too, should have done the same. His

take on the situation was an allusion to the unfortunate reality of our society where a lot of men think that a girl being friendly means she is willing to pursue the relationship further. He says men like Abhijit should be dealt with sternly and had Devoleena raised her voice in the beginning, the situation could have been salvaged.

8. Salman Khan and the other contestants completely supported Devoleena on the issue and during the discussion Salman Khan is seen telling Abhijit multiple times that his actions were completely wrong. Abhijit realized his mistakes and apologized to Devoleena and Salman numerous times during the episode.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

The complainant feels the episode was insensitive in handling the issue. The host shouldn't get carried away and say all kinds of things. He feels that on watching the episode, the primitive thought process takes us 10 steps backwards in creating a safe place for women in our country. The channel has to take responsibility for regressive comments.

BCCC DECISION: *The Council had issued a Notice to the channel. Earlier, BCCC had found that the incident occurred during a task where contestant Devoleena Bhattacharjee had a group of contestants stealing things for her, and the side that stole most things was going to win the game. Contestant Abhijit Bhijukle was not on Devoleena's side but was asked by another contestant to steal things for her side as "strategy". During the game, Abhijit repeatedly asked Devoleena for kisses in exchange for stealing things for her side. She refused every single time but Abhijit insisted and said, "this is okay between friends". Devoleena then told other contestants about Abhijit's behavior which received mixed reactions and led to a fight between two sides.*

Show host Salman Khan brings this up during 'Weekend ka Vaar', shows the footage, and asks Devoleena and Abhijit not to say a word while he speaks. He seeks the opinion of all contestants. Most say that Abhijit was wrong. One contestant says she had earlier warned Devoleena not to speak with him because of his behaviour, but she did not stop. Salman Khan tells her she is correct and then asks Abhijit for his side. Abhijit says he was joking and his intentions were not bad.

Salman Khan tells him that he cannot misbehave with a woman. "You may have been joking, but this joke was in bad taste," he says. Abhijit agrees. Salman Khan then turns to Devoleena and asks why she even needed Abhijit to be stealing for her when she already had three people on her team. The whole discussion then turns towards Devoleena accepting the things Bhijukle stole for her, and how he was manipulated. Contestants start to blame Devoleena for "taking advantage" of the things he stole for her and then creating an uproar when he did something wrong, although she was repeatedly told to not hang out with him as he made her uncomfortable. Salman Khan then goes on a tirade about how Devoleena should have called for help the first time Abhijit made her feel uncomfortable, and how it is wrong that she went through the whole game, took everything he had to give her and then spoke out about how he made her feel uncomfortable. Devoleena is then made to explain why she didn't speak out when it happened first. Salman Khan keeps saying that Abhijit's behavior was wrong and he continues to ask Devoleena for an explanation as to why she continued to take the things he offered. He says Devoleena was wrong to have stayed in the place where Bhijukule made her feel uncomfortable.

After considering the channel's reply, the Council unequivocally stated that Abhijeet's actions were wrong and no amount of explanation could be a justification for his actions and his transgressions could not be vindicated.

The channel stated that Bigg Boss House has a competitive environment and, on many occasions, the contestants have felt that it is okay to experience inquietude for the sake of tasks performed inside the house, but the channel fairly believes that such behaviour results only in discomfort to the other contestants.

The channel stated that Salman Khan and other contestants were in Devoleena's support and the remarks made by them were more in the nature of impressing upon Devoleena about the necessity of timely escalation. The channel maintained that in such sensitive issues pertaining to gender and more so in reality shows where all such conduct is on display, it is important to present a holistic view. Though unequivocally supporting a woman in her angst may be compelling but it is also significant to draw lessons from the interview and present a larger message.

After considering the channel's reply, BCCC was of the considered opinion that though 'Bigg Boss' is a reality show, the channel could have edited its content to bring out this facet during the interactions of the contestants and the show host. The Council directed the channel that any such sensitive issue must be handled with greater forethought and balance. BCCC directed the channel to refrain from the victimisation of the contestants at any level and sensitise its host to strike a balance and emphasise countenance.

The Appeal was DISPOSED OF with the rider that any such sensitive issue should be handled with greater caution.

APPEAL-16,17,18,19

2) CHANNEL: Star Plus

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Imlie', Episode 31/12/2021, 8:30 PM + Other similar Appeals

NATURE OF APPEAL: Male sexual assault and glorification of rape by showing the victim marrying the rapist.

The complaint was sent to the channel on 04 January 2022. The channel sent its response to the complainant on 06 January 2022. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an appeal with BCCC on 07 January 2022.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL: Rapist and victim marriage is shown in the programme. Rapist, who is a woman, used drugs to intoxicate the victim. The entire plot is glorified as the victim is shamed every now and then. Also they are making a mockery of Hinduism as rapist is wearing goddess Radha outfit during the act while the victim is dressed as Krishna.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submitted that:

1. Malini and Aditya track highlights one such incident of male sexual assault that is rarely discussed openly in our society. The show has picked up this difficult issue and built a sensitive story of survivors trauma and the repercussions of such an incident on the character's lives.

2. The show takes a strong stance against Aditya's assault. When he is humiliated to seek justice for the wrong done to him, Imlie becomes his biggest supporter and takes Malini to court. At no point does the show attempt to glorify or endorse Malini's actions as right or their subsequent marriage as a solution.
3. Malini is an established negative character who manipulates people around her to get what she wants. Her attack on Aditya is always presented as a heinous act of a scorned lover. She is no role model unlike Imlie whose courage and bravery is unparalleled.
4. Being a work of fiction, the show is bound to have its highs and lows. We request to kindly watch the track as it reveals itself in the coming episodes. In no way does the show endorse the sexual violence and strongly condemns the same.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

The complainant states that:

1. The show is ticking too many boxes. Theme 1 Crime and violence: The show presents criminality as desirable and glamorous. This is highlighted time and time again without the criminal being punished and roaming free. None of the criminal acts such as rape, kidnapping and human trafficking done by Malini has ever been punished. In fact, her acts are being justified and glamourised in the name of rights.
2. Malini tries to do self harm twice- first she slits her wrist, then she shoots herself and then her own mother poisons her. Such actions should not be shown during primetime.
3. It also violates Theme 5 (Religion and community) as all Hindu festivals in the show were either disrespectful or depressing. During Janmashthami, the rapist dressed herself as Radha. She drugs and rapes the victim who is dressed as Krishna. Hence, glorifying her act. During Diwali, the female leads removes her *mangalsutra* and burns it. Do we need to show all these vile actions only during religious festivals? Is there any value to the Hindu rituals or everything is fiction as per the statement released by the channel? When the programme is violating various themes, either the actions should be corrected or the slot be changed or the show should change the track.
4. I can understand it is a fictional show where there are no morals and values, but glorifying the rapist and justification of the action is wrong. Fictional show or not, as per the Hindu Marriage Act there should be 90 days gap between the divorce and remarriage. However, in this case the remarriage happens within a week of signing divorce paper. The whole plot is making mockery of the judicial system and sending wrong information to the viewers. The marriage is void by law and morally rapist and victim marriage should be nullified.

BCCC DECISION: *The Council had issued a Notice to the channel. In its reply, the channel categorically stated that there is no bigamy in the depiction as explicit consent is one of the pre-requisites for a marriage to be valid. Imlie and male protagonist Aditya are forced into a marriage at gun point under extraneous circumstances making it invalid and non-consensual. At the time of the marriage with Imlie, Aditya was legally wedded to Malini, though the couple were undergoing divorce proceedings. The channel stated that certain creative liberties were taken to portray fictional stories in an engaging manner and the intent was never to air any content that promotes or endorses social evils like bigamy or ill treatment of victims of sexual abuse.*

The Council directed the channel to be more responsive and conscious of such storylines and the irrepressible need to handle such portrayal sensitively. BCCC was of the opinion that viewers are concerned with overall projection and any effort on part of the Council to make an intervention will subvert the intricacies of the storyline.

However, the channel must also be aware of the impact that such plots/sub-plots may have on the viewers and sensitize its programming teams accordingly.

BCCC also made it categorical that any regional adaptation of this show by the network should avoid such track lifts and similar sequences, though they are free to take creative liberties about depiction and portrayal.

The Council took the channel's reply on record and DISPOSED OF the Appeal.

APPEAL-20

CHANNEL: Colors Marathi

LANGUAGE: Marathi

PROGRAMME: 'Sundara Mana Madhe Bharali', 12/01/2022 (9 AM)

NATURE OF APPEAL: Bullying/Fat Shaming

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 17 January 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 28 January 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 28 January 2022.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL: The show portrays excessive bullying. A man named Daulat repeatedly fat shames a woman Latika. It is not appropriate to promote such fat shaming comments. Children also watch the show.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

1. 'Sundara Manamadhe Bharali' is a fictional drama and an iconic show widely praised for its strong social messaging. At the core of the show, is an attempt by the channel to bring forth the deep-rooted social taboos related to overweight people.
2. The channel said the show portrays the discrimination faced by overweight people and how they must walk the extra mile to achieve their dreams. Protagonist Latika has consciously been depicted as an extremely confident and optimistic person who faces all the curveballs life throws at her in a self-assured manner. She is talented, skilled and, most importantly, unfazed by the comments meted out to her because of her looks. She does not lose hope when people pass unkind remarks about her. Such incidents strengthen her resolve to achieve her objective.
3. The channel said that fictional shows of this genre have an array of characters reacting in certain ways and the scenes and stories are thereby sensitively conceived and depicted to aid in taking the narrative forward. One would appreciate that to effectively portray a menace it is important to allude and depict it through fictional situations. Being a responsible channel adhering to regulatory guidelines, the discrimination was depicted suggestively and in softer terms.
4. The show has been conceptualised to celebrate the resilience of the human spirit. The instances mentioned by the complainant form only a small part of the narrative while the rest dwells upon the protagonist's indomitability and courage.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

While the complainant appreciates the programme encouraging overweight people, the complainant doesn't agree with the channel's response. The complainant asserts that negative comments related to bullying/fat shaming should be stopped.

BCCC DECISION: BCCC referred the matter to Ms. Pallavi Joshi for review. She watched the episode and stated that male antagonist Daulatrao has been depicted as a very rude, arrogant and mannerless young man who doesn't care for his own sick mother. The female protagonist has been body shamed on three occasions. But the larger point was that the show is based on the female protagonist, her indomitable courage and her remarkable trait of getting unaffected by all unkind remarks. BCCC felt the story is primarily based on the trials and tribulations of an overweight character and it would not move ahead if she is not embarrassed. The emphasis was not on body shaming but on the female protagonist's resilience. The Council decided to **DISMISS** the Appeal.

APPEAL-21

CHANNEL: ETV Telugu

LANGUAGE: Telugu

PROGRAMME: 'Satamanam Bhavathi', 27/01/2022 (6:30 PM)

NATURE OF APPEAL: Domestic Violence

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 28 January 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 08 February 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 08 February 2022.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL: The mother-in-law pours water on the daughter-in-law, who has 102-degree fever. Isn't this a form of domestic violence?

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

1. The show involves fictional characters who perform roles as per the story. There is nothing objectionable. Any fictional story contains both good and bad characters to create drama and maintain tempo. Any feature film or TV series would follow this formula and generally the bad character will either realise and reform or get punished. Since this is a daily show, the process of the bad character reforming may take some time till the climax.
2. To discourage domestic violence, it is imperative to show certain scenes of violence and legal consequences so that the mother-in-law who choose to harass her daughter-in-law would know the legal consequences and mend herself.
3. ETV broadcasts many shows on Telugu literature, poetry, tradition, art and culture. *Satamanam Bhavathi* is one of the programmes where it shows Telugu tradition and culture which is viewed by many Telugu people.
4. The programme intends to promote our tradition and culture and a disclaimer is also given at the beginning of the show. It is purely a fictional programme and all the characters are created to give narrative of the fictional story.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

The complainant agrees that that the disclaimer is shown but argues that is it practical that everybody who watches realises that this is a work of fiction? The complainant states:

1. As per the channel they are promoting culture through this show. Does our culture teach harassment of daughter-in-law by mother-in-law?
2. Showing the disclaimer for a few seconds does not mean that the channel can show objectionable content for half-an-hour.

3. In one episode, the mother-in-law creates a situation where the daughter-in-law injures her leg and hand. Why create such scenes and say it is a part of the plot? Such scenes might give ideas to the viewers and some might imitate the same.

The complainant requests to immediately stop telecasting scenes involving domestic violence. If the series contains such scenes, its telecast should be stopped immediately.

BCCC DECISION: *The Council viewed the episode and found that mother-in-law Urmila finds out from the maid that her daughter-in-law Bhanu has not woken up due to fever. She goes to Bhanu's room and orders her to get up and wash clothes. Bhanu tells her that she has fever and it may get worse if she gets into water. Urmila checks Bhanu's temperature. It is 102 degrees centigrade. Later, she pours water on Bhanu and checks her temperature again. Then Urmila takes a dig at Bhanu and tells her that the fever has not gone up even after her getting wet. She orders Bhanu to wash clothes. Bhanu pleads that she is feeling weak and cannot work. But Urmila doesn't care. Bhanu is shown to wash clothes. Urmila adds more clothes and asks Bhanu to wash those too. Urmila's maternal grandmother also joins her to harass Bhanu. Urmila scolds her maid and sends her from there as she tries to help Bhanu.*

*The Council decided to caution the channel against such prolonged depiction of harassment of women and decided to strongly reiterate its Advisory on the subject to the channel. The Council, however, felt that such episodes should not be viewed in isolation because in daily soaps, characters often reform and mend their ways over time. BCCC, though, was very clear on one aspect - that the channel must curtail such prolonged depiction and show such scenes suggestively. The Council also held that such unpolished depiction will merit greater scrutiny for appeals received in the future. The Appeal was **DISMISSED**.*

APPEAL-22

CHANNEL: Asianet

LANGUAGE: Malayalam

PROGRAMME: 'Ammayariyathe', 23/12/2021 (7:30 PM)

NATURE OF APPEAL: Attempt to suicide

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 24 December 2021. The complainant received a response from the channel. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 12 January 2022.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL: Aparna decides to commit suicide after repeated mental harassment and threat of divorce from her husband and his uncle, who publicly character assassinate her in her college. That her entire family unfairly sides with her husband is appalling. The show unapologetically puts forth the message that the husband is right in his decision and a woman's life ends with divorce as she has no other way but to commit suicide. This is one of the top shows. Such regressive track, running for a week, should be stopped.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The plot features the relationship between Aparna and Vineeth, a couple whose romantic relationship is in jeopardy leading to an inevitable divorce. Aparna is repentant about what transpired between her and Vineeth and does not want to leave the relationship. Nothing she tries seems to change Vineeth's mind. In a misguided bid to get his attention and love back, Aparna decides to fake herself coming to harm. Her desperate plan backfires when

someone else consumes the spiked drink. However, she carries out her attention-seeking stunt and pretends to faint during her dance performance.

In the subsequent episode, it is revealed that in a comedy of errors, her uncle ended up consuming the spiked drink. Though presented as a light moment, the takeaway from the episode is the lesson that such actions even when taken lightly can have unpleasant consequences. This show is a work of fiction made for entertainment for which creative liberties have been taken to simulate high drama points and intrigue.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

The channel asks to trust its creativity, but watching how the show is going, it is difficult to do that. This week's episodes show the girl attempting another suicide due to lack of support and mental harassment from her own family and husband. Instead of showing the girl getting support and counselling, she is shown getting together with the same person. This does give a good message to the young impressionable viewers religiously watching the show.

BCCC DECISION: *The Council referred the matter to Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath. She viewed the episode and found nothing of significance that substantiates the complaint that the episode might have a disproportionate impact on the minds of young viewers and influence their attitudes towards suicide. The Council also felt that channels are entitled to creative liberties in which high drama points, intrigue, chicanery and manipulation are shown to create dramatised fiction. In view of the above, The Appeal was DISMISSED.*

C. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 108TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 6TH APRIL 2022

APPEAL-23

<u>CHANNEL:</u>	Zee Marathi
<u>LANGUAGE:</u>	Marathi
<u>PROGRAMME:</u>	'Mann Jhale Bajinde', 10/03/2022, 7 PM
<u>NATURE OF APPEAL:</u>	Self Harm/attempt to suicide/blackmailing

SUMMARY OF APPEAL: In the said episode, the character named Ranjana set herself on fire in order to blackmail her son Raya. What are the makers trying to prove? Please take action.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- 1) In the episode the character Ranjana threatens to commit suicide by setting herself on fire. Her objective was to stop her son Raya from bringing his wife Krushna back home. The entire scene was depicted just as a threat, and she has not actually taken the step to set herself on fire in the episode as claimed.
- 2) Appropriate scrolls and disclaimers have also been incorporated within the episodes to sensitise audience that the channel does not support/endorse any such practices. The Channel ensures that we adhere to the BCCC Code and same was done here too.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

The complainant doesn't agree with the explanation given by the channel. The complainant is of the view that in 'reel life', the character Ranjana only threatens, but in 'real life' consequences are different. Also just mentioning in scrolls and disclaimers that

the channel is not responsible is not enough. The serial is aired on their platform, they are getting income from the advertisement shown during the show. Hence, the channel, creative director and producers are responsible.

BCCC DECISION: *The Council admitted the Appeal and watched the episode. The Council found that the character of Ranjana threatens to commit suicide by setting herself on fire with the overall objective to prohibit her son Raya from re-uniting with his wife Krushna. After watching the episode, BCCC felt that female antagonist Ranjana had used this threat of self-immolation and while enacting this sequence she has been depicted as pouring kerosene (oil) over herself in presence of her son and other family members. The channel had also run appropriate scrolls renouncing such actions. The Council felt that it was a sub-plot in the episode to take the story forward by portraying something unusual.*

The Council felt it was not its remit to prescribe story-lines to channels who have the right to make informed choices on these matters. The Appeal was DISMISSED.

APPEAL-24

CHANNEL: Colors HD Marathi
LANGUAGE: Marathi
PROGRAMME: 'Tujhya Rupacha Chandana', 16/02/2022, 9:30 PM
NATURE OF APPEAL: Extreme violence

SUMMARY OF APPEAL: The episode showed extreme violence. The character named Datta killed a man in front of almost 20 people. This specific scene and the overall character of Dutta is provocative to take law and order in own hands. Children will get wrong message about innocent people living in villages and their way of life.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

- 1) 'Tujhya Rupacha Chandana' is a fictional drama and is one of the most iconic shows of our channels that has been widely praised for its strong social message. Given that it is a popular show, we are cautious of how scenes are depicted and have always judiciously edited scenes to ensure compliance.
- 2) In the track mentioned, the man humiliates Nakshatra and tries to molest her after kidnapping her. As a result, Datta becomes aggressive and hits the man for ill-treating Nakshatra. However, the man continues to mistreat Nakshatra and passes comments on her. Hence, Datta's actions are shown to be an outrage against the villain's misdeeds. However, the aim of the track was to portray the fight between good and evil and how good always triumphs over evil.
- 3) We would also like to inform that being mindful of the regulations, we have been extremely cautious of the portrayal and used only suggestive shots and dialogues to editorially justify the scene.
- 4) We also humbly submit that the scene was a dramatic representation to establish the characteristic traits of the protagonists and was crucial to the narrative. Fictional shows of this genre have an array of characters reacting in certain ways and the scenes and stories are thereby sensitively conceived and depicted to aid in taking the narrative forward. You would appreciate that to effectively portray a menace,

it is important to allude and depict it through fictional situations. It should in no way to be construed of being in implicit or explicit support of any illegal practice.

- 5) Kindly note that all content provided by us is compliant with the Cable TV Network Rules, 1994 and self-regulatory content guidelines while also upholding creative freedom of expression.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

'*Tujhya Rupacha Chandana*' is one of the worst, senseless presentation and portrayals of characters with respect to morality and social responsibilities. This specific serial is willfully spreading racism among women and disgrace about Maharashtra Police on daily basis under the umbrella of fictional drama. The show has forgotten the fine thick line between creative freedom of expression and ethics of society.

After reading the specific response, anyone will think that it is a simple and a straight forward plot which is being followed in an ethical way, but there is a big fact willfully hidden by CGT of Viacom18 Pvt Ltd as they may have thought that the complainant has forgotten the sequence. There was a possibility to forget, but this specific episode is quiet harmful and shocking to innocent mindset like me and to my family that I will never forget even if I want it to let go.

For the fact to set open and justify to BCCC, I kindly request BCCC to watch this specific episode aired on 16 February 2022 at 9:30 PM on Colors Marathi HD once again as I do want to focus on it and write a important scene as follows,

Datta hits man and rescue Nakshatra from the hideout. Datta and Shankar (Datta's companion) get Nakshatra and that man to their home in Patil vasti. Now, the extensive conversation and extremely violent scene starts,

Datta: ह्योच होता हरामखोर. (He was the bastard.)

Datta: चल ऐ, नाक रगड़. (Hey, rub your nose on ground.)

Datta: रगड़ नाक, नाही तर... (Rub your nose on ground or...)

Datta: आई साहेब, यानेच त्या माणसाला पाठवला होता आणि ह्याच्याच इशान्यावर नक्षत्राला गायब करून तिच्यावर हाथ टाकण्याचा प्रयत्न केला. (Mother, he sent that man and by his orders, Nakshatra got kidnapped and they tried to molest her.)

Datta: चल ऐ, माफी माघ. (Hey, beg pardon.)

Datta: आमच्या आई साहेबांना जो नडंल, दत्ता त्याला उभा, आडवा, तिरका तोडंल. (Whoever double cross my mother, Datta will cut him/her straight, horizontally and cross.)

Man sees Nakshatra's photo on election publicity banner, point fingers towards it and tries to say something about Nakshatra, but Datta forces him to beg pardon from Tai saheb by putting nose on the ground.

(History behind the man's pointing fingers towards Nakshatra's photo is in the earlier episodes. Nakshatra's father has done deal with this man. Council will get to know that why he was pointing towards it.)

Datta: म्होहरं व्हायचं आणि माफी मागायची. (Go forward and beg pardon.)

Man: नाही मागणार माफी कारण हिला विकत घेतलंय मी. ठेवलंय मी हिला. आपण नाही मागणार माफी हिची. (I am not going to beg pardon because I have bought her. She is my slave. I am not going to beg pardon to her.)

Shankar (Datta's companion): ऐ थोबाड आवर, तार्ई साहेबांबद्दल बोलतोय तू. (Hey, control your tongue, you are talking about Tai saheb.)

This is the time Datta's anger goes sky high because Datta senselessly thought this man talking about Tai saheb while that banner had two photos, one of them was Nakshatra. Tai saheb promoted Nakshatra on that banner as next head of village in upcoming elections.

Man: आरे हाट. आपल्याला नाही फरक पडत. पैशे दिलेत आपण हिला विकत घ्यायला. हि फालतु आहे, हि सगळ्यांना फसवते. विकत घेतलय मी हिला. रोकडा मोजलांय. (Hey, back off. It does not matter to me. I have given money to buy her. She is worthless, she betrayed everyone. I have bought her. Counted cash.)

Datta: ह्याच्या तर, आज ह्याला हीतंच गाडणार. (Oh guy, today I am going to bury him right here.)

Datta: माझ्या आईला जो नडला, दत्तानं त्याला उभा, आडवा, तिरका तोडला. (Whoever double cross my mother, Datta will cut him/her straight, horizontally and cross.)

Shankar seen to be chuckling.

Datta hit this man with an axe in the man's head. Axe willfully shown as it is damaging head in a disgusting way that blood literally dripping from forehead. The sound of head being chopped was in extremely bad taste.

Datta: आपल्या आई साहेबांसंग बोलतोय ह्याच भान ठेवांय पाहिजे होतं. (He should have been mindful that he is talking about my mother.) Datta was spreading terror across Patil vasti by his cautious actions. Datta killed this man in front of approximately 20 people because he thought the man is passing bad comments on Tai saheb but he was telling about Nakshatra.

This serial is giving a message that anyone who passes bad comments about your mother, you should kill him/her with an axe without specifying any word to anyone else. Take law in your own hands because in the villages of Maharashtra every policeman is corrupt or politically polarized. The policemen are willfully disgraced in this serial.

Children subconsciously follow glorified criminals if get in contact with them on any platform. Children already started following character traits of Datta. 'He who kills a man with an axe in front of many people in a disgusting way and got away with it, talks violent and provocative dialogues.' Channel is promoting him as a good who triumphs over evil.

I hereby demand to BCCC either to put an immediate stop on this serial from broadcasting its upcoming episodes or put a financial penalty of atleast 30 Lakh (Rs 30,00,000) and direct the channel to run an apology to BCCC as well as Maharashtra Police in the form of a pre-recorded video message at the introductory part of this serial for at least 10 seconds of length for atleast 10 consecutive days.

I request BCCC to give Maharashtra Police and to me a reparation for the wrong has been done from the penalty amount. This action will act as a deterrence to all TV channels because obtaining only undertakings from TV channels will not solve the greater problem.

BCCC DECISION: *The Council admitted the APPEAL and watched the episode. BCCC found that in the impugned track, the antagonist abducts Nakshatra and also tries to molest her. Male protagonist Datta is shown to hit the man and his actions are portrayed to be an affront to the villainous misdeeds of the antagonist. The violence in the episode was suggestive and not prolonged. BCCC was also mindful of the fact that to take a narrative forward, fictional accounts need fictional situations and no story can move forward if evil is not shown. The Council felt the progression of the show does not suggest endorsement of violence and gore. The complaint was not found maintainable and DISMISSED.*

D. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 109TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 10TH JUNE 2022

APPEAL-25 & 26

CHANNEL: Sab TV

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Wagle Ki Duniya', Season-4, Episode-320, 9 PM

NATURE OF APPEAL: 'Hindi' wrongly addressed as 'National Language'.

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 10 May 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 12 May 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 18 May 2022.

SUMMARY OF APPEAL: In the show, one of the characters called Hindi the "National Language". India has a linguistic composition. The Constitution makes no provision for a "National Language", while it gives the status of "National Language" to 22 languages.

What the actor said is unconstitutional, illegal and an attempt to create a linguistic controversy. The channel should be asked to submit an apology for this. Else, we will take legal help. Law and order is our responsibility.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submitted:

1. 'Wagle Ke Duniya' is a fictional show. The intent of the particular track was to promote and explain the importance of one's mothertongue and one of the commonly spoken languages in India.
2. In the episode, Sakhi was embarrassed because she felt she lacks proficiency in English. Her father explains to her the significance of her mother tongue, Marathi, and takes pride in it. By his reference to Hindi, the father wanted to convey the message that, rather than feeling sad that she is not fluent in English, she should be proud that she is fluent in two languages - her mothertongue Marathi and Hindi. We recognize that Marathi and Hindi are part of the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution and are Official Languages, and India has no National Language.
3. The reference to Hindi as the National Language was an inadvertent error. We wish to clarify there was no attempt to create any linguistic controversy.

