



**Indian Broadcasting  
& Digital Foundation**

**Broadcasting Content Complaints Council**

Content Self-Regulatory Guidelines for Non-News Channels

**INDIAN BROADCASTING & DIGITAL  
FOUNDATION**

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# **Self-Regulatory Content Guidelines for General Entertainment Non-News/Current Affairs Television Channels**

## **INTRODUCTION, STATEMENT OF OBJECTS & REASONS & PREAMBLE**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

In 1991, India opened to align with a shrinking world and the broadcasting sector moved from the state-owned Doordarshan to a multiplicity of channels – the number being more than 920 today. Television has been a force-multiplier in shaping people’s choices and educating the masses. Television has the unparalleled potential of putting the spotlight on consequential moments and inspiring the imagination of millions.

As the industry grew, it felt the need to create a body of its own and hence in 1999, the Indian Broadcasting Foundation (now, Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation) was created to collaborate on pertinent issues facing the sector and to speak as a collective. A not-for-profit organization, IBDF’s members comprise both Non-News and News channels and the Foundation, today, represents more than 400 channels, around 91% of television viewership and approximately 95% of TV revenues. The broadcasting industry provides employment to thousands directly and indirectly.

IBDF members are admired globally for their innovative business practices, social sector participation and thrust on playing a crucial role in the global civil society. IBDF provides research-based legislative inputs to the Government and carries out advocacy on various fiscal, regulatory and other business issues to facilitate drafting of conducive policies, resolution of issues and introduction of necessary changes in the ecosystem.

The average viewer today is not only overwhelmed with an abundant choice of programmes, gadgets and platforms to watch content. The journey has created new benchmarks in line with the country’s diverse cultures, languages and topographies, making India the world’s second largest television market.

With an unprecedented volume of content being created, the IBDF Board of Directors had an early vision to establish an independent and autonomous self-regulatory mechanism to redress content-related grievances. The thrust was on creating a robust mechanism that would objectively examine complaints against television content by its viewers.

The Foundation held numerous consultations with stakeholders, including the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, civil society, and various commissions of the government. Parliament had already favoured the creation of a system that would be free from government control and it became one of the most ardent supporters of self-regulation. The objective was to provide content producers certain guiding principles, usher in a redressal mechanism for viewers’ complaints, and ensure that programming creativity flourished in a free-speech environment without hindering creativity. The wide-ranging consultations led to the establishment of an independent and autonomous Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC) in June 2011.

Working in conjunction with the Ministry of I&B, BCCC started receiving complaints against content aired on the channels in various languages, and it redressed the grievances in a transparent, time-bound manner. The decisions were communicated to the complainants and the channels, and everything was put on its website.

Over the years, content regulation in the Indian television ecosystem, which presents mindboggling choices to viewers, has been a learning experience – not only for the channels but also for the regulatory mechanism itself which gently and deftly put in place guiding principles for programming diversity.

In 2021, BCCC's self-regulatory mechanism received statutory recognition. It was registered by the Ministry of I&B under the amended Cable Television Network Rules as the appellatory second tier of grievance redressal, the first tier being the channel itself. The Council continues to adjudicate on 'Appeals' where the complainants are not satisfied with the responses received from the channels.

The result-oriented journey of BCCC has been possible because of the continuous support of Ministry of I&B, which has always believed in the principle of self-regulation.

Directives, orders and advisories issued by BCCC have received hundred percent compliance from the member channels. The Council has, from time to time, received matters and references from various courts. It provides inputs to the Ministry of I & B for responding to questions put up by Members of Parliament.

The BCCC journey testifies to the fact that self-regulation can succeed in the complex television ecosystem with a colossal multiplicity of content and languages. It also upholds IBDF's credo – "Self-regulation is the best form of regulation."

With suitable modification, IBDF has adopted the Ministry of I&B's Self-Regulation Guidelines for Broadcasting Sector draft version of 2008, which has been formulated after a comprehensive consultative process with more than 40 stakeholders from across the Government, civil society, NGOs and Industry. These Self-Regulation Guidelines, Content Code & Certification Rules set out principles, guidelines and ethical practices, which shall guide the Broadcasting Service Providers (BSPs) in offering their programming services in India so as to conform to the 'Programme Code' prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulations) Act, 1995, irrespective of the medium/platform used for broadcasting.

1. These Guidelines have been drafted to introduce greater specificity and detail with a view to facilitate self-regulation by the broadcasting industry and minimize scope for subjective decision by regulatory authorities or BSPs. The basic underlying principles of these Guidelines is that the responsibility of complying with the provisions of the Certification Rules vests with the BSP.
2. The principles in these Guidelines are sought to be implemented at the first instance through a self-regulatory mechanism of the BSP. Regulation by 'forbearance', as present in the telecommunications industry, shall guide the BCCC whilst enforcing adherence of the BSP with the guidelines. Such self-regulatory mechanism shall be subject to a credible and time-bound default/grievance redressal mechanism, which shall function under the guidance of BCCC.
3. BCCC may offer general guidance on the interpretation of the Guidelines. However, any such advice is given on the strict understanding that it will not affect its discretion to judge cases and complaints after broadcast/transmission and will not affect the exercise of its regulatory/adjudicatory responsibilities. The BSP should seek its own legal advice on any

compliance issues that may arise.

4. As the Guidelines are based on self-regulation, these set out the factors, which should be taken into account by the BSP when forming a view about the acceptability of any programme.
5. These Guidelines do not profess to address every case that may arise. The BSP may face a number of individual situations, not specifically referred to therein. The principles, as outlined in the following sections, should make clear what the Guidelines are designed to achieve and help the BSP make necessary judgments.
6. The BSP has to adhere to the Certification Rules under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, which are in addition and not in derogation of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940; Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1950; Drugs (Control) Act, 1950; Drugs and Magic Remedies (Prevention of Improper Use) Act, 1954; Prevention of Food & Adulteration Act, 1954; Prize Competitions Act, 1995; Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986; Trade and Merchandise Marks Act, 1999; Copyright Act, 1957; Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960; Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003; Cinematograph Act, 1952; Consumer Protection Act, 1986; and such other existing/new statutes, and Rules/Regulations/Guidelines framed thereunder, relating to the exhibition of films or broadcast of programmes.

