DECISIONS TAKEN BY BCCC
(APPEALS FROM 16 SEPTEMBER 2021 TO 20 MAY 2026)

TOTAL APPEALS - 166

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 Jagabandu 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 Jagabandu) 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 Jagabandu) 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 Odissa 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

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 protaganist'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 eulogies 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 Prabhakarrao 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 of National Honors 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 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 noramlises 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 from 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 explantion tendered by the channel, the Council decided to <u>DISMISS</u> 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 Udhu Udhu 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 ha*i, 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 Bhatacharjee 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 explantion 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 Janmasthami, 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 and 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 appaling. 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

CHANNEL: Zee Marathi
LANGUAGE: Marathi
PROGRAMME: '*Mann Jhale Bajinde*', 10/03/2022, 7 PM
NATURE OF APPEAL: 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 explanantion 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 इशाऱ्यावर 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, ताई 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 Nakshtara 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 irresponsibily, 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.

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, GoI, 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: Acharacter inthe 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 9and 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 can 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 forthe 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 fictious 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 themselvesalone. 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. Strictaction should be taken for maligning Hindu traditions.

BCCC DECISION
The Council viewed the episode. It doesnot 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. **<u>Episode Background</u>:** 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 fiancee's family.

3. **<u>Contextual clarification for the scene</u>:**

- 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 showeverything illegal andit'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 lawas 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 appellant has 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 socital 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 ofa 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 hyperbolichighs and lowsin thelives of charactersthat may not necessarilybe 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. The 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 <u>DISMISSED</u>.

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 scrimmage. 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 manifolds, 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.

<u>SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL</u> (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

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

CHANNEL: Star Vijay
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: Bharathi Kanamma 01/12/2022 at 9PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: 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
CHANNEL: Star Plus
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: *Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai*, 27/12/2022, 9:30 PM
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 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 Surjmal 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

CHANNEL:	Sony
LANGUAGE:	Hindi
PROGRAMME:	Promo of web-series '*Jehanabad of Love and War*' on Sony
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:	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. <u>The Appeal was DISMISSED.</u>

APPEAL-53 TO 64

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

<u>CHANNEL</u>:	Star Plus
<u>LANGUAGE</u>:	Hindi
<u>PROGRAMME</u>:	*Ghum Hai Kisi Ke Pyaar Mein* at 8 PM
<u>NATURE OF GRIEVANCE</u>:	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.

<u>SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE</u>:

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.

<u>CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I)</u>:

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.

<u>SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL</u> (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 advice 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 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 down **(**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**).**
2.	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.	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) 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.
3	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.	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 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.
4	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.	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)**.**
5	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 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**.**
6	Even the adoption track was a joke as once again it ignored the laws.	Explanation submitted in point 1 above

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
CHANNEL: Star Plus
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai*', 07/04/2023
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: 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
CHANNEL: Sony
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: *Indian Idol*
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: 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

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

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

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

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

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

CHANNEL: Asianet
LANGUAGE: Malayalam
PROGRAMME: *Bigg Boss*, 18/06/2023 & 27/06/2023
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: 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

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 apportions 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 in 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

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

CHANNEL:	Sab TV
LANGUAGE:	Hindi
PROGRAMME:	*Wagle Ki Duniya*, 17/07/2023, 9 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:	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

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 thar 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

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

CHANNEL:	Star Vijay
LANGUAGE:	Tamil
PROGRAMME:	*Baagyalatchumi*, 18/08/2023, 8:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:	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. Bu 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

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 Jeevanandam 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

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

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0084/2023 DATED 31 October 2023
CHANNEL: Zee Punjabi
LANGUAGE: Punjabi
PROGRAMME: '*Dilan De Rishtey*', 16/10/2023
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: 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

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

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:
BCCC noted that the impugned scenes were not shown on television. In view of the same the appeal was DISMISSED. The Council issued a Detailed ORDER in the said matter.

APPEAL- 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 claim 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

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

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.

N. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 119TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 31st MAY 2024

APPEAL- 90

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0090/2024 DATED 11 FEBRUARY 2024

CHANNEL: Dangal
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Mann Ati Sundar*', 28/01/2024, 7:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Domestic violence/Abuse

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: In a recent episode, protagonist Radhika was emotionally and physically abused. A family member forced her to live outside in the cold. She chooses to lie about her condition to her parents and the police. The makers are lauding the character for the same and portraying her as the "perfect daughter-in-law". It is sending a wrong message to society. Women who face such harassment in real life will be looked down upon if they demand their basic rights. It's derogatory to women. Given that content shapes society, the makers should be held accountable.

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

The channel submits:

- At the outset, we would like to clarify that the makers have not made any attempt whatsoever, to support the physical and mental abuse that the in laws of Radhika have subject her to. Rather it is a well-conceived effort to point out the evils of the society, how daughters-in-law like Radhika, often fall prey to ill treatment at in laws' house and how Radhika faces each situation with patience with the ultimate motto of being accepted by all members of the family.
- In this story, the act of Radhika saving the family from the interrogation by the police, has not been "lauded" by the makers of the show as alleged in the complaint. None of the characters had any word of praise for her act of saving them. In fact,

the Badi Dadi charged Radhika of cunningly planning it out so that she could get the police with her.

- Radhika's intention is clearly spelt out when she says that by virtue of being the bahu, it is her duty to protect the family. Radhika does not believe in taking revenge on her wrong doers, who are her own family members. She would rather win over the love and acceptance of her in laws through patience and submission. She is dealing with elders in the family and true to the Indian culture, she obeys whatever is told to her. Her patience, resilience and simple yet strong personality, has the ability to turn the situation to her favour. The makers want to portray the strength of character of Radhika who braves all odds to keep the family united (by not complaining to others who support her) and also does everything to satiate the cunning members' demands since her values drive her only towards wishing well for her family.
- The Channel is aware of its responsibility of portraying the true values and morals instilled in us by our forefathers. In joint families, there may be members having a personal agenda against the "Bahu". The Channel believes it is through love, patience and endurance that all adverse situations can be taken care of.
- These programs are not violative of the IBDF Guidelines or the Advisories issued by the Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC), in any manner. Our S&P Department is vigilant and does not encourage exhibition of any content which is within the legal parameters, our endeavors are purely directed to provide entertainment while creating awareness of social evils.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The appellant submits:

- The channel has mentioned certain specifics from recent episodes and brought forward their arguments stating that the meek submission of the protagonist portrays the "values of our forefathers".
- India has a tradition of respecting women as goddesses. "यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः । यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः ।। मनुस्मृति ३/५६ ।।". These have been quoted as they are, in the Manusmriti, one of our earliest texts. The four Vedas, Kautilya's Arthashastra and countless other ancient texts have spoken about treating women with respect. These are the true values of our forefathers.
- The appellant respects the makers' opinion on living in joint families, however, no family, joint or nuclear should subject any member to such inhuman treatment. This is blatant abuse. Being respectful and tolerating abuse in the name of being respectful are two very different things. One can very well stand for their rights while being respectful. Showcasing abuse tolerance in the name of being "respectful" will in no way address the ills in society. On the contrary, it will impose unreasonable expectations on women to be more tolerant and submissive to abuse.
- There are efforts being made by the legislature, executive and judiciary to make women aware of their basic rights. There has been extensive focus on verbal, physical and mental abuse, all just to ameliorate the lot of women. Thus, opportunity holders like actors, daily soap makers, movie producers and the lot carry a lot of responsibility. The protagonist sending away the police and covering up the family member's abuse will send a wrong message. It will only exacerbate the number of unreported domestic abuse cases which is already very high in India.
- The respected team concerned with the show must understand the dynamics of thin line that runs between being a good person and choosing to be a victim of abuse in the name of being good. In a world where we need inspiring female leads, Radhika stands out odd as a liability that many a woman might need to carry in a society that already expects unrealistic standards in women.

***BCCC DECISION**: The Council viewed the episode. The family matriarch, who does not accept her granddaughter-in-law (Radhika), has earmarked three tasks to gain her acceptability. These three challenges are exhibited over a period of episodes. The first task is to stay in a tent for five days and survive on a meagre meal. In the subsequent episodes, the female protagonist is shown to be brought back to her house on a wheelchair accompanied by policemen who accompany her to the house as she had fainted in the market place due to weakness which is implied as being due to the meagre meals that she has been consuming. When the policemen try to quiz the family members on the kind of treatment meted out to the female protagonist, she rescues all of them by suggesting that they have been very kind and caring to her. The second task is to earn Rs 6000 over a period of three days. She opens a food-stall serving healthy breakfast. The family members conspire against her by spoiling the taste of the food and even contaminating it. One family member tastes the food and detects the anomalies in her food after it was prepared. It is all part of the storyline wherein the female protagonist is subjected to all tortures and she is shown overcoming all obstacles. Some family members support the female protagonist in her endeavours.*

The Council held that the storyline is such in which negatives are essential to show the formidability as well as vulnerability of characters and any intervention would tantamount to dictating storylines to channels. BCCC also found that the female protagonist, who is shown to be a victim suffering at the hands of other characters, has somebody who stands in her support throughout the turbulence. There is no disparaging depiction that warrants any disciplinary action or further censure.

The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 91

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0091/2024 DATED 19 FEBRUARY 2024
CHANNEL: Star Vijay
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: '*Muthazhagu*', 08/01/2024, 3:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Degrading doctor's profession

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: They have degraded the dignity of doctors and lawyers in the episode by showing that a lawyer blackmails doctor due to false report and the doctor accepts to provide a baby to acknowledge their false report.