4. At Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI), our endeavour at all times has been to ensure that the content is within the framework of the laws of India. We place great emphasis on providing wholesome entertainment and we take every care to ensure the sensibilities of our viewers are not affected. In any event, if any part of the content has affected the sensibilities of our viewers, please be rest assured that was never the intent.

REASONS FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

The complainant stated:

1. The channel is manipulating the situation. In the scene, the person clearly said “National Language”. We are educated and we know the difference between ‘National’ and ‘Official’. Please look at the episode link.
2. There is no official ‘National Language’ under the Constitution. To facilitate functioning, Hindi and English have been accepted as official (working) languages for the Union Government. An apology should have come from Sony for the deliberate attempt to hurt the sentiments of other language speakers of India. This is not yet received. Please take appropriate action by paying attention to this issue. It can become a matter of law and order.

BCCC’s DECISION BCCC issued **NOTICE** to the channel and called it for **HEARING**. In its submission, the Channel reiterated the narrative of the episode and accepted that calling Hindi the National Language was an inadvertent error. The channel submitted that it has edited the episode, shored up its research content, reprimanded the research team, and conducted a sensitisation workshop to be careful in the future.

The Council asked the channel to be mindful of the reverberations that such content can have on the viewers. BCCC also asked the channel that in constitutional matters, it must refrain from taking latitudes. While viewer sentiments have surely been hurt, the channel has failed in terms of rigour of the research. Such a sensitive issue cannot be taken lightly or casually. The Council asked the channel to submit in writing:

- a) All steps taken by it so that such mistakes do not recur
- b) How it has strengthened the functions of the research team to prevent such inadvertent errors
- c) All corrective measures adopted and all necessary information touching the above-mentioned steps adopted by the channel

The Council directed the channel to place an **UNDERTAKING** before BCCC, listing all the corrective and precautionary steps taken to avoid such errors in the future.

Subsequently, the Council received the undertaking from the channel.

APPEAL-27

CHANNEL: Zee Telugu
LANGUAGE: Telugu
PROGRAMME: *Mutyaala Mugu*

NATURE OF APPEAL: Promoting illegal and rash driving, Episodes 190 to 200

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 02 December 2021. The complainant received a response from the channel on 07 January 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 03 May 2022.

SUMMARY OF APPEAL: A girl below 18 years of age is shown driving a car. This happens from episode 190 to 200. The girl, Nandika, was shown driving the car rashly and irresponsibly, endangering the life of another girl. Such dangerous driving was repeatedly shown. No one below 18 years can drive a car. This is illegal. Many other illegal things were also shown in this programme. The content influences people to do wrong things.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submitted:

1. 'Mutyaala Muggu' is a Telegu drama series which revolves around two stepsisters, Bhumi and Nandika. Bhumi is the protagonist, Nandika is the antagonist.
2. In this episode, Bhumi's boyfriend Viraat comes to her home to pick her up for shopping. Since Nandika is also at home, she decides to join them. In her excitement, she comes out and sits in the front of the car and not the driver's seat. Virat, an adult of about 22 years, comes out and ask Nandika to move on to the rear seat since Bhumi will be sitting beside him. Nandita does that. Viraat then gets in the driver's seat and moves on. Apart from this scene, nowhere in the episode we have shown any depiction of Nandika driving the car.
3. The channel adheres to the BCCC Guidelines and the same was done here too.

REASON FOR DISSATISFACTION OF THE COMPLAINANT

The complainant feels the channel's response is deceptive.

BCCC's DECISION

BCCC viewed the episode. As alleged, a minor was not shown driving the car. Nandika, the minor, against whom allegations of driving rashly has been levelled, was shown sitting in the driving seat of a stationary car. Later, she was moved to the rear seat. The Council found the complaint without basis. The complaint was DISMISSED.

[E. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 110TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 29 JULY 2022](#)

APPEAL-28

CHANNEL: Star Vijay

LANGUAGE: Tamil

PROGRAMME: 'Cooku with Comali', Season-3, Episode 46, 26/06/2022, 9:30 PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Comments referring to washerman (dhobi) community

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 28 June 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 07 July 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 07 July 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

In one of the rounds, fellow contestants and Comali made Pugazh, the comedian, eat celebrity Deepa's cooked food which was kept for presentation. They immediately made

him realise that he ate the food which was made for the competition. At this point, the audio clip was played in the background saying “*idhu vayira illa vannan jaali (washer man’s vessel)*”. Why are they using a name related to the lower caste community? Such content is completely unwanted since we, as a community, are facing lot of struggles in our day-to-day life. Not even a day goes by without such insults. We condemn telecast of such content on national television.

PREMISE OF THE APPEAL:

Washerman/*dhobi/vannan* community’s main job was to wash clothes of the higher castes. Traditionally, this lower caste community would wash clothes for particular families and receive grain or excessive food from them on “*vannan jaali*” (vessel). The higher community people would throw the food inside the vessel without even touching it. People of this community would save the excessive food or grains to feed the other members of their family. The community did not have any other job to feed their families.

In case the lower caste community wanted more food, they would finish their regular job and ask for it from their employers. Even after doing excessive household work of the higher community, when the *dhobi* community asked for more food, they would mockingly ask, “Is this a stomach or a big vessel?” There were many such discriminations over the generations. They would mock people who ate more by referring to the *dhobi* community. Vijay TV allegedly used the comments in this context to mock people who eat more, thereby insulting the lower caste community.

LEGAL STANDING OF THE ISSUE

Section 3 ‘The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989’ states:

(1) Whoever, not being a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe

(x) intentionally insults or intimidates with intent to humiliate a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe in any place within public view;

As per the 2017 Supreme Court Order in *Manju Devi Vs. Onkarjit Singh Ahluwalia*, calling people ‘Harijan’ or ‘Dhobi’ is offensive.

CHANNEL’S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

1. That, Star Vijay, being a responsible broadcaster, is extremely sensitive towards the impact its content creates. This show is a comedy-based cooking competition with lots of associated fun and entertainment. It is a celebrity-based non-fiction show where one celebrity who is a good cook and one comedian (Komali), who is a bad cook, are paired together to form a team and compete with other teams by carrying out multiple cooking tasks/challenges. To enhance viewing experience and engagement and in accordance with the show’s format, comedy dialogues and soundtracks are introduced as audio-clips.
2. That, in one of the rounds, the fellow contestants and Komalis made Pugazh, the comedian, to eat celebrity Deepa’s cooked food which was kept for presentation and then made him realise that he ate the food which was done for the competition. **At this point of time, the audio clip, which you have mentioned in the complaint, was played for the purposes of increasing the comedy quotient and entertaining the viewers to denote that he eats so much that his stomach is equivalent to the washerman’s vessel which is capable of filling large quantities of whatever is put inside it, and not with the intent of hurting the sentiments of any particular caste, community, religion or profession.**
3. That, Vijay is a responsible broadcaster and is completely against any discrimination over any caste, community or religion in any manner whatsoever. That said, rest

assured that your views and feedback have been heard and the team working on the show has been made aware of your concerns. As per our review, this content is not in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

Not satisfied with the channel's response, the complainant submits:

1. The channel agreed that an audio-clip referring to the lower caste community (Vannan caste) was used to entertain audiences. Hence, the appeal is being filed for insulting the community.
2. The response provided by the channel is very generic. The exact meaning of it has been explained under the premise of the appeal. Undoubtedly, there was no need for the content to be played.
3. People belonging to this community are still being insulted at many places. Use of such comments on national television has saddened the Vannan community.
4. The complainant is fond of the show and has nothing against its format. The only prayer is to take corrective measures so that such content is not repeated again. Content like these are very hurtful for the entire community.

LANGUAGE EXPERT'S COMMENTS:

1. The expression about Vannan is clearly audible. As per the SC order reported on Mar 26, 2017 (*The Wire*)

“Calling People ‘Harijan’ or ‘Dhobi’ Is Offensive: Supreme Court.” “The SC held that such terms “denote a caste” and these days are used “to intentionally insult and humiliate someone and so constitute abuse.”

2. The channel has not denied telecasting the offending portion. It has written that the dialogue is not about the caste and “the audio clip which you have mentioned in the complaint was played for the purposes of increasing the comedy quotient and entertaining the viewers to denote that he eats so much that his stomach is equivalent to the washerman’s vessel which is capable of filling large quantities of whatever is put inside of it and not with the intent of hurting the sentiments of any particular caste, community, religion or profession.”

3. The channel may have erred inadvertently, but it should have been doubly careful where caste names are involved.

4. The complainant has responded to the channel’s reply, that “this specific community are still being insulted at many places”.

5. It is important to understand the hurt and anguish of the community. BCCC and the channel will sympathise with the sentiment. The channel should accept its mistake.

6. A suitable written apology by the channel that is widely seen by its viewers would also educate other channels and members of the public.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE NOTICE

1. As a responsible broadcaster we are extremely cautious with regards to the impact the content would have on our wide base of loyal viewers and would never intentionally hurt the sentiments of our viewers.

2. We would like to inform that participants on this show are featured basis their standing in the industry as actors, celebrities and not basis their caste, community or religion. Caste or community references are not organic to this show format. Star India had no intention to hurt, defame, insult or derogate the Vannan community in our content.
3. Further, to explain, none of our contestants on the show have said this comment. It is pertinent to inform that the alleged statement being referred by you for hurting sentiments of Vannan community is in fact a third-party audio clip from a Tamil feature film 'Marudhamalai', certified for public viewing by the CBFC.
4. This movie is a popular title and has been airing on TV channels for many years and is also readily available on other streaming platforms. In a very similar situation in the film, the comment refers to the huge size of the vessel in which clothes are washed to figuratively represent substantial appetite of the participant.
5. We did not have knowledge of any derogatory connotation/ implication of the term as mentioned in the notice under the *Premise of Appeal* section and therefore we had absolutely no intention, no reason to hurt or disrespect or insult Vannan and/or any community in any manner whatsoever through the medium of the program.
6. Even though the use of alleged audio-clip was without any intention to hurt or offend the sentiments of any community, to demonstrate its respect to the members of the Vannan community, we had immediately upon knowing about the misunderstanding due to the unintentional use of alleged audio clip, removed the same from future airings.
7. We request BCCC to consider that there was no intent to hurt the sentiment of any community and the corrective measures taken after realising that the alleged third-party audio clip from a certified film has caused misunderstanding amongst viewers.

BCCC Decision

The channel was called for a hearing. At the hearing, the channel accepted that the audio clip was played inadvertently, and that the channel was unaware of its etymology. During the hearing, the channel's representatives assured the Council that they have removed the clip from all repeats, and also from the online platform Hotstar Disney+ as soon as they received the complaint.

Language expert explained the meaning of the phrase. She said it was completely unacceptable to use the phrase and should not have been played on a public broadcast channel. The hurt caused by the phrase is evident and lived by many in their everyday lives. The phrase has re-traumatized the community living on the margins and has derogatory connotation.

Even though the channel responded promptly, BCCC is of the view that such errors should not occur, especially since such usages are prohibited in law, have been banned by the Supreme Court and not acceptable. BCCC cautioned the channel to be careful and sensitive about the usage of such phrases and to ensure that it does not even repeat/reproduce any content that diminishes the dignity of any marginalised community in the future. BCCC felt that in a reality show, extracting the phrase which may have been used from the Tamil movie 'Marudhamalai' certified for public viewing by the CBFC, is legally impermissible, not in keeping with the realities of everyday existence and is completely unwarranted.

The Council felt the phrase is not acceptable in everyday parlance and that too the Channel having played it on a popular channel is a serious matter. BCCC directs the Channel to train its Standards and Practices (S&P) teams and apprise them of the repercussions of usage of such phrases on the marginalised communities and possible legal action.

BCCC directs the channel to run an APOLOGY SCROLL, in Tamil on 17 October 2022 (Monday) at 9AM to 10:30 AM twice during the repeat telecast of the show 'Cooku with Comali', for ONE day to assuage the sentiments of the Vannan community.

The text of the scroll would be:

The channel regrets the inadvertent playing of the clip on 26/06/2022 episode of the show. It was not the channel's intention to hurt the sentiments of any community. The channel is regretful for the hurt caused.

APPEAL-29

CHANNEL: Star Plus

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Ghum Hai Kisi Ke Pyaar Mein', Episodes 4,6,11,12 & 14 July 2022, 8 PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Incorrect portrayal of surrogacy

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 06 July 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 15 July 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an appeal with BCCC on 15 July 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

Surrogacy is a very sensitive issue. It needs to be handled with care. In this show, a woman without children becomes a surrogate which is illegal. This is done without the consent of the biological mother and without legal documents. The channel should have displayed some social responsibility. It shows inappropriate content which is wrong as per law.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

1. It has been repeatedly and quite strongly established in the show that Pakhi is not eligible to be a surrogate because she has not given birth to a child previously. Further, the show, through various scenes and dialogues, lays out the correct process and procedures for a surrogacy arrangement in India.
2. Sai, being a doctor herself, is vocal about the merits of this process and herself guides the intended surrogacy recipient. The medical professionals involved are also clearly shown to state Pakhi's ineligibility and the risk-free nature of surrogacy. You must also know that the story is going through an extremely sensitive point where Sai and Virat's relationship is once again under stress due to Pakhi's schemes and Kaku defending her blindly.
3. The show, being a work of fiction, relies on larger-than-life drama and on the day of the procedure, Pakhi is shown to go out of her way to make sure that neither Sai nor her chosen surrogate is able to reach the clinic on time.
4. Under duress and family pressure, a very vulnerable Virat is unable to voice his protests and due to some misunderstanding Pakhi ends up going through the procedure instead. This track also addresses the fact that it is often very hard to condemn the wrong done to us by our loved ones. Even for accomplished

professionals like Sai who is a doctor and Virat a police officer, it is something difficult to come to terms with.

5. However, rest assured the curtain has not closed on this track yet and if you've been watching the follow-up episodes then you already know that Sai in her characteristic bravery and never-give-up attitude has certainly not stopped the search for the perpetrators who attacked her and intimidated the surrogate mother - Geeta. As a hopeful mother she has chosen to accept the pregnancy but not the means by which it was forcefully thrust upon her. She has not accepted the wrong done to her and is determined to get to the bottom of things.
6. We request you not to judge this story or our intent by what happens in a singular episode and continue to follow the fascinating tale of Sai and Virat to see how they face this life challenge going ahead. Rest assured, Star Plus will never air content that endorses wrong actions. We only endeavour to deliver to you the best-in-class content and entertainment.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

Not satisfied with the channel's response, the complainant submits:

1. Whatever the circumstances be, the surrogate cannot be changed at the last moment since the procedure was scheduled according to original surrogate's monthly cycle.
2. In the episode dated 4 July 2022, the surrogate was changed at the last moment without the consent of Sai, the biological mother. Also, no legal documents were made for this so-called last-minute surrogacy
3. The father who is an IPS officer, didn't oppose this and remained silent as he always does in the show.
4. As mentioned in the channel's response, there were dialogues to lay out the correct procedure of surrogacy but at last the procedure was done with the woman who was unfit for surrogacy.
5. In the episode of 11 July 2022, the woman on whom the procedure is done tells the mother to stay away from her and repeatedly says that the child is hers. I understand sometimes the drama is exaggerated, but to go to the extent of multiple illegal activities should not be allowed.
6. Are they showing that the surrogacy can be done on any woman without following 'The Surrogacy Regulation Act'? Many women watch the show and such content endorses wrong action. If this was meant to create hype for the show they could have shown the family facing legal difficulties for going ahead with illegal surrogacy but they still went ahead proceed with this surrogacy.
7. In the precap of the episodes dated 12th and 13th July, it was shown that implantation failed but in the subsequent episode they showed the pregnancy to be a complicated one. Is this the way the channel manipulates the viewers?

Link for the episode dated 04 July 2022 <https://www.hotstar.com/1000277499>

BCCC's DECISION

The Council viewed the episodes and found that the female antagonist, in keeping with her scheming nature, became the unintended surrogacy recipient of Virat and Sai's child. BCCC also felt that the doctor's behaviour in threatening Pakhi with police action for keeping everyone in the dark, while undergoing the surrogacy process, was justified and consequential in mitigating the wrong act that was done.

The Council felt the show is a work of fiction and while crime and deprecation are displayed in the context of the story, it should never be in the realm of encouragement or glorification. It should also be noted that criminal acts, when handled with sufficient care have remained components of fictional storytelling.

The Council directed the channel to be more responsive and conscious of such storylines and the irrepressible need to handle such portrayal sensitively. It was of the opinion that viewers are concerned with overall projection and any effort on part of the Council to make an intervention will subvert the intricacies of the storyline. However, the channel must also be aware of the impact that such plots/sub-plots may have on the viewers and sensitize its programming teams accordingly.

Though the Council is fully seized of the issue that channels do take creative liberties in depiction and portrayal but issues that concern sensitive topics like surrogacy must not be prolonged to hurt viewer sensibilities.

The Council felt that whatever incongruities may arise through a particular episode could not be held responsible for the entire show and DISPOSED OF the complaints.

APPEAL-30

CHANNEL: Star Plus

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Ghum Hai Kisi Ke Pyaar Mein', Episode 05/07/2022, 8 PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Domestic violence and negative portrayal of surrogacy

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 12 July 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 15 July 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 16 July 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

1. Domestic violence by mother-in-law

A pregnant woman is cursed which results in miscarriage due to mental stress.

2. Surrogacy Track: Through manipulation they took the original surrogate's identity so that another character Pakhi could become a surrogate mother. This happened without the consent of the biological mother Sai. It is an offence under Section 419 of IPC. The Surrogacy (Regulation) Act requires that you have your own children to become a surrogate mother, unlike Pakhi (the surrogate).

3. Misconduct by an IPS officer: An IPS officer, who is legally bound, violates the law and accepts Pakhi as a surrogate mother of his child, even if it is against the rules. Instead of protecting the law, he is going against it because it is his own child and the person impersonating as the surrogate mother is his family/friend. He is misusing his power as an ACP by supporting the wrong deeds. [Reference Episode 550]

Earlier, he also concealed a Naxalite (Shruthi) because of the promise given to his friend Sadanand and the makers of the show said that friendship comes above all, even duty. He didn't even press charges against his uncle (Omkar) because he was his family.

Usually, the culprits are punished for their mistakes but in this show they have room to manoeuvre and enjoy their privileges. Through the show, they want to paint evil as good.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

1. It has been repeatedly and quite strongly established in the show that Pakhi is not eligible to be a surrogate because she has not given birth to a child previously. Further, the show through various scenes and dialogues lays out the correct process and procedures for a surrogacy arrangement in India.
2. Sai being a doctor herself is vocal about the merits of this process and guides the intended surrogacy recipient. Medical professionals are also clearly shown to state Pakhi's ineligibility and the risk-free nature of surrogacy. You must also know that the story is going through an extremely sensitive point where Sai and Virat's relationship is once again under stress due to Pakhi's schemes and Kaku defending her blindly. The show being a work of fiction relies on larger-than-life drama and on the day of the procedure, Pakhi is shown to go out of her way to make sure that neither Sai nor her chosen surrogate is able to reach the clinic on time.
3. Under duress and family pressure, a very vulnerable Virat is unable to voice his protests and due to some misunderstanding Pakhi ends up going through the procedure instead. This track also addresses the fact that it is often very hard to condemn the wrong done to us by our loved ones. Even for accomplished professionals like Sai who is a doctor and Virat a police officer, it is something difficult to come to terms with.
4. However, rest assured the curtain has not closed on this track yet and if you've been watching the follow up episodes then you already know that Sai in her characteristic bravery and never give up attitude has certainly not stopped the search for the perpetrators who attacked her and intimidated the surrogate mother - Geeta. As a hopeful mother she has chosen to accept the pregnancy but not the means by which it was forcefully thrust upon her. She has not accepted the wrong done to her and is determined to get to the bottom of things.
5. We request you not to judge this story or our intent by what happens in a singular episode and continue to follow the fascinating tale of Sai and Virat to see how they face this life challenge going ahead. Rest assured, Star Plus will never air content that endorses wrong actions. We only endeavour to deliver to you the best-in-class content and entertainment.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

Not satisfied with the channel's response, the complainant submits:

1. Whatever be the circumstances, the surrogate cannot be changed at the last moment since the procedure was scheduled according to original surrogate's monthly cycle.
2. In the episode of 04 July 2022, the surrogate was changed at the last moment without the consent of Sai, the biological mother. Also, no legal documents were made for this so-called last-minute surrogacy
3. The father who is an IPS officer, didn't oppose this and remained silent as he always does in the show.
4. As mentioned in the channel's response, there were dialogues to lay out the correct procedure of surrogacy but at last the procedure was done with the woman who was unfit for surrogacy.
5. In the episode of 11 July 2022, the woman on whom the procedure is done tells the mother to stay away from her and repeatedly says the child is hers. I understand, sometimes the drama is exaggerated but to go to an extent of multiple illegal activities should not be allowed.
6. Are they showing that the surrogacy can be done on any women without following 'The Surrogacy Regulation Act'? Many women watch the show and such content endorses wrong action. If this was meant to create hype for the show they could have shown the family facing legal difficulties for going ahead with illegal surrogacy but they still went ahead proceed with this surrogacy.

7. In the precap of the episodes dated 12th and 13th July, it was shown that implantation was failed but in the subsequent episode they showed the pregnancy to be a complicated one. Is this the way the most reputed channel manipulates the viewers?

BCCC Decision

The Council viewed the episodes and found that the female antagonist, in keeping with her scheming nature, became the unintended surrogacy recipient of Virat and Sai's child. BCCC also felt that the doctor's behaviour in threatening Pakhi with police action for keeping everyone in the dark, while undergoing the surrogacy process, was justified and consequential in mitigating the wrong act that was done.

The Council felt the show is a work of fiction and while crime and deprecation are displayed in the context of the story, it should never be in the realm of encouragement or glorification. It should also be noted that criminal acts, when handled with sufficient care have remained components of fictional storytelling.

The Council directed the channel to be more responsive and conscious of such storylines and the irrepressible need to handle such portrayal sensitively. It was of the opinion that viewers are concerned with overall projection and any effort on part of the Council to make an intervention will subvert the intricacies of the storyline. However, the channel must also be aware of the impact that such plots/sub-plots may have on the viewers and sensitize its programming teams accordingly.

Though the Council is fully seized of the issue that channels do take creative liberties in depiction and portrayal but issues that concern sensitive topics like surrogacy must not be prolonged to hurt viewer sensibilities.

The Council felt that whatever incongruities may arise through a particular episode could not be held responsible for the entire show and **DISPOSED OF** the complaints.

APPEAL-31

CHANNEL: Star Plus

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Ghum Hai Kisi Ke Pyaar Mein', Episode 05/07/2022, 8 PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Incorrect portrayal of surrogacy

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 12 July 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 15 July 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 21 July 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

The show has been promoting abuse, regressive content and disrespecting pious relationship of brother-in-law and sister-in-law (*devar-bhabhi*).

This time they have crossed all limits by misleading people on surrogacy laws. This is happening under the nose of an IPS officer. The procedure was done with the consent of the father (an IPS officer). The surrogate got the procedure done on herself by cheating the mother and the elders of the house who said it should be punished.

Putting disclaimers for such unlawful/immoral content will not help. If the channel does not support such unlawful activities, it should not telecast or promote it.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

1. The story is going through an extremely sensitive point where Sai and Virat's relationship is once again under stress. The show being a work of fiction relies on larger-than-life drama and the featured surrogacy track is a part of it. Time and again Sai, a doctor herself and other medical professionals involved speak about the right process of surrogacy in India. Things spiral out of control when Pakhi, an established antagonist, deviously sabotages the procedure.
2. Rest assured, this is all a part of the show's creative story narrative. The curtain has not closed on the plot at all since Sai has not accepted the wrong done to her and is determined to get to the bottom of things.
3. We request you not to judge this story or our intent by what happens in a singular episode and continue to follow the fascinating tale of Sai and Virat to see how they face this life challenges. Rest assured, Star Plus will never air content that endorses wrong actions or misrepresents due process. We only endeavours to deliver to you the best-in-class content and entertainment. Upon review, this content was not found in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

Not satisfied with the channel's response, the complainant submits:

1. The channel's response is generic as they continue to show illegal surrogacy supported by an IPS officer.
2. This is wrong in so many ways. The surrogate was never a mother and manipulates an IPS officer who agrees without the consent of the real mother.
3. The surrogate mother is planning on keeping the baby although there is no contract between the family.
4. There are women facing such issues. Such content spreads wrong information.
5. This illegal surrogacy track should be stopped and the ones supporting it should be punished. Failing which, it will send wrong information that people can get away after performing such acts.

BCCC Decision

The Council viewed the episodes and found that the female antagonist, in keeping with her scheming nature, became the unintended surrogacy recipient of Virat and Sai's child. BCCC also felt that the doctor's behaviour in threatening Pakhi with police action for keeping everyone in the dark, while undergoing the surrogacy process, was justified and consequential in mitigating the wrong act that was done.

The Council felt the show is a work of fiction and while crime and deprecation are displayed in the context of the story, it should never be in the realm of encouragement or glorification. It should also be noted that criminal acts, when handled with sufficient care have remained components of fictional storytelling.

The Council directed the channel to be more responsive and conscious of such storylines and the irrepressible need to handle such portrayal sensitively. It was of the opinion that viewers are concerned with overall projection and any effort on part of the Council to make an intervention will subvert the intricacies of the storyline. However, the channel must also be aware of the impact that such plots/sub-plots may have on the viewers and sensitize its programming teams accordingly.

Though the Council is fully seized of the issue that channels do take creative liberties in depiction and portrayal but issues that concern sensitive topics like surrogacy must not be prolonged to hurt viewer sensibilities.

The Council felt that whatever incongruities may arise through a particular episode could not be held responsible for the entire show and **DISPOSED OF** the complaints.