## B. PRINCIPLES

1. Broadcasters are seized of the importance and impact of broadcast media in the lives of Indian citizens. While the debate is often raised about the impact of news on society, it is the non-news and particularly the so called “entertainment” broadcast that has a much deeper impact on the society primarily because of the aspect and the manners in which it touches popular lives.
2. This is the moment of destiny for India and as broadcasters it falls upon us as much as any other stakeholder to ensure that we reach out to touch the life of every Indian without discrimination. Broadcasters in India have a duty not only to communicate but also to inspire, empower, embolden, encourage and include all members of Indian society. This responsibility must be discharged with full commitment to preserving, promoting and projecting the diversity of Indian culture.
3. To fulfil the goals stated above, the non-news broadcasters of India, in conjunction with the Indian Broadcasting & Digital Foundation (‘IBDF’), solemnly pledge to create, comply with and be bound by the SELF-REGULATORY GUIDELINES FOR ALL NON-NEWS CHANNELS as set out herein.
4. Content is an evolving, creative medium that is subjective in nature and the guidelines can therefore not be frozen in time. They do therefore enshrine in themselves a commitment from all signatories to a periodic review to align the guidelines to evolving social mores, scientific developments, legal precedents and constitutional obligations. The principles as outlined in the following sections, while not being exhaustive and professing to address every situation that a broadcaster may face, are designed to achieve and help the broadcaster make necessary judgment. While making any such judgment, the broadcaster shall abide by the relevant laws of India as applicable to broadcasting.
5. The scope of the guidelines extends to all non-news broadcast programming that appears on television, irrespective of the medium of transmission whether cable, terrestrial, satellite, DTH, IPTV, Mobile or HITS or through any other platform now known or developed in future.
6. By making broadcasters responsible to their peer group and by creating a forum for transparent accountability to all stakeholders, these regulations are also aim to thwart the veiled and ingenious designs of vested interest groups to covertly subjugate the power of media to support their own agenda.
7. These Guidelines are intended to guide the BSP and are based on enduring principles; that all programming should not mislead, cause offence, or lead to harm, particularly to the vulnerable.
8. For the purposes of the Guidelines, “Programme” in relation to broadcasting services, means, any television or radio broadcast and includes:
  - (a) Exhibition or films, features, dramas, news, promos, trailers, songs, music videos and serials through video/audio cassette recorder or video/audio cassette players;
  - (b) Any audio or visual or audio-visual live performance or presentation and the expression “programming service” shall be construed accordingly, but does not include any matter that is wholly related to or connected with any private communication;

- (c) This section should be read in conjunction with Content Code & Certification Rules hereunder;

9. Basic principles of these Guidelines are the following:

- (a) Programmes should always be scheduled with an awareness of the likely audience in mind. Great care and sensitivity should be exercised to avoid shocking or offending the audience.
- (b) Each BSP shall categorize each of their programmes based on its theme, subject-matter treatment, language and audio-visual presentation and slot it accordingly. The BSP will ensure that all programmes broadcast are in accordance with scheduling as per Certification Rules.
- (c) The BSP should take reasonable steps to protect minors. The BSP should be vigilant in gaining an understanding of how material shown on television could impact the development of minors. Minors cover a wide age-group and levels of maturity. It is therefore necessary for the BSP to exercise judgment on the capacity of minors in different age-groups in coping with the depiction and treatment of material, which may not be suitable for them.
- (d) There is a progressive decline in the proportion of minors present as television audience through the evening and during the night. The restrictions on the broadcast of programmes unsuitable for minors should be relaxed on a gradual and progressive basis after 8 PM. The assumption is that after 8 PM, parents are expected to share responsibility for what their children are permitted to watch on television.
- (e) By and large, the Certification Rules shall apply uniformly to all types of BSPs.

## **C. SELF-REGULATION MECHANISM**

**This section sets out the mechanism for self-regulation of content. Self-regulation shall operate at two levels – at the BSP level and the Industry level. These are described below.**

### **PREFACE:**

1. The complaints regarding content carried on TV channels are being addressed by Ministry of I&B, as per the extant provisions under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, the rules thereunder and the Uplinking and Downlinking Guidelines. A need has also been felt to put in place a system of self-regulation of content by the Broadcasting industry. Accordingly, these Guidelines provide for a two-tier mechanism for ensuring compliance to the Content Code & Certification Rules under the aegis of the Programme Code by the GECs, Non-news and current affairs channels and redressal of consumer grievances at the industry level.
2. Self-regulation at the individual TV Channel (TVC) level would be the responsibility of the Standards and Practices Department of the concerned Broadcaster. At the next higher industry level, a Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC), would examine complaints about television programmes, received from the viewers or any other sources, including NGOs, RWAs, Ministry of I&B etc, and ensures that the programmes are in conformity with the Content Guidelines. This mechanism would not cover films, movie videos, film trailers or any other production that can be telecast only after obtaining a certificate from Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

### **RECEIPT, PROCESSING AND DISPOSAL OF COMPLAINTS:**

#### **BROADCASTER/CHANNEL LEVEL: TIER – I**

1. Each Broadcaster shall set up a Standard and Practices (S&P) Department with a head of department for its channel(s) or nominate a dedicated person as Content Auditor to deal with the complaints received for content aired on its channels. In the absence of an S&P Head, the Content Auditor will be construed as S&P Head.
2. Each broadcaster shall provide complete contact details of its Content Auditor(s) on its own website and channel for public information. This information will also be notified to the Ministry of I&B and BCCC, who will post the same on their respective websites. This person(s) shall also be the contact point for any feedback on compliance etc. from the public regarding content violation.

### **3. DUTIES OF THE CONTENT AUDITOR/HEAD OF STANDARDS & PRACTICES**

- (a) The Content Auditor and/or Standard & Practices (S&P) Head shall ensure that the BSP is in compliance with IBDF's Content Code.
- (b) The Content Auditor and/or S&P Head shall be the point of contact for any issues, complaints in relation to any programmes broadcast by the BSP.
- (c) The Content Auditor and/or S&P Head will be responsible for examining all programmes and recommending appropriate categorization as per IBDF's Content Code.
- (d) The Content Auditor and/or S&P Head will examine the complaints against content and guide the BSP to satisfy itself with regard to compliance with all the relevant legal and administrative requirements under various statutes and regulations having a bearing on content.
- (e) The Content Auditor and/or S&P Head shall bring to the notice of the Head of Programming of the BSP, by whatever designation s/he is called, which requires to be rectified. The ultimate decision in such matter shall be responsibility of the Head of Programming of the BSP.
- (f) The Content Auditor and/or S&P Head shall not be held personally liable for any violation of the IBDF's Content Code and it will be only the Head of Programming of the BSP who will be liable for any non-compliance.