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

The channel submits:

- In the current story, medical reports get mixed up due to human error. Antagonist Anjali's mother Regina, a lawyer, uses this opportunity to create chaos in everyone's life. The doctor too in this case is a mere victim of circumstances and is being bullied and manipulated by Regina to do her bidding.
- Please note we have nothing but deepest respect for the noble profession of doctors and lawyers. The show is a work of fiction and relies on over the top and hyperbolic drama elements to create engaging stories. As a responsible channel, we always ensure that all our content carries a message of hope and victory of good over evil.
- The channel requests the appellant to be patient in following the story as it unfolds, and assures it would never air content that endorses wrong actions and behaviours.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The appellant submits that he followed further episodes considering the channel's response, but the programme continues to show a degrading storyline which portrays doctors even worse. A false report can be produced by a human error but it can't be used against a person for blackmailing as it intrigues human values and triggers emotions. A doctor is doing such things even though she isn't playing a negative role.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
The appellant requests to end the plot as it is a serious issue.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council viewed the episode and found that as per the story in this episode, the doctor has made a mistake in giving a wrong report of pregnancy confirmation to Anjali. The latter and her lawyer mother, Regina, use this opportunity to continue to fake a pregnancy implying that the father is Anjali's former husband Bhumi and threaten the doctor with legal and financial consequences for malpractice in case she does not cooperate in their scheme. The doctor, when threatened, agrees to continue with the charade and suggests methods by giving a kit for the period of pregnancy and says there is a couple whose child is due at the same time as the ghost pregnancy of Anjali. Meanwhile, Muthazhagu, who has married Bhumi, is also pregnant. There is an exchange of words as to whose child would be considered the real heir of Bhumi. The Council accepted the channel's reply that this a work of fiction shown in an exaggerated manner.

The Council was inclined to advise the channel that in such storylines, the channel could have taken adequate precaution to show that the doctor need not suggest methods to fake a pregnancy. The Council decided to direct the channel to refrain from doing so.

The Council also found that the episode centred on a swindler lawyer mother and daughter and a weak doctor who has made a mistake. It does not say anything adverse nor has it "degraded the dignity" of the two professions.

The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 92

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0092/2024 DATED 27 MARCH 2024
CHANNEL: Zee Marathi
LANGUAGE: Marathi
PROGRAMME: '*Navri Mile Hitlerla*'

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Issue with the name of the programme

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The name Hitler has to be erased as hate crime is promoted by giving this name to a daily soap.
The whole world has witnessed the hate crime against Jews by Hitler. This is not acceptable and request you to erase Hitler name. This has hurt our feelings and if no action is taken, we will have to take up the matter legally.

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

The new fiction show '*Navri Mile Hiterla*' is the story of Abhiram, a perfectionist millionaire also known as AJ, and his wife Leela, a carefree young woman. Abhiram's character displays dictatorial characteristic like Hitler and the show does not promote Hitler, hate crime or genocide in any way. We urge you to keep watching the new show and see how the story unravels. The Channel ensures that we adhere to the BCCC Code and same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- It is nowhere mentioned that the story revolves around Hitler's life. The name Hitler is enough to hurt our sentiments. I urge you to erase the name Hitler from the Title. The entire Jewish community from India and across the globe who are daily reviewers of the channel urge the channel to remove the name.
- Hoping for appropriate action on immediate basis. The whole world has witnessed the hate crime against Jews by Hitler. This is not acceptable and request you to erase Hitler name from the Daily soap. This has hurt our feeling.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council discussed the matter and held that the Appellant's contention that the programme's name may hurt viewers' sensitivities was exaggerated and inflated.
In the past, there have been serial/programme names with Hitler, and it is outside BCCC's mandate to suggest or dictate the names of programmes to channels. As such no content in the serial with references to Hitler or any of his genocidal affiliation can be inferred.
The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 93

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0093/2024 DATED 29 MARCH 2024
CHANNEL: Sony Marathi
LANGUAGE: Marathi
ROGRAMME: '*Maharashtrachi Hasya Jatra*', 18/03/2024, 11 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Alcohol/Drinking

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme showed a skit in which a group freely consumes liquor almost throughout the programme without any statutory warning. This is blatant disregard of rules.

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

The channel submits:

- We are conscious of the way our content is portrayed and ensure no inappropriate content is shown. The visuals of characters in an inebriated state (if incorporated) have been shot in a manner that expressive and verbal references has been avoided. There are mere indirect suggestions that may imply that the characters are intoxicated.
- Furthermore, although there is no requirement of placing any written and explicit statutory warnings or cautionary message while indirectly suggesting that may imply that the character is using or consuming alcohol, we value our viewers' feedback and have taken note of your inputs.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)
The appellant differs. In the episode in question, Sameer Chougule takes out a bottle of whiskey and tells his friends that it is 37 years old and costs Rs 43,000. Thereafter they open the bottle and start consuming alcohol and get inebriated. Nothing can be more explicit than this. The content is not suggestive and the word whiskey is clearly mentioned.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council viewed the APPEAL and found that to begin with, when the drunk person walks in on the stage with a bottle in his hand, the caption stating alcohol consumption is injurious to health comes up in Marathi. Later, towards the end, when a group of drunkards come in and one of them takes a sip from the bottle, the warning again flashes on screen. BCCC found that the word "whiskey" was not used anywhere. The Council also considered the fact that under the COTPA Act, it is mandatory for channels to exhibit a disclaimer when a smoking scene appears on TV, while for drinking scene, no such mandatory disclaimer is warranted. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 94

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0094/2024 DATED 29 MARCH 2024
CHANNEL: QTV
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Maskari Bhains Ki Taang*', 20/03/2024, 11 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Violent content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme shows violent content. It contains physical fights, acts of eating cow dung and mud. Once it was shown that a fly was sitting on someone's face and people were hitting him. They are encouraging violent content through this programme. The programme should be removed as it is not suitable for children.

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

The channel submits:

- The complaint/grievance in relation to the impugned episode and/or our show is as vague as it can be. There is no merit in the alleged grievance and the channel denies the same. From the nature of the complaint, it appears that the alleged grievance is complainant's personal view and opinion, which is totally misconceived and untenable. The channel fails to understand on what basis the complainant has formed his aforesaid alleged opinion.
- The channel is in no way intending to depict any inappropriate content and/or language in the show. The show is a work of fiction and slapstick comedy revolving around the daily lives of the characters depicted therein i.e. they are residents of a village and they depict situational comedy about everything that goes wrong in their village. This show is purely meant for the humour and entertainment of our audience. The impugned episode is not inappropriate for any age group as alleged and in fact the same is appreciated from time to time by various audience groups. One must appreciate that the show is fictional and not intended to hurt, disparage, or disrespect the belief(s) and/or sentiment(s) of any person, including children, whatsoever.
- The channel is cognizant of the various laws and guidelines applicable to the content being broadcast, including the programme code and the IBDF Guidelines and it abides by it in all content. The intent has never been to promote any content that will negatively impact children, nor does it encourage anyone to use inappropriate language. In fact, this show, has aired over 226 episodes and has been broadcast

since the past 14 months, attempts to promote comedy which can be enjoyed by the entire family. In every episode, the following disclaimer is displayed in relation to this show:

"इस कार्यक्रम के सभी चरित्र, चरित्रों के नाम, स्थान, घटनाएं, पूरी तरह से काल्पनिक हैं। किसी भी जीवित। या मृत व्यक्ति। या घटना। या स्थान से समानता मात्र एक संयोग है। इस कार्यक्रम के विषय-वस्तु का उद्देश्य किसी भी व्यक्ति, धर्म, जाति, समाज, संस्था, राजनीतिक दल इत्यादि की भावनाओं को ठेस पहुंचाना नहीं है। इस कार्यक्रम का इरादा काला जादू, मनोगत, प्राचीन धार्मिक गतिविधियों को बढ़ावा देना या जनता की राय को प्रभावित करना नहीं है। यह कार्यक्रम किसी भी ऐसे व्यक्ति की नकारात्मक भावनाओं या उपहास को बढ़ावा नहीं देता जो दिव्यांग है और ना ही उकसाने या प्रभावित करने का इरादा रखता है।Qtv कार्यक्रम कि विषय-वस्तु की पुष्टि या समर्थन नहीं करता, ना ही इसकी जिम्मेदारी लेता है। इस कार्यक्रम के विषय-वस्तु से जुड़े दर्शकों का कोई भी निर्णय। या कृत्य उनके अपने विवेक और स्वतंत्र इच्छा के आधीन है।कार्यक्रम में व्यक्त किसी भी दृष्टिकोण, सुझाव, विचार, कथन इत्यादि या उससे घटित किसी भी अवमानना या मानसिक आघात के लिए चैनल। या Qtv किसी भी प्रकार से जवाबदेह या उत्तरदायी नहीं है।"

The channel's position is so clarified and in view of the aforesaid, expects that there can be no grievance with respect to the impugned episode and that the complainant will not press the complaint any further.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)
The appellant submits that the videos attached by him are proof enough for the kind of content being shown. This is not a personal opinion but the programme is not fit for public viewing. The appellant further submits that he is a regular viewer of the channel (QTV) but this programme in particular is not fit for the channel.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council viewed the episode and found that the show revolves around situational and slapstick comedy set in a rural backdrop. The Council held that the show is all about humour with no disparaging or deprecatory affiliation
The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 95

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0095/2024 DATED 05 APRIL 2024
CHANNEL: Star Plus
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Jhanak*', 01/03/2024, 10:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Women Harassment

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: A woman is being harassed on a continuous basis. The programme has the worst storyline.