APPEAL-32

CHANNEL: Sun TV

LANGUAGE: Tamil

PROGRAMME: 'Ethir Neechal', "Anti Swimming" series, Episode 09/06/2022, 8 PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Dialogues against Vishwakarma and Kammalar community

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 04 July 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 18 July 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 21 July 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

In the programme, jewellery workers were referred to in a very substandard way. It is requested to take action on the director V Tiruchelvan (who wrote substandard verses), the actor and the channel to protect traditional jewellery workers.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

1. We have taken note of the concerns raised by you over the content in respect of the episode and we wish to assure you that we have not telecast anything which is in any manner derogatory to the professional ethics of goldsmith or their community namely "Vishwakarma Community".
2. To provide perspective and clarity, we state that the elder brother character in the serial was giving a brief about a "goldsmith workshop" ("Nagai Pattarai" in Tamil) that he has rented/acquired for his younger brother. The scene that you are referring to shows the elder brother advising his younger brother to be very careful in the goldsmith workshop as thievery is quite common in such workshops.
3. In our view, the impugned scene/dialogue ought to be viewed in light of the circumstances surrounding it and in entirety. We state that, in fact, the dialogue is not targeted towards goldsmiths or any other occupation, but towards general occurrence in places that have valuable metals/things and it is very clear that any interpretation otherwise is only misleading and contradictory to what has been represented on screen.
4. As a responsible channel it is our endeavour to be sensitive towards the viewers and society at large, keeping in mind how our stories and narratives may impact them. Any inconvenience caused to you is unintentional and we regret the same.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

Not satisfied with the channel's response, the complainant submits:

1. They are speaking in a way that discredits our community work. What does 'kalavani' mean? It means 'thief' in our Vishwakarma society. Jewellery business is a profession that most people can opt for but the story is set in a way that denigrates the community/profession. This has created a lack of trust on us by general public.
2. The content has taken our profession in a wrong perspective and the only way is to apologize for misrepresenting the Vishwakarma profession on all news networks of Sun TV and give one lakh rupees as compensation for the loss.

BCCC's Decision

The Council was briefed that

'Kalavani' means robber or thief. The very respected Kryavin Tharkala Tamil Agarathi (Krya's current Tamil dictionary) describes the word as petty thief. There is no reference to any caste in the dialogue. Nor does it say that goldsmiths are thieves. The warning about theft is just a general comment as part of the story.

The Council accepted the Channel's submission and DISPOSED OF the Appeal.

F. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 111TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2022

APPEAL-33

CHANNEL: Star Plus

LANGUAGE:Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Ravivar with Star Parivar', 24/07/2022, 8PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: The complaint is about promotion of bottle-feeding and alleged violation of the Infant Milk Substitute (IMS) Act.

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 28 July 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 02 August 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 08 August 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

In the said programme, actor Ranbir Kapoor was shown trying to feed a baby with bottle. As per the Infant Milk Substitute (IMS) Act, promotion of milk substitutes and bottle feeding for children below two years is an offence. At a time when the Indian government with organisations like UNICEF and WHO are trying to educate about the benefits of breastfeeding, telecasting such promos/ads is not a good idea. Also, showing a celebrity trying to feed from the bottle will encourage bottle feeding and will tend to be a hurdle in government's initiative of regulating substitutes of breast feeding. A child should be fed mother's milk for at least six months. Bottle feeding doesn't give enough nutrition to the child and are prone to diseases. Therefore, it is requested to remove the said content and producer/director should be charged in violation of the IMS Act.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

1. Disney Star, being a responsible broadcaster, is extremely cautious regarding the influence our content has on our wide base of loyal viewers. The sequence highlighted in the complaint refers to actor Ranbir Kapoor's appearance on the show 'Star Ravivar'.
2. Mr. Kapoor is a soon to be expectant father and the show's hosts prompt him to polish his fatherhood skills by practising how to feed the baby. Ranbir complies and pretends to playfully feed a doll with a bottle.
3. Though being a light-hearted moment, there is absolutely no comment on breast milk vs formula milk in this entire sequence. We wish to highlight that pumping and bottle-feeding breast milk is a widely accepted practice for many new and working mother's today.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

1. It is very sad that a national channel is justifying the wrong trend. Through this broadcast, the channel is so irresponsible and has bypassed all the efforts in improving the nutritional level of the large community. From the NFHS data, it can be understood that the level of breastfeeding is still low and malnutrition is also high. Malnutrition is directly related to bottle-feeding and not breast-feeding.
2. Bottle-feeding increases the chances of infection with malnutrition and the death of the child. To prevent this, World Breastfeeding Week is also organised from 1-7 August. Along with this, the IMS Act has been brought to stop the tradition of bottle feeding.
3. About Infant Milk Substitutes (IMS) Act
 - The Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles, and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production and Supply and Distribution) Act 1992, amended in 2003, applies all over India.
 - As per the Infant Milk Substitute Act 1992, (amended in 2003), no person can advertise or take part in the promotion of infant milk and bottle feeding in any advertisement.
4. As per WHO and UNICEF, breastfeeding has tremendous positive effects:
 - Improves bonding between mother and child which ultimately improves cognitive development of the child.
 - Mother's milk has antibody which protects the baby from different infections like diarrhoea, pneumonia, asthma, ear infection etc.
5. WHO always recommends that expressed breastmilk should be fed through a bowl and spoon. It has been argued by them that it is common for working women to bottle-feed by expressing their mother's milk. This is absolutely wrong, as per the guidelines of WHO, UNICEF, MWCD, Gol, expressed mother's milk should be fed with a spoon in special circumstances.
6. By making a celebrity practice and promote bottle-feeding on a national channel, a wrong message is given to the whole country.
7. Action should be taken under Indian law (IMS and Broadcast act). Also, in the event of not removing the content, the message "bottle feeding is injurious to child health" should be directed to be added.

BCCC Decision

The Council viewed the episode. The Council felt that the sequence of bottle feeding was not being glorified or encouraged. The Council accepted the channel's submissions. The Appeal was dismissed.

APPEAL-34

CHANNEL: Sony
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: 'Pushpa Impossible', 13/07/2022, 9:30PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Derogatory words against Dhobi community.

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 02 August 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 16 August 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 16 August 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: A character in the show used derogatory words for the washerman (Dhobi) community.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

1. 'Pushpa Impossible' is a fictional show, it depicts a middle-aged woman who has studied until class 9 and is hardworking and endearingly loveable to her children. While struggling as a full-time mother and part-time businesswoman, the show explores her everyday struggles, small victories and shortcomings.
2. We would like to explain the track. Pushpa was asked to leave her house by the character Narhari Bapodra. In the show, Narhari plays the antagonist; he is a landlord who demands that Pushpa move out of the chawl or Munna will lose his shop, as Munna was involved in a shirt robbery committed by Pushpa's younger son Chirag. Pushpa decides to move out in order to save Munna. Narhari, the antagonist, uses an inappropriate term for Munna based on her decision to express his anger. Therefore, the inappropriate term was used for the character Munna and should not be attributed to any community. There was no intention whatsoever to disrespect, offend or hurt the sentiments of anyone or any community.
3. We place great emphasis on providing wholesome quality entertainment and we take care to ensure the sensibilities of our viewers are not affected. In any event, if any part of the content has affected the sensibilities of any person or community, please be rest assured that was never the intent.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

It is not the right way to protect a character who made such objectionable remarks. The channel's explanation about the show and the particular episode was good to understand but hard to digest. So, I and members of my community are not satisfied with the explanation. During the shoot, why didn't the makers understand that such scene could harm or insult the entire community?

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE NOTICE

The channel submits that:

- Pushpa Impossible is a fictional show, it depicts a middle-aged woman who has studied until class 9 and is hardworking and endearingly loveable to her children. While struggling as a full-time mother and part-time businesswoman, the show explores her everyday struggles, her small victories, and her shortcomings.

- Regarding the grievance, we would like to explain that in the show, Narhari plays the antagonist; uses the words “do kaudi ka” for the character Munna who owns a laundry shop to express his anger towards the antagonist Pushpa.
- Further, Sushila, who plays Narhari’s wife, reprimands him and calls him a villain immediately after their conversation. The words were used for the character Munna and should not be attributed to any community. The character has been part of the show for a long time, it is to be noted, that there never has been any negative or disrespectful remarks with reference to any community. The said remark was meant to be directed towards him as an individual and was used with no wrongful intent of any nature. Thus, there was no intention whatsoever to disrespect the sentiments of anyone or any community.
- We would like to state that no action for insulting any particular community can lie, unless it is demonstrated that there was a deliberate and malicious attempt to do so. The “intent” is the paramount factor in such matters. It is not every act which hurts the sentiments of someone that shall invite culpability under the Law, but only the act which is ‘intended’ to hurt the sentiments of a person or any community. It is reiterated that if the show is seen in its entirety, it cannot be said that the scene in question has been enacted with any deliberate intention of hurting the sentiments of any community. In contrast, the theme of the track depicts that the protagonist is willing to leave her house to save the character Munna.
- Furthermore, it should be noted that, in cognizance of the concerns expressed by our viewers, we proactively edited the episode. Taking into account the feedback received and respecting our viewer’s sentiments, the said dialogue was immediately removed from the episode across all platforms. Without prejudice to the foregoing, we would like to state that, we carry a disclaimer prior to the broadcast of the show, to the effect that the show is a work of fiction and that it does not intend to defame, discredit, or hurt the sentiments of any person, organization, religion, country, profession, or community.

BCCC DECISION

BCCC had issued a Notice to the channel and called it for a Hearing. At the hearing, the channel said the intention behind the usage of the phrase was not derogatory. It said the phrase was spoken by the negative character and the larger message was to show that the intent of people who use such phrases is nefarious. The character was immediately berated by his wife for the usage of the phrase as well. The channel submitted the term was used for the character Munna, who would iron clothes for the people in the ‘chawl’, and was not intended to be attributed to the entire community. The channel said the clip was immediately removed from all platforms and re-runs.

Even though the channel responded promptly, BCCC is of the view that such errors should not have occurred - especially since such usages are prohibited by law, have been banned by the Supreme Court and are not acceptable in normal parlance. BCCC cautioned the channel to be careful and sensitive about the usage of such phrases and directed it to ensure that it does not repeat/reproduce any content that diminishes the dignity of any marginalised community. BCCC felt that there was no need for the negative character to mention the name of the community at all. The Council also discussed the compelling question of artistic freedom granted to channels for depicting good and bad and was of the view that even strong counters like the one used in the

episode by other characters cannot justify the usage of unfiltered language and hence the sequence is objectionable.

The Council felt the phrase is not acceptable at all, in any manner in everyday parlance and the channel having played it on a popular channel is a serious matter. BCCC directed the channel to make its Standards and Practices (S&P) team aware of its concerns and apprise them of the repercussions of usage of such phrases on the marginalised communities and possible legal action.

BCCC directed the Channel to run an APOLOGY SCROLL, in Hindi and in English, twice during the show 'Pushpa Impossible' for one day in order to assuage the sentiments of the community.

Text of the scroll would be:

'The channel regrets the inadvertent playing of the clip on 13/07/2022 episode of the show. The channel's intention was not to hurt the sentiments of any community. The Channel assures the viewers that every care would be taken to ensure that such error does not occur in the future.'

APPEAL-35

CHANNEL: Star Plus

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: 'Promo of *Rajjo*', Star Plus

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Vulgar/Indecent dialogue in a promo

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 16 August 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 22 August 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 22 August 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

In the promo, the female protagonist says, "You said this racing competition is for women and I am a woman. There is nothing fake, you can check."

The promo is vulgar and it is not that in the absence of this dialogue any scene in the programme could have compromised. This dialogue should not be a part of a family show and should be removed.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

1. The show '*Rajjo*' is the story of a young woman from rural India who will overcome great odds to achieve her dreams. Having never stepped outside of her village *Rajjo* is unfamiliar with the ways of the world and has a very simple and unfiltered way of speaking which is normal to her, but at times can be amusing for other people.
2. The promo referenced in your complaint features a seemingly tense moment in the story when *Rajjo* arrives late for a race that she wants desperately to win. She pleads to be allowed to run, stating that she meets all qualifications for participation. Here her dialogue is intended to mean nothing beyond her saying 'please look at my candidature, I too am a woman' (who is eligible to participate in this women's only

race). Request you to view the context of this promo in a way that a simplistic village girl would communicate.

3. In her naïve manner of speaking, she makes another inadvertent joke in the very next line with a word play on “baal-bacche” (kids) and “sar par bache hue baal” (hair on one’s head). The entire back and forth is based on a series of childlike retorts with absolutely no intention to make any innuendos or obscene comments. We urge you to kindly view the whole promo and not focus on a single line which would be meaningless without taking into account the rest of the dialogues and setup. Any interpretation beyond the one offered here would be a great disservice to creative expression and intent.
4. Rest assured, as a responsible broadcaster Star Plus will never air content that objectifies or disrespects women in any manner. We only endeavour to deliver best-in-class content and entertainment to our viewers.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

Not satisfied with the channel’s explanation, the complainant finds the promo indecent and not meant for family viewing. The complainant feels that the dialogues in a running serial are still understandable but to repeatedly telecast as a programme promo is certainly beyond the understanding.

BCCC Decision

The Council viewed the promo. BCCC found nothing vulgar in it. The protagonist’s gesture was innocent and naive. The Council accepted the channel’s submissions. The Appeal was dismissed.

G. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 112TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 03 NOVEMBER 2022

APPEAL-36

CHANNEL: Sony
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: ‘The Kapil Sharma Show’
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Depiction of *Dhobi* character in the show

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 13 September 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 23 September 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 23 Sept and 8 Oct 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

There appears to be a character named *Dhobi* in the show. I, being a Chowdhary of Dhobi Samaj, Lucknow, request you to drop this casteist and insulting character from the show.

CHANNEL’S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- The said show is a comedy-focused talk-show format series. The actors and artists portray several different fictional characters to add a comic element to the narration and/or discussion for the purpose of entertainment.
- It is pertinent to note that the show does not make any references to the Dhobi community, let alone the portrayal being insulting. The character only owns a laundry, and there are no derogatory references to the character or the Dhobi community in

general. The characters, their professions and incidents depicted in the show are more of a comedic pantomime and are entirely fictitious, as stated prominently in the disclaimer that precedes the show. Therefore, there was no attempt in the show to insult or offend any community.

- Our endeavour at all times has been to ensure that the content is within the framework of the laws of India. We are sensitive to the sentiments of our viewers, and we have deep respect towards all professions and communities. We place great emphasis on providing wholesome quality entertainment and we take care to ensure the sensibilities of our viewers are not affected.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The channel's response is prototype on formal lines of defence. In this regard, we would like to submit that

- ✓ If the character is not slated to undermine the dignity of dry-cleaning community, why the character is projected as an ugly girl named Gudiya. Why not a handsome male character instead?
- ✓ The girl Gudiya represents our entire Dhobi community whose actions are exhibiting a dirty and cheap image of our daughters. Gudiya's laugh in donkey's voice is really an insult to a human being as well as the animal.
- ✓ Cheap and double-meaning dialogues like "*Mein patne ke liye Tayyar*" is said by the character in the 'Raju Srivastav special episode'. It crosses the limits of decency.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

Request to remove the character Gudiya from the show to protect the community image.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE NOTICE

- Gudiya is a fictional character who owns a laundry in the show. The humour is specific to this character. It is pertinent to note that the show does not make any reference to her surname or specify the community she belongs to. Consequently, Gudiya, the fictitious laundry owner, cannot be considered to represent the Dhobi community. Additionally, there are no derogatory references to the character or the Dhobi community in general. Furthermore, the complainant calls the character Gudiya "ugly" and questions why a handsome person is not depicted? This is extremely insensitive. As a network, we believe in inclusivity and in equal representation of every individual, irrespective of gender, looks, size and shape.
- Regarding the grievance pertaining to her actions being both cheap and dirty, the double-meaning dialogues that she uses and her laughing in a donkey's voice, we would like to point out that there is no such content or act depicted by the character that could be considered cheap or dirty. Every person is unique and has distinct characteristics. We as a network celebrate each individual's uniqueness. Unless an individual's act is offensive or indecent, it cannot be deemed dirty simply because it is not in conformity with what everyone else does.
- As a network, we have immense trust and respect in the decisions taken by BCCC, which has always complied with the given guidelines while facilitating creative thinking. We appreciate the Council's *prima facie* views that there was no attempt by the channel to denigrate any particular community as alleged in the complaint. We conclude by submitting that there is no mention of any community in the episode, nor any derogatory remarks towards any community or profession that have been made. The complaint is absolutely frivolous and baseless.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council had issued Notice to the channel in the previous meeting. BCCC considered the channel's response to the Notice. Since the word "Dhobi" wasn't used to describe the character Gudiya Laundrywali, the Council accepts the channel's submissions. The Council also took note of the language used by the Appellant. It was found to be derogatory and inappropriate for the forum.

APPEAL-37

CHANNEL: Zee Tamil
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: 'Vidhya No.1', 16/09/2022 at 8:30PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Humiliation of the character named Vidhya
The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 17 September 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 01 October 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 03 October 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The character named Vidhya is being humiliated by all characters. It discourages women and portrays them as slaves. Such tendency of the channel should be condemned. TV programmes are spreading poison among viewers and demolishing social ethics.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:
'Vidhya No. 1', is based on a girl named Vidhya who has immense wisdom. She is the main lead in the show. There are positive and negative points in the storyline when Vidhya gets secretly married to Sanjay and stays with him in his home without the knowledge of his family. At no point in the show, there was any depiction of slavery and humiliation of the characters involved. The channel ensures that we adhere to the BCCC Code and same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

Vidhya, a village girl married a rich guy of a city. Right from the beginning of her marriage, the character Vidhya is being assaulted and humiliated by her husband, mother-in-law and other family members.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

The programme should be banned.

BCCC DECISION

The Council viewed the episode. It does not find the episode to be in contravention of the BCCC Code and the self-regulating guidelines. The Council accepts the Channel's submission. The Appeal is accordingly DISMISSED.

APPEAL-38

CHANNEL: Sony
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: 'Apnapan', 16/09/2022 at 10:30PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:Defaming Hindu traditions.

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 21 September 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 04 October 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 04 October 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: In the show, they are making a joke of Indian traditions. First, they show the characterless younger cousin of the female lead getting sexually involved with her husband because of which they had to get separated 18years ago. Now after 18 years, the mother of male lead comes and wants both the leads to get re-married. All of a sudden, the characterless younger cousin also returns back and in one of the rituals of “*mouli bandhan*” where the sister of bride ties ‘*mouli*’ on the wrists of bride and groom together, she ties her hands as well with them. When asked for a solution, the priest says that the younger cousin will also have to stay together with the bride and groom when they perform all the “*roka*” rituals. Such plots are defaming and maligning the Hindu traditions.

CHANNEL’S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- ‘*Apnapan*’ is a fictitious story about a broken family, coming face to face after 15 long years, and eventually overcoming their differences to find their way to each other. After their separation, Pallavi and Nikhil have raised their children by themselves alone. But despite their best efforts, they haven’t managed to overcome the lack of the other parent in the children’s life.
- With reference to your misinterpretation of the woman’s cousin getting sexually involved with her brother-in-law, we would like to clarify that Sonali is the antagonist, trying to cause a rift between the protagonists, Nikhil and Pallavi. The scene wherein Sonali is in their room while Nikhil is asleep and Pallavi is away, she takes advantage of the situation and creates a misunderstanding between them. She misleads Pallavi into believing that she and Nikhil were having a sexual relationship, and as a result they parted ways. Hence, there were no visual references suggesting physical intimacy between them, it was just a misunderstanding created by the antagonist.
- Regarding your concern of Hindu traditions being defamed and maligned, we would like to explain the scene. At the behest of Nikhil’s unwell mother, Pallavi and Nikhil agree to remarry. Trying to ruin the celebration, Sonali ties her wrist along with Nikhil and Pallavi’s while tying the thread “*mouli*”. As everyone is in shock, the priests suggest that cutting the “*mouli*” might be a bad omen, and Sonali should only perform that puja with the couple. Every society and culture have a set of rituals and traditions that make it different from others. Important functions, events, ceremonies, festivals are marked by certain acts or a series of acts that are perceived to have a symbolic value. These are unwritten laws and norms pertaining to behaviour and action when interacting with others in the society.
- Traditions and rituals have helped in binding a society together serving as a fabric running across the social spectrum. Thereby we state that the ritual of tying the “*mouli*” depicted in the show was part of the wedding ceremonies with no intention whatsoever to disrespect the sentiments of anyone or any community. Further we carry a disclaimer prior to the broadcast of the show, stating “*This program is entirely a work of fiction. All characters, names of locations, events, cultures, procedures of law, medical procedure and practices, religious practices*

etc., portrayed in this program are purely fictitious in nature. Any resemblance is a mere coincidence.”

- We are sensitive to our viewers’ sentiments and broadcasting standards that are followed in India and have deep respect towards all religions and communities. We place great emphasis on providing wholesome quality entertainment and we take care to ensure that sensibilities of our viewers are not affected.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- In the name of “work of fiction” and “entertainment”, they cannot air such content. Work of fiction should be limited to characters, storyline and should strictly prohibit an individual from misrepresenting the societal norms/beliefs of any community.
- The Grievance Officer mentions that “every society and culture have a set of rituals and traditions that make it different from others”. If her channel knows this fact so well, why don’t we see any content and storyline at primetime that depicts a Hindu family with Hindu traditions and cultures as well as mutual respect for each other?
- Channels are maligning the Hindu community by showing negative acts and practices which are normally not practised in real life.
- If it has to be work of fiction, why not write a show any other religion for a change?

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

The show should be banned from being telecast unless rectified or deleted. Strict action should be taken for maligning Hindu traditions.

BCCC DECISION

The Council viewed the episode. It does not find the episode to be in contravention of the BCCC Code. The Council accepts the channel’s explanation. The Appeal is DISMISSED.

APPEAL-39

CHANNEL: Star Plus
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: ‘Rajjo’, 13/09/2022 at 10:30 PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Casteist remarks on underprivileged people.

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 13 September 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 29 September 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 05 October 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The show used negative words to describe underprivileged people. The dialogues targeted people from the lower castes.

CHANNEL’S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that

- The show '*Rajjo*' did not air at the date and time mentioned. However, we thank you for reaching out and appreciate the opportunity to allay your concerns.
- We reviewed a few episodes around the date range mentioned by you and found no caste reference in any episode. The show tells the story of the young Rajjo, who lives a hand-to-mouth existence in a small village with her mother. Due to an unexpected turn of events, Rajjo finds herself alone in a big city. Here she is met with a highly classist attitude of the high society household she is accidentally stuck in - that is Arjun's family.
- When Rajjo is discovered hiding in the house, Arjun's mother humiliates her. However, her tirade was limited to her flawed perception of rich and poor in our society and featured no negative words against any caste, community, or people. We request you to keep watching the show to see Rajjo triumph over her detractors.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

In the episode, the protagonist mother used very bad comments on underprivileged people which is unacceptable in this era. Such comments will affect the mindset of young people.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

Request to take necessary action against the programme writers to avoid such language in future.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE NOTICE

1. **About the show:** This is the story of Rajjo, who lives in the fictional mountain village of Neeltal with her single mom Manorama. The mother and daughter duo live a hand-to-mouth existence selling fish for subsistence, but have deep love and regard for each other. Unknown to Rajjo, her mother Manorama has a tragic past where her promising career as an athlete came to a standstill when she found herself pregnant and abandoned with a baby out of wedlock. Yet young Rajjo has inherited her mother's great athletic talent and loves to run, much to Manorama's frustration. Fate brings the businessman Arjun to Neeltal where he meets Rajjo and is astounded at her talent. Though relative strangers, Rajjo and Arjun form an unspoken bond and Arjun even rescues Rajjo from a forced marriage with a local goon. They find themselves falling for each other but have to face seemingly insurmountable opposition from their loved ones and society at large which frowns upon and discourages interclass unions.
2. **Episode Background:** Rajjo's village is destroyed by the Kedarnath floods and her mother is nowhere to be found. Desperate to find her, Rajjo makes her way to the big city where some flood victims are supposed to be hospitalized. This is her first time travelling outside her village. Intimidated by the big city where she knows no one but Arjun, Rajjo makes her way to his home. The day she lands in Arjun's house is also the day of his engagement ceremony. Not wanting to intrude, Rajjo sneaks inside Arjun's room, who is shocked to find her there. Rajjo pleads for Arjun's help who agrees to assist her, but requests that she remain hidden in his room since it will be impossible to explain her presence to his relatives and his fiancée's family.
3. **Contextual clarification for the scene:**

- The complaint references the happenings of Episode-20 where Rajjo has been living secretly inside Arjun's room for days completely unbeknownst to his family. Arjun's mother is livid at the embarrassing revelation that her son has been sharing his bedroom with another woman when he is engaged to Urvashi and the household is preparing for their nuptials. She is humiliated at this breach of trust and lashes out bitterly at everyone in the family who conspired to keep Rajjo hidden including and especially her own son, then the grandfather and even a trusted family friend who dares to intervene. Here we wish to submit that there is no undue focus on humiliating Rajjo. Everyone is a target of Madhumalti's (Arjun's mother) ire. Her anger is over the top because she has a very myopic view of this world and is blind towards the extreme privilege her own wealthy household enjoys.
- The road to success for someone like Rajjo, who is from an underprivileged social class, is often paved with barriers. She has to fight not just economic roadblocks but also stand up against societal biases. The show is a celebration of Rajjo's victory against all odds. It cannot be reasonably argued that the scene or the show in question seeks to demean her character or her background in any way. In fact, it just highlights Madhumalti's character who is reflective of the rampant and ugly biases - overcoming which is a critical part of Rajjo's journey to self-actualization.
- The episode in question is at the very beginning of Rajjo's journey in the big city, and at this point, she lacks the courage and life exposure to stand up for herself or to speak against any injustice meted out to her. Today, through the course of nearly 100 episodes, Rajjo's has found confidence and has a strong voice. She has many allies (Siya, Chirag, Swara) within the household who stand up for her when the going gets tough and is routinely found to be the voice of those who don't have any. For example, in recent episodes Rajjo is playing a leadership role for the working class employed in the rich neighbourhood she now lives in. Rajjo realizes that the *mohalla* excludes the shopkeepers, housekeepers, drivers etc. from participating in the Diwali race simply because they are not privileged residents. She schools the Thakur family on class privilege and gives a fitting reply by ensuring there is an inclusive celebration (Ep-70-71). More recently (Ep 96) when Arjun is irritated that Urvashi's wedding ceremony outfit is ruined, Rajjo once again teaches him the lesson that marriage has to mean more than material goods and that Arjun needs to shift his privileged life view leaving Arjun stunned and impressed.
- In the end, we want to state that the show holds a mirror to the deeply divided Indian society that discriminates against and treats poorly anyone who has the misfortune of being born poor. In fact, having met with such condescending and disrespectful behaviour is the lived experience of many real-life rural athletes, who represent India at national and international forums, having traversed great societal barriers to do so. The show brings forth this divide only to address the issue, but does not endorse or approve it.
- As responsible content creators and a television network with a vast footprint, we understand the impact our content has on the audiences. We reiterate that Rajjo is the 'hero' of the story and that any antagonism faced by her should not be viewed in isolation but as a part of the larger narrative. We would like to reiterate that it is important to see the intent and the objective of the show as a whole in order to fairly judge its intentions. We humbly request the esteemed Council to consider the above explanation and dispose of the complaint.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council had issued a Notice to the channel in the previous meeting. The Council found that the prolonged berating of the character Rajjo is in bad taste but it does not violate the BCCC Code. The Channel is at liberty to the storyline of their content and depict characters as they wish without conforming to the established notions. Though the outburst of the antagonist in this case did not seem plausible, but a subsequent viewing of episodes reveal that it focuses on the extant prejudices prevailing in the society based on the notion of poor and rich. The Council was of the opinion that creators need evil and villainous characters in order to start a debate on societal biases and in order to show strong and resilient protagonists overcoming them with grit and determination to take the stories forward. The Council also decided to caution the channel that such prolonged and lengthened depiction may not be entirely necessary to drive across the message of fighting unfairness and it can be kept to a minimum not to hurt viewer sensitivities. In light of the same, the Council accepted the channel's submissions and DISPOSED OF the Appeal.