### **4. PROCESS OF HANDLING A COMPLAINT AT THE BSP LEVEL (TIER-I)**

- (a) A consumer may send a written complaint as soon as possible and not later than a week of the telecast of the offending programme to the Content Auditor and/or S&P Head of the concerned Broadcaster/TV Channel, who shall be expected to carefully consider the complaint. Name, age, complete address along with the fax number/ e-mail ID, if available, of the complainant must be given in clear handwriting or typed. An acknowledgment to the complaint shall be sent to the complainant within two days after the receipt of the complaint.
- (b) The complainant must furnish all relevant particulars, including the name of TV Channel, date and time of telecast of the offending content, title of the programme, details about the alleged offence, etc, and also give reasons as to why s/he feels that the particular programme was not in compliance with the Content Guidelines.
- (c) If the S&P Head considers that there has been a violation of the Content Guidelines, s/he shall reply to the complainant within one week of the receipt of the complaint, indicating the breach of the Guidelines and informing whether the offending content has been modified or withdrawn. A copy of the reply, along with the complaint, shall also be endorsed to the BCCC Secretariat.
- (d) If in the opinion of the S&P Head, the complaint is, prima-facie, frivolous, vexatious, motivated/biased etc., the S&P Head would be within her/his right to take no action on such complaint and reply in an appropriate manner to the complainant.

## 5. BROADCASTING CONTENT COMPLAINTS COUNCIL (BCCC): TIER-II

### CONSTITUTION OF BCCC

- (a) The BCCC shall be a thirteen (13) Member body, consisting of a Chairperson being retired Judge of the Supreme Court or High Court, and 12 other Members. The Chairperson of BCCC will be appointed by the IBDF Board of Directors by a majority decision.
- (b) The Composition of other Members of BCCC shall be as under:
  - 1. Four (4) Non-Broadcast Members
  - 2. Four (4) Members from National Level Statutory Commissions
  - 3. Four (4) Broadcast Members – Should be a Full (Regular) Member of the Foundation representing Non-News Genre. However, in case no nomination is received from Full (Regular) Member (non-news genre) against the vacancy/ vacancies under Broadcast Members Category in BCCC, then the IBF Board of Directors has the authority to call for nominations from Ad-Hoc Member(s) and appoint an Ad-Hoc Member(s) from non-news genre to BCCC under the Broadcast Members category.
- (c) Four (4) Non-Broadcast Members should be selected by a separate panel of eminent persons, to be appointed by the IBDF Board. The 4 Non-Broadcast Members shall be renowned persons of impeccable integrity, high social standing and outstanding achievements from the following fields:
  - 1. Eminent administrator with relevant experience
  - 2. Eminent media critic/expert
  - 3. A person who has been a member of CBFC for two years or more
  - 4. Eminent social worker
- (d) Four (4) Members from National Level Statutory Commissions shall either be the Chairperson or any other Member of such Commission so nominated by Chairperson of the Commission be a part of BCCC.

Provided that one Member each shall be from National Commission for Women, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and National Commission for Schedule Caste respectively. The Fourth Member shall be from any of the National Level Statutory Commissions such as, National Commission for Schedule Tribes, National Commission for Minorities, National Commission for Backward Classes, National Human Rights Commission, to be selected on a rotational basis, depending on the nature of complaint being dealt by BCCC in a particular meeting.

(e) Four (4) Broadcast Members, i.e. Full (Regular) Member from non-news genre, should be appointed by voting at the Annual General Body Meeting (AGM) or Extraordinary General Body Meeting (EGM) of IBDF to ensure fair and transparent representation. It is further clarified that:

- (i) Any Full (Regular) Member (Non-News Genre), not being a retiring member, shall be eligible for election to BCCC under Broadcast Members' category at any Annual General Body Meeting, if a nomination has been filed by letter/email by such Member, not less than 21 days before the meeting, with the office of the Foundation signifying her/his candidature. The Foundation shall not be responsible for considering/remedying any defective, incomplete or delayed notice of candidature.

- (ii) Only Full (Regular) Members (Non-News Genre) or their appointed proxies shall be entitled to vote during the AGM/EGM.
- (iii) In case the number of nominations received from eligible Full (Regular) Members (Non-News genre) is equal to the number of vacancies, then such Full (Regular) Members shall be deemed to have been elected to BCCC under Broadcast Members' category without having to call an AGM/EGM.
- (iv) However, in case no nomination is received from Full (Regular) Member (Non-news genre) against the vacancy/vacancies under BCCC's Broadcast Members' category, then the IBDF Board shall have the authority to appoint an Ad-Hoc Member(s) from non-news genre to BCCC against such vacancy/vacancies without having to call an AGM/EGM.
- (v) A Member who has defaulted in the payment of IBDF/BCCC subscription fee/other dues and levies or against whom disciplinary action is pending (by IBDF/BCCC), shall not be eligible for election. A Member who has been re-admitted after expulsion, shall not be eligible for election for a period of one year after such re-admission.
- (f) Quorum of meeting of BCCC shall be at least seven (7) Members, out of which, at least three would be Non-Broadcast Members. But if any meeting has to be adjourned for want of quorum, then at the adjourned meeting the Members present, whatever their number, shall form a quorum and shall have power to decide upon all matters, which could have been disposed of at the adjourned meeting.
- (g) All decisions of BCCC shall be by simple majority of the Members present and shall be in writing and may specify the action to be taken by the concerned TV Channel in respect of the programmes complained against. The Chairperson's view shall have the same weightage as that of any other Member of BCCC.

## 6. TERMS & CONDITIONS:

### **Clause 6(a)**

**(i) Rotation Policy:** 'Rotation Policy' is the process through which *One-Third* of the Members in each category – Non-Broadcast as well as Broadcast – shall retire from the Council every year after the completion of their three-year term. The 'Rotation Policy' shall come into operation only when the terms of two or more Members end on the same date. As and when the 'Rotation Policy' comes into effect, Members in office in the Council for the longest duration *historically* shall retire first. In case the tenures of two or more Members end on the same date, the name of the single Member to retire shall be decided by a draw of lots. The 'Rotation Policy' further envisages that the same Member(s) shall not be re-appointed in the Council immediately after their term has ended.

**(ii) Group Company/Group of Companies:** A 'Group Company' or 'Group of Companies' shall be defined as a collection of parent and subsidiary companies or channels or entities or verticals etc that function as a single financial entity through a common source of control. Further, a 'Group Company' or 'Group of Companies' means a single organisation irrespective of languages or genres or memberships or channels or networks that the parent company

may have. Furthermore, the various companies or channels or entities or verticals of the same 'Group Company' or 'Group of Companies' shall be deemed as one and the same for the purpose of appointment of Broadcast Members even if these entities pay IBDF's self-regulatory membership subscriptions separately, individually, and as different entities.

**(iii) Cooling-Off Period:** 'Cooling-Off Period' means the debarment of the same Broadcast Member or a Broadcast Member from the same 'Group Company' or 'Group of Companies' for a period of One Year immediately after the term of such a Broadcast Member has come to an end. The one-year Cooling-Off Period shall also apply in the case of retiring Non-Broadcast Members.