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

The channel submits:

- The show is a work of fiction that often relies on hyperbolic circumstances that are not in reality and cannot be compared with real life as such. The channel urges the appellant to please note that the featured rituals are used as a creative device

seeped in symbolism that are meant to indicate the physical and psychological distance, Anirudh's family wants to put between him and Jhanak.

- The rituals and their relevance to the track is entirely fictitious, formulated solely for dramatic storytelling. An advisory condemning such regressive practices and mindsets was also displayed during these scenes.
- Rest assured, Star Plus will never air content that endorses wrong actions or regressive behavior and only endeavours to deliver best-in-class content and entertainment to its viewers. The channel requests the appellant to watch the story to its logical conclusion.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)
The appellant is not satisfied with the channel's response and reiterates that women harassment is shown in every episode. The women characters encourage such activities.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
Request to look into the matter

BCCC DECISION:

The Council viewed the Episode. It found that the female protagonist Jhanak and Anirudh share an emotional bond. The protagonist Jhanak stays in Anirudh's house and is treated like a house help and they have got married in adverse circumstances which both of them are unable to reconcile themselves to. In the said episode, almost everyone in the family reprimands Jhanak for calling Anirudh multiple times on his phone when the family was away for some celebration. Jhanak tries to explain to everyone that she was calling him due to a medical emergency and not because she is attracted to Anirudh. Nobody allows her to speak in this particular episode and the sequence of blaming Jhanak continues for the entire episode. Finally, the grandfather comes and explains how Jhanak saved his life in a dire situation. He is also supported by the doctor who treated him and commends Jhanak for displaying her presence of mind. In the future episodes, Jhanak is blamed and accused for every petty thing but most of the times she raises her voice and stands for herself.
The Council felt the programme, on the whole, carries a positive message on the journey of self-empowerment of a single girl who fights relentlessly 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 protaganist's resilience than her suffering.

The Council felt 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 DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 96

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0096/2023 DATED 23 APRIL 2024
CHANNEL: Colors Kannada
LANGUAGE: Kannada
PROGRAMME: '*Gicchi Gili Gili*' (Season 3), 13/04/2024, 9 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Vulgar content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme shows adult humour and most of the time it borders on vulgarity. Sex and related topics are discussed. Since it is shown on primetime, children below 18 could be exposed to such content. It is better to ban such programmes.

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

The channel submits:

- *Gicchi Giligili*, a comic reality show, is one of our most popular shows and at present it is in the third season. The show has gained immense popularity for juxtaposing entertainment with strong social message regarding family morals, consequences of misogyny, domestic violence and social service, and has been appreciated by different quarters. Given its popularity, we ensure that we maintain a balance between the creative and compliance aspects in the programme. With our experience of handling the show for the past three seasons, we are extremely mindful of viewers' sensibilities and ensure no offensive content is aired.
- Comic shows usually contain satires and double entendre and many a times physical humour and inordinate dialogues are used as devices for inducing laughter and lightening a situation. However, keeping in mind that the show is watched by viewers of varied age groups and abiding by regulatory guidelines, the channel ensures that no reprehensible or distasteful dialogue or act is aired.
- While comedy is subjective and perceived differently by different people, all elements are not to be taken in their literal sense and must be viewed from entertainment viewpoint alone.
- 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 channel's response makes it clear that the show has adult humour. So, it is not appropriate to air it at 9 PM as children are awake and they might watch such content.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
Either 16+ parental guidance should be displayed or telecast it after 11PM.

BCCC DECISION:

The Council viewed the content. It found that Gicchi Giligili, a comic reality show, contain satires and double entendre and many a times physical humour and inordinate dialogues for inducing laughter and lightening a situation.

The Council agreed with the channel's defence on this particular episode. Comedy indeed can be subjective; while there could be some instances of double entendre, they don't seem to go overboard.
The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 97

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0097/2024 DATED 15 MAY 2024
CHANNEL: Asianet
LANGUAGE: Malayalam
PROGRAMME: '*Bigg Boss*' (Season 3), 25/03/2024 (16th Episode)
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Violence/Physical assault

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

On March 25, 2024, Asianet Channel aired it's 16th episode featuring the 15 day's activities, during which a serious physical altercation occurred between two contestants – Haseeb SK (known by the nickname Asi Rocky) and Sijo John. It is alleged that Asi Rocky struck Sijo John on the chin, resulting in severe injury. Subsequent medical reports indicate that Sijo sustained facial fractures requiring surgical intervention.

Asi Rocky's actions may potentially constitute offenses under IPC Sections 320 & 325. Furthermore, the broadcast by Asianet channel may violate the Programme Code as stipulated by the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, and The Cinematograph Act, 1952. Asianet's dissemination of video footage depicting the incident on social media platforms for promotional purposes may also contravene provisions of the IT Act, 2000, specifically Sections 66E and 67.

The involvement of the programme's host, film actor Mr Mohanlal, in these violations is notable. Production and airing of such content are deemed objectionable to the general audience, particularly given television's role as a medium commonly accessed by families across diverse demographics and socio-economic backgrounds, including the elderly, middle-aged individuals, and children.

This action additionally contravenes the advisory issued by the Ministry on January 9, 2023. Consequently, it is hereby requested that requisite legal measures be pursued against Endemol Shine India and Banijay for their facilitation of the production of unlawful content, Asianet channel and its parent company Disney Star for the broadcast of said content, and for an immediate cessation of the program's airing.

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

1. At the outset, it is submitted that the Letter dated 25 April 2024 has been inadvertently issued to Asianet News Network Pvt. Ltd. It is submitted that programme titled 'Bigg Boss Malayalam – Season 6' ("Show") is being aired on the Malayalam language TV channel "Asianet" owned and operated by Star India Pvt Ltd ("Star India"). We understand that the telecast of the 16th episode of the Show which carried visuals of an incident of altercations between the two contestants has been alleged to fall afoul of the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 ("CTN Rules"). In respect thereof, our reply is as under.
2. As a way of background, please note that the Show, is an unscripted format-based reality television show which places celebrities from different walks of life in close quarters having absolutely no connection to the outside world, for a minimum period of hundred days. Every week the participants, called "housemates", nominate one or more participants to be eliminated from the Show. The public/viewers vote to save their favourite participant from being eliminated from the show. The object of the Show is to place celebrities in unconventional situations in order to test their mettle and gauge their personalities and reaction/interaction with the other celebrities given that they are outside their comfort zone and put in isolation.
3. It is submitted that as per the format of the Show, every week a captain is elected amongst the housemates vide multiple physical tasks/activities and/or voting (as applicable). This elected captain is tasked to run the entire house and ensure that the daily chores assigned to each housemate/contestant are executed properly. During this exercise, an argument broke out between the then captain (Mr Sijo) and

another contestant, Rocky, over certain kitchen-related duties, which eventually led to Rocky punching Sijo.

4. Immediately after the incident, Rocky was called into the confession room and was reprimanded clearly emphasizing that such behaviour is a blatant violation of the format of the Show and house rules. Accordingly, Rocky was promptly evicted from the Show. During the following weekend episode, the host Mr Mohanlal discussed the incident with the housemates and the consequences of violating person space. Mr Mohanlal also apologized to Sijo for this unfortunate incident. In response, Sijo stated that he sees the incident in the spirit of the game and that he has no complaints against anyone including Rocky.
5. As is evident from the above, the Show never endorsed any negative conduct and/or action by the contestants. In fact, the Show terminated Rocky's Agreement and evicted him for his inappropriate behaviour in the Show. It is submitted that the Show must be viewed in totality and any part or scene, must not be taken out of context and analysed in isolation.
6. It is respectfully submitted that Star India has not violated any of the provisions of the CTN Rules, various advisories (including January 9, 2023) or any other law in force. It is further submitted that nothing has been telecasted that could offend good taste or decency and/or not suitable for unrestricted exhibition. It is settled law that the show must be seen as a whole and not in isolation. It is pertinent to note that the incident in question should not be seen in isolation but when looked as a whole does not convey anything that is against good taste or decency, or which is not suitable for unrestricted public exhibition stipulated under Rule 6(1)(a) and 6(1)(o) of the CTN Rules.
7. It is submitted that the broadcast of the incident was not at all disturbing/upsetting in any nature. The Show, when is viewed in its proper context and in totality, is not structured to incite violence between the contestants. On the contrary, the Show displays how strangers learn to live with each other, work in teams, build their communication skills and above all their community spirit.
8. It is pertinent to note that Star India has an in-house Self-Regulation Mechanism, viz. Standards & Practices Department (S&P), which serves as a gatekeeper to regulate the content of every program to ensure that the programs comply and adhere to the stipulations prescribed in the Programme Code. Star India is a responsible broadcaster and takes great pains to ensure that the content broadcast by it does not cause hurt or offend the sensibilities of its viewers. Star India aims to fulfil the highest broadcasting standards, including ensuring that the content aired on its TV channels complies with the guidelines prescribed by various statutory and self-regulating bodies.

In light of the above explanation, the channel trusts that the issue is suitably addressed. One will appreciate that given the circumstances the channel reserves all rights available to it in law, equity or otherwise.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The petitioner inter-alia requested the Ministry to take action against Asianet; TV channel and its parent company Disney Star for the said broadcast and immediate cessation of the Programme's airing.

In the meanwhile, the petitioner moved to High Court of Kerala and filed WP (C) No. 15148 of 2024- Adv. Adarsh S Vs. UOI & Ors. The Hon'ble Court after hearing the arguments passed an Order dated 11.04.2024directing that "... The matter raises a serious concern. In such circumstances, we direct 7st respondent (UOU MIB) to immediately address the violations of advisories, if necessary, by instructing the party respondents herein to desist from telecast such shows in electronic media.