APPEAL-40

CHANNEL: Star Plus
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: 'Ghum Hai Kisi Ke Pyaar Mein', 15/09/2022 at 8 PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Dangerous stunts involving child artist, wrong portrayal of adoption procedure, encouraging bigamy.

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 21 September 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 07 October 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 10 October 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

The programme is shown to promote bigamy by an IPS officer who marries a criminal who separated him and his wife. Also showing dangerous stunts with child artists without a disclaimer. The programme shows remarrying for the sake of adoption and also a criminal adopting a child which is clearly violating the law.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- We urge you to keep in mind that the show is a work of fiction and often relies on larger-than-life drama that has no basis in reality. It is not always possible to establish every small procedural detail in a fiction show with a time-limit.
- As a responsible broadcaster, we are always mindful of the impact our content has on our wide audience and always endeavour to feature various dialogues and scenes that represent laws/procedures and processes in the correct light.
- Trust us to never air content that encourages or endorses illegal conduct. The story around this track is still unfolding and we request you to be patient with its natural twists. Upon review, this content was not found in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- The channel's response is completely unacceptable since the show is clearly promoting bigamy. The man knows his legally wedded wife is alive and is still continuing to live with his second wife who is the culprit.
- The surrogacy laws were violated and no action was taken in the name of fiction.
- Now they have manipulated adoption laws by showing a woman with criminal history adopting a child. The couple was not married for two years before adoption so they have violated the adoption rules. The rules were mentioned in the show itself and now they have shown its violation.
- The show uses foul language on women where the mother-in-law calls his son's ex-wife '*Bazaar se laayi hui cheez*'.
- Such immoral storyline and illegal content in the name of fiction is highly unacceptable and derogatory.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE NOTICE

1. ***Ghum Hai Kisi key Pyaar Mein*** is a popular Indian Hindi television drama series centered around the star-crossed love story of Dr Sai and ACP Virat. Virat marries Sai to honour the promise he made to her dying father. But when his former lover re-enters his life, he finds himself pulled in many directions. The show captures the ups and downs of their lives and is presented in a romantic drama format with regular sprinklings of thrill and intrigue that a doctor or a policeman may face.
2. **Episode Background:** The show takes a leap of 6 years, and it is revealed that Dr Sai is now living in a non-descript village with her young daughter Savi where she works as a doctor and is helping to empower the women by exposing them to education and financial independence. This is not palatable to the village head who has ulterior motives. A local strongman abducts young Savi in a bid to blackmail her mother into leaving the village forever. Not one to bog down Sai tries to rescue her daughter with Virat whom fate has once again brought back to her life after years.
3. **Scene background and context:** Before dwelling on the clarification behind the stunt, we urge the Council to bear in mind that the show is a work of fiction, relying on larger-than-life drama that has little to no basis in reality. Events and incidents portrayed in the lives of its characters are decidedly hyperbolic and created solely for the purpose of entertaining and engaging the audiences and are not as such comparable with how things pan out in real life. Savi's abduction is one such dramatic point in the show.
 - To begin with, the stunt following young Savi's abduction has been shot very aesthetically with cheat shots ensuring that the child actor was not even required to be present physically for the majority of the scene. Separately and safely shot green screen shots are stitched together with the main scene during post-production (Annexure 1).
 - That said, we take great pride in our production processes and take every precaution on set to ensure that actors perform under professional and secure working conditions at all times. This includes children who do not participate in any dangerous stunt and shoot all their action sequences in a safe manner in a separate 'green screen setup' (refer to Annexure 1).

- In Episode-613, it can be clearly seen that the child actor playing Savi was not present in the outdoor stunt sequence and that (a) all her close-up and mid-shots are shot in a different location (b) the shot of a child hanging from the crane is that of an unmoving dummy and that no real child was made to participate in this stunt at all. (c) Stunt scenes in Episode-613 carry an advisory stating that the stunt “visuals were created with the help of computer-generated graphics”.
- As responsible content creators and a television network with a vast footprint, we understand the impact our content has on the audiences. We reiterate that at no point was the child actor exposed to any real physical danger during the shooting process. Request you to dismiss the complaint.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council had issued a Notice to the channel limited to the depiction of child in a dangerous stunt. The Council noted the channel’s submission that the stunt following young Savi’s abduction has been shot very aesthetically, ensuring that the child actor was not even required to be present physically for the majority of the scenes in the episode. Separately and safely shot green screen shots are stitched together with the main scene during post-production. The Council also notes that the close-up and mid-shots of the child actor are shot at a different location. The shot of a child hanging from the crane is that of an unmoving dummy and that no real child was made to participate in this stunt at all. That the stunt scene carries an advisory stating that the stunt “visuals were created with the help of computer-generated graphics.” In light of the same, BCCC accepted the channel’s submission and dismissed the Appeal.

APPEAL-41

CHANNEL: Star Plus
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: ‘Ghum Hai Kisi Ke Pyaar Mein’, 15/09/2022 at 8PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Bigamy and wrong adoption procedure

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 21 September 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 07 October 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 10 October 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: An IPS officer is shown married to another woman when the first wife is alive. That woman is a criminal and marries just to adopt a child. This is wrong.

CHANNEL’S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- The show is a work of fiction and often relies on larger -than-life drama that has no basis in reality. It is not always possible to establish every small procedural detail in a fiction show with a time limit.

- As a responsible broadcaster, we are always mindful of the impact our content has on our wide audience and always endeavour to feature various dialogues and scenes that represent laws/ procedures and processes in the correct light.
- Trust us to never air content that encourages or endorses illegal conduct. That said, the story around this track is still unfolding and we request you to be patient with its natural twists. Upon review, this content was not found in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

We are not satisfied with the channel's response. They are showing criminals not getting punished. The antagonist is treated like a queen and the victim is suffering. They show everything illegal and it's harming the audience.

BCCC DECISION

The Council viewed the episodes. It found nothing to be in contravention of the BCCC Code. The Council is of the view that ups and downs in a track and contravention of law by characters of a fictional show necessitate the progression of a storyline. The Council accepts the channel's submission. The Appeal is DISMISSED.

APPEAL-42

CHANNEL: Star Plus
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: 'Ghum Hai Kisi Ke Pyaar Mein', 15 & 26/09/2022 at 8PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Atrocities on a handicapped child, Bigamy, Illegal adoption.

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 27 September 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 07 October 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 07 October 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: Atrocities on a handicapped child continues. The child's grandmother forcefully snatches the phone from his hand leading him to fall. Also, invalid marriage to sister-in-law continues which is a criminal offense. There is emotional and verbal abuse. The show has become like 'Crime Patrol'.

Episode 612, Sept 15, 2022: An IPS officer continuing to violate the laws follows:

- **Bigamy/illegal marriage under Hindu Marriage Act:** In the show, the protagonist Dr Sai, leaves for her maternal village from her husband's house. The male lead had warned her not to return if she leaves the house. She meets with an accident where she goes missing for some years. She is alive and doesn't go back home since her husband had forbidden her to return. Her husband doesn't even make an attempt to search for his wife, Dr Sai. As per the laws of India, the spouse of the missing person can remarry after the completion of period of seven years and post a tedious and difficult court procedure of declaring Dr Sai dead. However, the IPS officer married his sister-in-law (ex-lover) well within the seven-year period and with no court procedure at all. Thereby, clearly violating the law.

He now has two wives though his second marriage is invalid. Utter disregard for morals, ethics and culture.

- **Violation of the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act and Rules:** Immediately on marrying his sister-in-law (ex-lover), he adopted a child of about 3 or 4 years old from an orphanage. However, the IPS officer in the process violated the Adoption Act and rules, since the law requires adoption post completion of two years of a stable marital relationship. A newly married couple cannot adopt a child. The show indicates that the IPS officer is married so he could adopt a child. But in reality, there was no need to marry as the law allows a single person having a family to adopt.
Very important to note that the sister-in-law whom the IPS officer married has a criminal case pending against her and was also put in the lock-up till she was granted bail. An FIR is pending against her filed by Dr. Sai for illegal surrogacy. The case cannot be withdrawn even if Dr Sai had died as the Indian law requires the case to continue against the criminal sister-in-law. Therefore, the adoption act has been violated on two counts.
- **Child artist was shown hanging from a crane:** Lastly, a child artist was shown hanging from a crane. They might have used a doll or graphics for showing the child at a higher level, but for close-up scenes it can be seen that the child was hanging from the crane. The viewers are appalled at such insensitive act of the production house and the channel. What is the need to show such ghastly scenes with a child artist on a primetime show? Also, the online episode did not even have a disclaimer. Viewers feel that even with a disclaimer it does not justify such insensitive act. In one of the earlier episodes, the IPS officer was shown pulling and dragging his child who is handicapped. Extremely insensitive content.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- The show is a work of fiction and often relies on larger-than-life drama that has no basis in reality. It is not always possible to establish every small procedural detail in a fiction show with a time limit.
- As a responsible broadcaster, we are always mindful of the impact our content has on our wide userbase audience and always endeavour to feature various dialogues and scenes that represent laws/ procedures and processes in the correct light.
- Do trust us to never air content that encourages or endorses illegal conduct. That said, the story around this track is still unfolding and we request you to be patient with its natural twists. Upon review, this content was not found in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

- The channel has strangely advised us that this show is a work of fiction that relies on larger-than-life drama with little or no basis to reality. Its sole purpose is entertaining and engaging audiences. Channel is requesting us to wait for it to conclude logically. In the same breath, Channel states Star Plus will never air content that endorse wrongful actions. So, the Channel concludes on one the hand that it is

a drama with no basis in reality and at the same time it justifies itself that it never airs content which is wrongful.

- In the last one year particularly, almost every scene and dialogue has been illogical, illegal, criminal, full of lies, physically and mentally torturous to the viewers. The show has a degrading storyline.
- I am not sure why the channel is stating that BCCC Code is not violated. Great care and sensitivity should be exercised to avoid content that is shocking or offending to the audience.
- Star India has a brilliant and promising CSR policy which seems to have been a decorative piece in some corner of their office. Hope that our appeal will be admitted and heard.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

The appellants have requested to take appropriate action in the said matter.

BCCC Decision

*The Council viewed the episodes. It finds nothing to be in contravention of the BCCC Code. The Council is of the view that ups and downs in a track and contravention of law by characters of a fictional show are necessary for the progression of a storyline. The Council notes that the disabled character Vinayak's falling was an accident and not a deliberate atrocity committed with the intention to cause physical harm. The Council accepts the Channel's submission. The Appeal is **DISMISSED**.*

APPEAL-43

CHANNEL: Zee Tamil
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: 'Kannathil Muthamittaal', 19/09/2022 at 2PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Ill-treatment of a woman.

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 19 September 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 01 October 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 12 October 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

A woman was shown to be ill-treated. In the name of punishment, they made a woman to stand on an iceberg. Such scenes should be avoided or else it may encourage others to perform such acts.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- Thirumaran and Adhira are married. Thiruman's father was against this marriage and had opposed the relationship. Earlier, a police complaint was filed against his father and Thiruman thinks that Adhira is behind the police complaint. Due to this misunderstanding, he punishes his wife. His family members take cognizance of this in the same episode, where they scolded and condemned him of his actions. Thiruman realizes his mistakes and repents for his behaviour.

- This is completely a family drama and the positive side of the story will be unfolding in the coming episodes. The channel ensures that we adhere to the BCCC Code and same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

The channel's response is unsatisfactory. I was talking about the ill-treatment of women in the serial but they have come up with an answer saying others have shown empathy and the content will be alright in future. This is not a right response.

BCCC DECISION

The Council viewed the episode. The Council is of the opinion that the show presents a reflection of societal norms. Domestic violence is rampant in our society and women face a lot of barriers to leaving the abusive household. The Council accepts the Channel's submission and cautions them against showing prolonged violence against women and to ensure only such depiction as is absolutely necessary for spreading societal awareness and proper messaging. The Council also observed that the channel needs to come out with strong counters to this women oppression in domestic households. The Appeal is, thus, DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL-44

CHANNEL: Star Pravah
LANGUAGE: Marathi
PROGRAMME: 'Rang Mazha Vegala', 8PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Child abuse and mental harassment.

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 11 October 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 20 October 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 22 October 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The story is about a dark-complexioned girl. The programme started two years back with social discrimination and instead of finishing the serial, it is being unnecessarily extended. There are two girls who are separated from their parents and are subjected to unnecessary mental harassment by two women portraying negative character. Following are the instances of child abuse:

1. Attempt to burn the child
2. Planning and plotting to stop their school education for non-payment of fees. The principal is being shown involved in such a cruel plan.
3. Framing of a child in theft case.

Since I am also an author, such child abuse is paining me. It may also impact the children who are watching such content.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- The show is a work of fiction created for entertainment alone and often features hyperbolic highs and lows in the lives of the characters that may not necessarily be true in real life.
- The show sheds light on people who face discrimination due to their skin colour and the way they handle this discrimination in their day-to-day life. This show has a very positive messaging and we request you to keep watching the show and let the story unfold in entirety.
- The references in your complaint are regarding Kartiki and Deepika, two courageous children who are being troubled by the show's antagonists Ayesha and Shweta. However, their mother, the very tenacious Deepa, always stands up for herself and her daughters and protects them from all harm. No matter what the hardship is, the children always overcome it and emerge victorious whereas the antagonists always face punishment and humiliation after being exposed.
- We would like to emphasize that Star Pravah is a responsible broadcaster, and we never intend to promote or justify any kind of discrimination or child abuse through our content. In fact, we take great pride in our characters who display bravery and courage in the face of life's difficulties.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

- The channel has replied that the hyperbolic highs and lows in the lives of characters that may not necessarily be true in real life. The appellant feels that in the name of fiction, the channel cannot show incidents like burning of a child and framing them in theft cases. Such content causes harassment to the child characters as well as the children who are watching.
- The response says that children are shown to be courageous but that doesn't mean they should be subjected to such harassment.
- The negative characters are subjecting to child abuse in order to trouble the child's mother Dipika.
- If the channel is a responsible broadcaster as it claims, it should wrap up the show and not extend it. They showed colour discrimination in the first year, separation of a family in the second year and now child abuse. They should be proper standards of fiction.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

Request to initiate an enquiry and take necessary measures

BCCC DECISION

*The Council viewed the episode. The episode was also viewed by the Marathi language expert who was of the opinion that the show had no depiction of child abuse or mental harassment in the episode. The Council accepted her review and the channel's submission. The Appeal is accordingly **DISMISSED**.*

H. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 113TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 06 JANUARY 2023

APPEAL-45

CHANNEL: Colors
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: 'Bigg Boss', 17/11/2022, 10 PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Bulling/Harassment

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 24 November 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 7 December 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 8 December 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme continuously defames a young girl. It shows bullying of an 18-year-old contestant Sumbul. The channel has been showing violence since past one week. Is physical violence allowed on national television? Also, a me-too accused person is a contestant of the show.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- The girl is an adult who voluntarily entered the Bigg Boss House and therefore, she is treated at par with others by Bigg Boss and all other housemates.
- Over the seasons, you would have observed that some contestants form close bonds with one another. Shalin and Sumbul's bond has been a point of discussion for the housemates since beginning of the show and it was spontaneous. Her father on his request, was also given an opportunity to speak to her about her behaviour on the show and guide her. He had even informed her about how her actions are being perceived by the audience and that she should play her game independently without being bothered by Shalin's opinions.
- However, Sumbul decided to continue the same approach and her role continued to revolve around Shalin, as pointed out by the housemates and the host on numerous occasions. Her father reiterated the same when a phone call was arranged between him and Sumbul on a second instance, later in the show. During this call, he elaborately explained to her how her actions are perceived and asked her to steer clear of Shalin and Tina and play her game independently and smartly. However, it is the decision of the participant as to how she plays the game.
- We would like to reiterate that Sumbul as a contestant has not been forced or pushed in any manner to do anything against her wishes. Other contestants also have the right to their opinions which were presented by them where they categorically spoke about her infatuation bordering on obsession for Shalin which was denied by her. And, the opinions of both the sides; her and other contestants, were broadcast on the channel in a neutral manner.
- As for the instance regarding physical violence mentioned in your letter, MC Stan and Shalin got into an altercation due to a misunderstanding regarding Tina Dutta's injury and soon the situation spiralled resulting in a scuffle. Adhering to regulatory guidelines, we muted all abuses and there were absolutely no shots of any contestant charging towards another with any object or that of strangulation. We retained the visuals for only 5 seconds which was necessary for contextual purposes to enable our viewers understand the situation. While there were no extensive visual of the

occurrence, we decided to retain all verbal mentions since it would have been a disservice to the viewers to completely omit all references. Please note, voting plays a pivotal part in deciding the fate of Bigg Boss participants and since viewers vote basis what they see, it was our responsibility as broadcasters to offer them a peek into what transpired. We have always strived to be authentic in our portrayals of contestants on Bigg Boss and believe that we have done so while maintaining a balance between the creative and compliance aspects.

- Please note that Bigg Boss is the flagship show of our network and given its unprecedented popularity, the channel has always ensured that due diligence is done before a season goes on air. Adult participants from different walks of life voluntarily enter the Bigg Boss house and are offered a platform to showcase their characters, talents, and skills. The show is known to give back to its contestants in manifold, be it their professional or personal lives. Every member comes with a backstory and their own ups and downs. The journey has been a life-changing experience for many contestants and time has proven that many of them turn out to be quite different from how they were perceived prior to their participation.
- We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the well-being and security of our contestants is of utmost importance to us as a channel and we scrutinize and monitor the behaviour of every contestant closely. Aberration in participants' behaviour inside the house is not allowed at all and we will take stringent measures if such situation arise.
- Kindly note that all content provided by us is compliant with the Cable TV Network Rules, 1994 and self-regulatory content guidelines while also upholding creative freedom of expression. The opinions and perspectives of our viewers are extremely valuable to us, and we would like to thank you for your unwavering support and patronage.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The appellant states that:

- Such promos and episodes cannot be justified. The host Salman Khan taking back his words about Sumbul not being obsessed with Shalin, speaks for itself that the channel is at fault in slut-shaming a girl on national television.
- The violence part cannot be justified as a separate act as the channel tried it's best to cover the acts of violence by slut shaming a girl. Salman Khan clearly said after seeing the manner in which Sumbul stopped Shalin, she looked obsessed.
- Also, a 'me too' accused, Sajid Khan, is allowed to participate in the show and he is constantly making Sumbul to justify her acts. Looks like me-too accused are allowed to character assassinate a young girl on national television.
- The channel should remove Sajid Khan and Shalin as they have some responsibility towards the women of India. The channel is trying to fix the issue by punishing the victim who is a girl rather than punishing Sajid Khan and Shalin.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

The show should be stopped immediately for dangerous content shown on television

BCCC DECISION:

BCCC viewed the episode. The contestants are all consenting adults and free to act in a manner they find appropriate and reasonable. To the greater point of the depiction of violence on the show, BCCC found it to be short and restricted to what was necessary for context. The Council noted that on two instances the 18-year-old was counselled by her father, and refused to change her behaviour. The Council also noticed that the show's format is such that it would certainly create friction and there was always this possibility of voyeuristic interaction between contestants. BCCC felt this show is aimed at a viewership that appreciates satire and conflicts arising from human relations. The results range from angry confrontations to genuine and tender connections. These reactions must, therefore, be understood in the context in which they are made without extending their meaning and seeking secondary nuances. The Council felt that Appeals arising out of depiction in the show were not maintainable and DISPOSED them OF.

APPEAL-46

<u>CHANNEL:</u>	Colors
<u>LANGUAGE:</u>	Hindi
<u>PROGRAMME:</u>	Bigg Boss, 10 & 11/11/2022 at 9:30PM
<u>NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:</u>	Violence

A notice dated 14 November 2022 was sent to the channel by complainant's lawyer. The complainant received a response from the channel through its letter dated 01 December 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC vide its letter dated 10 December 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

- The programme featured two episodes with objectionable content promoting, inciting and justifying violence and allied acts through its show which contravenes the self-regulatory guidelines of IBDF.
- In the episodes, woman contestant Archana Gautam assaults male contestant Shiv Thakre. She tries to strangulate his neck with her right hand which created a risk to his life or substantial body harm or injury. After this "violent" attempt, she also uses words like "Maar Dungi, Gaad Dungi".
- It was assumed that a strict action will be taken against Archana Gautam and a precedent will be set that violence is not a solution and will not be justified in any manner for any issue.
- In the same episode, Archana Gautam was asked to leave the show on grounds of violence. However, it was shocking to see several acts of promoting and justifying violence in the next episode on 12 November 2022.
- In the 12 November episode, host Salman Khan asks the contestant, "Who all are in favour of getting Archana Gautam back on the show?" A majority of contestants were not in favour of bringing her back but the host manipulated the contestants and got the majority to vote in favour of getting Archana back. By the said act, the host systematically and deliberately justified the violent act of Archana. Also, his statements wilfully promoted the said illegal and violent acts and gave audience a

message that violence is justified reaction to a verbal provocation. Although the makers claim that violence in the show is against the rules but the same is being promoted and justified for the sake of TRPs.

SUMMARY OF CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- There is no objectionable content where promotion, incitement and/or justification or violence has taken place by the channel or otherwise.
- The disclaimer which appears before every episode clearly states that the channel does not endorse the views, ideas, comments, opinions and statements expressed in the programme and is not liable and/or responsible for the same.
- During the 12 November episode, host Salman Khan discussed in detail the incident whereby aggression was shown by Archana Gautam towards Shiv Thakre. We state that the same has not been justified in any manner whatsoever, in fact, Salman Khan categorically told Archana Gautam that her actions were unjustified and not in consonance with the rules of the game since violence is prohibited on the show. Thereafter, he delved deeper into the incident by discussing the same with other contestants which led to various revelations. Based on the clips shown to the audience and contestants, majority of the contestants decided to rescind their earlier opinion and voted in favour of Archana re-entering the house. In fact, Shiv Thakre himself voted in favour of her entry. Neither the clips shown during the episodes, nor the contestants were manipulated to bring Archana back.
- Additionally, Salman Khan warned her that her actions were uncalled for and must not be repeated under any circumstance. It is pertinent to note that there was no physical harm *per se* and Shiv Thakre himself stated that Archana's action did not cause any bodily harm to him in any manner.
- Please note that we have always maintained the legal standards and sensitively and judiciously edited the content in case of aberration in participants' behaviour to ensure such acts are not glorified.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The appellant states that:

- The channel's response is not in consonance with the applicable guidelines and regulations of BCCC.
- The show featured at **9 PM** with all objectionable and adult content which is barred by law and can only be featured after **11 PM** as per the existing regulations.
- The aforesaid episodes are not only a single instance of objectionable content but the said channel is repeatedly featuring such illegal content on regular course of their telecast in its entire season.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

Request to initiate strict action against the channel and cease telecast of such inappropriate content which deliberately promotes, incites and justifies acts of violence along with unconditional apology to all the viewers of the show.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council viewed the episode. The depiction of violence was short and restricted to what was necessary for context. BCCC found no scenes of strangulation in the episode. The Council noted that the contestant resorting to physical violence was later eliminated from the game and brought back in the house only with the consent of the alleged victim of violence. The Council found no violation of the BCCC Code. In light of the same, the Council accepted the channel's submission and dismissed the Appeal.

APPEAL-47

CHANNEL: Star Vijay
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: Bharathi Kanamma 05/12/2022 at 9:15AM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Attempt to suicide by a child

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 7 December 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 28 December 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 30 December 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

A child threatens her parents of committing suicide by jumping from the building. The scene seems to be disturbing and sets a bad example for children who are watching. Children might imitate such acts which is not good for society.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- The story is a work of fiction and does not endorse or encourage any actions depicted.
- The featured story track is an attempt by the storyteller to highlight a societal problem and address it. We would urge your patience and understanding in allowing the story to unfold.
- We can also assure you that all challenging story tracks involving the child actor are shot aesthetically under expert supervision ensuring that the child actor is never under any real physical or emotional duress during the production process.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The appellant states that - We understand that this is totally a work of fiction and the production is done under supervision. Our main concern is that the said scene is disturbing and setting a bad example as it encourages blackmailing and suicide. It might impact children negatively.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council had issued a Notice to the channel and called it for a Hearing. In the Hearing, the language expert, said children are exposed to a lot of unwarranted and age-inappropriate content in the internet era. In a situation like this, given how impressionable children are, channels must be very careful and sensitive about the

depiction of children. Children should not be used as vessels of drama because their mental health is a much bigger problem and so less discussed about. Through such a prolonged depiction, the channel has created doubt in children's minds as they must have dwelled on this episode - rather than seeing the entire story come to a logical end in the subsequent episodes. Insensitively depicting an issue, as serious as self-harm, in a prolonged manner, is completely unwarranted and uncalled for as it has larger impact ramifications. However, the language expert also considered the fact that the programme took corrective measures immediately and showed the child being counselled by adults in the show.

At the Hearing, the channel's representatives admitted to the mistake and concurred with the Council that such prolonged depiction may have been harmful and irresponsible. They said they have already taken corrective steps on their own.

The Council was of the view that corrective measures such as counselling should be taken in the same episode, so that children who may have been exposed to the content depicting self-harm can also understand the dangers of this and learn appropriate coping mechanisms immediately. The Council also advised the channel to stay away from the negative and urged it to be more sensitive to children's needs.

The Council felt that when children become the mainstay of television content, the channels need to tread a very slippery line and must avoid any content that may impact them negatively or may be prejudicial to their mental health.

The Council took note of the corrective measures taken by the channel. The Appeal was DISMISSED with a note of caution to the channel for future depictions.