**(iv) Multiple Representation:** 'Multiple Representation' means the debarment from appointment or presence of more than one Broadcast Member in the Council from the same 'Group Company' or 'Group of Companies' simultaneously at a given point in time.

### **Clause 6(b)**

**(i)** The Chairperson and the other Members of the Council – from both Non-Broadcast and Broadcast categories – shall hold office for a fixed term of three (3) years. In case the tenures of two or more Members end on the same date, a 'Rotation Policy', as defined above, shall decide who amongst the retiring members shall first vacate office.

**(ii)** Upon the expiry of the fixed term, the incumbent Chairperson shall continue to hold office until a new Chairperson is appointed or for a period of three months, whichever is earlier. The process of appointment of the new Chairperson as well as that of the Members shall be initiated by IBDF at least 60 days prior to the expiry of the term of the Chairperson or the Member.

**(iii)** Provided further that where a person nominated as a Member becomes ineligible or otherwise incurs or suffers a disqualification from holding office as a Member of the Council, such Member shall forthwith cease to be a Member of the Council.

**(iv)** Non-Broadcast Members nominated in BCCC, after expiry of her/his tenure of three years, shall not be eligible for re-appointment for a period of one year. For such Non-Broadcast Members, a 'Cooling-Off Period', as defined above, shall be mandatory.

**(v)** For the category of Broadcast Members, the same Member shall not be eligible for immediate reappointment in the Council through a different company or channel or network or entity of the same 'Group Company' or 'Group of Companies', as defined above, for a period of one year. For such Members, a 'Cooling-Off Period', as defined above, shall be mandatory.

**(vi)** Provided further that the principle of 'Multiple Representation', as defined above, shall be mandatory, and there shall be no appointment of more than one Broadcast Member in the Council from the same 'Group Company' or 'Group of Companies' simultaneously at a given point in time.

### **Clause 6(c)**

A Member shall be deemed to have vacated her/his seat if she/he, in the opinion of the Chairperson, remain absent without sufficient cause, from three (3) consecutive meetings of the Council.

#### **Clause 6(d)**

The Chairperson may resign from office by giving notice in writing to the IBDF Board of Directors, and any other Member may resign from office by giving notice in writing to the Chairperson, and upon such resignation being accepted by the IBDF Board of Directors or by the Chairperson, as the case may be, the Chairperson or the Member shall be deemed to have vacated office.

#### **Clause 6(e)**

Any vacancy so arising in the office of the Chairperson (caused due to resignation/expiry of tenure) shall be filled by nomination by the IBDF Board of Directors and the new Chairperson shall hold office for a fixed term of three years. Any vacancy arising in the category of Broadcast Members shall be filled, as soon as may be, by nomination by the same Broadcast Member and the Member so nominated shall hold office only for the remaining period for which the original Member would have otherwise held office and convening an AGM/EGM to ratify such nomination shall not be necessary.

#### **Clause 6(f)**

Any vacancy arising in the category of Non-Broadcast Members (caused due to resignation/expiry of tenure) shall be filled, as soon as may be, after the approval of the IBDF Board of Directors. However, the new Non-Broadcast Member so appointed shall hold office for a full term of three years from the date of appointment.

### **7. TERMS OF SERVICE OF CHAIRPERSON AND MEMBERS:**

The Chairperson and non-Broadcaster Members will be paid sitting fee for attending each meeting of BCCC. They will also be provided pick and drop facility for attending the meetings. Airfare and suitable accommodation, as per arrangement made by IBDF, will be provided to outstation Members. Broadcaster Members in BCCC shall not be entitled to any sitting fee, reimbursement of traveling, boarding and lodging expenses.

### **8. PROCEDURE:**

- (a) Any person or a group of persons may, either individually or jointly, file a complaint directly to BCCC against any programme broadcast on any of the TV Channels within 14 (fourteen) days from the date of the first broadcast.

The complainant may write to the Secretary General, BCCC, C/o. Indian Broadcasting & Digital Foundation, C-301, Third Floor, Ansal Plaza, August Kranti Marg, New Delhi – 110 049.

A complaint must be made in writing, either in English or Hindi, and must include the following:

1. Name, age, complete address of the complainant
2. Name of TV Channel and Programme
3. Date and time of broadcast
4. Short summary of the subject matter of the complaint.

However, in order to facilitate the general public making complaints, the Secretariat will not insist on accepting complaints in the prescribed format.

In case the complaint is sent by e-mail, a hard copy of the complete complaint with enclosures may also be sent by post to Secretary General, BCCC. Complainant can also register his/her complaints online as well. On receipt of a complaint, the BCCC Secretariat will acknowledge the complaint within two working days.

- (b) All complaints so received will be put up for orders of Chairperson by BCCC Secretariat within three working days from the receipt of the complaint(s). If the complaint appears prima facie vexatious, frivolous or motivated or appears baseless, the Chairperson shall initiate no action but will direct BCCC Secretariat to put up the same at the next meeting of BCCC to decide whether the complaint should be processed or not. The BCCC shall direct further action to be taken.
- (c) In case of any complaint received by BCCC for a channel which is not a member of IBDF, such complaint shall be forwarded to the Ministry of I&B for appropriate action.
- (d) If the Chairperson feels that the complaint appears to, prima facie, indicate a possible violation of the Code, the Chairperson will direct BCCC Secretariat to ask the concerned TV Channel to submit its views on the offending content within one (1) working week from the receipt of the letter from BCCC in the matter. On receipt of request from BCCC, the Electronic Monitoring Media Centre (EMMC), Ministry of I&B shall submit tape/CD on the offending content within two (2) working days.
- (e) The reply of the Channel, if any, along with video/footage as received from EMMC will be put up for consideration of BCCC in its next meeting.
- (f) If BCCC is not satisfied with the response of the concerned TV Channel, the BCCC should decide whether the offending content has violated the Guidelines. In case a violation is detected, BCCC shall direct the concerned TV Channel to modify or withdraw such content within a week on receipt of direction from BCCC.
- (g) It shall be open to the TV Channel to seek a personal hearing and to BCCC to seek the TV Channel's presence at their meeting. However, this shall not be construed to grant any further time extension but must be allowed within the same period granted by sub section 3(iii).
- (h) If the representative of the TV Channel fails to appear before BCCC on the stipulated date, the BCCC may decide the complaint ex-parte as the BCCC may deem fit.
- (i) In the event of a TV Channel found to have telecast any objectionable unauthorized content, messages, or communication inconsistent with public interest or national security, or if its continued telecast may create a serious law and order problem or incite violence, BCCC may, upon due consideration, pass an interim order directing immediate withholding of the offending telecast by the TV Channel and direct the TV Channel to send its justification within 24 hours to enable BCCC to issue a final order in the matter. If the channel defies the order of BCCC, the matter may be referred to Ministry of I&B within the next 24 hours for appropriate action.
- (j) If it appears to BCCC that a motivated complaint has been made with the objective of tarnishing the reputation and or the goodwill of the concerned TV Channel in the market, the Council can blacklist such complainants for three years and no complaint shall be entertained thereafter from such complainants.
- (k) The BCCC shall not entertain anonymous as well as pseudo anonymous complaints.