Meanwhile, the channel, in its reply, has denied all the allegations and stated that it has not violated any provisions of Programme Code prescribed under the CTN Rules or various advisories (including January 9, 20231.

BCCC DECISION:

The channel was issued a Notice and called for a HEARING. In the Hearing, the channel's representatives emphasised the point that only one close-up shot of violence (the contestant punching another) was shown which was essential to showcase that such unruly and impulsive behaviour has no place in the Bigg Boss house. The same contestant who resorted to violence was later evicted from the Bigg Boss house. There was no prolonged depiction and without the actual violence being shown it would have been difficult for the producers or the channel to justify the remedial action that was taken against the erring contestant. The channel representatives also suggested that they have given the contestant who was punched, the option of pressing charges against the delinquent contestant which he refuted. The contestant's contract was terminated and the host of the show berated him for his disorderly conduct in his absence. He also apologised to the contestant on whom violence was inflicted upon.
The Council wished to understand the philosophy of the show in which structural torture and violence is used as a subtext. The channel representatives suggested that it is a global format that has been adopted, and Bigg Boss is a show that is shown in almost all major Indian languages. They also reiterated that the show's format is more of a social experiment in which people, who are taken out of their comfort zones, react to certain incidents/happenings. In this particular episode, the kind of incident that was exhibited was an isolated act which was not embedded in the show but should be viewed more of an unprovoked act. The Council was also informed that the channel did not condone the act of violence or support the unwarranted act of a single contestant. After hearing the arguments of the channel representatives, the Council cautioned them against normalising scenes of torture on their show, and categorically told them that in view of such depiction the Council has been compelled to issue an Advisory on Depiction of Violence in Reality Shows, which will subsequently be circulated to all IBDF member channels for adherence and compliance. The Council was also of the opinion that violence cannot be a means of entertainment.
Taking note of the channel's reply and arguments, the Council decided to DISPOSE OF the APPEAL with the rider that such untriggered violence has no place in linear television and many people would get impacted by it. The channel was also directed to set proper norms and guidelines if such an incident had to be shown on the show. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.

O. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 120TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 13TH AUGUST 2024

APPEAL- 98

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0098/2024 DATED 18 JUNE 2024

CHANNEL:	Colors
LANGUAGE:	Hindi
PROGRAMME:	'*Doree*', 10/06/2024 (Episode 211), 8:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:	Violence against children

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: In the said episode, a brutal attempt to the murder of a girl child was shown. The programme always shows gender discrimination and the lead actress is trying to kill the girl child. Kindly stop such content and save the girl child.

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

- '*Doree*' is one of our channel's most popular shows and has received praise from several quarters for its strong social message. The show focuses on the critical issue of girl child abandonment. It attempts to shed light on the harsh realities faced by many girls and challenges the prevailing mindset. Doree's character is a beacon of hope; breaking away from the stereotype that girls are a burden, she stands tall and questions Kailashi Devi's beliefs. Her strength and resilience inspire viewers to challenge societal norms.
- The clash between Kailashi Devi and Doree represents the struggle between tradition and progress. Kailashi's failed attempts to suppress Doree underscore the resilience of goodness and the power of questioning oppressive norms. Doree's escapes through divine intervention add an intriguing layer. It suggests that sometimes, forces beyond our understanding work in favour of justice and righteousness. Doree and Kailashi symbolise this struggle, embodying the battle for a better society. In addition, there are scrolls incorporated in scenes which clearly states that children were not harmed in any manner.
- The portrayal of connivance by questionable characters plays pivotal roles in taking the narrative forward and are integral to shows of this genre and Dori is no different. You would appreciate that victory of right cannot be shown without depiction of the wrong. However, we would also like to state that there is a distinction between reality and dramatic representation of facts in fictional shows. Though they might not be in concurrence with one another often, we have ensured that no transgression is appreciated in the show. Kindly note that all content provided 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 appellant submits that he is not satisfied with the channel's response. He believes that people like Kailashi Devi do not exist in this world and the makers are only making fool of the public.
- The girl Doree is only 6 years' old and the character of Kailashi assaults her and is always trying to kill her but somehow, she manages to save herself. It is a melodrama but millions of viewers watch it. If someone follows the same gesture, then who will be held responsible?

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

Request to stop such kind of child violence.

***DECISION**: BCCC had issued a Notice to the channel. In its reply, the channel said the violence depicted was created through computer-generated imagery and no child was put to risk during its shooting. The storyline revolves around battles between the child protagonist 'Doree' and the female antagonist 'Kailashi Devi' with the channel intending to depict a battle between innocence and malice in which the child protagonist emerges resilient and triumphant. The channel said the storyline addresses a critical and pervasive issue in Indian society – the abandonment and mistreatment of the girlchild. The story track was also meant to show the determination and grit of the child actor in which she overcomes overwhelming odds not only to protect herself from the machinations of the antagonist but also an infant in the process depicting hope and empowerment.*

After perusing the channel's reply, while appreciating the fact that in fictional storylines the victory of right cannot be shown without the depiction of wrong, the Council decided to <u>CAUTION</u> the channel against prolonged depictions of such tracks in which a child's life is subjected to lengthened torture or discomfiture. BCCC took the channel's reply on record in which it had acknowledged the Council's concerns over sensitive and mindful depiction of child characters and the transgressions that such tracks would necessitate. The APPEAL was thus DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 99

APPEAL NO. BCCC/0099/2024 DATED 25 JUNE 2024

CHANNEL:	POGO
LANGUAGE:	Hindi
PROGRAMME:	'*Chotta Bheem*', 09/06/2024, 9 AM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:	Violent content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The cartoon programme is violent for small children and encourages them towards violent activities in society.

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

- POGO is a leading child entertainment channel featuring content that spans multiple genres from comedy and action to games and curiosity. The channel has an in-house 'Content Compliance Department' (Standards & Practices Team) dedicated to review all on-air content beforehand with utmost vigilance. The highly experienced team makes sure that the content is not in violation of IBDF's 'Self-Regulatory Content Guidelines' and 'The Code for Self-Regulation of Advertising Content in India' prescribed by ASCI, in addition to the Programming and Advertising Code of CTN Act, 1994 and its Rules. The content scrutiny is also carried out in adherence to Indian cultural and religious sensitivities, organisation's internal 'Content Guidelines', Global Network Policies of Warner Bros Discovery as well as permissible industry standards. Especially the content aired on our channels dedicated to children entertainment is treated with high surveillance to cater to the sensibilities and sensitivities of the younger target group.
- The show '*Chhota Bheem*' is one of India's top animated series, wherein the lead character sets out on epic adventures and fights villains, monsters, and mutants to protect his village and its people. The essence of the series is to promote values such as bravery, kindness, and the victory of good over evil.
- The show depicts Chhota Bheem as a protector to safeguard his friends and & community; as opposed to "hammering kids to do violent activity" or promote violence as mentioned by you in your complaint. We respect your expressed concern and care to keep your child away from any ill influences; and therefore, as responsible content creators, we try to stay as cautious as possible while dramatizing acts or making representations of the locations, names or events in our content. Our motive is only to create high quality entertaining content for children and '*Chhota Bheem*' is a prime example of it.
- In the light of the above, please consider this complaint resolved and closed. Rest assured, we will continue to do our best to ensure that all compliances pertaining to the content being aired on our network adhere to all applicable rules, codes, guidelines and laws.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The appellant is not satisfied with the programme and channel's comments.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
The appellant requests to move towards resolution and stop the programme with immediate effect.

***DECISION**: The Council considered the appeal and viewed the content. 'Chhota Bheem' is a leading animated series for children, wherein the lead character sets out on epic adventures and fights villains, monsters and mutants to protect his village and its people. The essence of the series is to promote values like bravery, kindness, and the victory of good over evil BCCC found the plea that the show is violent impacting impressionable minds to be exaggerated. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.*

APPEAL- 100

APPEAL NO. BCCC/100/2024 DATED 26 JUNE 2024

CHANNEL:	Sony Sab
LANGUAGE:	Hindi
PROGRAMME:	'*Vanshaj*', 10/06/2024 at 10PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:	Corruption/ Disrepute

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme shows all government officers as corrupt. The jailor, who is a lady officer, is shown as corrupt. Her behaviour towards criminals and doctors is very bad. The programme shows negative content.

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

- At times certain negative incidents depicted in the show are an attempt to depict how evil can be eradicated and how light can conquer darkness. Further, a disclaimer is displayed prominently at the beginning of the show which clearly and unambiguously states that the show is a work of fiction.
- That being said, the channel is conscious of the way their stories have been portrayed and ensures that no inappropriate content is shown. Therefore, it is requested to watch the show in its entirety to understand its essence.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)
Government officers like doctors, jailors and other officers are shown in a negative manner. They show that a phone can control a woman's heart beats. Can you explain?