APPEAL-48

<u>CHANNEL:</u>	Star Vijay
<u>LANGUAGE:</u>	Tamil
<u>PROGRAMME:</u>	Bharathi Kanamma 01/12/2022 at 9PM
<u>NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:</u>	Attempt to suicide by a child

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 1 December 2022. The complainant received a response from the channel on 28 December 2022. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an appeal with BCCC on 30 December 2022.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

In the said programme, a child threatens to jump from the building as she intends to know the identity of her father. This may impact children who are watching and they might believe that their needs can be fulfilled by imitating such acts.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- The story is a work of fiction and does not endorse or encourage any actions depicted. At the same time, promotional videos are seldom capable of capturing the maker's intent or the story sought to be portrayed through the series itself.
- The featured story track is an attempt by the storyteller to highlight a societal problem and address it. We would urge your patience and understanding in allowing the story to unfold.
- We can also assure you that all challenging story tracks involving the child actor are shot aesthetically under expert supervision ensuring that the child actor is never under any real physical or emotional duress during the production process.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The programme shows a child attempting to jump from the building after getting influenced by others. It might impact children negatively.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

Such scenes should not be allowed.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council had issued a Notice to the channel and called it for a Hearing. In the Hearing, the language expert, said children are exposed to a lot of unwarranted and age-inappropriate content in the internet era. In a situation like this, given how impressionable children are, channels must be very careful and sensitive about the depiction of children. Children should not be used as vessels of drama because their mental health is a much bigger problem and so less discussed about. Through such a prolonged depiction, the channel has created doubt in children's minds as they must have dwelled on this episode - rather than seeing the entire story come to a logical end in the subsequent episodes. Insensitively depicting an issue, as serious as self-harm, in a prolonged manner, is completely unwarranted and uncalled for as it has larger impact ramifications. However, the language expert also considered the fact that the programme took corrective measures immediately and showed the child being counselled by adults in the show.

At the Hearing, the channel's representatives admitted to the mistake and concurred with the Council that such prolonged depiction may have been harmful and irresponsible. They said they have already taken corrective steps on their own.

The Council was of the view that corrective measures such as counselling should be taken in the same episode, so that children who may have been exposed to the content depicting self-harm can also understand the dangers of this and learn appropriate coping mechanisms immediately. The Council also advised the channel to stay away from the negative and urged it to be more sensitive to children's needs.

The Council felt that when children become the mainstay of television content, the channels need to tread a very slippery line and must avoid any content that may impact them negatively or may be prejudicial to their mental health.

The Council took note of the corrective measures taken by the channel. The Appeal was DISMISSED with a note of caution to the channel for future depictions.

I. [APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 114TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 22 FEBRUARY 2023](#)

APPEAL-49

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0049/2023 DATED 13 JANUARY 2023

<u>CHANNEL:</u>	Star Plus
<u>LANGUAGE:</u>	Hindi
<u>PROGRAMME:</u>	Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai, 27/12/2022, 9:30 PM
<u>NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:</u>	Domestic violence

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 3 January 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 9 January 2023. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an Appeal with BCCC on 13 January 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

A female protagonist, who had undergone miscarriage, was verbally abused. She was blamed for a family member's death. In this age, an educated family of doctors is calling her a bad omen. Such content is not suitable for primetime viewing. The makers should be responsible in showing quality content with focus on messaging that eventually comes out.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

- The show recently went through a critical season finale where a series of unfortunate incidents lead to the breaking down of the Akshara-Abhimanyu marriage. It is a real moment of crisis for the Birla family. They are unable to come to terms with their emotions and they end up saying and doing hurtful things to each other that are simply not right or true.
- That said, do also note that the show is a work of fiction that relies on larger-than-life drama and hyperbolic highs and lows in the lives of its characters. The curtain has not closed on this story and we request you to kindly follow the new season to see how life has panned out for its characters in the future.
- Star Plus will never air content that endorses wrong actions/behaviours and only endeavours to deliver best-in-class content and entertainment to its viewers.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- I understand the requirement of having an unreal drama, but I do not support this content on a U-PG drama that holds a brand value for family and relationships. A viewer of this show has clearly signed up for non-violent content.
- When the network or the show does not support or encourage acts like these, and the channel in its response acknowledges that such things are not right and are only a reaction of the fictional characters in grievous situation, what does it take for the channel to flash a disclaimer (warning) that clearly indicates to viewers that you are qualifying this as incorrect act and are not supporting it?
- I have stopped watching the series as the content is too regressive and offensive to the extent of violating my self-respect as a female audience due to all the misconduct and misrepresentation of the female protagonist.
- Since it is the longest running fictional show that has a large international audience, you have to be sensitive at delivering these over-the-top dramas that have legal implications in real life.
- Also, when an episode like this is aired, a trigger warning at the beginning would help viewers to select not to watch it. This is especially true for emotional content. A few episodes earlier, there was a death track that I can, from personal interactions, tell you affected a lot of your viewers as it came across out of nowhere. People relate these to their personal experiences in today's era where people mental health is clearly impacted due to effects of pandemic and isolation. It is just a better way of handling sensitive matter.
- In the subsequent communication, the appellant shares that a domestic violence scene was shown in the 22 January episode. It was shot accurately and sensitively with disclaimer. 'This is all I am expecting from the channel and production house. I do have another complaint out on another misinterpreted plot I am following through on. This is just my acknowledgement to handling it right.'

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

The appellant requests to consider the suggestions and concerns highlighted in the Appeal.

BCCC DECISION

The Council viewed the episode and found that there was no scene of explicit violence as alleged by the appellant. The Council believes that the scene was an expression of grief and every act of violence or suggestive violence cannot be painted with the same

brush. It could take away the creative liberty guaranteed to television producers in depicting storylines. The APPEAL was dismissed.

APPEAL-50

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0050/2023 DATED 16 JANUARY 2023

CHANNEL: Star Plus
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai, 22/10/2021 (episode date mentioned wrongly)
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Domestic violence

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 3 January 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 9 January 2023. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an Appeal with BCCC on 16 January 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

It is a primetime family show. They are mocking medical ethics and pregnancy. They are bringing up regressive tracks like domestic violence. The negative characters are not getting punished. The Birla family was violent towards the pregnant daughter-in-law and blamed her for all deaths in the family. They plan to get more regressive tracks by showing brother-in-law and sister-in-law marriage. It gives a wrong message to viewers.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

- The show recently went through a critical season finale where a series of unfortunate incidents lead to the breaking down of the Akshara-Abhimanyu marriage. It is a real moment of crisis for the Birla family. They are unable to come to terms with their emotions and they end up saying and doing hurtful things to each other that are simply not right or true.
- That said, do also note that the show is a work of fiction that relies on larger-than-life drama and hyperbolic highs and lows in the lives of its characters. The curtain has not closed on this story and we request you to kindly follow the new season to see how life has panned out for its characters in the future.
- Star Plus will never air content that endorses wrong actions/behaviours and only endeavours to deliver best-in-class content and entertainment to its viewers.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

Fictional shows should not create bad thoughts in people's mind. Now for TRP, they will be showing brother-in-law and sister-in-law marriage.

BCCC DECISION

The Council viewed the episode and found that there was no scene of explicit violence as alleged by the appellant. The Council believes that the scene was an expression of grief and every act of violence or suggestive violence cannot be painted with the same brush. It could take away the creative liberty guaranteed to television producers in depicting storylines. The APPEAL was dismissed.

APPEAL-51

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0051/2023 DATED 2 FEBRUARY 2023

CHANNEL: Sony
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: Punyashlok Ahilyabai, 17/11/2022
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Derogatory remarks

The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has forwarded an Appeal pertaining to the said programme.

The complainant had earlier received a response from the channel. On receipt of the Appeal, BCCC has asked the channel to file an additional response in the said matter.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

In the said episode, the comments made on Bharatpur's Maharaj Surajmal are condemnable. Maharaja Surajmal has always come out be victorious in the past even then historical facts about him are wrongly portrayed. This has hurt the sentiments of the Jat community and the followers of Maharaja Surajmal. Prior to this, similar content was shown in the film *Panipat*, due to which there were huge protest in the streets and in Parliament, subsequent to which the derogatory content was removed. Now for TRPs, the facts pertaining to Maharaja Surajmal are misrepresented which is not acceptable.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

- The programme is based on many folklores, incidents and facts based on Queen Ahilya Bai, which have been integrated into one storyline in a fictional manner. The series has received widespread appreciation for its depiction of many uncommon threads based on Ahilya Bai's life.
- The channel conducts a lot of research to depict historical figures and stories and is based on written material available to our researchers and specialists.
- Ahilya Bai's life reaches a critical juncture when her husband Khande Rao Holkar dies. According to research available with the channel, Holkar was killed when he tried to surround Maharaja Surajmal in Kumbher Fort. The conversation between Holkar and Surajmal is contextual and is reflective of the conversation when two opponents meet in a battleground. It reflects the mental state of the two opponents meeting in a battleground and does not mention any community or caste. Hence the intention was not to hurt the sentiments of any community.
- The channel has depicted that Maharaja Surajmal was not only a brave and courageous fighter, but was also kind. When he goes to meet Malhar Rao at a personal risk to his life, he expresses his condolences. He says he is against war and does not wish that more women are widowed. He announces that in remembrance to Khade Rao, he will erect an umbrella (*chhatri*) at Kumbher Fort.
- The channel also states that no community or tribe can be humiliated till the time it is depicted that such an act was done intentionally and willfully. The channel has not tried to denigrate any individual or community either intentionally or unintentionally. This programme has not been made with that intent.
- The programme begins with a disclaimer that it does not intend to hurt any individual, community, tribe, profession or religion and it is not meant to denigrate any of them.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

Same as above

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

The telecast of the programme should be stopped. There should be strict proceeding against the director and producer of the show.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE NOTICE ISSUED BY BCCC

- We have clarified that the programme, '*Punyashlok Ahilyabai*' takes inspiration from various events and facts surrounding the life of Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar and brings a dramatization of these historical events to the small screen. Without impinging on the factual narrative, some artistic licences have been taken to narrate the story in a manner to appeal to our viewers.
- The programme has received widespread appreciation for bringing to life many of the lesser-known facts about Ahilyabai. That said, we would like to clarify that extensive research is conducted by our researchers when depicting historical shows and its characters. The events depicted in the show are based on published material. The events depicted are as per the literature referred to by our team of researchers and experts, to verify all information.
- The dialogues between Khanderao Holkar and Maharaja Surajmal are contextual and meant to depict two adversaries talking about one another. These dialogues reflect the mental state of two opponents in a war-like situation and there is no reference to any community. There was no intention whatsoever to disrespect the sentiments of anyone or any community. Following Khanderao Holkar's death, we have depicted that Maharaja Surajmal was not only a courageous and brave warrior but also a kind-hearted person. Despite the danger of being killed, he visits Malharao and offers his condolences. In expressing his condolences, he offers to end the war, saying that he does not want any more bloodshed and more women to become widows. He also declared that he would build a *chhatri* near Kumbher Fort in the memory of Khanderao.
- We would like to state that no action for insulting any particular community can lie, unless it is demonstrated that there was a deliberate and malicious attempt to do so. It is not every act which hurts the sentiments of someone that shall invite culpability under the law, but only the act which is 'intended' to hurt the sentiments of a person or any community. Seen in its entirety, it is evident that the scene in question has been enacted without any malicious or deliberate intention of hurting the sentiments of any person or community.
- Further, we would like to state that, we carry a disclaimer prior to the broadcast of the show, to the effect that the it does not intend to defame, discredit, or hurt the sentiments of any person, organization, religion, country, profession, or community.
- In conclusion, we place great emphasis on providing wholesome quality entertainment and take care to ensure that the sensibilities of our viewers are not affected. Our endeavour at all times is to ensure that our content is within the framework of the law and in compliance with the Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation's Self-Regulatory Content Guidelines for Non-News & Current Affairs Television Channels.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO BCCC'S NOTICE SEEKING SOURCES

- Please find the details of the sources referred to by our team of researchers and experts for depicting the war sequence between Maharaja Surajmal and Khanderao Holkar in the programme, '*Punyashlok Ahilyabai*':
 1. *Advanced Study in Modern India's History 1707-1813*, by Jaswant Lal Mehta.
 2. *Fall of the Mughal Empire, Volume 2*, (1950) by Jadunath Sarkar.

- We would like to submit that we have created many popular historical television shows which are being cherished and applauded by our viewers. As stated earlier, our researchers conduct extensive research when depicting historical shows and their characters. While most of the events depicted in the show are based on published material, some artistic licenses have been taken to narrate the story in a manner to appeal to our viewers. The dialogues between Khanderao Holkar and Maharaja Surajmal are contextual and meant to portray two adversaries talking about one another. These dialogues reflect the mental state of two opponents in a war-like situation and there is no reference to any community. There was no intention, whatsoever, to disrespect the sentiments of anyone or any community.
- As a network, we have immense trust and respect in the decisions taken by the Hon'ble BCCC, which has always complied with the given guidelines while facilitating creative thinking. We appreciate and respect Hon'ble Council's *prima facie* view that historical storylines are open to varying interpretations and debates. Therefore, BCCC does not intervene in issues concerning historical storylines.
- We believe we have established our bonafides and earnestly request the Hon'ble Council to consider the complaint in the context we have explained and take a considerate view.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episodes and issued a Notice to the channel seeking sources on which the storyline is based. The channel cited the following sources:

1. *Advanced Study in Modern India's History 1707-1813*, by Jaswant Lal Mehta.
2. *Fall of the Mughal Empire, Volume 2 (1950)* by Jadunath Sarkar.

The channel further submitted that the events depicted in the show are based on published material and some artistic and creative licenses were taken to narrate the story in a manner to appeal the viewers. The dialogues between Khanderao Holkar and Maharaja Surajmal were contextual and meant to portray two adversaries talking about one another. These dialogues reflect the mental state of two opponents in a war-like situation and there is no reference to any community. There was no intention whatsoever to disrespect the sentiments of anyone or any community by the channel.

The Council accepted the channel's response. In keeping with its earlier stand of non-intervention in historical and mythological programmes, BCCC decided not to intervene as there could be various interpretations of history and mythology.

The Council also noted that the programme is based on thorough research and since its narrative is based on the journey of a Maratha warrior and her family, such dialogues are usually used by opponents in a war-like situation and cannot be construed as a disgrace for a particular community. The Council was also of the unanimous opinion that the making of this series is well within the framework of depiction of historical events with some artistic liberty. The Appeal was, thus, DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL-52

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0052/2023 DATED 14 FEBRUARY 2023

<u>CHANNEL:</u>	Sony
<u>LANGUAGE:</u>	Hindi
<u>PROGRAMME:</u>	Promo of web-series 'Jehanabad of Love and War' on Sony
<u>NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:</u>	Violent/gory scenes

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 31 January 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 10 February 2023. Not being satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an Appeal with BCCC on 14 February 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

The promo shows a man's head inside a bag. The promo is not only scary but horrifying as it repeats multiple times. We are forced to watch it even if we do not want to. It is mostly shown at primetime, 7 PM onwards.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

- The content of the promo is aesthetic, and the visual is a suggestive quick shot only to register the scene. Additionally, it does not contain blood or gore.
- Our endeavour is to always ensure that our content is within the framework of the law and in compliance with the Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation's Self-Regulatory Content Guidelines for Non-News & Current Affairs Television Channels.
- We place great emphasis on providing wholesome quality entertainment and we take care to ensure the sensibilities of our viewers are not affected.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

1. The said scene is not at all 'aesthetic' and full of 'gore' as it shows only a head of a man with his eyes wide open and shining. It is not at all a quick shot as I am able to give a vivid description of the scene.
2. Also, the promo with the said scene is repeated so many times in the prime hours on television that even if someone does not wish to see it they are helpless and are forced to watch it.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE NOTICE

The channel submits:

- While conducting a deeper investigation, it appears the complainant has watched the promo on **Live TV of SonyLIV**. While we simulcast content on Live TV of SonyLIV, but when the TV channel takes a commercial break, at that point, we play promos of our upcoming series on Live TV. Hence, the promo is in compliance with the guidelines of the medium in which it appeared, which, in this case, is SonyLIV.
- Further, we would like to state that SonyLIV's mechanism requires an adult to subscribe to and watch content on the platform. Additionally, we have implemented access control mechanisms, including parental lock for children.
- In view of the above, we request the Hon'ble Council to dispose of the complaint. Below is the link to the off-air recording of our channel SET at the time and date mentioned by the complainant in the attached email.

BCCC DECISION: BCCC viewed the promo and issued a Notice to the channel and called it for a HEARING. In its response, the channel submitted that it had simulcast content on Live TV of Sony LIV (channel's OTT platform). The said promo was shown on Live TV of Sony LIV when the channel took a commercial break. The channel reiterated that it was not shown on linear television.

The Council accepted the channel's response that the impugned promos was not shown on television and hence there is no ground for intervention. The Appeal was DISMISSED.

APPEAL-53 TO 64

APPEAL NO. 53 TO 64 DATED 17,18, 19,21 & 28 FEBRUARY 2023

CHANNEL: Star Plus
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: Ghum Hai Kisi Ke Pyaar Mein at 8 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Wrong portrayal of surrogacy

The complaints pertaining to the said programme were forwarded to the channel in January and February 2023. Subsequently, the complainants received a response from the channel. Not satisfied with the response, 8 complainants have filed an Appeal with BCCC.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

The complaints pertain to the surrogacy track which was discussed by BCCC in the previous meetings. BCCC had asked the channel not to prolong it. In the current track, the complainants have objected to the scenes where the characters are claiming that the surrogate mother has rights on the child and not the biological mother.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

- We urge you to keep in mind that the show is a work of fiction meant only for entertainment purposes. Even though the show often relies on larger-than-life drama, we, as a responsible broadcaster, have always endeavoured to incorporate dialogues and scenes to represent laws/procedures and processes in the correct light, in the storylines.
- We request you to consider the whole plot progression across several weeks to see a wholesome picture of the creator's intent behind this track. As an avid viewer you may be aware of the recent twist in our main characters' lives in which Virat-Pakhi's adopted child, Vinayak, is revealed to be Virat-Sai's biological son. Circumstances have once again brought the three lead characters' lives at a crossroad where both strong maternal instincts of two mothers and a child's emotions and wellbeing are at stake. We request your patience with the natural twists and turns of the story.
- Upon review, this content was not found in violation of the BCCC Code. We strive to make your viewing a pleasant one and appreciate your support and feedback. Looking forward to your continued viewership.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- From the time the surrogacy track was started, laws have been broken left right, and centre. The content shown does not affect someone who is educated and can decipher between right and wrong but people who are less educated and do not have access to information about their legal rights get influenced by such

programmes negatively or positively. Hence, the channel has the moral responsibility to show wrong being punished appropriately.

- Episode after episode, the surrogate mother is still being touted as the only mother and no one in the family corrects this statement. Surrogacy is an extremely sensitive topic; people vary around opting for this because of the insecurities the biological mother goes through and this show just bolstered those insecurities.
- The child was shown to be severely distressed to the point that he ran away from the house in search of his biological parents. The child is clearly suffering from abandonment issues and mental trauma. To keep him close to a woman who is suicidal is problematic and may cause him further stress.
- The female antagonist has also wielded a gun in the later episodes and has now given him incomplete information. That has further terrorized him. She in her fear is also keeping the child away from school and from meeting his peers. Promoting all this in the name of maternal instincts is wrong. The child is suffering from immense mental stress, so his mental and physical wellbeing is clearly at stake. In the later episodes, the same lady is shown insensitively revealing the truth to him. She tells him not to leave her for his biological mother and even manipulates him boy by telling her a story of a witch who wants to snatch him from his mother. A child of such a tender age is being played where instead of this issue being explained to him in a decent manner the lady is busy manipulating him.
- The lady is clearly suicidal and is being given a child to keep sane? How is this part of larger-than-life drama? The same channel did not give proper justice the lead, by giving the same suicidal woman the child to raise is morally wrong especially now that the truth is out that she is the illegal surrogate who not only stole an embryo but illegally implanted it and tried to get the child's mother killed.
- Even the adoption track was a joke as once again it ignored the laws.

BCCC DECISION:

BCCC had issued a Notice to channel and called it for a HEARING. In response to the Notice, the channel submitted the below explanation to the concerns raised by the appellants:

S.No	Concerns raised by the Appellant	Channel's Response
1.	From the time the surrogacy track was started, laws have been broken left right, and centre. The content shown does not affect someone who is educated and can decipher between right and wrong but people who are less educated and do not have access to information about their legal rights get influenced by such programmes negatively or positively. Hence, the channel has the moral responsibility to show wrong being punished appropriately.	We wish to clarify once again that the show has time and again laid out the right process for surrogacy through many dialogues and scenes (Ep 540 14 mins). Pakhi is initially rejected as a surrogate when the Doctors advise the family on her ineligibility due to various reasons (Ep 544, 10 mins). Later in typical hyperbolic circumstances she manages to take the opportunity to become a surrogate through deception and manipulation. These circumstances are not rooted in reality and simply cannot be duplicated in real life. Further, her actions are never shown as a happy occurrence endorsed or accepted by the characters of the show. In fact, it is a critical point that fractures Sai and Virat's relationship further. Sai takes legal

		<p>action towards both – Pakhi and Virat. Pakhi is arrested and goes to jail; her own mother condemns her actions, and she is shown to be extremely repentant and recognises the irreversible harm she has done (Ep 582 and Ep 583). Virat who was not directly involved in Pakhi's wrong actions but failed to do anything to stop them is also taken to task by his superiors and suspended from duty and reprimanded severely (Ep 584).</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Episode after episode, the surrogate mother is still being touted as the only mother and no one in the family corrects this statement. Surrogacy is an extremely sensitive topic; people vary around opting for this because of the insecurities the biological mother goes through, and this show just bolstered those insecurities.</p>	<p>After a leap of a few years, a deeply depressed Virat comes across little Venu at a children's home and decides to adopt him after forming a bond with the child. For the purpose of being a successful adoption applicant Virat marries Pakhi who wants to make it up to Virat for all the pain and suffering she has caused him. This is not a romantic marriage by any means. This is how Vinu comes to know Virat and Pakhi as his mother and father. The three of them do not have any clue about Venu's biological status or the surrogacy connection between them. Only the audiences know this. There is absolutely no narrative that shows that a surrogate has any parental rights on a baby. Due to paucity of time the adoption process and passage of time is established with the help of a montage without going into great detail. (Episode 612, 2 min and 12:30 mins)</p> <p>In recent episodes, Vinu comes to know that Sai is his biological mom and that his beloved friend Savi is his sisters. After initial confusion he has started bonding with Sai as one would with a mother (Ep 787 and 788). Even the usually harsh matriarch Bhawani supports Sai's endeavours in getting close to Vinu and wants the mother and son to be reunited and bonded. On more than one occasion she has told Pakhi to step back.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>The child was shown to be severely distressed to the point that he ran away from the house in search of his biological parents. The child is clearly suffering from abandonment issues and mental trauma. To keep him close to a woman who is suicidal is problematic and may cause him further stress.</p>	<p>One's origin story is usually hard to come to terms with for children and kids alike. Adopted children especially may react negatively or appear to be confused if revelations come to them all of a sudden. Upon learning the truth Vinu is understandably shocked and in a typical childlike reaction concocts a plan with Savi to find his real parents. He does not run away from home but decides to go to a Ramleela with Savi where they plan to display posters to find his parents (Ep 646). He has his mobile phone and knows that him and Savi going on their own is not safe. Here we want the council to note that this aspect was treated with utmost sensitivity on screen. The episodes portray a heartening and realistic child's view of the world that is turned upside down. When they are rescued, Sai is gentle and sensitive towards how he is feeling and teaches both the children that they should never leave home like that again or accept anything from strangers (Ep 647, 15 mins). She even helps him reconcile with Virat and Pakhi. In later episodes we see that Sai has moved back to Chavan house and</p>

		<p>is trying to form a real bond with Vinu without forcing him to accept her as his mother (Ep 788). In a heartening scene we see Sai helps Vinu repair a broken project and explains how even when we think everything is ruined, it can still be put back together and become even more beautiful (Ep 736, 7 min and Ep 738). In their appeal the complainant has mixed up track timelines and events in an effort to make things appear worse than they are. At the time Vinu decides to find his real parents Pakhi is not suicidal or acting out at all. This happens several episodes later due to different reasons.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>The female antagonist has also wielded a gun in the later episodes and has now given him incomplete information. That has further terrorized him. She in her fear is also keeping the child away from school and from meeting his peers. Promoting all this in the name of maternal instincts is wrong. The child is suffering from immense mental stress, so his mental and physical wellbeing is clearly at stake. In the later episodes, the same lady is shown insensitively revealing the truth to him. She tells him not to leave her for his biological mother and even manipulates him boy by telling her a story of a witch who wants to snatch him from his mother. A child of such a tender age is being played where instead of this issue being explained to him in a decent manner the lady is busy manipulating him.</p>	<p>Despite the fact Pakhi is the main antagonist of the show, her character is simply not black and white and has many shades of grey. While life has not dealt her a fair hand, she too has taken many bad decisions that have caused her a world of hurt and guilt. In her eyes, the opportunity to adopt Vinu and become a mom was her chance at redemption and she has been a loving and kind mother to Vinu ever since. She had no clue he was the child she carried as a surrogate. On Sai's re-entry Pakhi's old insecurities bubble up again and the idea that Vinu may leave her is deeply upsetting to her. She takes many drastic actions, and they are portrayed as reactions of an unstable person and not endorsed as maternal instinct in any manner. Her wielding a gun or threatening self-harm are last ditch efforts and never take place in front of the child. The narrative of the show goes out of its way to prove that it is always Sai who has Vinu's best interest in mind, unlike Pakhi her motherhood is not selfish and that she is willing to give young Vinu the time to love and accept her. Whereas Pakhi is impatient and self-absorbed. As a result, Vinu has once again started forming a bond with Sai and looks up to her. He wants to grow up to be a doctor like his biological mom and trusts and respects her (Ep 794).</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>The lady is clearly suicidal and is being given a child to keep sane? How is this part of larger-than-life drama? The same channel did not give proper justice the lead, by giving the same suicidal woman the child to raise is morally wrong especially now that the truth is out that she is the illegal surrogate who not only stole an embryo but illegally implanted it and tried to get the child's mother killed.</p>	<p>Even though Pakhi is fraught with worry and having panic attacks about losing Vinu, Vinu and Sai are already shown growing the undeniable bond of a mother and son. Pakhi may be Vinu's adoptive mother, yet the narrative of the show makes it crystal clear that it is Sai who repeatedly acts in the best interest of the child and allows him time to accept and love her. Their journey has just started, and Vinu is bonding more and more with his bio mom and best friend cum sister every day.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Even the adoption track was a joke as once again it ignored the laws.</p>	<p>Explanation submitted in point 1 above</p>

Additionally, the channel's representatives in the Hearing suggested that they have/ had taken rightful actions from time to time. The complainants continue to refer to the past plots/tracks which have evolved over time. There have been fan wars and propaganda on social media regarding the storyline for which the channel representatives are publicly targeted and harassed. The spat of complaints appear to be orchestrated online and feature identical writeups being sent by a few email addresses repeatedly in an attempt to create a sense of false emergency. The channel feels viewers are taking the storyline way too personally since they do not like the antagonist and they wish to see Sai and Virat together.

The channel further submits that in fictional shows every story takes time to evolve and this, too, shall have a rightful ending but commenting on it would be preposterous.