## 9. PROCEDURE FOR IMPOSING DIRECTIONS/ORDERS BY BCCC & COMPLIANCE THEREOF

### I. DIRECTIONS/ORDERS

This section of the Guidelines prescribes the procedure to be followed by BCCC when considering direction/penalty against the TV Channel for non-compliance of the Guidelines. Imposition of direction/penalty against a TV Channel is a very serious matter. After following the due process of complaint redressal and the principles of natural justice, if BCCC arrives at decision that a TV Channel has seriously, deliberately, repeatedly or recklessly violated IBDF's Self-Regulatory Guidelines, then BCCC may consider imposition of following direction/penalty to establish seriousness in compliance of the Guidelines:

1. Issue a *Warning* to the channel to be more cautious in future in its depiction while telecasting a particular kind of content.
2. Issue a *Direction* to the channel to not repeat a particular episode of a programme.
3. Issue a *Direction* to avoid a particular kind of reference in the programme or to edit/modify the programme.
4. In a rare case, issue a *Directive* giving option to the TV channel either to modify the content of the episode for viewing during general hours or to shift the telecast of the episode to restrictive viewing hours. BCCC must observe the following principle of the Guidelines while passing direction under this sub-clause: "There is a progressive decline in the proportion of minors present as television audience through the evening and during the night. The restriction on the broadcast of programmes unsuitable for minors should be relaxed on a gradual basis after 8 PM. The assumption is that after 8 PM parents are expected to share responsibility for what their children are permitted to watch on television."
5. Issue an *Order* to telecast an Apology Scroll in a standard format that shall be applicable to all similar decisions. There should be gradation of violations, ranging from mild to severe, and the frequency of Apology Scroll should be determined accordingly.
6. Impose a Financial Penalty in a graded manner up to a maximum of Rupees 30 lakh. There shall be gradation of violations, ranging from mild to severe, and amount of Financial Penalty should be determined accordingly. The financial Penalty could be graded in six buckets – Rs 1 lakh, Rs 2.5 lakh, Rs 5 lakh, Rs 10 lakh, Rs 15 lakh, Rs 20 lakh and Rs 30 lakh.

BCCC, while passing order, must clarify that IBDF's Self-Regulatory Guidelines' violations in no manner can be considered as violation as per Ministry of I&B Guidelines since that would amount to double jeopardy and there are separate laws and policy guidelines for the same.

### II. FACTORS TO DECIDE GRADATION OF PENALTIES

To determine whether the breach is serious, deliberate, repeated or reckless, the BCCC must consider the following factors:

1. Degree of breach – this refers to the extent and severity of the breach
2. Duration of the breach – the time-period for which breach was alive
3. The harm caused as a result of the breach – Assess the degree of harm, both actual and potential, caused by the breach that may affect the audience
4. The financial gain made by the broadcaster as a result of the breach – Is it the case that the broadcaster has committed breach to gain television ratings?
5. Reversibility of the harm – whether the harm can be corrected through any measure
6. Steps taken by the broadcaster to remedy and correct the consequences of the breach,

including complying with the initial recommendations of BCCC.

### **III. REMEDIAL ACTIONS**

In case a TV channel/broadcaster does not comply with the Orders passed by BCCC, following recommendations, ANY ONE or a COMBINATION, can be made by BCCC to the IBDF Board of Directors:

1. To not consider any request of the said TV channel/broadcaster pertaining to outstanding of collection monies from the concerned advertiser for a limited period until the matter is resolved.
2. To recommend to the Ministry of I&B, in exceptional cases, for initiating appropriate action against the TV channel concerned as per law.
3. Adopt a resolution to expel the said TV channel/broadcaster from the membership of IBDF

### **10. TIMELINE FOR DISPOSAL OF A COMPLAINT BY BCCC:**

It would be the endeavour of BCCC to pass the final orders within three weeks of the receipt of the complaint. In case BCCC is not able to dispose of a complaint within three weeks, the Chairperson would write to the Ministry of I&B giving brief reasons for non-disposal of complaint.

### **11. SUO MOTU PROCEEDINGS OF BCCC:**

The BCCC may initiate *suo motu* proceedings against any programme broadcast on any of the TV Channels as and when it deems necessary.

### **12. SUO MOTU COMPLAINTS:**

When a member of the IBDF Board or BCCC makes a complaint, then it is treated as a *suo motu* complaint. The IBDF Board member or BCCC member is required to register a complaint in writing with BCCC Secretariat, as is done by other complainants. When a complaint is deliberated upon by BCCC, it can raise a *suo motu* complaint on another matter against other claims made in the originally complained broadcast *suo motu* complaint goes through the same process as other complaints, ensuring that the Broadcaster is given an opportunity. The BCCC member/s who make a complaint should not be part of the deliberations and evaluation of the specific complaint.

### **13. OTHER PROVISIONS:**

- (a) Each complaint to BCCC, along with all supporting information provided by the Complainant and the Broadcaster complained against, will be placed as part of the agenda of the next BCCC meeting.
- (b) Once BCCC has made a decision on the complaint, both the complainant and the party complained against will be informed of the BCCC decision, along with a copy of the order immediately. Orders/directions of BCCC will be invariably endorsed to Ministry of I&B as well as EMMC and also put on the website of BCCC.
- (c) Unless specifically sought, BCCC's meeting protocols will not provide for personal representation by the complainant/TV Channel concerned in respect of complaints being deliberated upon at BCCC's meeting.
- (d) Any BCCC Member who has any interest in the complaint by virtue of being associated with the concerned Broadcaster or the complainant should automatically

recuse and Secretariat should not send papers relating to the complaint, and even if such papers have been sent such Member shall voluntarily withdraw from the proceeding if it transpires that such Member is associated with either of the parties.

- (e) If a positive response is not received or compliance is not assured by the TV Channel within one week, BCCC may initiate action, as indicated at para 4 above immediately.
- (f) The IBDF Secretariat will put on their website monthly details of complaints received, decisions taken by BCCC and action taken by the concerned TV channels on the decisions of BCCC. The same will be circulated to all IBDF members. The BCCC Secretariat will separately send a monthly report of cases of non-compliance by Television Channels to BCCC.
- (g) BCCC Secretariat will put the details of Content Auditor of each TV Channel on its website for facilitating the public.