***DECISION**: BCCC had issued a Notice to the channel. In its reply, the channel said the impugned fictional series has completed more than 400 episodes and is currently off air. It is a family drama which depicts the story of a battle of rightful succession. At the heart of the storyline is the antagonist character 'DJ', who falsely implicates the female protagonist 'Yuvika', in a case to prevent her from inheriting the business empire. The depiction of the corrupt jailor 'Dhopte' as a gangster and butcher of the jail was done intentionally to establish her character traits. The scenes in which Yuvika was ordered by the jailor to clean her shoes using her tongue was shown suggestively. In the subsequent episodes, it is also shown that many inmates, including the lady gangster in the jail, come out and support Yuvika in extracting her revenge and punishing all the wrongdoers in her life. Dhopte is suspended for accepting bribes and is punished for her wrongdoing. Yuvika's maturity in dealing with complex situations inside the jail and bearing the burden of torture is also shown but through her actions she is able to win the heart of inmates.*
BCCC believes that no storyline moves forward until there is depiction of the evil and keeping in view the entirety of the story, such sequences were depicted. The Council

is not inclined to make an intervention in dictating storylines to channels. The APPEAL was, therefore, DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 101

APPEAL NO. BCCC/101/2024 DATED 02 JULY 2024

CHANNEL: Star Vijay
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: '*Siragaadika Aasai*', June episodes + 19 July
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Domestic violence

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:
In this programme, there is a lot of domestic violence. The show indirectly promotes dowry by ill-treating the poor daughter-in-law. Please take action against them otherwise such serials will keep evolving.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):
This show is a work of fiction, which inherently features hyperbolic dramatization of events and scenarios to enhance the viewer's experience. The mother-in-law is an established negative character and all her greed motivated bad actions are, without a doubt, never endorsed but strongly condemned in the show's narrative. In a daily show, storylines take some time to fully reveal themselves and we would urge your patience and understanding in allowing the story to unfold in the coming weeks.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- The programme affects people's mental state as domestic violence portrayed is a part of the storyline. Such content should not be viewed by the younger generation as it will spoil their outlook towards the society.
- Please air the show after 11 PM with a disclaimer that the storyline indirectly supports dowry, treats poor people badly and is a work of fiction.
- In India we do not consider stress and mental illness as a problem and consider only physical things as an issue. This series is the best example of that. If we encourage such shows, we are developing a young generation with a very bad attitude towards the needy. This will also encourage dowry. The channel being one of the best should consider the storyline at least hereafter and bring closure to this mental torture.

DECISION: The Council viewed few episodes and noted that the mother-in-law is an established negative character and all her greed motivated bad actions are never endorsed but strongly condemned in the show's narrative. While she is partial to wealth and ridicules the daughter in law for the jewels she got at her wedding, the storyline does not support dowry. In fact, in the episodes the father-in-law points out the faults of the mother-in-law and the husband supports his wife making it clear as to what is good or bad. The Council was also of the view that there are no scenes of domestic violence as alleged by the appellant although the scenes can be categorized as harassment. However, BCCC decided to advise the channel not to prolong scenes of harassment. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 102

APPEAL NO. BCCC/102/2024 DATED 09 JULY 2024

CHANNEL: Sony
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Super Star Singer 3*', Episodes 24 and 26

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Age-inappropriate humour

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:
Several episodes of this programme, a children's singing reality show, have evoked issues of morality.

In Episode 26, Captain Arunita Kanjilal was asked to comment on contestant Pihu's performance. She said, "I will come there and give a hug to Pihu." While she was going, Super Judge Neha Kakkar said, "*Ab aa hi rahi ho to baju wale ko bhi zara pyar de dena woh to bechara maar hi khata rehta hai*." To this, Captain Salman Ali said, "*Main toh intezaar kar raha hoon* (I am waiting)." Remarks of Ms Neha Kakkar, if scripted, show negligence in a children reality show. What kind of scriptwriting is this? Can a family audience accept this in children's reality show.

In Episode-24, Captain Salman Ali was found to be invading private space to the extent that Captain Arunita Kanjilal found her personal space violated. This is a reality show and care should have been taken by the content team. There were protests on social media for his behaviour. Many viewers and I are aware that Mr Salman Ali is sane as a captain and is a responsible person. In earlier videos, he violated personal space of Pawandeep and Arunita Kanjilal. Is this the standard followed in children singing show, to teach children how to be intrusive in other sane individual's private space?

Use of inappropriate language is unbecoming of children singing reality shows on national television. The channel's impeccable reputation is being dented by the present content team in the public eye. The people are injured on moral grounds.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):
- *Superstar Singer 3* is a reality show, meant only for entertainment purpose. This programme strives to bring the most talented singers throughout the country to the viewers. The show's objective is to bring out talent from various parts of the country for which the show is often praised.
- In response to the grievance, we would like to clarify that the Captains and Judge(s) do occasionally engage in light-hearted banter, and various situations are discussed in a humorous manner. That being said, we are conscious of the way our content has been portrayed and ensure nothing inappropriate is shown.
- At all times, the channel's endeavour has been to ensure that the content being telecast is within the framework of broadcasting standards. Further, we would like to submit that we place great emphasis on providing wholesome quality entertainment and 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, please be assured that was never the intent.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)
- The channel should have shown regret for its mistake but it is disappointing that this was not forthcoming. If the show is an adult show like *Indian Idol* or *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa* or any other programme not classified as a children show, then classifying it as light-hearted humour makes sense. This is because adults have a choice based on rating. But this show is expressly with singers below the age of 15 years. It is a family show watched by individuals who have varying conservative views as to what families and children can watch.
- Based on the above, the remarks and actions by the judges/captains of *Superstar Singer 3* should be encouraging children for good behaviour. A child's sensitivity should be borne in mind while evaluating his/her performance in reality shows. This specifically relate to the drama scenes I had been referring to above.

- The channel is required to consider audience demographics and their likely expectations. The appellant believes that even big television networks do make an oversight or mistake. If that was the case, an apology would have solved the need for appeal. What are generally accepted standards of decency? This needs to be answered as well.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

- Removal of Captain Salman Ali from *Superstar Singer 3* as he has proved to be unfit for the children programme and does not display a good moral conduct. I have no complaints about his singing capacity. He is alleged to be a nuisance in English common law to public spectators. This is displayed in various episodes.
- Removal of Mr Siddarth Dey as content team scriptwriter along with his supervisor. They have not displayed any script which meets the standards of the children programme based on what is observed in public show as referenced. Short of saying alleged professional negligence.

DECISION: The Council viewed the episode and found that there is banter between the captains, the judge and the guest judge of the show. In episode 24, Udit Narayan was the chief guest along with his wife. Nothing denigrating is said to child participants but there is considerable banter which is humorous. The child singers are exceptional when it comes to performances. BCCC did not find anything age-inappropriate being told to the child contestants. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 103

APPEAL NO. BCCC/103/2024 DATED 15 JULY 2024

CHANNEL:	Zee TV
LANGUAGE:	Hindi
PROGRAMME:	'*Bhagyalakshmi*', 05/06/2024, 8:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:	Child arrest/Illegal content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: Child character Paro (Parvati) is falsely accused of harming another character Neelam due to which Neelam lands up in hospital.
When police come to arrest Paro, her mother tries to protect her from being arrested. To this, the Inspector says that an "FIR has been registered against Paro." At that very moment, a woman claiming to be a "Special Officer" from a Baal Sudhaar Griha appears and stops the Inspector from arresting Paro, saying that this was "her case". The Inspector leaves, but this Special Officer and her team forcibly takes Paro to the Baal Sudhaar Griha.
The portrayal of Paro's arrest is horrifyingly and illegal. As per IPC, nothing is an offence if committed by a child below seven years of age, let alone being arrested or being sent to the Baal Sudhaar Griha. Further, no child can be sent to an Observation Home (Baal Sudhaar Griha) without and order of the Juvenile Justice Board.

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

- In the current track, the child (Paro) is being wrongfully framed by antagonist Malishka into an attempt to harm her own grandmother, Neelam. In this entire track, due care has been taken to ensure that during the shooting of the scene, the child was not under any kind of stress. Awareness scrolls have been put in place to ensure the audience knows that it is a fiction show meant for entertainment and the child has been well taken care of.
- In relation to her being taken by Juvenile Department officials, please note that the child is shown being handled with extreme care and caution. We would like to share that in real life too many a times such incidents do take place where children are put through difficult situations such as these. Sad but true, vindictive adults tend to

exploit children for their own personal vendettas. Depicting this track in our show was our honest effort to make the audience aware on how a child requires to be treated on human grounds, if such an unfortunate incident arises.

- If you have seen the track progress, the blame of the crime gets completely lifted off the child and she is not being prosecuted or put in any precarious situation. The channel ensures that it adheres to the BCCC Code and same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

1. The episode aired on 05/06/24 misrepresents legal procedure in India concerning a child under the age of criminal responsibility.
   Referring to the original complaint, there were two key legal violations:
   - As per Section 82 IPC, no child under the age of seven years can be held criminally liable.
   - As per the Juvenile Justice Act, Model Rules 2016 (Rule 9 (2)), no child can be sent to an Observation Home (Baal Sudhaar Griha) without an order of the Juvenile Justice Board.

2. The channel's response was vague and failed to address the core issues of misrepresentation of law and misinformation being spread to viewers.

   Furthermore, the portrayal of events in subsequent episodes is deeply concerning:
   - Episode 964 (06/06/24): Baal Sudhar Griha shows cohabitation of male and female children in conflict with law, which is legally incorrect. (Annexure-3).
   - Episode 966 (08/06/24) and episode 967 (09/06/24): Paro undergoes a trial in a Family Court, whereas in reality, cases against children take the form of inquiries before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB). These inquiries are closed to the public and involve only the parties concerned, unlike the open courtroom scenes depicted in the show. (Annexure-4)
   - Episode 980 (22/06/24): Paro, who is present in the courtroom in a matter where her mother and aunt are the accused, is shown to be slandered during her mother's statement being recorded in open court. This is a violation of the law which clearly states that joint proceedings of a child should not be conducted along with any person who is not a child. (Annexure-5)
3. While we understand that the show is fictional and to be viewed for entertainment purposes only, our concerns arise when the portrayal of scenes in the shows misrepresents the law to the extent that it significantly deviates from reality.
4. Given the show's broad reach and popularity, the makers should be aware of their social responsibility towards the audience. They must ensure that they are not misinforming citizens about their rights or about the laws that are applicable to their children, or delivering content which in any manner discourages them from pursuing legal remedies or justice.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

- The appellant urges BCCC to direct the channel to run an apology at the outset of every episode of '*Bhagya Lakshmi*' for an entire week. The apology should clearly state that the legal depiction in question was inaccurate and ideally it should also provide the correct legal information. This apology shall be in the form of a pre-recorded audio/video message.
- The appellant requests BCCC to mandate all TV channels to include a clear disclaimer at the beginning of any programme that features scenes depicting crimes against children. This disclaimer should specifically state that the legal procedures portrayed are fictionalised for dramatic effect and do not represent actual legal processes. "The channel does not condone the depicted procedures." This disclaimer

should be run additionally to the existing disclaimer which states that "no child was harmed during the shooting of this scene".