BCCC understands that for the good to win over the evil, channels have to depict characters doing evil deeds. The Council noted that there have been characters in the show either condemning the wrong or sympathising with the biological mother Sai.

BCCC was of the view that there have been instances in fictional programmes where the content may not seem to be accurate/factual but that it the beauty of a fictional programme. The channel is at complete liberty to show beginnings, ends or story plots in keeping with the creative rendition not on the basis of audience preferences. The Council decided not to interfere with the creative freedom guaranteed to channels specifically as far as fiction is concerned and there cannot be an immediate gratification in such programmes which run over a period of time.

In view of the above, the Appeals were DISMISSED.

J. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 115TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 23 March 2023

APPEAL- 65

APPEAL NO. BCCC/65/2023 DATED 09 MARCH 2023

CHANNEL: Sony
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: "Crime Patrol" on 27 December 2022
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Change of caste/religion of characters

The complaint was filed with the channel on 27 December 2022. Since there was no response from the channel the appellant filed an Appeal with BCCC

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

The religion of the characters shown in the episode are highly objectionable. Since the show is based on real life incidents, the appellant seeks the following information:

- Reference of case on which this episode was shot
- Full details of all characters (name, caste, etc) shown in this episode
- Reasons of changes in name/community/ religion in characters names

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The appellant submits that there was no response from the channel

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The appellant has forwarded the above grievance to BCCC, since there was no response from the channel.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

Request to take necessary action against the channel for non-compliance of grievances sent by the appellant. Kindly instruct them to provide the information on priority.

BCCC DECISION: The Council opined that there is no complaint *per se*. The appellant has tried to link an episode to a real-life incident and has sought details about a particular episode. BCCC was of the view that the appeal is outside the scope of BCCC. The Council cannot ferret information from the channel and provide it to the appellant. **The Appeal was DISMISSED.**

APPEAL- 66

APPEAL NO. BCCC/66/2023 DATED 16 MARCH 2023

CHANNEL: Sony Sab
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: 'Ali Baba Daastan E Kaabul' on 15 February 2023
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Incomplete Map of India

The complaint was forwarded to the channel on 14 March 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 16 March 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant has filed an Appeal with BCCC on 16 March 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: At the end of the show, an incomplete Map of India was shown. The top part was covered with clouds. This seems to be a propaganda by the makers for not showing the full Map. If they wish to show the map, it should be complete and not half.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that the map referred to, is the logo of the Production House - Peninsula Pictures'. Peninsula Pictures Pvt Ltd has registered the logo as a trademark under the Trademarks Act.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The appellant submits:

- The channel in its response mentions that Peninsula Picture Pvt Ltd has registered the logo but how can map of India be a logo of a private company? Also, the northern region of our country is hidden which leads to a lot of suspicion.
- As per my view, no one can misuse the Indian map for their personal/commercial purpose. Kindly ask the production house to show the full map.
- Any such thing that affects the integrity of our country should not be shown. No one should be allowed to use any symbol of our country. If we allow such things now, then in future someone else will come up with some other agenda/ logo/ content, the same thing will happen again.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

In the interest of our country, please ask the production house to either remove the logo from the programme or show the full map of India.

BCCC DECISION:

BCCC admitted the complaint and viewed the logo of Peninsula Pictures shown after the programme. The logo has been authorised under the trademark's registration by the Government of India. The Council was of the view that this does not come under the mandate of BCCC and the appellant can approach the appropriate authority. On perusal of the logo, the Council also noted that in keeping with the name Peninsula, the logo had depicted the peninsula and it was not Kashmir or other northern parts that were missing from the logo but almost half of India was missing.

The Appeal was DISMISSED.

K. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 116TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 27 JUNE 2023

APPEAL- 67

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0067/2023 DATED 28 MARCH 2023

CHANNEL: Sony
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: Promo of 'Katha Ankahee', 8:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Objectionable dialogues

The complaint was sent to the channel on 20 March 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 28 March 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC on 28 March 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

In the promo, the lead actor offers money to his employee (female protagonist) to spend a night with him in a hotel. The dialogue in the promo is unacceptable. Similar content was shown earlier as well.

While we are watching family shows like *Ahilya Bai*, promos like these appear in between. Our children are asking questions about such dialogues. What should we tell them?

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

1. We would like to begin by stating that, 'Kathaa Ankahee' is an Indian adaptation of the Turkish show 'Binbir Gece -1001 Nights'. It depicts the struggle of a mother, Katha, who needs funds for her son's medical treatment. She comes across Viaan, who offers help, but his conditions put her in an awkward situation.
2. To address your grievance, we would like to state that in the show when Katha approaches her boss Viaan for a loan, who is unaware of the medical emergency she is dealing with, he is taken aback by the request for such a large sum. Viaan also has a past trauma due to which he has angst towards women. That being said, we have depicted that in the due course of time, Viaan starts to feel anxious and guilty about his act and profusely apologises to Katha. Katha reprimands him and asserts that he should not feel guilty only because she is a mother, but rather apologize for his conduct towards women in general. Through the course of the story, Viaan was shown to incorporate new provisions to improve the working conditions for women and respecting them.
3. The said promo is a trap by Shamita an employee in Viaan's office who falsely accused him. The promo reveals the twist in the story, a moment of shock for Katha, who had finally forgiven Viaan for his action-driven apology. Nevertheless, the upcoming episodes will show Katha's dilemma in handling the complaint and how

she serves justice. Further we would like to state that the language/words used in the promo, or the content of the show, are suggestive and cannot be deemed inappropriate. Therefore, in conclusion the show depicts how a woman changes a man's perspective and leads the company to change its policies.

4. We place great emphasis on providing wholesome quality entertainment and we take care to ensure that the sensibilities of our viewers are not affected.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- Why use such rubbish dialogues in the promo? By inserting such dialogues, it appears the programme is built around one-night stand.
- Why does the channel unnecessarily push the promo at primetime? Why can't such unacceptable promos be shown after 10 PM when children go to bed?
- Earlier, they aired promo of *College Romance*, and now this. It appears to be vulgar and a TRP game to sell anything for business. What and why should we answer our children for such vulgar business?

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

Kindly stop such unacceptable promos to be broadcast before 10 PM.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO BCCC'S NOTICE:

1. We would like to begin by explaining the premise of the show, '*Kathaa Ankahee*' is an Indian adaptation of the Turkish show '*Binbir Gece - 1001 Nights*'. It depicts the struggle of a mother 'Katha', who is in need of funds for her son's treatment. She comes across Viaan, who offers help, but his conditions put her in an awkward situation.
2. The show's theme revolves around the character Viaan, who suffers from angst towards women because of a past trauma. His difficulty in trusting women makes him feel intimidated when Katha approaches him asking for a loan. Unaware of the medical emergency she is experiencing, he decides to test her. That being said, the dialogue used in the promo "*Ek raat bitani padegi*" is neither explicit nor indecent. They are suggestive, indirect and have been edited appropriately for the promo.
3. As seen in context, the visuals, the setup of the scene, and the dialogue have not been reduced to innuendo for it to be deemed inappropriate. We would like to humbly submit to the Hon'ble Council that we are extremely conscious of the content aired on our Network and the viewer feedback received. Although the promos are intended to pique viewer interest in the show, we are careful to avoid offending the sensibilities of viewers and violating any rules or regulations.
4. Furthermore, in the show we've depicted the journey of a woman, Katha, fighting against all odds to save her child and at the same time she reprimands Viaan and asserts that he should not feel guilty only because she is a mother, but rather apologize for his conduct towards women in general. Through the course of the story, Viaan was shown to incorporate new provisions to improve working conditions for women and respect them.
5. Therefore, in conclusion the show depicts how a woman changes the perspective of a man and leads the company to change its policies. In light of the above, we request that the complaint be dismissed.

BCCC DECISION: The Council had issued a Notice to the channel in its last meeting. In its reply, the channel stated that '*Kathaa Ankahee*' is an Indian adaptation of the Turkish show '*Binbir Gece - 1001 Nights*'. It is based on the resilience of a single mother 'Katha' who alone fights to get her son treated for a complicated medical

problem. She suffers financial hardships and challenges and when she comes across an awkward moment where the male protagonist offers her money to spend the night with him. She stands up and reprimands the male character for his temerity and impertinence.

The Council felt that the channel should have refrained from using such lines in the promos as it paints a very different picture of the impending content of the programme and advised the channel against using content bordering on obscenity. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 68

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0068/2023 DATED 15 APRIL 2023

CHANNEL: Sun TV
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: 'Vanathapola' on 27/03/2023 at 8 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Violent content

The complaint was sent to the channel on 31 March 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 10 April 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC on 15 April 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

The programme contains violence. It gives immoral and provocative message to the people.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

1. We have taken note of the concerns raised by you over the content of the series. We value the opinion and input of our esteemed viewers. At the outset, it is submitted that all allegations that are levelled in the complaint are denied, and nothing should be deemed to be accepted for want of specific denial. Sun TV has taken note of the concerns raised by you over the content in respect to the series. However, the same cannot be construed to be considered a content violation. The channel values the opinions, input, and feedback of its viewers and works towards aligning its operations with the tenable feedback it receives.
2. The content broadcast fully adheres to the laws and regulations in place, and does not contain any explicit or implicit messages promoting violence, immorality, or illegal judgments that could be perceived as inciting the general public.
3. Additionally, the content of the series complies with the Cable TV Networks Regulation Act, 1995, as amended by the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994, which includes the Programme Code and other prescribed standards of ethical journalism. Our channel is part of a responsible broadcasting network and remains committed to adhering to the law of the land. We state that the channel has not violated any of the provisions of the Rules while airing the series, including but not limited to the Programme Code.
4. As a responsible Channel, it is our endeavor to be sensitive towards the viewers and society at large keeping in mind how our stories and narratives may impact them.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

My concern is about the characters playing in the series. It shows favouritism for the lead casts irrespective of their crime. It provokes others to get involved in such criminal

activities. For instance, Tulasi was shown to be burning Vetri alive and hiding the crime for escaping the punishment. Don't you think it is favouritism and injustice to the victim Vetri? The content is provocative and cannot be digested.

BCCC DECISION: The Council referred the Appeal to the language expert. She viewed the episode and suggested to the Council that Komathy and her daughter (married to Vetri) accuse Thulasi, Rajapandi and his parents of having murdered Vetri. Thulasi says she has nothing to say on the matter. Poorni is the sister of Vetri who also wants to know if he is alive. She agrees to assist Komathy and her daughter in finding the truth. Earlier enmity between Vetri and Thulasi and Rajapandi is hinted at in this episode. The police refuse to act on the matter without evidence.

There are no visuals in this episode about Vetri being burnt alive and hiding of the crime for escaping the punishment. As of now in the programme it remains unclear if Vetri is a victim.

In the light of the above, the Council decided to DISPOSE OF the Appeal.

APPEAL- 69

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0069/2023 DATED 19 APRIL 2023

<u>CHANNEL:</u>	Star Plus
<u>LANGUAGE:</u>	Hindi
<u>PROGRAMME:</u>	'Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai', 07/04/2023
<u>NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:</u>	Disrespecting women. Hurting religious sentiments.

The complaint was sent to the channel on 10 April 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 19 April 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC on 19 April 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

- Marriage between the characters Abhimanyu and Arohi might be legally acceptable but it is morally disgusting. The inorganic bond they are forcing between Akshara and Abhinav insinuates that a woman once ritually bound to a marriage has to offer herself to her husband in all forms, mind, body, and soul without her proper consent. The scenes suggest forceful sexual initiation by a woman just after the husband ties *mangalsutra* and applies *sindoor*.
- The mockery of religious sentiments by comparing the lead characters Akshara-Abhimanyu to Shiv-Parvati, while also constantly humiliating their relations, is hurtful and absolute unnecessary.
- The insinuation that a woman who is abandoned by her family and husband needs a man to survive as the society will not accept her raising her child by herself is demeaning.
- The message projected to the audience through their narration suggests that a person can be considered a bad omen and be humiliated for the same, time and again. The triggering scenes of subtle narcissistic manipulation termed as "*achchai*" (goodness) is very problematic.
- This is a primetime show aired on national TV, influencing the majority of the population. These problematic themes can influence the minds of the viewers to initiate violence, manipulation and unwanted sexual advances towards their partners. The constant lying promoted in this series suggests that a person can get

away with any sort of wrong wrongdoing without consequences. Characters/women in this series like Arohi, Mahima, Manjari, Akshara, Shefali, Swarna are represented as selfish, dumb horrible women who become the reason for the misery of other characters. The constant downfall of these women characters in specific suggest a misogynist theme in writing.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

1. As an avid viewer, you already know of the unfortunate circumstances that led to the breakup of the Akshara-Abhimanyu marriage at the end of Season 1. Akshara eventually gives birth to her and Abhimanyu's son, and only decides to stay with Abhinav to give her son a chance at having a normal family life. We request that you consider the whole plot progression across several weeks in order to get a wholesome picture of the creator's intent behind this track. In no way does the show endorse the breakdown of marriages or resorting to divorce or that misdeeds go unpunished. That said, do also note that the show is a work of fiction that relies on larger-than-life drama and hyperbolic highs and lows in the lives of its characters. The same is not true for real life and is not comparable as such. We request your patience with the story's natural twists and turns.
2. As a responsible broadcaster, Star Plus will never air content that endorses wrong actions or behaviours. We only endeavour to deliver best-in-class content and entertainment to our viewers. Upon review, this content was not found to be in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The complainant is not satisfied with the channel's response and has forwarded the same complaint as an appeal.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

It is requested to take severe action against the production house.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episodes and found that the story being a work of fiction showcases the journey of Akshara and Abhimanyu and their marriage ending due to an unfortunate incident. The Council felt the progression of the story has taken place due to the introduction of a new character, Abhinav, who is shown to be supporting Akshara. The Council felt the content reflects the creative dilemma and does not glorify women insubordination or denigrate women. Intervention of any kind in the storylines would amount to dictating storylines to the channel which the Council refrains from doing.

Keeping the creative liberty guaranteed to rendition of programmes in mind, the Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 70

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0070/2023 DATED 20 APRIL 2023

<u>CHANNEL:</u>	Sony
<u>LANGUAGE:</u>	Hindi
<u>PROGRAMME:</u>	<i>Indian Idol</i>
<u>NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:</u>	Disrespect towards religion

The complaint was made to MIB and the channel. The complainant received a response from the channel on 23 March 2023 and previously on 27/08/2021. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC through its letter of 20 April 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

- In 2021, the appellant had complained to MIB that in the show's Season 12, a shawl was placed on the legs of a sitar player which had words "Bhagwan Shri Ram" and "Satya, Karuna and Prem" written on it. The channel had accepted the same in its letter of 23/08/2021, saying that the objective of keeping the shawl on the lap is to give support to the instrument. Similarly, the channel accepted the same in its another letter of 23/03/2023.
- The appellant says that no sitar player keeps the sitar on his lap. It is always placed on the side of sitar player's lap.
- The shawl is placed on the lap in such a manner that the name of Lord Ram written on the shawl and words like "Satya, Karuna and Prem" can be seen on the feet of the sitar player. This hurts our religious sentiments.
- The channel removed the name of Lord Ram after the complaint which was made in the 12th season in 2021, but the words "Satya, Karuna and Prem" are still there in the 13th season. This proved that the objection raised by me was correct.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

- Indian Idol is one of the most popular reality shows and is currently running its 13th season. This programme strives to bring the most talented singers throughout the country for the viewers. The objective of the programme is to bring out talent from various parts of the country for which the show is often praised.
- Sitar is considered as a prominent and respected musical instrument of ancient India. As popular sitarist Pandit Ravi Shankar once said, "In the Indian culture all the musical instruments are given a place equivalent to God and are highly respected." Every sitarist has their own style of holding the instrument. In the said episode of season 12, the sitar player is sitting on the floor and keeps the sitar on his lap. He is a big devotee of Lord Ram and always keeps a shawl with him which has the name of *Bhagwan Shree Ram* written on it.
- The sitar player played the sitar on a spiritual song, hence he kept the shawl on his lap. He usually does so in all his performances, especially spiritual ones. The motive behind keeping the shawl on his lap was to take the blessings of Lord Ram and not to disrespect the deity or the religious sentiments of the community.
- In Season 12, the shawl does not have the name of Lord Ram but it has words "Satya, Karuna and Prem" written on it which is a notion of his personal life.
- We strive to bring good quality entertainment and keep in mind the sensitivity of our viewers.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- In 2021, the appellant had complained to MIB that in the Season 12 of the show, a shawl was placed on the legs of a sitar player which had words "Bhagwan Shri Ram" and "Satya, Karuna and Prem" written on it. The channel had accepted the same in its letter of 23/08/2021 saying that the objective of keeping the shawl on the lap is to give support to the instrument. Similarly, the channel accepted the same in its another letter of 23/03/2023.
- The appellant says no sitar player keeps the sitar on his lap. Sitar is always placed on the side of the player's lap. The shawl is so placed on the lap that the name of

Lord Ram written on the shawl and words like “Satya, Karuna and Prem” can be seen on the feet of the Sitar player. This hurts our religious sentiments.

- The channel removed Lord Ram’s name after the complaint, which was made in the 12th season in 2021, but the words “Satya, Karuna and Prem” are still there in the 13th season. The appellant says this proves that the objection raised by him was correct.

CHANNEL’S RESPONSE TO BCCC’S NOTICE:

1. In our opinion, placing the shawl on the lap that has the name of Lord Ram and words such as ‘Satya’, ‘Karuna’, and ‘Prem’ cannot be viewed as disrespectful when the intent is pure devotion towards Lord Ram, by an ardent follower of Lord Ram.
2. The shawl is used by the musician while playing the Sitar which is regarded as one of the key instruments of ancient India, occupying the place of pride in Indian musical instruments. As said by the famous sitarist ‘Pandit Ravi Shankar’, in Indian culture there is a lot of respect and high regard for all musical instruments as they are regarded as part of God. The sitarist is an ardent follower of Lord Ram and hence always carries this shawl with him to seek Lord Ram’s blessings during the performance. Therefore, in determining whether an action or gesture hurts the sentiments of any individual(s), one must ensure that the allegedly offensive creation is seen and evaluated in its proper context.
3. It is also noteworthy that, no action for insulting religious beliefs can be justified unless it is demonstrated that there was a deliberate and malicious attempt to do so. The "intent" is the paramount factor in such matters, and the intent here was never to disrespect, or offend the sentiments of any person. In fact, the emotion behind the act was devotion towards Lord Ram, by an ardent devotee of Lord Ram. While the portrayal in Season 12 was not incorrect either, we take serious note of our viewers' feedback and are sensitive to their sentiments, and therefore in season 13 we advised the musician accordingly.
4. As a Network we have immense trust and respect in the decisions taken by the BCCC, which has always complied with the given guidelines while facilitating creative thinking and thus request the Hon’ble Council to dismiss the complaint taking the intent into consideration.

BCCC DECISION: BCCC had issued a Notice to the channel in its last meeting. In its reply, the channel said that placing the shawl on the lap which has words such as ‘Satya’, ‘Karuna’, and ‘Prem’ cannot be viewed as disrespectful when the intent is pure devotion towards Lord Ram by an ardent follower of Lord Ram. The sitarist, Bhagirath Bhatt is an ardent follower of Lord Ram and hence always carries this shawl with him to seek Lord Ram's blessings during the performance.

The Council was convinced with the channel’s explanation and, also the fact that in the next season of the same programme, the channel did not repeat the same. The Council also felt that in determining whether an action or gesture hurts the sentiments of any individual, one must consider and evaluate the said content in entirety. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 71

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0071/2023 DATED 02 MAY 2023

CHANNEL:

Colors Kannada

LANGUAGE: Kannada
PROGRAMME: 'Gicchi Giligili' on 16/04/2023 at 9 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Disrespect towards religion

The complaint was sent to the channel on 19 April 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 02 May 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC on 02 May 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme showed a skit on Mahabharatha. The performance appeared to be a mockery of the characters of Mahabharata. This can affect our younger generation. Such skits damage our religion and should be reviewed before telecast. The performers and the judges should apologize for the same.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

1. In the instance mentioned, a mythological skit is staged by contestants and newcomers for purely entertainment purposes, and we ensured that no book or character is demeaned. The visuals and dialogues portrayed the comedy of errors that ensue when non-actors act in a drama.
2. Before the skit, the anchor clearly explains the circumstances under which the skit is being performed; the actors have escaped fooling the director and now the technicians are staging the play. As with most novice actors, there are errors, missed dialogues, mispronounced words and lack of seriousness leading to confusion and guffaws. While the scene embodied physical humour, which is a commonly used device for inducing laughter and lightening a situation, you would appreciate that at no point of time is there any disparaging comment about any mythological story or character.
3. Further, once the skit concludes, the director rebukes the performers and clearly says that playing mythological characters is no mean feat and must not be taken lightly. The judges too, while commenting on the performance, express their respect and admiration towards mythological books.
4. We would like to state that, as a responsible channel, we always respect the tradition and values of our nation and uphold them. Further, keeping in mind the sensibilities of our viewers we refrain from demeaning any religion, caste, community, scriptures, or characters on all accounts.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- The great *Mahabharata* is not just a mythological story or book. It is a *mahakavya* of India. It is respected, worshipped and followed all around the world. Being Indian it is shameful for mocking the characters of the great *mahakavya*.
- If you really want to make a skit on *Mahabharatha*, kindly don't convert serious situations into comedy. It doesn't give a good message to the younger generation.
- As for the part where the whole "Draupadi *vastraharan*" was shown as a comedy scene, does the channel not know that the battle of Kurukshetra happened just because of it. Being a big TV channel, you should be ashamed of broadcasting such a comedy skit. If they were newcomers, will they imitate one another's family situation into comedy skit in front of the world? If they all are newcomers, they should be first educated about the impact of such acts.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

The performers and the judges should apologize for the act.

BCCC DECISION: The Council referred the complaint to the Language Expert, who suggested that the skit resembles the situational comedy scene of the *Mahabharata* from the cult Hindi film 'Jaane Bhi Do Yaaron'. The Council felt there have been imitations of the same scene in various comedy shows and the judges or the contestants were not disparaging in any comment whatsoever made on the epic *Mahabharata*. The Council decided to DISPOSE of the APPEAL.

APPEAL- 72

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0072/2023 DATED 24 MAY 2023

CHANNEL: Asianet
LANGUAGE: Malayalam
PROGRAMME: Bigg Boss 5 on 17/04/2023 at 9:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Smoking visuals

The complaint was sent to the channel on 19 April 2023. The complainant didn't receive a response from the channel and filed an Appeal with BCCC on 24 May 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

Smoking visuals can be seen in the programme. It is a reality show watched by many children. Such scenes set a wrong example and normalize smoking. Since usage of drugs is high in this era, such visuals, especially in a TV reality show, must be banned.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The complainant didn't receive a response from the channel and informed the BCCC

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel responded to the appellant after he lodged an appeal with BCCC. The channel submitted:

- *Bigg Boss* is a reality show and all views and actions expressed in this programme are independent views of the respective participants and they do not necessarily reflect the channel's views. Please note that the channel never endorses or encourages, activities like smoking and hence a health advisory cautioning viewers that - Smoking Causes Cancer - has always been posted during scenes that may incidentally carrying smoking visuals. Smoking is not allowed in the common areas in the house and there is a designated room for individuals to exercise this option.
- Asianet is a responsible broadcaster, and we are always cautious with regards to the impact our content has on our wide base of loyal viewers. Upon review, the content referenced in your complaint was not found in violation of the BCCC Code.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episodes and found that every time a smoking scene was shown, the mandatory disclaimer, as envisaged under the COTPA, was displayed. However, the Council decided to ask the channel to be more careful and air less smoking scenes even though they were compliant of the Act. The APPEAL was DISPOSED of.

L. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 117TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2023

APPEAL- 73

73. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0073/2023 DATED 28 JUNE 2023

CHANNEL: Colors Marathi
LANGUAGE: Marathi
PROGRAMME: Bhagya Dile Tu Mala, 15/06/2023
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Sexual content

The complaint was sent to the channel on 16 June 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 28 June 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC on 28 June 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

The episode showed a sexually intimate scene in a family programme. What is the motive of the makers in showing such scenes?

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

1. We would like to inform you that the track mentioned in your communication has been shown to depict the depth of connections between individuals and to further the narrative. Being mindful of the regulations and in order to ensure compliance in all our tracks, we have used only suggestive shots and dialogues to editorially justify the scene and they are retained only for a shorter duration, just enough for the audience to register the plot.
2. The highlight of the storyline is only to establish the evolving dynamics and emotional graph of the relationship between the characters.
3. Kindly note that all content provided by us is compliant with the CABLE TV Network Rules, 1994 and self-regulatory content guidelines while also upholding creative freedom of expression.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

1. I am not satisfied with the channel's response. As per them, a sexually intimate scene was shown to depict depth of connection between two individuals and telecast of such scene was their right to freedom of expression. Is there no other way to show bond between two individuals? In its response, the channel does not accept that they were wrong in showing such scene in a family show.
2. Being a regular viewer of this family show, what message should I share with my children who watch the show with us? Shall I believe that sexually intimate scenes are part of freedom of expression? Being a viewer, we want quality content. I hope you understand our point of view.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episode and found that the alleged romantic scene complained against aesthetically shown without vulgarity and obscenity. The Council did not find any merit in the complaint that the programme had gone overboard in titillating the viewers. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 74

74. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0074/2023 DATED 01 JULY 2023

CHANNEL: ETV Bal Bharat
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: *Detective Conan*, 17/06/2023
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Violent content in children's programme

The complaint was sent to the channel on 22 June 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 26 June 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC on 01 July 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

The episode showed a person committing murder with a cable wire. My 7-year-old was watching the show. It had so many vulgar scenes not meant for children.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

1. The animated series *Detective Conan* was produced by TMS Entertainment Co Ltd Japan, which is being successfully run internationally, entertaining children of various countries in the age-group 9 to 14 years. It was acclaimed to be one of the best animated series for the said age-group and there were no complaints whatsoever on this programme.
2. The series is based on the life of a Japanese school child who is a detective and how he brings the offenders to task, the challenges the child meets during the entire investigation of case and how he resolved the case with exemplary mind game and bravery.
3. Episode 55 of the animated series (at time code 00: 11:12:00 for three seconds) related to a backstory link of offence shown in a super-quick 3 second duration which the storyline demanded in the context of the story flow. You would appreciate that the scene was so short that even before the child knew what it was, they would be engrossed in the subsequent storyline.
4. We thank you for your kind suggestion which have taken note of seriously. We state that the channel takes ample precaution in not depicting anything on the screen which is not in good taste for children. We are reviewing the animated series in the lines suggested by you and would not hesitate to edit scenes from the original programme, to make the programme suitable for viewership of 9-to-14-year children.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

I am completely disappointed by the channel's response. I feel that if children of 9 to 14 years of age learn something wrong, say murder for that matter, it will not affect the channel, but it will definitely affect the children's mentality. Do not make them learn offensive things.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

Remove the offensive scene from the show.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the content and noted that in the episode a still visual of a man strangulating a woman with a video cable was shown for about 3 seconds. The detectives are trying to crack a murder mystery and the scene is shown as a flashback. A reference to the cable is also made in the form of dialogues as it said a video cable was found around the victim's neck and how it was used as a weapon.