**D. IBDF'S CONTENT CODE & CERTIFICATION RULES 2011**  
**CHAPTER – 1 : PRELIMINARY**

**Short title, extent and commencement.** – This Code and Rules may be called the Indian Broadcasting & Digital Foundation “Content Code & Certification Rules 2011 (hereinafter the IBDF Content Code 2011)”, as approved and adopted by the IBDF Board of Directors.

It shall extend to all general entertainment and non-news and current affairs TV Channels operating in India.

It shall come into effect on the date as notified the by the IBDF of Directors.

**Definitions.** - In this IBDF Content Code, unless the context otherwise requires;

- (a) **“Broadcaster or Broadcast Service provider (BSP)”** means any person who provides a content broadcasting service and includes a broadcasting network service provider when he manages and operates his own TV Channel;
- (b) **“Broadcasting Network Service”** means a service, which provides a network of infrastructure of cables or transmitting devices for carrying broadcasting content in electronic form on specified frequencies by means of guided or unguided electromagnetic waves to multiple users, and includes such other Network Service as may be prescribed by the Authority;
- (c) **Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC)** means the independent and autonomous complaints redressal authority prescribed under this IBDF Content Code as adopted and ratified by the IBDF Board of Directors.
- (d) **“Categorization”** of a programme implies calibration of a programme according to theme, subject matter treatment and audio-visual depiction suitable for the two categories of Generally Accessible “G” and Restricted Access “R” programmes. All programmes/scenes will be categorized based on the following:

**Theme:** Subject matter, topic or idea of content

**Subject matter treatment:** the treatment given to the overall theme keeping in view the “likely impact” among viewers or listeners.

**Audio-visual presentation:** On screen/on air presentation of the theme.

- (e) **“Category G”** - Programmes which are suitable for unrestricted viewing by all viewers and/or under Parental Guidance.  
**“Category R”** means restricted programmes that are not meant for children and young viewers.
- (f) **“Content”** means any sound, text, data, picture (still or moving), other audio-visual representation, signal or intelligence of any nature or any combination thereof which is capable of being created, processed, stored, retrieved or communicated electronically;
- (g) **“Content Broadcasting Service”** means the assembling, programming and placing content in electronic form and transmitting or re-transmitting the same on electro-magnetic waves on specified frequencies, on a broadcasting network so as to make it available for access by multiple users by connecting their receiving devices to the network, and includes such other content broadcasting services as may be prescribed by the Central Government from time to time.

- (h) **“Channel”** means a set of frequencies used for transmission of a programme;
- (i) **“Content Code”** means the IBDF Content Code and Certification Rules as prescribed herein;
- (j) **“Defamation”**: It will have the same meaning as given in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) or any amendments thereto or in any other law for the time being in force.
- (k) **“Depiction of cruelty to animals”** means any visual or auditory depiction, including any photograph, motion-picture film, video recording, electronic image or sound recording, of conduct in which a living animal is intentionally harmed, maimed, mutilated, tortured, wounded or killed or any other such conduct that is illegal under the animal-protection laws.
- (l) **“Identifiable larger public interest”** shall mean the subject matter treatment or audio-visual presentation of themes relating to social evils, gender- or caste-based issues; criminal or disreputable behaviour; protecting public health or safety; exposing misleading claims made by individuals or organizations; or depicting significant incompetence or corruption in public office for the larger public interest.
- (m) **“Libel”**: A published (including broadcast) false statement with the intent to damage a person’s reputation; a written defamation.
- (n) **“Pornography”** means description or depiction of sexual acts or naked people in a way that is intended to cause sexual excitement but would be considered of no artistic value or unpleasant or offensive by most people.
- (o) **“Programme”** in relation to broadcasting service, means:
  1. Any matter the purpose of which is related to entertain, educate or inform public or
  2. Any sponsorship matter, whether or not of a commercial kind;

But does not include any matter that is wholly related to or connected with any private communication.

- (p) **“Prescribed”** means prescribed by the IBDF Content Code and/or BCCC.
- (q) **“Slander”**: The action or crime of intentionally and deliberately making a false spoken statement damaging to a person’s reputation
- (r) **“Suffering”** shall mean and include physical or mental pain or distress or trauma caused to a human being or an animal by mistreatment.
- (s) **“Trophy”** means the whole or any part of any captive animal or wild animal that has been kept or preserved by any means, whether artificial or natural, and includes;
  1. Rugs, skins and specimens of such animals mounted in whole or in part through a process of taxidermy; and
  2. Antlers, horns, hair, feathers, nails, teeth, musk, eggs, nests, rhinoceros horn etc.
- (t) **“Violence”** means any overt depiction of a credible threat of physical force or the actual use of such force intended to physically harm an animate being or group of beings and includes domestic violence and all kinds of sexual harassment and torture in word, gesture or action. Violence also includes certain depictions of physically harmful consequences against an animate being or group that occur as a result of unseen violent means.

- (u) **“Warranted”** means that where broadcasters wish to justify an infringement of privacy or the subject matter treatment or audio-visual presentation of themes of identifiable larger public interest as warranted, they should be able to demonstrate why, in the particular circumstance, it is warranted. If the reason is that it is in identifiable larger public interest, then the broadcaster should be able to demonstrate that the public interest outweighs the right to privacy and/or does not violate any of the provisions of the IBDF Content Code and restrictions on subject matter treatment and audio-visual presentation of themes under this Code.

## CHAPTER-2: PROGRAMME CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

### 1. Scheduling Rules

1. The BSP/TV Channel shall ensure that all Programmes are categorized and self-certified by each BSP/TV Channel as either (a) Category “G” Programmes which are suitable for unrestricted viewing by all viewers and/or under parental guidance, and, (b) Category “R” Programmes which may not be suitable for children and young viewers.
2. The BSP/TV Channel shall broadcast each category of programmes in accordance with scheduling set out below:

S.No	Category of Programme	Scheduling of programme
1.	Generally Accessible “G” Programmes which are suitable for unrestricted viewing by all viewers and/or under parental guidance	At all times
2.	Restricted Access “R” Programmes which may not be suitable for children and young viewers	11:00 PM to 5:00 AM

Provided that the BSP/TV Channel shall ensure that Category Restricted Access “R” programmes which may not be suitable for children and young viewers will be edited in conformity with restrictions given in the Categorization System.

3. Notwithstanding anything contained in any other rules or regulations in force for the time being, the BSP/TV Channel shall obtain prior certification from the CBFC or any other authority as may be authorized by the Central Government, for:  
“All films (including foreign films, music videos, albums, trailers, promos, songs etc.);  
And shall broadcast them on television or radio only after such certification and shall schedule them consistent with their certified categorization as above.
4. As per the Cable TV Networks (Regulation) Act, all complaints related to advertisements shall be regulated by Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI).