***DECISION**: BCCC had issued a Notice to the channel. In its reply, the channel accepted the concerns made by the Appellant. The Council directed the channel that in any sequence involving children, the channel has to run a disclaimer suggesting that no child was put in harm's way during the shooting of the impugned sequence in addition to the disclaimer that is depicted during the start of the programme. The Council also directed the channel to minimise fiction during depiction of legal procedures as it may have an adverse impact on viewers' minds. The APPEAL was thus DISPOSED OF.*

APPEAL- 104

APPEAL NO. BCCC/104/2024 DATED 21 JUNE 2024
CHANNEL: Colors
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Bigg Boss*', Episode 86
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Objectionable dialogues

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: In the programme, actress Isha Malviya uses the word "*Bhangi*" for a housemate. She should be arrested under the SC/ST Act. This word is banned by the Supreme Court. The actress intentionally uses the word to demean the Valmiki community. An FIR should be registered against the actress, producers and channel.

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

- We would like to clarify that the term used in the episode is "*Dhongi*", a word commonly used in Hindi parlance to refer to someone who is hypocritical and pretentious. We would also like to state that the sensibilities of our viewers are extremely important to us, and we always take affirmative measures to ensure that their sentiments and beliefs are not hurt in any manner.
- Kindly note that all content provided by us is compliant with the CABLE TV Network Rules, 1994 (as amended) and self-regulatory content guidelines while also upholding creative freedom of expression.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II) (Forwarded by MIB)
In the episode, a housemate uses the word "*Bhangi*" for another housemate. The channel denies it and says the word used was "*Dhongi*" and not "*Bhangi*". The channel feels that they can get aways through their claims.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
The appellant requests to take action.

***DECISION**: BCCC viewed the episode and found that the word used for the contestant was 'Dhongi" instead of the alleged usage of the word "Bhangi'. Not found maintainable, the APPEAL was DISMISSED.*

APPEAL- 105

APPEAL NO. BCCC/105/2024 DATED 24 JUNE 2024
CHANNEL: Star Plus
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Jhanak*', 16/03/2024

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Hurting religious sentiments

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: In the episode, the way the makers intend to torture Jhanak is intolerable. In the Hindu religion, there is no provision of cancellation of marriage through Hindu spiritual customs and traditions. Acts like removing *sindoor* and snatching sacred ornament '*vishakha*' that represents a married woman are shown. The said track was emotionally stressful. The channel runs the disclaimer that the scene is a work of fiction and they condemn such rituals/traditions. This proves that the makers knew that such scenes are unacceptable by the Hindu community.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II) (Forwarded by MIB)
I am not satisfied with the channel's reply. The justification given by the channel by playing with words is completely weak. TV programmes are responsible for polluting the society. Only Hindu religion is shown in a negative manner. Why don't the makers think of portraying any other religion the way they portray the Hindu religion? Viewers get emotionally attached to the characters. That is why we oppose such torture towards protagonist Jhanak and imaginative portrayal of Hindu religion in TV programmes.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL
The makers should be punished so that the other producers do not follow the same route. The makers should also be issued guidelines so that they do not hurt societal sentiments.

DECISION: ***Jhanak and Anirudh get married accidently. To nullify the marriage, Jhanak is brought to a temple and made to undo every marriage ritual by Anirudh's family. The grandmother, in the presence of the priest, asks Arshi (Anirudh's fiancé) to break "shakha pola" (wedding bangles) that Jhanak is wearing. Since Arshi is unable to break the remaining two bangles, her mother twists Jhanak's wrists and takes out the bangles. The grandmother asks Arshi to remove sindoor from Arshi's forehead. Arshi does so and washes it with water to remove it completely. Jhanak is asked to wear a white sari and dive into the water thrice. Jhanak agrees to dive in but refuses to wear a white saree.***
The grandmother asks few members not to worry about Jhanak by saying, "Ise kuch nahi hoga, aisi ladkiyan na paani mein doobti hain na agni mein jalti hain. Bahut mushkil se marti hain." Jhanak replies by quoting transcripts from the Geeta. Although there are disclaimers during these rituals, the said track continues for two episodes. The Council was shocked at the depravity being shown in such episodes, and discussed that marriages - real or accidental - cannot be revoked in such a manner. The Council also felt that the channel in this fictional serial has shown certain things which are inordinate and extravagant but it should refrain from prolonging such scenes in future episodes. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 106

APPEAL NO. BCCC/106/2024 DATED 30 JULY 2024
CHANNEL: Colors
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: Promo of '*Megha Barsenge*'
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Hurting religious sentiments

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

- The promo shows an Indian girl marrying a Sikh NRI who abandons her at their wedding. Being a member of the Sikh community, the appellant expresses deep concern regarding such portrayal.

- The appellant further submits that it is crucial to avoid perpetuating negative stereotypes that misrepresent Sikh values and contributions globally. Sikhism promotes principles of compassion, equality, and service to humanity. Sikhs have made significant contributions worldwide, from humanitarian aid to selfless community service, such as providing free meals in gurdwaras globally. Whenever there is a disaster in the world, Sikhs are often among the first to offer assistance.
- The storyline should be reconsidered and Sikh culture and values should be presented accurately with respect. Such representations are vital in fostering understanding and appreciation for the diverse cultures.

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

- This is a completely fictional show aimed at highlighting the journey of protagonist Megha and her steadfast resolve to seek answers after she is wronged. Though she is abandoned by her husband, she refuses to be a victim and chooses to fight her battle. She continues to believe in love and compassion and does not let her personal situation deter her from the right path.
- The scenes in the promo are only a quick comprehensive compilation of larger events that offers audiences a glimpse into the thematic essence of the show and enables them to gauge the plot.
- As a channel, we are extremely mindful of our viewers' sensitivities and always take affirmative measures to completely refrain from generalised commentary on any community. The progression of the show's narrative will bear testimony to this.
- 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) (Forwarded by MIB)

- In the promo, a Sikh groom is depicted running away with dowry in the middle of a marriage. This portrayal was deeply troubling and misleading. Why is the Sikh community being singled out and shown in a negative light? It feels the production house and the channel are consistently targeting the Sikh community.
- What has the Sikh community done to warrant such treatment? They are always known for generosity and willingness to support others, regardless of caste or creed. The contributions of the Sikh community are unparalleled, and it is disheartening to see such a skewed representation.
- Why there seems to be a lack of similar scrutiny or depiction of other communities such as Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Buddhists, and Jains. This selective portrayal raises questions about the motivations behind channel's programming choices.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL

The makers – director, producer and the channel – should issue a public apology. A 60-second video apology on the channel would be an appropriate gesture to address this issue and show respect to the Sikh community.

***DECISION**: BCCC viewed the promos and found that the female protagonist is abandoned by her husband after marriage. The promos seem to suggest that NRI Sikh grooms come to India and marry a girl and then are left at their own mercy except in case the female protagonist decides to find out why she has been left to fend for herself. BCCC also felt that fictional serials generally tend to take inspiration from real life incidents and in this case, there is nothing derogatory to the Sikh community or any other community per se. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.*

APPEAL- 107 TO 115

Multiple appeals against 'Maati Se Bandhi Dor' on Star Plus (Appeal 107 to 115)

SUMMARY: The Appellants allege that the show insults their community/religion. It denigrates women of Marathi background. They are being portrayed as being violent and without moral values. The Appellants claim the channel was aware of the story as it is a "remake". The channel spreads wrong information of making a family drama. It shows romance between brother-in-law and sister-in-law. "This is unacceptable and harms our society where we have to fight crime. We will not allow the makers to insult our culture and women (who work in villages) by portraying them as characterless. Kindly end the show. The channel should take responsibility."
In its last meeting, BCCC had directed the channel to send a detailed clarification.

Clarification/Response from the channel:

The channel states that by means of repetitive and disingenuous allegations by certain complainants there is an attempt to present the programme's narrative in a light that is simply untrue and not based on facts. A few months before the release of the show, a misinformed speculation took off on social media that compared the show to a 2013 Star Maa programme '*Devatha*'.The channel reiterates that '*Maati Se Bandhi Dor*' is not a remake of '*Devatha*' and does not follow its narrative. All allegations made by the complainants are baseless and the subject matter referenced in their complaints does not feature in the show.

Below are the two primary grievances as they appear in all complaints:

1. That the show presents women in Maharashtrian villages in a poor light:

On the contrary, the show's protagonist (Vaiju) is a strong female rural farmer who supports her family by toiling in the fields every day. She works in the harsh sun, muddy fields, ploughing them herself. In a unique and never before seen portrayal of woman farmers, Vaiju embodies a bold-faced attitude and a strong value system that puts pride and honour before all things. No character, including Vaiju or her sister, are portrayed as promiscuous or as having questionable morals. Vaiju's character reflects an undying sense of loyalty and responsibility towards her family. Most importantly a virtuous character like Vaiju presents Maharashtrian culture and women in the most flattering and heroic light. We confirm that the show makes absolutely no disparaging references to either.