The Council felt the programme focussed more on solving the murder mystery rather than on the murder itself. However, BCCC advised the channel to refrain from showing

violent visuals or references in children's programme and decided to reiterate its advisory on cartoon shows for greater adherence by the channel. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 75

75. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0075/2023 DATED 28 JUNE 2023

CHANNEL: Asianet
LANGUAGE: Malayalam
PROGRAMME: Bigg Boss, 07/06/2023, 4:30 AM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Objectionable dialogues

The complaint was sent to the channel on 12 June 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 04 July 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC on 28 June 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

Contestant Mr Vishnu was pointing at a female participant who is already out of the contest. The act was very cheap and was aired on Hotstar. The programme and participants are crossing all limits and entering into private life of families. The makers do not take any action against Vishnu. The female contestant, who is impacted by such statement, must get justice. The matter should go to the court for legal action against those responsible.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

- At the outset we would like to state that *Bigg Boss* is an unscripted format-based reality show aimed at entertaining public wherein celebrities from different walks of life are placed in close quarters without any connection to the outside world, for an approximate period of hundred days.
- The show's nature and format are such that celebrities are placed in unconventional situations, outside their comfort zone, to test their mettle and gauge their true personalities and extract natural and unscripted reactions from them. We as broadcasters do not exercise control over any of actions of the contestants nor do we endorse any opinions and statements made or expressed by the contestants in the show. The show has never endorsed any negative conduct and /or action by the contestants, in fact in many instances the host of the Show has time and again reprimanded the participants on any usage of abusive language or inappropriate action/ behaviour etc. while interacting with co-participants.
- The complaint has alleged that one of the contestants, Mr Vishnu, made remarks on a female ex-contestant and family using cheap language. To address your concerns, set out below are factual details on how we tackled the issue and reprimanded the said contestant for his wrong actions/ statements. After the mid-week eviction prank task there was an exchange of words between Rinosh and Vishnu. Along with Rinosh other contestants of the Bigg Boss house also expressed their displeasure over Vishnu's conduct.
- In the weekend episode you would have also seen that our host, Mr Mohanlal, strongly reprimanded him for his remarks and demanded an explanation from Vishnu for the same. He emphasized that when we make a reference about someone who has left the Bigg Boss house, it should be with due respect. Vishnu replied that he did not intend to disrespect an ex-contestant or her family. He further said that if he ended up offending anyone, he apologizes for it. Our host serves as the voice of reason for the channel and we ensured that any misconduct by a participant is not taken lightly.

- Asianet is a responsible broadcaster, and we are always cautious with regards to the impact our content has on our wide base of loyal viewers. This content referenced in your complaint was not found in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- 1) As per my understanding this programme is not live and edited before telecast. Why are the remarks not removed before telecasting the programme to the world? Where is the apology Asianet provided for telecasting such statements on primetime?
- 2) This programme is rated as 16+ category. Are discussions of sexual nature and abusive words like 'f**k' etc allowed for 16+ rated programmes? Aren't these words in violation of the BCCC Code?
- 3) What is the moral value provided to the world? I feel this is creating some cyber bullying and hatred army in the community. Anyway, as an MNC you are not going to think about any moral values in the society and you will always worry about TRP.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episode and found that programme host Mohanlal reprimanded the contestant Vishnu for his alleged objectionable remarks about another contestant who has been evicted from the Bigg Boss house. He emphasized that when we make a reference about someone who has left the Bigg Boss house, it should be done with due respect. Vishnu replied that he did not intend to disrespect an ex-contestant or her family and apologized for his behaviour and outburst. The show host is shown as the voice of reason and does not allow any misconduct. The channel also maintains that after the mid-week eviction prank task, there was an exchange of words between Rinosh and Vishnu. Along with Rinosh other contestants of the Bigg Boss house also expressed their displeasure over Vishnu's conduct. The channel states that *Bigg Boss* being an unscripted format-based reality show aims at entertaining public wherein celebrities from different walks of life are placed in close quarters without any connection to the outside world, for an approximate period of hundred days. The nature of the show and format are such that celebrities are placed in unconventional situations, outside their comfort zone, to test their mettle and gauge their true personalities and extract natural and unscripted reactions from them.

BCCC also took into account various complaints pertaining to smoking scenes. The Council viewed the episodes and found that every time a smoking scene was shown, the mandatory disclaimer, as envisaged under the COTPA, was displayed. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 76

76. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0076/2023 DATED 14 JULY 2023

CHANNEL: Hungama
LANGUAGE: Hindi/English
PROGRAMME: *Tensai Bakabon*, 04/07/2023, 11:31AM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Nudity in children's programme

The complaint was sent to the channel on 06 July 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 14 July 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC on 14 July 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

They are showing nudity in a children's programme. When such content is inappropriate for mature audiences, how can it be allowed for children? The show is hideous.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

- *Tensai Bakabon* is an animated comedy cartoon series where the father and son duo engage in comedic banter and antics. The scene in concern has the father standing at the door of the bath and talks about going in for a shower after a workout. There is no male/female nudity whatsoever and nor is the show adult in nature. As a responsible broadcaster we are deeply aware of the impact our content has and are sensitive towards viewer sentiment. We have duly noted your kind feedback and thank you for sharing the same with us.
- As a responsible broadcaster this channel is deeply aware of the impact its content has on its loyal viewer base and will never air content that violates any codes and encourages or endorses illegal conduct or processes. Upon review, this content was not found in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- As per the channel's response, it is acceptable to show male/female nude body just because the character wants to take a bath. If that is the case then why a smoking scene is suggestive in cartoons and a disclaimer is provided in programmes for adult viewers? Having said that, nudity in any form, for any reason is unacceptable, especially in programmes meant for juvenile audience.
- The channel's response was a disappointment. It shows that how much little protection is provided to children from such hideous content which the channel is claiming to be acceptable.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episode and found that in the comedy animated series, the character of the father is shown coming out of the washroom. He covers himself with a towel and suddenly realises that he forgot to wear his clothes. He then runs inside and comes back after wearing his clothes. The programme is based on comic banter and antics between the father and son. BCCC noted there is no male/ female nudity or any age-inappropriate content. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 77

77. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0077/2023 DATED 28 JULY 2023

<u>CHANNEL:</u>	Asianet
<u>LANGUAGE:</u>	Malayalam
<u>PROGRAMME:</u>	<i>Bigg Boss</i> , 18/06/2023 & 27/06/2023
<u>NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:</u>	Smoking visuals

The complainant received a response from the channel on 17 July 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC on 28 July 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

- I have found some episodes nauseating in the sense it violates the rules of COTPA by showing two participants - Mr Shiju and Mr Akhil Marar, the ultimate winner, smoking

repeatedly in different episodes without any control by the online producer and violating all the provisions of the COTPA. The Episodes that have come to my notice are (98; Day 97), Episode 73 (Day 72), 93rd Day Episode, June 18, 2023 streamed Episode. There were other episodes as well, my family members and friends said that vitiated their scenes with Smoking.

- The two participants Mr. Shiju and Mr. Akhil Marar, glamourised smoking in no uncertain terms in most of the projected episodes and this deliberate act clearly violates the COTPA provisions and invite penal provisions of the Act.
- This is shown repeatedly by the producers without any regard to Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of Government of India guidelines, rules and regulations. Besides, how can the producers encourage smoking by providing the cigarettes to the participants against the provisions of the act? It is a gross violation of the act and punishable without any leniency. No reasoning would make you escape from the offense knowingly committed by your organisation. Unlike in some cinema in which scenes may require showing smoking at a glance based on the essential situation of the story-line, the Bigg Boss Season 5 episodes does not need such a situation to be shown visually or is there any necessity to show Smoking by the mentioned two participants repeatedly in different episodes.
- The act of glamourising smoking in the said episodes instil youngsters to smoking. Above all, the youngsters whom I have met now feel that Mr. Akhil Marar was declared winner perhaps because of his strength to dare and smoke in the episodes and that it is one of his winning points that found favour among the voters.
- The BCCC and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India should take punitive measures to penalize the actors, producers, broadcaster for the offence committed against the provisions of the act and for glamourising smoking despite knowing the implications of law and ills on human health. Their act of glamourising smoking in the episodes are in all probability would instil the youngsters to take to smoking as an incentive to achieve success in the games like Bigg Boss Season 5 and perhaps due to this factor the ultimate selected participant emerged victorious too.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

1. Bigg Boss is a reality show and all views and actions expressed in this program are independent views of the respective participants and they do not necessarily reflect the views of the Channel. Therefore, personal choices are allowed in certain circumstances. Please note that the Channel never endorses or encourages, activities like smoking, and hence a 'statutory warning aston/health advisory' cautioning viewers that - 'smoking causes cancer' has always been posted during scenes that may incidentally carry smoking visuals on TV. This is in line with the rules for television wrt showing smoking scenes. Smoking is not allowed in the common areas of the BB house and there is a designated room for individuals to exercise this option.
2. Asianet is a responsible broadcaster, and we are always cautious with regards to the impact our content has on our wide base of loyal viewers. Upon review the content referenced in the complaint, was not found in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- The channel's response was not *found justifying with reasons like having given "Statutory Warning which is in line with the rules for television with respect to showing smoking scenes"*, which cannot be endorsed in public interest and to any extent of viewers imagination the statement looks strange and puzzling since the

scene or visuals of Smoking in the Show is absolutely not at all necessary and called for in the context of the Show.

- Several important points were debunked. The reasons elaborated and justified do not absolve the producer, broadcaster and the offender-participants from escaping in the severity of the felonious act which can be termed as an unlawful act. It is much against the very concept of COTPA (Act) and disregarding the Kerala High Court verdict that was previously pronounced on the same subject. The law is brought to act as a deterrent to tobacco users but utter disdain was shown by glorifying tobacco products like cigarettes which is nothing short of failure to comply with the judicial verdict and seen as an assault on the Act leading to deleterious effect to smoking among youngsters who have viewed the visual product.
- The programme being a reality show does not mean participants could express or have the liberty to independently convey their views and expressions visually to their whims and fancies in a public programme/ This does not mean that they can express whatever they feel so, and as if the Channel which had streamed as no control over them, do not augur well with the argument of the writer, and is not within the legal boundaries of public interest.
- With more than 74 Cameras rolling in the filming of the show and that On-line editing should have been going on, there is ample allowance for the producer of the programme to clip or mask those scenes which are not in conformity with the rules of law, and that if found nauseating and titillating including like a kissing scene or embrace between the opposite sex surfaces would have been censored and why not this hazardous message is also not clipped or discouraged among the participants.
- The Producer of the programme has miserably failed to exercise his influence over the participants and hence, least concerned about what has emerged in the show by giving liberty to smoke and by providing smoking/lighting devices, and thus showed utter disdain to law and even undermine the same.
- The statement of showing Statutory Warning as a panacea to the deliberate act by displaying Smoking visuals cannot be agreed to, and if that's so, even smoking a Ganja or banned substance or taking MDMA by a person or any glorified star can be indirectly shown without any regard to public consequences, by just showing the Statutory Warning. By showing a woman participant Smoking, it appears the honour of women in India was assaulted publicly as being a nurtured Indian culture among the female gender worldwide bringing disrepute to the preserved historical culture of the country compared to the West. The mental and physical fortitude of the Indian women were seriously undermined by this act.
- The display of Statutory Warning/health advisory on the screen (in an invisible form) is not a panacea for streaming the visuals as long as the scene is not a necessity to the whole Show/Series. In fact, the Producer of the programme is committing a criminal offence in encouraging or allowing the participants to take the banned tobacco products inside or by he providing the cigarettes inside the BB House for them to exercise the option knowingly well that smoking in the vicinity is an offence punishable by law.
- Despite knowing well that it is against COTPA Act, the glorification of Smoking, which is not required for the Show as a necessity or unavoidable in multiple times, is a grievous criminal offence and both the producer, director and broadcaster of the Series, and the concerned offender- participants should be brought before law in stern terms for public infringement of law.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

To punish the guilty for the injuries inflicted on the public by showing undesirable smoking visuals repeatedly, the Council may forward a strong recommendation for taking strict punitive action under IPC (for bringing disrepute to women in India), CrPC and COTPA to

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Home and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting so that such tendencies if any found among the channels are nipped from the bud itself.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episodes and found that every time a smoking scene was shown, the mandatory disclaimer, as envisaged under the COTPA, was displayed. However, BCCC decided to ask the channel to be more careful and air less smoking scenes even if they complied with the Act. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 78

78. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0078/2023 DATED 08 AUGUST 2023

CHANNEL: Star Plus

LANGUAGE: Hindi

PROGRAMME: *Ye Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai*, 16/01/2023 (9:30PM) & 10/01/2023 (9:30AM)

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Children shown as perpetrators of violence

The complaint was sent to the channel on 15 July 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 28 July 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC on 08 August 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

A 5-year-old child is shown to be attacking an adult for money. In doing so, he vandalises police vehicle. This is due to the parent's failure to mask discussions on financial challenges with the child. I understand this is drama but how the situation is handled by not educating the kid rather making it seem as a right action.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

- In the track reference in your complaint, young Abhir is feeling anxious and wants to throw a spray can away and chucks it in a random direction. This is a childlike reflex and not a thought through act of misbehavior or rebellion. Unfortunately, the can hits a stationary police vehicle and damages a glass pane. Abhir's father appears and can imagine what may have happened.
- Later in the episode, Abhir who is a sensitive child apologizes to his parents for all the trouble he has caused. He knows what he did was wrong and owns up to it. His parents also counsel him.
- Rest assured, Star Plus will never air content that endorses wrong actions or behaviours and only endeavours to deliver best-in-class content and entertainment to its viewers.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The show is a joke in the name of everything. All that we get to see is vile behaviour by female protagonist, crime and disgust.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episode and found that the child protagonist throws a can of spray paint which hits a parked police vehicle and damages its glass. The male protagonist apports the blame and says he has thrown the can and it has damaged government property for which he should be penalised. The story track also shows the male protagonist, Dr Abhimanyu, standing up for the small child when the police characters behave in an indignant manner while dealing with the child. He is later

taken to the police station where a different male character essaying the role of cab driver comes, pays the penalty and frees him from police custody. The story track does not glorify the child character damaging government property and is shown to realise his mistake for which the parents counsel him.

The Council after viewing the episode did not find any merit in the complaint. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

ISSUE 2 (10 Jan episode)

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

- A new mother, post-delivery coma for 2 to 4 days, is shown waking up. A nurse tells her how a man was of assistance to her child while she was unconscious with kangaroo care and the woman is shown asking the man to be father to the child.
- This has got to be the worst insinuation of 'prostitute behaviour' shown by a female lead. The child is not illegitimate, she chose to stay in those circumstances in a complicated pregnancy almost getting the baby killed with lack of care hygiene and seriousness of situation. In vengeance the woman commits fraud of replacing name of father in birth certificate.
- Star Plus should not be approving to air content like this. The woman is shown honey trapping a man and volunteers to this scenario only to marry him on papers later. The marriage doesn't legalize the paternity fraud or the prostitute insinuation

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

As you know, the show is a work of fiction and often relies on hyperbolic situations to create intrigue and suspense in the tumultuous lives of its protagonists. Rest assured, Star Plus will never air content that endorses wrong actions or behaviors and only endeavors to deliver best-in-class content and entertainment to its viewers. Upon review, this content was not found to be in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- The appellant has filed an appeal with BCCC and highlighted that the channel has shown a case of Paternity Fraud by forging legal documents. In more recent episodes there is further development on the same with no conclusion.
- Irrespective of this being fiction, fraud within IPC cannot be hailed and encouraged by the channel. This is unacceptable, the channel cannot spread crime.
- As indicated below this has also deeply hurt the sentiments of a woman, with how low criminal moral hindered the protagonist is shown. If the channel dares to show this kind of crime, show the conclusions, and in time. We are 8 months through and see no conclusion or punishment for culprits whatsoever.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episode and found that there is no attempt to falsify the records. The female protagonist, who has parted ways with her husband, does not wish to name Dr Abhimanyu (male protagonist) as the father of the child that she has given birth to. The nurse and other hospital staff are under the assumption that the character of Abhinav is the father as he brought the female character to the hospital and has been taking good care of the baby as well as the mother. The Council felt that since the programme is a fictional one, the channel has taken certain creative liberties to keep the story progressing. It would be undue interference on the part of BCCC to dictate storylines and story tracks to channels. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 79

79. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0079/2023 DATED 10 AUGUST 2023

<u>CHANNEL:</u>	Sab TV
<u>LANGUAGE:</u>	Hindi
<u>PROGRAMME:</u>	Wagle Ki Duniya, 17/07/2023, 9 PM
<u>NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:</u>	Men Harassment

The complaint was sent to the channel on 28 July 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 10 August 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC on 10 August 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: A part of the programme, shows hate towards a man by calling him *Paapi*, divorcee, wife beater and characterless. He is also called impure person in the society who needs to be thrown as soon as possible.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

- *Wagle Ke Duniya* is a fictional story of three generations of a middle-class family that navigate the ups and downs of life and overcome their simple everyday struggles together. The moral conclusion of the stories through humour and emotions is the intended goal of the programme.
- To address the grievance, we would like to clarify that the discourse in the episode attempts to depict the harsh reality of some parts of our society where divorce or being divorced is stigmatised. That being said, it was rebutted immediately in the same episode, by the couple with a strong message. The character Riya emphasises that the reason for every divorce may not necessarily be due to abuse from the husband. There should be no prejudice against either partner when a couple decides mutually to divorce for reasons best known to them. The character Pulkit also explains that sometimes for the betterment of the couple and the children it's better to part ways than to endure a bad marriage. When viewed in its entirety and context the story culminates in a strong message.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- The channel did not respond on the concern where a person is abused and called names - *Paapi*, *Naradham*, *divorcee*, *wife beater*, *characterless* and *impure*.
- In their response, they are telling about the story and other parts. Abusive language towards men on national television is not acceptable. Such content promotes hate towards divorced men in society.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episode and found that on watching Pulkit thrashing another person, his housing society members slam him for his violent behaviour. They address him as a 'divorcee' several times instead of calling him by his real name. One of the neighbours goes on to say, "Look at the way he is behaving, he must be beating his ex-wife in the same manner that's why she left her." They also questioned his character and asked him to move out as they won't allow any divorcee to stay in the society in future.

As responded by the channel, the comments were rebutted in the same episode. Pulkit's ex-wife Riya informs the society members that a man was trying to molest her and that was the reason for Pulkit's violent behaviour. She tells the society members that the reason for their divorce was not domestic violence or that he was a womaniser. She said

that we wanted different things from life which we realised after getting married. The society members realise their mistake and goes to Pulkit's house for apology. Even Pulkit is shown to sensitise them about the stigma attached to divorce and how it is better to move out instead of staying in an unhappy marriage. The male character is also shown narrating a story of how her mother died staying in an unhappy marriage where she was assaulted by her husband every day and finally she lost her to this brutal assault. The Council found no grounds of intervention. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 80

80. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0080/2023 DATED 22 AUGUST 2023

CHANNEL: Colors
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: Pyaar Ke Saat Vachan Dharampatni, 26/04/2023, 8 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Bigamy

The complaint was sent to the channel on 08 August 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 21 August 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC on 22 August 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

The programme showed bigamy/illegal marriage between male protagonist Ravi and the antagonist Kavya. Ravi Randhawa is already married to the female lead Pratiksha Parekh. I have complained about it when the show started. It is still promoting men having two wives which is illegal according to the Indian law.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

- At the very outset we would like to state that, it is not our intention to portray bigamy in a positive light. We are mindful of our role as a responsible channel and have always been conscious about such depictions.
- Various characters of the show, across episodes have unequivocally stated that Ravi's marriage to Kavya is illegal and will be considered null and void in the eyes of the law since he had not divorced his first wife Prateeksha. It has always been made clear to our viewers that Ravi and Kavya's union is invalid.
- We would like to state that though there is a distinction between reality and dramatic representation of facts in fictional shows wherein they might not be in concurrence with one another often, we are extremely conscious of portraying the same and the broader story arc will ensure that no transgression of law is appreciated. Further, Ravi has also been shown feeling contrite about his actions and has accepted that he has wronged Prateeksha. He is in love with her, but circumstances have created a rift between the two.
- Please note that story revolves around Prateeksha and her journey as she overcomes the curveballs that life throws at her. She is a strong woman who stands up for her rights and will fight till the very end for truth and justice. The highlight of the storyline is triumph of right and truth over wrong and deceit and you would appreciate that victory of right cannot be shown without depiction of the wrong. With fictional dramas of this genre, the narrative unfolds gradually and as the story progresses no character will be excused for their negative exploits. Hence, it should

in no way to be construed of being in implicit or explicit support of any illegal practice.

- Kindly note that all content provided by us is compliant with the CABLE TV Network Rules, 1994 and self-regulatory content guidelines while also upholding creative freedom of expression.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The reply to my complaint wasn't satisfactory due to the following reasons:

- The channel states that the show implies the marriage between Ravi and Kavya to be illegal. However, the legal wife Pratiksha has to fight for her rights at every step. If the illegal marriage is invalid, why they are showing Ravi doing ceremonies with Kavya and Pratiksha both as husband wife?
- Pratiksha is getting slapped by her mother-in-law who doesn't even consider the marriage and trying to shove the illegal wife towards Ravi. She had sent Ravi to honeymoon with Kavya who is his illegal wife. How is that implying the show isn't promoting bigamy.
- Ravi is doing all kind of ceremonies with Kavya. Pratiksha is shown losing every battle, whereas the vamp aka the illegal wife gets to perform all puja's instead of the legal wife. Kavya also getting away from planning and plotting murder. How is that Pratiksha's journey? In every episode they are showing illegal stuff but never fixing it.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episode and found Kavya to deceitfully getting married to Ravi. Kavya's parents also have a role to play in this. The female protagonist is shown to be locked in a room from where she jumps out of the window and tries to stop the wedding but she fails to stop the marriage. In the subsequent episodes, various characters of the show, across episodes have unequivocally stated that Ravi's marriage to Kavya is illegal and will be considered null and void in the eyes of the law since he had not divorced his first wife Prateeksha. Ravi and Kavya's marriage is invalid. Ravi has also been shown feeling contrite about his actions and has accepted that he has wronged Prateeksha. He is in love with her, but circumstances have created a rift between the two. The Council felt that though the show is based on bigamy, which is a very sensitive issue, the story is more about Prateeksha and her journey in gaining her rightful position. The Council felt that any intervention will inhibit the story line and also the creative freedom that channels enjoy to show characters in keeping with the story tracks. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 81

81. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0081/2023 DATED 13 SEPTEMBER 2023

<u>CHANNEL:</u>	Star Vijay
<u>LANGUAGE:</u>	Tamil
<u>PROGRAMME:</u>	Baagyalatchumi, 18/08/2023, 8:30 PM
<u>NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:</u>	Religious sentiments

The complaint was sent to the channel on 25 August 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 06 September 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC on 13 September 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

A character named Eswari is shown as a Shaivite and abstains from meat. Her family ridicules her for her choice of food, her devotion to Lord Siva and her liking towards Yoga. The family is shown elated to lure her to become non-vegetarian.

This serial blatantly ridicules the faith of Saivism, food habits of vegetarians and its practitioners and their belief. This is in total violation of the federal structure of India and the freedom allowed to practice their faith, food habits and lifestyle. This kind of ridiculing the practices of certain sect of people in the name of entertainment causes hurt and humiliation. This may lead to disharmony in the society.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

- We would like to kindly point out that the character of Eswari has never been established as belonging to any specific sect. She is just a simple and realistic character who, like many people in our society, struggles between the ideals of spirituality and her own true nature.
- After returning from a spiritual journey Eswari suddenly starts applying strict benchmarks of diet and behavioural expectations on her family. Like wanting everyone to give up tea and coffee in favour of a bitter herbal drink that she herself cannot stomach. Or going on an extreme fruit only diet which is impacting her health. Noticing all this, Baagylatchumi is worried about Eswari's health, and it is only to challenge this façade that she decides to trick Eswari into admitting her true desires.
- This whole track is a light-hearted drama, and our intent is certainly not to antagonize anyone on the basis of their faith or their dietary preferences. Do keep in mind that being a work of fiction, the show does rely on hyperbolic dramatic scenarios to enhance the viewer's experience.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- The channel's response clearly states that fruit diets are weakening the health of people and only meat diet can improve health. This itself is highlighting the bias in their approach towards vegetarians and presenting a prejudiced view on dietary and lifestyle values.
- In the episode, all the family members are showing teasing Eswari by eating full fish in front of her. She was shown discreetly eating fish and whole family mocks at her. She is shown applying sacred ash on her forehead and chanting mantras. She is also shown doing yoga asanas, meditation and visiting Kashi on pilgrimage. All these are part of Saivism. By using the term "hyperbolic dramatic scenarios", Vijay TV should not demean the dietary habits of a section of the society.
- Not only in this serial, in many programmes, the channel is bent upon promoting meat eating and ridiculing the socially responsible dietary habits, thereby promoting communal disharmony in the society in the name of entertainment. One of such programmes is "Cooku with Comali". Vijay TV and Disney can boldly display on their channel that this channel is not meant for vegetarians, yogis and Saivites.
- Hence, I am requesting BCCC consider this reply mail as an appeal and take appropriate action on the channel for their irresponsible depiction in the name of fiction. BCCC should not allow TV channels to just show a mandatory disclaimer statement before the programme and displaying totally opposite contents.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

Star Vijay and mega serial maker should tender unconditional apology to all the vegetarians, Saivites and social harmony lovers by broadcasting that their content was in bad taste and they will not repeat such content in any of the programmes in future. BCCC should take appropriate action against the TV channel and content maker.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episode and found that Eswari is shown sporting ash on her forehead and wanting to abstain from eating meat and fish. Two relevant points pertaining to the complaint come through in the exchange that takes place inside a house and between members of Eswari's immediate family:

- Eswari had earlier eaten and enjoyed non vegetarian food, and,
- Ever since she had become vegetarian, she was advocating that all the members of the family become vegetarian.

Verbal exchanges inside a home and between affectionate family members, which in this case is more in the nature of playful teasing than confrontation, cannot be described as "ridiculing Saivism, food habits of vegetarians and its practitioners and their belief". The Council also felt that it is an exaggeration to term the episode as "in total violation of the federal structure of India and the freedom allowed to practice their faith, food habits and lifestyle. This kind of ridiculing the practices of certain sects of people in the name of entertainment causes hurt and humiliation. This may lead to disharmony in the society".