### CHAPTER-3: CATEGORISATION SYSTEM

Except in cases where preview and certification by the CBFC or any other competent authority is prescribed, all content, i.e. every film, programme shall be self-certified by a Broadcasting Service Provider (BSP)/TV Channel under any one of the categories on the basis of the subject matter treatment and audio-visual presentation of various themes as may be prescribed from time to time. Each film and programme shall be certified and given an overall categorization by the CBFC or the BSP or any other competent authority, as the case may be. It is mandatory that each programme is adjudged 'Generally Accessible' [Programmes for unrestricted viewing and/or under parental guidance] to obtain overall "G" certification. Any content that violates the prescribed restrictions may be refused certification by the CBFC or the BSP or any other competent authority for reasons to be recorded in writing and after giving a reasonable opportunity to the applicant/content provider to explain their position or make suitable modification in the content.

Unless the context otherwise requires by storyline/theme, all other content shall be categorized in accordance with the following norms.

## PROGRAMME CATEGORIZATION SYSTEM

[“G” Programmes for unrestricted viewing and/or under parental guidance and “R”  
Programmes which may not be suitable for children and young viewers]

### Theme 1: Crime and Violence

**Subject Matter Treatment:** While the overall theme, storyline and characterization may justify one or more specific scenes of crime or violence, the subject-matter treatment of such content under all categories **shall not**:

1. Induce, incite, encourage, justify, reinforce or glorify violence or terror or its perpetrators or contain anything against the maintenance of law and order or promote anti-national attitudes.
2. Present violence as glamorous or an acceptable solution to human conflict.
3. Incite violence against specific groups identified by race, national or ethnic origin, colour, class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or mental or physical disabilities.
4. Present criminality as desirable and/or glamorous.
5. Endanger human lives or prejudice the success of attempts to deal with a hijack or hostage or kidnapping crisis or a law-and-order situation or any other security-related or criminal investigation.
6. Have a traumatic, desensitising or dehumanising effect that could lead to psychological disorders or unsocial attitudes or behaviour, particularly among minors.
7. Encourage emulation of criminal or violent behaviour.
8. Provide opportunities to copy the *modus operandi* of criminals and thereby encourage commission of any offences or crimes.
9. Encourage the possession of wildlife as trophies.

**Audio-Visual Presentation:** The audio-visual presentation of any content will be given in a responsible and aesthetic manner, subject to the condition that the following **shall not** be included in respective categories below:

Category “G” Programmes for unrestricted viewing and/or under parental guidance	Category “R” Programmes which may not be suitable for children and young viewers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Excessively explicit or gruesome crime or violence.</li> <li>b) Excessively explicit portrayal of eccentric or abnormal violence or dangerous behaviour.</li> <li>c) Closeups or prolonged shots of dismembered or disfigured limbs or bodies.</li> <li>d) Depict images of dead or seriously wounded people or gruesome and gory scenes while showing violent events, natural calamities, or accidents.</li> <li>e) Depict explicit cruelty or violence towards animals, or whose production may subject animals to excessive pain, fear, or suffering.</li> <li>f) Show details of methods of suicide or self-harm</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Prolonged or frequent closeup shots of gruesome crime or violence.</li> <li>b) Prolonged or frequent portrayal of explicit eccentric or abnormal violence or dangerous behaviour.</li> <li>c) Prolonged closeup shots of blood and gore or dismembered or disfigured limbs or bodies.</li> <li>d) Excessive depiction images of dead or seriously wounded people or gruesome and gory scenes while showing violent events, natural calamities, or accidents.</li> <li>e) Prolonged or frequent depiction of simulated explicit cruelty or violence towards animals, or whose productive may subject animals to excessive pain, fear or suffering.</li> </ol>

## Theme 2: Sex, Obscenity and Nudity

**Subject Matter Treatment:** While subjects of themes exploring human relationships may include sexual relations, the subject-matter treatment of such content under all categories **shall not**:

1. Incite or encourage or induce viewers to obscene or indecent behaviour or breach of law.
2. Present sex, nudity, kissing or offensive behaviour or language so as to glorify, encourage or justify induce or incite indecent or obscene behaviour.
3. Present the figure of a woman, her form or body or any part thereof in such a way as to have the effect of being indecent degrading or derogatory to woman or depict women as mere objects or symbols of sexual desires or behaviour.

**Audio-Visual Presentation:** The audio-visual presentation of any content will be given in a responsible and aesthetic manner, subject to the condition that the following **shall not** be included in respective categories below:

<b>Category “G”</b> <b>Programmes for unrestricted viewing and/or under parental guidance</b>	<b>Category “R”</b> <b>Programmes which may not be suitable for children and young viewers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Highly coarse language with explicit sexual connotations.</li> <li>b) Show nudity, with full exposure of lower abdomen or sexual organs or posterior or full female’s breast/s.</li> <li>c) Show fondling of female breasts or human or animal sexual organs.</li> <li>d) Closeup shots of crude gestures or movements, suggestive of sexual activity.</li> <li>e) Show explicit images of sexual activity or sexual perversions or violence including rape, molestation etc:</li> <li>f) Show pornography</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Prolonged use of highly coarse language or dialogues with explicit sexual connotations unless the storyline, or subject matter or the context justifies its use.</li> <li>b) Show complete nudity with full exposure of sexual organs or full female breast/s except under exceptional circumstances such as programmes featuring historical or dramatized events e.g. tribal ways of life, health programmes or in restricted programming.</li> <li>c) Fondling of female’s breasts or human or animal sexual organs.</li> <li>d) Prolonged depiction of crude movements of sexual activity.</li> <li>e) Show explicit images of sexual perversions or acts of sexual intercourse being performed. Show explicit images of violence including rape, molestation etc., unless the storyline, or subject matter or context justifies its use.</li> <li>f) Show pornography</li> </ul>

### Theme 3: Horror and Occult

**Subject Matter Treatment:** While subjects or themes dealing with exorcism, occult, paranormal, divination, human or animal sacrifice or such other practices depicting horror may be covered only in “R” category [programmes not suitable for children and young viewers] provided the storyline or the characters justify these and the subjects matter treatment **does not** in any way:

1. Justify, encourage or glamourise such practices
2. Instil fear or revulsion about the consequences of not following such practices
3. Encourage blind belief or superstitions in the efficacy of such practices
4. Enable the viewer to emulate such practices or learn their details or sources
5. Depict women as witches in programmes on occult

**Audio-Visual Presentation:** The audio-visual presentation of any content will be given in a responsible and aesthetic manner, subject to the condition that the following **shall not** be included in respective categories below:

<b>Category “G”</b> <b>Programmes for unrestricted viewing and/or under parental guidance</b>	<b>Category “R”</b> <b>Programmes which may not be suitable for children and young viewers</b>
a) Prolonged, frequent or gratuitous depiction of horror related to occult, exorcism, paranormal, divination or human or animal sacrifice or other such practices. b) Depiction of such practices in such morbid details so as to make them look realistic and efficacious.	a) Prolonged, frequent or gratuitous depiction of excessive horror related to occult, exorcism, paranormal, divination or human or animal sacrifice or other such practices.