3. That the show encourages illicit relationships and is against Indian family culture and Hindu religion:

'*Maati Se Bandhi Dor*' is a classic love triangle where the lives of two sisters are unknowingly enmeshed with the same man. Love triangles are an evergreen theme in entertainment, especially romantic fiction, including opera, romance novels, soap operas, romantic comedies and popular music. They are undeniably a major aspect of Indian television shows with most major television dramas and films find themselves centered on a love triangle. Like in a classic Shakespearean romantic drama story structure, '*Maati Se Bandhi Dor*' features initial tragedy (circumstances leading to a forced marriage, unrequited love), internal & external conflict (discovery that Ranvijay was in love with Vaiju's sister Jaya, Vaiju's guilt at having unknowingly wronged her sister, Ranvijay rejecting Vaiju), redemptive plots (Vaiju wanting to fix everything, Ranvijay being unable to dislike Vaiju despite trying) and ultimate catharsis (to unfold as

the show draws to an end). The show features all the elements of a classic story structure in a balanced and realistic manner.

'*Maati Se Bandhi Dor*' is a fictional narrative designed to explore the complexities of human relationships and emotions. The characters and their actions are purely fictional and are intended to be reflection of real-life emotions and sentiments, and not individuals or events. We have taken great care to ensure that the content is sensitive and respectful of diverse perspectives. All characters embody gracious and respectful manners and there is no element of sensational or scandalous conduct. They never cross any boundaries or behave in an inappropriate or indecent manner.

We strongly deny all allegations made by the complainants that paint the show as salacious, indecent, or lewd. Most importantly, the show features ABSOLUTELY NO such content as referenced in the complaints.

As responsible content creators and a television network with a vast footprint, we understand the impact our content has on the audiences and maintain that the show does not feature anything that can be considered detrimental to the viewers. We would like the Council to kindly note that some misinformed fan groups on social media are campaigning incessantly to pressurize the makers to change the track to their liking, going to the extent of harassing the show's cast and creators. The spat of complaints directed at the Council appears 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.

DECISION: The Council had earlier discussed the complaints and sought a detailed clarification from the channel. After careful consideration of the channel's reply and watching the storyline. BCCC decided against any intervention in dictating narratives to the channel as it would be against creative liberty guaranteed to fictional programmes. The Appeal was DISMISSED. The Council has also passed a detailed order in the matter.

N. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 121st BCCC MEETING HELD ON 17TH JANUARY 2025

APPEAL- 116

APPEAL NO. BCCC/116/2024 DATED 13 AUGUST 2024
CHANNEL: Star Jalsha
LANGUAGE: Bengali
PROGRAMME: 'Roshnai', 05/04/2024, 8:30PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Derogatory and unscientific content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme shows that the city of Banaras is still in the middle aged mindset where the Mukhiya decides the marriage of unprotected woman and the administration/police are controlled by mafias. Such content is derogatory. Also, in a hospital scene they are showing a doctor and his associates saying that now only God can cure the patient instead of referring the patient to a better hospital. The doctor allows patient's relative in operation table to put a flower near patient's head. It is totally unscientific and harmful idea. It is astonishing how does a channel promote such derogatory and unscientific plot publicly?

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

The channel submits:

1. The show is a work of fiction and all characters, names of characters, locations and events featured in the program are a work of fiction and are not based on reality and cannot be compared with real life as such. We have nothing but the greatest respect for healthcare professionals and would never intentionally portray them in an unscientific or unflattering manner.

2. In the scene referenced in the complaint the doctor characters merely utter a frequently used Indian phrase and it would be unfair to give it a meaning that is not intended. As a responsible broadcaster we are extremely mindful of the message out content carries and always try to ensure that it is ultimately constructive. Upon review the content referenced in your complaint was not found to be in violation of the BCCC code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- No such story should be selected at the time of scripting where science, arts, history, culture of any country or society is disrespected.

- Even fiction should show some ethics and morals and respect to science and culture. In the programme when Aranyak met with an accident he was admitted to a rural hospital. Usually, due to lack of infrastructure the hospital always will shift the patient to better hospital. Here the doctor is getting confused whether the patient will survive or not?

- The channel should be mindful in selecting new ideas where science, history and culture are given due respect.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
The track should be stopped or the script should be changed.

***DECISION**: BCCC viewed the episode and found that the programme is based out of Varanasi and revolves around a young girl Roshnai, who is a bubbly and vivacious girl. BCCCC accepted the channel's reply that in fictional shows, characters, names of characters, locations and events are not comparable with real life. In the impugned scene, when the doctor says the phrase, it would be unwise and unfair to provide a connotation which was not intended or meant. It was only incidental to the episode and no significance should be attributed to the phrase as it doesn't even attempt to demean the noble medical profession. The APPEAL was thus DISPOSED OF.*

APPEAL- 117

APPEAL NO. BCCC/117/2024 DATED 16 AUGUST 2024
CHANNEL: Zee Marathi
LANGUAGE: Marathi
PROGRAMME: '*Punha Kartavya Aahe*', 09/07/2024, 9:30PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Portrayal of a child as goon

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: In a primary school classroom, a student behaves like a goon. He threatens two girls over studies. He said, "Teacher punished you but there is one more person, that is me, who will punish you." This student behaved like a gang leader.

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

The channel submits:

- In the said episode, the children are pranking by planning to bait their stepbrother. They do this by asking a friend to act as a bully and try to get a rise from their stepbrother. This is merely done by them to get their stepbrother in trouble.

- This is a normal track showing childish sibling rivalry and small unharmful tricks to get back at their stepbrother for coming into their lives. The children are not able to accept him as their family and hence acting out. We are just trying to show real life issues which may take place in case of a complicated marriage and other contributing factors.

- The channel adheres to the BCCC Code and same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

- The channel's response doesn't mention about the child's goon-like behaviour. Usually, schools have supervisory staff who ensure that such behaviour doesn't happen, and the management takes strict action against such students.

- Since the channel is of the view that it is showing real-life issues and the track in question was a prank, why did it not show any punishment given to these students in the subsequent episode?

- These programmes are watched by families. What impression will this have on viewers? I am not satisfied with the channel's response.

***DECISION**: BCCC viewed the content and found that in the impugned episode, two children (girls) of the same family are shown not to complete their homework and they are reprimanded by their teacher for not doing so. In a separate sequence, the bully boy Rocky is shown to be telling the girls that not only the teacher will punish them for not completing their homework, but they will also be punished by him. Students are shown booing the girls and cheering for the bully. In the subsequent episode it is shown that the stepbrother, who comes to save the girls, is locked inside an isolated room in the school and the previous act was only used as a bait to lure the brother to follow the girls when they run away from the class. The parents are shown to be frantically looking for the boy who has not returned home from school. They find him in an unconscious state in the room that he was locked in. The boy has been shown as traumatised and in the subsequent episodes has been shown to know the chicanery and machination of the young girls. Considering it to be part of the storyline, BCCC did not intervene into the creative rendition. The APPEAL was thus DISPOSED OF.*

APPEAL- 118

APPEAL NO. BCCC/118/2024 DATED 28 SEPTEMBER 2024

CHANNEL: Sony
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Crime Patrol*', 30/09/2024 at 5:50PM + Multiple episodes
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Violence

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: Most episodes of this programme show police officers slapping and assaulting citizens on a continuous basis. This is barred by law. Also, showing police officials beating people appears to normalise such behaviour.

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

The channel submits:

- The show, being a fictional series, also seeks to alert and inform viewers about safety. Through this show, our police force is shown having some of the bravest men and women in uniform who act promptly and effectively in solving complex criminal cases. We take pride in the fact that Mumbai Police has taken some episodes of this show as case studies for serving and trainee officers.

- '*Crime Patrol*' is essentially a work of fiction. It is a reconstruction of events based on media reports, public records, and other information in the public domain. The characters, places, names and events are fictionalised and creatively conceptualized for the purpose of dramatization. The series does not make any claims of authenticity or correctness of any events, incidents, as depicted. Even if there is any resemblance or similarity of the characters, places, names, and events in the series to any actual events, entities, places, or persons (living or dead), such resemblance is entirely unintentional and coincidental.

- Our endeavour at all times is to ensure that our content is within the framework of the laws of India and in compliance with the IBDF's Self-Regulatory Content Guidelines for Non-News & Current Affairs Television Channels.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

Not satisfied by channel's response the appellant submits:

1. In several episodes, police are shown beating the citizens which normalises police assault. Such an act is Illegal. Citizens and police must condemn and oppose such behaviour.

2. It seems the channel feels that this is an act of bravery as its response states that the police use their programme to train their force. If this is true, it is a cause for greater concern and seems to legitimise an illegal practice. I hope you will see the rationale of my complaint and will direct appropriate action.

3. Multiple episodes of the programme give an impression that the episodes are based on real life incidents. Most of them show police officers slapping, assaulting citizens routinely. Even today's episode (30/09/2024) shows police hitting people. There is a need for the country not to normalise illegal actions by police, otherwise we degenerate into Jungle Raj.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL: The channel should take steps to stop showing violence by police. It should consider putting a disclaimer in earlier episodes.