The background to this episode is extraneous to the complaint and so is the motive attributed to the channel. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 82

82. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0082/2023 DATED 18 SEPTEMBER 2023

CHANNEL: SUN TV
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: *Ethir Neechal*, 02/09/2023, 9:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Vulgarity, Naxalism

The complaint was sent to the channel on 04 September 2023. The complainant received a response from the channel on 13 September 2023. Not satisfied with the response, the complainant filed an Appeal with BCCC on 18 September 2023.

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

The programme shows women in bad taste. It has vulgar dialogues. It also promotes naxalism. The character named Gunasekaran treats women in bad taste. The character named Jeevanantham is shown as a Naxal.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

- We would like to assure you that the content fully adheres to the laws and regulations in place, ensuring that it does not contain any scenes that show women in bad light. We hereby state that the scene in question should be examined in a broader context of the narrative. The narrative created around the character Janani, the female lead in the Serial, has had a significant impact on you and other viewers. Janani's character represents a strong and empowered woman who stands up against male chauvinism and challenges the oppressive behaviour exhibited by characters like Adhi Gunasekaran, his brothers, and the Karikalan family. Her actions and beliefs reflect the frustrations and aspirations of many women who have been victims of selfish and oppressive behaviour from males in their lives. By questioning her in-laws

and expressing her opinions, Janani encourages other daughters-in-law to find their voices and join her in the fight against gender inequality. We understand the importance of highlighting women's rights and the economic independence of women in today's world and it is through the portrayal of strong characters like Janani that we hope to raise awareness and encourage dialogue about these important issues. Our intention is to empower women and challenge societal norms that perpetuate gender discrimination.

- In the episode telecasted on 02-09-2023, three of Jeevanandham's friends visit him to offer support after the tragic loss of his wife. During this meeting, Jeevanandham makes it clear that he has no intentions of seeking revenge for his wife's murder. Instead, it is his friends who are determined to seek justice for her death without Jeevanandham's knowledge. It is to be noted that neither the character Jeevanandham nor the narrative of the Serial glorifies or symbolizes "naxal" and that the character Jeevanandham embodies the spirit for social transformation, aiming to inspire viewers with his resolute pursuit of equality and justice.
- In another scene from the same episode dated 02-09-2023, Adhi Gunasekaran discovers that Jeevanandham had once expressed an interest in marrying Easwari, Adhi Gunasekaran's wife, during their younger days. In an attempt to undermine Easwari in front of their family members, he speaks negatively about her character. However, Easwari stands her ground and confidently opposes him. This particular episode highlights the resilience of Easwari and her co-sisters as they firmly respond to attempts by the family members to belittle them. It is to be noted that neither the scene nor the Serial uses any vulgar dialogues. As creators, we take responsibility for crafting a compelling narrative that respects societal values and norms. We are committed to delivering entertainment that is both engaging and morally sound, fostering a positive impact on our audience. Our team remains dedicated to upholding the highest standards of storytelling and ethical content creation.
- It is through the portrayal of characters like Aadhi Gunasekaran and Jeevanandham we aim to shed light on the importance of standing up against injustice and the triumph of good over evil. While we understand that certain scenes may have appeared harsh when viewed in isolation, we encourage viewers to consider the broader context and storyline. The character's actions and their eventual consequences are intended to create a powerful narrative that resonates with the audience and encourages reflection on the values of compassion, empathy, and justice. The characters' upbringing and life experiences contribute to their thought processes and actions, shaping their individual identities within the narrative.
- The content of the Serial complies with the Cable TV Networks Regulation Act, 1995 ("Act"), as amended by the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 ("Rules"), which includes the Programme Code and other prescribed standards of ethical journalism. Our Channel is part of a responsible broadcasting network and remains committed to adhering to the law of the land. We state that the Channel has not violated any of the provisions of the Rules while airing the Serial, including but not limited to the Programme Code.
- As a responsible Channel, it is our endeavor to be sensitive towards the viewers and society at large keeping in mind how our stories and narratives may impact them. Any inconvenience caused to you is unintentional and we regret the same.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- Showing derogatory scenes and dialogues. Vulgarity cannot be justified in any way.
- This programme tries to portray a particular ideology as correct and other ideologies as false and against progressive reforms of the society. Naxalism cannot be justified for any cause. I am not satisfied with the justification given by the channel. Someone

from the authority who know Tamil should watch this programme continuously for better understanding of my concern.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episode and found that the episode does not depict women in a bad light, though there are some male members who treat the women of the household badly. The husband charges his wife of having an affair and harsh accusatory language is used, however it cannot be termed as obscene or vulgar for a late telecast. As alleged in the complaint, there is no reference to Naxalism. The character named Jeevanandam figures in the episode only for wanting to marry the female protagonist earlier and there is no reference to him as a Naxal. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

M. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 118TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2024

APPEAL- 83

83. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0083/2023 DATED 27/10/2023

CHANNEL: Sony
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: 'Kavya', 25/09/2023 onwards at 7:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Disrespect of a government institution

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: This is the story of the son of an IAS officer and his girlfriend (Kavya), both trying to join the IAS training programme. They are engaged and both appear for the eligibility examination. The boy fails and the girl gets through. This enrages the boy's family, who wants Kavya to drop the training programme. The girl refuses and the boy's family tries everything - from harassing to blackmailing the girl and her family.

In the episode dtd. 12/10/2023, the course director told the trainee Kavya, "The officer trainees who will be running the government in future have to be completely fit both physically and mentally and it is the government's responsibility to ensure that."

IAS training is conducted only by the Government of India. It is, therefore, abundantly clear that the story is on the government-run Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), the only IAS training academy in India. The name of the institute in the serial is Central Administrative Training Centre, to prevent punitive action against you from LBSNAA.

The objection is that the channel is not revealing that the training centre is a government institution and they are demeaning a highly respected institution by:

1. Presenting the way the boy's father becomes a course director in the institution with the sole purpose of ensuring that the girl does not complete the course; and
2. Providing VIP facilities with a giant TV set in the hostel to another student, son of a political leader, much against the normal practices.

This sends a wrong message to the aspiring candidates that IAS officers and the training programme are biased, corrupt and manoeuvrable. The first few episodes alone will convince you that the serial's contents are against the interests of the general public.

The serial has no entertainment; but only hatred, revenge and vendetta to settle personal issues. I am very sure that 'vendetta' culture does not exist in LBSNAA.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- Kavya symbolizes fearlessness and determination. The story depicts Kavya's courageous journey of facing challenges with an unwavering resolve, of asking tough questions and staying focused on her purpose.

that *Kavya* is a fictitious programme. Further, a prominently displayed disclaimer at the show's beginning clearly and unambiguously states that the show, characters, locations and incidents therein are entirely fictitious. A fictional show should not and cannot be associated with real persons, community, or events. The moral conclusion of the stories through emotions is the programme's intended goal. Viewed in its entirety and context, all the stories culminate in a strong message. Some make an effort to emphasise women's empowerment, encouraging them to speak out against any form of exploitation, while others discuss eradicating stigmas and preconceptions. The programme aims to draw attention to numerous societal problems, prejudices, and difficulties that affect most people, especially women. That said, the Channel states that it is conscious of the way its stories have been portrayed and ensures no inappropriate content is shown. All stories have been represented in an aesthetic manner.

- With regard to the Complainant's concern about the character Jaideep Thakur, it has been depicted that getting the opportunity to be the course director of the academy was coincidental, rather than it being a manipulated or a strategic move. The fictional characters have been conceptualized and showcased solely for the purpose of entertainment. The Channel has requested the Complainant to view and construe the show in a manner with which it is intended as clarified in the response. The Channel states that it has been its endeavour, at all times, to ensure that the content being telecast is within the framework of the laws of India.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The appellant submits:

- That in spite of all the channel's clarifications about the story being fictitious and depiction of Kavya's courageous journey, the fact remains that they are demeaning all our IAS officers (past and present) and destroying the reputation of a highly respected institution.
- That the channel's contention that the character Jaideep Thakur getting the opportunity of course director is coincidental is far from truth. It was deliberate and manipulated under the garb of '*guru dakshina*' to the institute with the sole purpose of harassing Kavya. And what about the role of the '*netaji*'?
- That the story might not hurt personal, professional or fundamental rights. But it is certainly defaming our prestigious IAS training academy.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

Appeal to kindly stop this serial on immediate basis to prevent further embarrassment to our prestigious IAS training academy.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council, upon considered viewing of specific episodes, concluded that the programme is a fictionalised representation of a story in which the female protagonist 'Kavya' is both aspirational and determined to become an IAS officer. Kavya has been depicted as a progressive woman who is steadfast in her approach to become a civil servant and serving the society to the best of her abilities. It is about twists and turns in the storyline in which her fiancé could not get through to the civil services examination but she cleared it. This, despite the fact that on the day of the interview she was late whilst trying to save a complete stranger who threatened to jump from a high-rise building as his loan application was not even being considered. Having persuaded the person not to jump and taking initiative to help solve his dilemma, she appears for her interview. As far as the specificity of the training institution is concerned, the names have been changed to ensure that no particular institute is painted disparagingly.

The Council is of the view that the programme - which appropriately states that the show, characters, locations, and incidents are fictitious - cannot be held accountable for creative rendition. It is entirely the channel's prerogative to show characters and incidents as per the storyline and the Council will not make any intervention in dictating storylines.

The Appeal warrants no censure or disciplinary action also keeping in view the totality of the context in mind rather than focus merely on select interpretative readings. The Council also did not find the Appeal maintainable considering that the story focuses more on the protagonist's resilience than her suffering.

The Appeal is thus DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 84

84. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0084/2023 DATED 31 October 2023

<u>CHANNEL:</u>	Zee Punjabi
<u>LANGUAGE:</u>	Punjabi
<u>PROGRAMME:</u>	'Dilan De Rishtey', 16/10/2023
<u>NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:</u>	Hurting Religious sentiments

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: A woman serves the holy *prasad* to a man named Swaran. The woman is shown bare-headed and wearing shoes (*jutti*) while serving the *prasad*. This is against *Rehat Maryada* of Sikh religion and hurts religious sentiments. The channel is misleading people against Sikh religion. It is requested to take strict action against the producer of the serial. The Complainant also intends to forward this complaint to Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC).

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

- 'Dilan de Rishtey' is a fiction show about a lady called Gurman and her family. In this episode, Gurman has just finished her pooja in her bedroom and as she begins to move out, she comes across her husband who has just entered the room and she gives him some *prasad*. Moments later, his friend Shammi also comes home with

some gifts for the family. She hands out the *prasad* to him as well. Gurman was shown with her head covered properly and she was not wearing her *jutti* too.

- Since her husband and friend both had just come from outside, they were not part of the pooja, they just consume the *prasad* with due respect. Please note there was no disrespect or insult depicted towards any religion during this scene. The Channel ensures that it adhere to the BCCC Code and same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The Appellant has enclosed pictures of the referred scenes and submitted that in Scene-1, Gurman is giving holy *prasad* to a red-turbaned man. During this scene, she was bare-headed and not wearing shoes. In the same episode (Scene-2), Gurman again gives holy *prasad* to another women who is bare-headed.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

Take strict action against the Channel.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council viewed the episode and found that in the opening scenes, the woman is shown covering her head while giving 'prasad' to an elderly person, but in the subsequent scenes the customary obligations were not fulfilled.

The Council after careful pursuing of the channel's reply was of the view that the channel had shown such depiction inadvertently and there was no mala-fide intent to hurt the religious sentiments of the Sikh community.

The Council decided to advise the channel to be abundantly careful in future to avoid such lapses so that such mistakes do not recur. BCCC also decided to caution the channel that henceforth they should be appropriately attentive and conscientious in depiction of such scenes where the sentiments of people may get hurt.

The Appeal was thus DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 85

85. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0085/2023 DATED 24 December 2023

CHANNEL: Star Vijay
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: 'Thamizum Saraswathiyum', 21/11/2023
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Hurting religious sentiments

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: Christian-dominated Vijay TV has shown a scene which defames Hindu temple culture. As per the Agama Rules, a temple umbrella is meant only for deities and in the said episode, a crook servant can be seen holding it for the protagonist Saraswathi in order to hide her husband Tamizh.

It hurts the sentiments of crores of Hindu devotees. This is not the first time. Similar scenes have been shown on a number of occasions since 2005. This channel is sponsored mostly by Christian businessmen and hence they are always insulting Hindus, Hindu customs and the present central government.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits:

- The show is a work of fiction that relies on larger-than-life drama and hyperbolic highs and lows in the lives of its characters. As per the current story track, the character Meghna, an entrepreneur, has come into the lives of Tamizh and Saraswathi.
- Tamizh, along with his close friend Namachivayam, approaches Meghna to seek financial help for his business. Without Tamizh's knowledge, Namachivayam lies to Meghna that Tamizh is single/unmarried. What follows later, when both parties land in the temple premises, is a chain of comedy of errors.
- Please note that there is no intention on the makers' behalf to bring in any religious angle to the proceedings. However, if the Complainant's sentiments are inadvertently hurt, the Channel deeply regrets it. An assurance stands given that the Complainant's views and feedback have been noted and relayed to the team working on the show.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

Why are the makers targeting only Hindu community? The reality is that most of the people are not aware that they can complain to the authorities and officials about such barbarism by these networks, so these people are taking advantage of that. In the name of entertainment, they are doing more and more atrocities. Few years back, in a comedy show, they insulted our Prime Minister.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

It is requested to take necessary action against the channel at the earliest.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council viewed the episode and found that the umbrella has been used as a prop for the comic character trying to wriggle out of an awkward situation with no intent whatsoever to cause hurt to religious sentiments. The Appeal is DISMISSED.

APPEAL- 86

86. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0086/2023 DATED 24 November 2023

CHANNEL: Sony
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: 'MasterChef India', Episode 16
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Hurting religious sentiments

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: In episode 16, there was a disconcerting incident involving one of the show's promising contestants, Mr Kenneth Gopinath. Shockingly, despite being merely 18 years old, Mr Gopinath chose to incorporate rum as a key ingredient in his culinary creation, a revelation that unfolded in the public eye during the broadcast. It is disheartening to note that rum was included in the secret mystery box selected by Mr Gopinath, and he audaciously proceeded to taste it on national television.

My concern intensifies considering the legal ramifications of Mr Gopinath's actions. As stipulated by Section 18 of the Bombay Prohibition Act 1949, individuals below the age of 21 are unequivocally prohibited from the consumption of alcoholic beverages. The repercussions of such a blatant violation on a show of *MasterChef India*'s stature, enjoyed by a diverse audience, including children and families, are far-reaching and profoundly troubling.

This incident has left an indelible impact on my family, particularly on my 14-year-old son and 18-year-old daughter. My daughter, perturbed by the apparent incongruity, questions the acceptability of such behaviour, while my adolescent son grapples with the adverse effects on his studies and mental well-being.

The complainant holds the show's sponsors equally accountable for their association with this controversial episode. Therefore, I demand public apologies from Veeba, Maggi Masala E Magic, Urban Company, Acko Insurance, Basmati Rice, Aashirwaad Select, ID Fresh Foods, and Spaces Fabric.

The Complainant also states that the presence of renowned Chef Prateek Sadhu in the episode raises perplexing questions about the oversight and lack of intervention, given his iconic status. This is a grave blunder that cannot be ignored.

In light of the gravity of this situation, the Complainant demands the following:

- A public apology from Sony Entertainment on national television and across prominent Indian and international newspapers.
- Seeks restitution for the distress caused to his family, demanding a compensation of Rs 10 crore, with Rs 5 crore allocated to each of his children.

Each sponsor should individually pay compensations of Rs 8 crore, with 4 crore designated to my daughter and Rs 4 crore to my son.

- Calls for public apologies and compensations from Chef Pooja Dhingra, Chef Vikas Khanna, and Chef Ranveer Brar, each contributing Rs 6 crore, with Rs 3 crore designated to my daughter and Rs 3 crore to my son.
- To restore the integrity of the competition and ensure accountability, advocates for the forfeiture of the show, with auditions recommencing from the beginning.

It is requested to kindly address these concerns promptly and take decisive action to rectify this disconcerting situation. The reputation of *MasterChef India* and the associated personalities are at stake, and swift redress is the need of the hour.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- *MasterChef India* is a competitive cooking reality programme, meant only for entertainment purpose. The programme features amateur and home chefs competing to win the title of 'MasterChef India'. The programme celebrates diverse culinary talents from every corner of the country.
- To address the Complainant's grievance, the Channel states that although it is true that contestant Mr Kenneth Gopinath chose rum as one of the ingredients from the mystery box, there were no express or implied visuals of the contestant tasting the dish or the rum. While there is no law that prohibits the usage of rum by an 18-year-old for the purpose of expressing their culinary talents in the non-fiction show, in a

given instance the contestant, as a professional and to be true to his/her duty as a chef, was expected to make the best dish using various ingredients, being made available to all other contestants of the show.

- Further, a prominently displayed disclaimer at the beginning of the show clearly and unambiguously states: *“This programme is a cooking-based show intended for entertainment purposes only. All views, opinions and comments expressed in the programme are solely of the judges/anchors/guests/participants and the platform does not necessarily subscribe to any of the views, opinions and comments expressed. Neither the platform nor the judges/anchors/guests/participants intend to defame, discredit, or hurt the sentiments of any person (living or dead), organization, religion, ethnic group, caste, community, class of persons, institute, profession, or beliefs in any manner, whatsoever. Some of the cooking techniques featured require professional skills and supervision. The platform and/or company shall not be liable or responsible in any way whatsoever for the outcome of the recipe/s and/or any decision or action the viewer takes based on the content of the program.”*
- The Channel thus vehemently denies all assertions made in by the Complainant and states that its endeavour at all times is to ensure that our content is within the framework of the laws of India. The Channel states that it sincerely appreciated its viewers’ feedback and continued patronage.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- The channel’s assertion that there were no explicit visuals of Mr Kenneth Gopinath tasting the dish he prepared with rum during the episode is contradictory to the confession made by Mr Gopinath himself on national television. His admission to tasting the concoction every five minutes throughout the cooking process undeniably highlights repeated consumption of alcohol, a direct contravention of Section 18 of the Bombay Prohibition Act 1949. This provision unequivocally prohibits individuals under 21 years from consuming alcoholic beverages.
- Moreover, the accessibility of rum within the pantry for an underage contestant not only breaches legal frameworks, but also disregards the sanctity of beliefs upheld by the Jain community. Jainism strictly prohibits the consumption of alcohol, aligning with principles of non-violence and purity. This violation not only defies legal norms but also deeply offends the religious sentiments of individuals, like myself, who adhere to Jain beliefs.
- In addition to contravening the age limit, Mr Gopinath’s handling of alcohol also raises concerns about permits and legal prerequisites for handling alcoholic beverages. As a minor contestant, it is imperative for Mr Gopinath to possess the necessary permits and legal documentation for handling alcohol, which, to my understanding, he lacks, adding another layer of legal non-compliance to this unsettling situation.
- Furthermore, the impact on the Complainant’s family, particularly his children, cannot be overstated. As practising Jains, their faith emphasizes abstinence from alcohol, and this breach on a widely-watched platform challenges the moral values he strive to instil in his children. Witnessing such disregard for legal and religious

principles on national television not only undermines their faith but also raises profound questions for his children, causing distress and confusion.

- The perplexing silence or inaction of renowned chefs, including Chef Prateek Sadhu, Chef Pooja Dhingra, Chef Vikas Khanna, and Chef Ranveer Brar, during this incident is deeply disconcerting. Their stature in the culinary world suggests an obligation to uphold ethical and legal standards within the realm of their expertise. Their failure to intervene or voice concerns regarding Mr Gopinath's actions amplifies the magnitude of this concerning lapse.
- Given the severe breaches in legal, ethical, and religious norms, the Complainant implores Sony Entertainment to conduct a thorough re-evaluation and take decisive action to rectify this alarming transgression. The preservation of legal integrity, respect for religious sentiments, and the propagation of responsible content dissemination are non-negotiable.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

The Complainant strongly urges a comprehensive review of the incident, coupled with appropriate actions, to restore faith in the show's commitment to ethical conduct and legal compliance.

BCCC DECISION:

The appeal is to be discussed further in the next meeting.

APPEAL- 87

87. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0087/2023 DATED 03 January 2024

CHANNEL: Star Vijay
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: 'Bigg Boss', 09/11/2023
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Vulgar content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: Three contestants - Poornima, Maya and Vikram - supported the most indecent gesture of displaying innerwear among each other in the court session. The act of displaying innerwear is being replicated by his wife just like these contestants for fun. The Complainant's six-year-old son has also started doing this. Strict action should be taken against this channel for broadcasting and supporting such worthless and unethical content. The Complainant also claims a decent compensation towards the impact it has had on his family due to this channel's unethical show.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- 'Bigg Boss' is a reality show and all views and actions expressed in this program are independent views of the respective participants and they do not reflect the views of the channel. This is a reality gameshow which tests the mettle and personalities of the contestants when placed under unconventional situations and the manner in which they overcome the same in the show.

- The incidents happening in Bigg Boss house are totally organic and spontaneous and nothing is scripted. Neither the channel nor the host are responsible for contestant's behaviour or reactions in the show.
- The Channel reviewed the episodes referenced in the complaint and could not find any content that could be deemed inappropriate. As a responsible broadcaster, the Channel is extremely careful with what it chooses to put on air and reassures the Complainant that the whole program goes through a rigorous process of content curation and review to ensure that it is suitable for a television audience.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

Further to the channel's response, the appellant submitted the following:

- It has been stated that the quoted episodes have been reviewed and no content was found inappropriate. The Appellant failed to understand the fact on how supporting the most indecent gesture of displaying one's innerwear to the other contestant is deemed to be appropriate as was specifically quoted in the complaint raised for which there is no mention about this specific point by the channel
- The channel has stated that this show goes through stringent "content curation", The Appellant fails to understand the reason why this most indecent content was not reviewed by the team which handles this work of content curation.
- The channel in no way can get away stating they are not responsible as it is a reality show and everything happens as per the emotions of the contestants as this most indecent gesture of displaying innerwear by Maya and Poornima to Nixen has ruined my family's discipline. The channel is definitely liable to compensate for this damage caused as being a family head, the Appellant takes maximum efforts to maintain discipline and respect among the family members.
- Apart from the recent incident of his wife and six-year-old son following the indecent exposure of displaying innerwear at home, his son has done this again to the caretaker at school and it has been brought to his notice as a complaint on the student's conduct.
- The Appellant would like to take this up legally with the help of his advocate as the initial response obtained from the channel is totally unacceptable and irrelevant to the concern raised as the content that consists of this indecent activity is already relayed worldwide and the channel has stated in the response that no such content was found in the entire '*Bigg Boss*' episodes relayed so far. The Appellant expects justice and support from BCCC towards this appeal in case of the channel failing to accept my demand.
- The Appellant also wants to write to the PM on the same as very much disappointed with the initial response from such a reputed channel like Star Vijay supporting most indecent gestures in the so-called "reality show named *Bigg Boss*". The channel's success should not be at the cost of ruining the family's discipline'

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

Demands and claims a decent compensation from the channel towards the damage caused to his family's discipline and also would like to appeal to BCCC if the demand for compensation is not considered by the channel.

BCCC DECISION:

BCCC noted that the act of displaying innerwear was not shown on linear television. The complaint was DISMISSED. The Council also issued a Detailed ORDER in the said matter.

APPEAL- 88

88. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0088/2023 DATED 11 January 2024

CHANNEL: Zee Tamil
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: 'Seetha Raman', 21/12/2023
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Violent content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme teaches violence. It shows harassment, murder attempts and family members trying to separate husband and wife. Such violent content has a negative impact on viewers.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- The fiction show 'Seetha Raman' is a family drama in which Sita and Ram are a married couple. Ram's stepmother Mahalakshmi dislikes Sita for various reasons and that is why she plots to separate them in her own ways.
- In this episode, she has kept a fast for religious reason. There was no scene of violence, depicting any kind of killing or harassment in the entire episode. The channel ensures that it adheres to the BCCC Code and the same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

Not satisfied with the channel's response, the appellant has filed an appeal with BCCC.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council viewed the episode and found that the episode is only about foiling the attempt of a character who is fasting. It does not "teach violence" or "show harassment, murder attempts and family members trying to separate husband and wife". The complaint was DISMISSED.

APPEAL- 89

89. APPEAL NO. BCCC/0089/2023 DATED 11 January 2024

CHANNEL: Star Jalsha
LANGUAGE: Bengali
PROGRAMME: 'Horo Gouri Pice Hotel', 21/11/2023 at 10PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Vulgar content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: Violence, dowry.

The programme shows dowry-related issues. An old woman demands Rs 10 lakh for her son's marriage. Such violence should not be shown by the channel.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):

The channel submits that:

- The story track referenced in your complaint features the entry of Oishani's aunt-in-law Satyaboti, someone with a stereotypical and regressive mindset. Satyaboti is bent on getting her son married and expresses her expectations of receiving dowry in exchange. Dowry system is a social evil and a malpractice that plagues our society even today. In real life too, there are people like the aunt's character who try to pressure vulnerable folks into giving dowry. This is a condemnable and an illegal ask, the show takes a strong stance against the same. Oishani immediately protests the idea of demanding dowry and is vocal about it being immoral and illegal. Even when the girl's parents agree to giving a cash dowry under pressure, Oishani takes the entire Ghosh family to task and vows that as long as she is alive no dowry will exchange hands and that will make sure that the guilty are punished. Ultimately no dowry is given, and Satyaboti's plans are foiled when her son marries someone of his own choice.
- Star Jalsha is a responsible broadcaster, and would never air content that would justify or promote any social evil. On the contrary, it is always the Channel's attempt to show the victory of good over evil.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The Appellant is not satisfied with the channel's response. As per the Appellant, the programme is showing prejudice by using the 'Pisi Ma' character.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council viewed the episodes in question and found that an elderly woman 'Pisi Ma' has been shown asking for dowry when she and other family members go to look for a suitable bride for her son, who incidentally is a police officer. After returning, one of the female protagonists is shown to castigate the elderly woman for her dowry demand and tries to make her understand that dowry is a societal evil, punishable by law. In the subsequent episodes, her son is shown to marry the girl of his choice without any dowry.

The Council was of the view since the channel carried the message of positivity in the same episode and did not leave it for a future episode, it compensated for the depiction of a wrong with a positive message. The Council was of the opinion that the episode does not suggest endorsement of the practice of dowry or retrogressive customs. The scene has to be viewed in context.

Actions of the characters can neither be a comment on societal values nor are they meant to be a barometer of good behavior. The characters have been shown as fallible, which is the creative liberty of the channel, and any intervention could tantamount to dictating storylines to channels which is not BCCC's mandate.

The Appeal is thus DISPOSED OF.

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