## Theme 4: Drugs, Smoking, Tobacco, Solvents and Alcohol

**Subject Matter Treatment:** While use of illegal or narcotic drugs or tobacco and tobacco products or smoking, or the abuse or misuse of drugs, alcohol or solvents, may be shown only under “R” Category [programmes not suitable for children and young viewers] if the theme, storyline or the characters justify these, provided the subject-matter treatment **shall not** in any way:

1. Justify, promote, encourage or glamourise use or misuse of such products
2. Enable the viewers to learn and emulate various ways of their abuse or misuse
3. Omit to highlight their ill-effects on personal health or social behaviour or criminal tendencies

Note: Depiction of public health messages or programmes on de-addiction shall not be governed by the above restrictions.

**Audio-Visual Presentation:** The audio-visual presentation of any content will be given in a responsible and aesthetic manner, subject to the condition that the following **shall not** be included in respective categories below:

<b>Category “G”</b> <b>Programmes for unrestricted viewing and/or under parental guidance</b>	<b>Category “R”</b> <b>Programmes which may not be suitable for children and young viewers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Depict the use of illegal or narcotic drugs or tobacco and tobacco products or smoking, or the abuse or misuse of drugs, alcohol or solvents or other such harmful products.</li> <li>b) Depict the details of methods of preparation or procurement or such use or abuse or misuse of such harmful products.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Prolonged or frequent or gratuitous depiction of the use of illegal or narcotic drugs or tobacco and tobacco products or smoking, or the abuse or misuse of drugs, alcohol or solvents or other such harmful products.</li> <li>b) Depict the details of methods of preparation or procurement or such use or abuse or misuse of such harmful products.</li> </ul>

## Theme 5: Religion and Community

**Subject Matter Treatment:** The subject-matter treatment of any programme under all categories **shall not** in any manner:

1. Defame religions or communities or be contemptuous of religious groups or promote communal attitudes or be likely to incite religious strife or communal or caste violence.
2. Incite disharmony, animosity, conflict, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, linguistic groups, castes or communities.
3. Counsel, plead, advise, appeal or provoke any person to destroy, damage or defile any place of worship or any object held sacred by any religious groups or class of persons.
4. Proselytize any particular religion as the 'only' or 'true' religion or faith or provoke, appeal, advise, implore or counsel any person to change his religion or faith.
5. Play on fear of explicit or implicit adverse consequences of not being religious or not subscribing to a particular faith or belief.
6. Promote any dangerous, retrogressive or gender discriminatory practices in the name of religion or faith or ideology.

**Audio-Visual Presentation:** The audio-visual presentation of any content will be given in a responsible and aesthetic manner, subject to the condition that the following **shall not** be included under all categories ("G" Programmes for unrestricted viewing and/or under parental guidance or "R" Programmes not suitable for children and young viewers)

- a) Distort or demean or depict in a derogatory manner the physical attributes or social customs and practices of any ethnic, linguistic, religious groups or any caste or communities.
- b) Distort or demean or depict religious or community symbols or idols or rituals or practices in a derogatory manner.

## Theme 6: Harm and Offence

**Subject Matter Treatment:** The subject-matter treatment of any program under all categories **shall not** in any manner:

1. Create public panic or unnecessary alarm, which is likely to encourage or incite the public to crime or lead to disorder or be offensive to public feeling.
2. Ridicule, mock or scorn physically or mentally challenged persons.
3. Encourage superstition about the causes of mental illness or stigmatise the mentally sick as violent or dangerous.
4. Stereotype mental health practitioners as unethical or exploitative.
5. Disclose the location of a person's home or family without permission, unless it is warranted.
6. Question minors about private matters without the consent of a parent or legal guardian unless it is warranted to proceed without such consent for an identifiable larger public interest.
7. Stereotype women as passive or submissive so as to promote or glorify their subordinate or secondary role in the family or society.
8. Portray women as primarily driven by sexual impulses or the female body or form as an object of sexual exploitation.
9. Promote, glorify or justify social evils such as child marriage, dowry, bigamy, son preference, etc.
10. Glamourise, promote, encourage such activities and sports, which encourage ecological imbalance and hurt animals.

**Audio-Visual Presentation:** The audio-visual presentation of any content will be given in a responsible and aesthetic manner, subject to the condition that the following **shall not** be included under "G" Programmes for unrestricted viewing and/or under Parental Guidance and "R" Programmes not suitable for children and young viewers categories below:

- a) Depict the physical attributes or personality traits or mental deficiencies of an individual or a class of individuals in a derogatory manner so as to evoke ridicule or contempt.
- b) Depict mentally challenged people as more violent or dangerous than the common persons.
- c) Show scenes involving children in violence as victims or as perpetrators or as forced witnesses to violence or being subjected to any form of child abuse.
- d) Portray by gestures or expressions or words or images that women are primarily driven by sexual impulses or that the female body or form is an object of sexual exploitation.
- e) Reveal the identity of an individual or her/his family or location of her/his home or fail to protect the privacy of her/his personal or private activities by failing to use suitable techniques such as masking, blurring, changing names or identities etc., particularly in the cases of minors, victims of sexual violence or dreaded diseases like HIV/AIDS or natural or other disasters unless there is an identifiable larger public interest involved.

## Theme 7: General Restrictions

Subject Matter Treatment: The subject-matter treatment of any programme under all categories **shall not** in any manner:

1. Contravene the Constitution of India or the applicable Indian laws
2. Cast aspersions against integrity of the Nation
3. Involve defamation or contempt of court
4. Adversely affect the judicial process of India
5. Affect the integrity of India or jeopardise or endanger the security of the State
6. Cast aspersions against the integrity of the President or the Judiciary
7. Exploit the National Emblem/National Flag

Audio-Visual Presentation: The audio-visual presentation of any content will be given in a responsible and aesthetic manner, subject to the condition that the following **shall not** be included in all categories ("G" Programmes for unrestricted viewing and/or under parental guidance or "R" Programmes not suitable for children and young viewers) below:

- a) Distort or demean or depict the National Emblem or National Flag, National Symbols or National Geographical Boundaries in a derogatory manner deliberately.