***DECISION**: The episode depicts rape and brutal murder of a young girl who was hearing impaired. When police question the initial witnesses, the inspector is shown to be slapping a fruit vendor who offered the victim apple from his shop and who was last seen at his shop. There are instances when police high handedness is shown in multiple episodes, but it is a fictional representation of the actual crimes that have occurred over a period of time. As far as disclaimer is concerned, the channel clearly and categorically states in its disclaimer that the episodes are work of fiction based on the reconstruction of events based from multiple open sources and information in the public domain. The routine slapping or beating up of ordinary citizens or allegedly accused is done only for the purposes of dramatization and is primarily done to bring*

out the truth or solve the cases rather than for purposes of assault or to demean the police force's high handedness. The APPEAL was therefore DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 119

APPEAL NO. BCCC/119/2024 DATED 06/11/2024
CHANNEL: Star Vijay
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: '*Baagyalatchumi*', 16/10/2024, 8:30PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Hurting religious sentiments

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The character named Gopi confronts Baagyalatchumi with dialogues of betrayal using "Lord Govinda" (Tirupathi Balaji) name and doing mockery of it. This hurts my religious sentiments. The appellant is seeking clarification from the makers that on which context this was allowed.

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

The channel submits:

- The show is a family drama which revolves around a housewife Baagyalatchumi's life and her journey towards finding self-respect and happiness.

- Baagyalatchumi faces some difficulties in her hotel business through a chef who works as a spy for her ex-husband Gopi. Due to one of his conspiracies, Baagyalatchumi's hotel was locked and sealed by the concerned authorities. When Gopi casually meets Baagyalatchumi on the road, he starts to criticize her.

- Please note that there is no intention on the makers' behalf to bring in any religious angle. At Star Vijay we have the deepest respect for all religions, faiths and belief systems and would never air content that could hurt anyone's sentiments. Having said that, rest assured that your views and feedback have been noted and relayed to the team working on the show.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)
The appellant is not satisfied with the channel's response.

DECISION: The Council viewed the complaint and found that Bhagyalakshmi is a strong and positive woman who is financially independent. The protagonist's ex-husband manages to shut her restaurant. He is elated with the fact that Bhagyalakshmi is in crisis and uses the word 'Govinda' implying that she has lost everything. The word Govinda is commonly used in Tamil Nadu when somebody is in crisis. No denigration of any faith or religion is evident. The APPEAL was therefore DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 120

APPEAL NO. BCCC/120/2024 DATED 08/11/2024
CHANNEL: Cartoon Network
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Dragon Ball*', 22/10/2024, 9:15PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Nudity

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: This is a cartoon show. The episode shows adult magazines containing nudity.

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

The channel submits:

- Cartoon Network is a leading kids' entertainment channel featuring content that spans multiple genres from comedy and action. The channel has an in-house 'Content Compliance Department' (Standards & Practices Team) dedicated to review all the on-air content beforehand with utmost vigilance. The highly experienced team makes sure that the content is not in violation of the 'Self-Regulatory Content Guidelines' prescribed by IBDF and 'The Code for Self-Regulation of Advertising Content In India' prescribed by the ASCI, in addition to the Programming and Advertising Code of Cable Television Network Act, 1994 and its Rules. The content scrutiny is also carried out in adherence to Indian cultural and religious sensitivities, organization's internal 'Content Guidelines', Global Network Policies of Warner Bros. Discovery, as well as permissible industry standards. Especially the content aired on our channels dedicated to kids' entertainment is treated with high surveillance to cater to the sensibilities and sensitivities of the younger target group.

- "*Dragon Ball Z*" is one of India's top animated series, that follows the adventures of Goku who, along with the Z Warriors, defends the Earth against evil. The action adventures are entertaining and reinforce the concept of good versus evil. "*Dragon Ball Z*" teaches valuable character virtues such as teamwork, loyalty, and trustworthiness. The 'adult nude magazine' referred by you in your complaint is a regular magazine with a cover showing a picture of woman posing. Also, no attention is brought to the magazine or the picture separately in the story. However, we respect your expressed concern and care to keep your child away from any ill influences; and therefore, as responsible content creators have decided to modify the content before airing it again. Our motive is to only deliver high quality entertaining content for kids and 'Dragon Ball Z' is a prime example of it.

- In the light of the above, please consider this complaint resolved and closed. Rest assured, we will continue to do our best to ensure that all compliances pertaining to the content being aired on our network adhere to all applicable rules, codes, guidelines and laws.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)
The appellant is not satisfied with the channel's response and submits that master Roshi does a lot of obscene acts towards the girl. This can have a very bad impact on the children's development. The appellant has unsubscribed cartoon network due to this programme.

BCCC DECISION: BCCC has directed the channel to run an APOLOGY SCROLL. A DETAILED ORDER has been passed for this programme.

APPEAL- 121

APPEAL NO. BCCC/121/2024 DATED 12/11/2024

CHANNEL:	Colors
LANGUAGE:	Hindi
PROGRAMME:	'*Bigg Boss*', 30/10/2014,10PM, Episode -25

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Comments on reservation policy

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:
In the episode, contestant Karanveer Mehra makes a very sad statement about Indian reservation while talking to another contestant Rajat Dalal. The statement was made twice. While referring to the selection of 'Time Guru' in the show, he said, "This reservation has become like a person, the one who is not worthy is appointed to the post."

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

- At the very outset we would like to state that there was no conversation about the Indian reservation system at all.
- In the instance mentioned, a task was conducted wherein Shilpa played the role of Rajmaata, Karanveer and Vivian played Yuvaarj 1 and Yuvraaj 2 respectively and Rajat was the Senapati. Rajmaata had to select a 'Time Guru' basis the discussions between the Karanveer and Vivian, and she decides to choose the latter instead of the former who she is seemingly close to.
- The conversation that ensued was solely related to this task and Karanveer states that Vivian was selected not due to his merit but because of Shilpa's preference towards him. We would like to reiterate that this entire discussion revolved around the selection of 'Time Guru' and had no other implications whatsoever.
- 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)

- Karanveer Mehra while discussing with contestant Shilpa Shirodkar very clearly said, "Matlab ye reservation ho gaya, privilege ko extra chances mil gaya, matlab wo value nahi bhi karta, tab bhi usko chance de diya."
- Speaking in the same context for the second time, Karanveer Mehra told contestant Rajat Dalal, "Tabhi to bola aarakshan, jo layak nahi tha use bhi mauka diya gaya."
- When I complained in this regard, I got a mail from the concerned team in which according to them it was only about Time God. By making such ridiculous statements, he has hurt the sentiments of more people like us.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
This season of the show should be banned or at least contestant Karanvir Mehra should apologize as his statement has created dissatisfaction towards Indian reservation system.

DECISION: The Council viewed *the episode and found that Karanveer, while discussing with contestant Shilpa the reason why he was not made the 'Time Guru', says, "Matlab ye aarakshan ho gaya, privilege ko extra chances mil gaye. Matlab agar wo value nahi bhi rakhta, phir bhi usko chance de diya." The dialogue was uttered on the selection of Vivian D'sena as the Time Guru of the house by Shilpa Shirodkar and the conversation was not reflective or a commentary on the Indian reservation system. Attributing other implications to a seemingly innocuous conversation would be unfair. The Council decided to DISPOSE OF the Appeal.*

APPEAL- 122

APPEAL NO. BCCC/122/2024 DATED 13/11/2024
CHANNEL: Colors

LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Bigg Boss*', 24/10/2024,10:50PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Unethical content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:
They are showing content which is against humanity by making people beg, steal, borrow or even abuse verbally for food. The makers are teaching society to be sadist for entertainment. Its highly unethical.

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

1. '*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. It has a mix of personalities, and they behave/react differently due to their different inherent traits. However, given that it is the flagship show of our network, we have ensured that we maintain a balance between the creative and compliance aspects in the programme.
2. Avinash, while in jail, was entrusted with the responsibility of distributing food to other contestants, but how he handled the responsibility reflected his innate character and mindset. We hope you understand that since 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 broadcaster to offer them a peek into what transpired.
3. We have always strived to be authentic in our portrayals of contestants on '*Bigg Boss*', however host Salman Khan addressed the issue during the weekend episode and Avinash's actions were criticised. We would also like to state that no cuss words were audible in the episode.
4. 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)
I am not satisfied with the channel's response as the show has been polluting the society by showing that mean and sadist behaviour is normal. This is very harmful for the society. People, especially youngsters, who watch it, are becoming cruel as they see celebrities behaving in such a manner and they feel it is "cool". Keep a close watch on the content of the show.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
Please take action against them

DECISION: The Council viewed the episode and found that Avinash and Afreen are given powers to give food items from the weekly ration to the other inmates of the Bigg Boss House. In this task, the contestants have to sacrifice their most prized possession in return of the items they wish for. The sacrificed items were put in a bin by the contestants which was eventually to be destroyed by fire. Afreen and Avinash have to mutually decide on whether they want to give the items or not depending on the sacrifice made by each contestant.
The contestants are shown to be crying and requesting for basic food items by sacrificing things they were emotionally attached to. BCCC also felt that since 'Bigg Boss' is a reality show in which public voting decides the outcome of the contestants

and the channel is at liberty to showcase people as they wish to (whether positive or negative) and where survival is of essence, the complaint that celebrities behave in one particular manner which will impact the viewers who watch the show was not found to be maintainable. The APPEAL was therefore DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 123

APPEAL NO. BCCC/123/2024 DATED 15/11/2024
CHANNEL: Colors
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Bigg Boss*', 22/10/2014,10PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Violence, Biased content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:

The channel gave full authority to Avinash to misbehave with women. He regularly misbehaves on the show. He does not provide food items to the housemates. This is inhuman and against our value system. Contestants Shrutika and Chum had no option but to pursue him to give them food. This is condemnable. Please investigate the channel as it is giving a wrong message in the society. It is also negatively impacting the youngsters. Kindly stop the show or shift it to 11PM slot.

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

The channel submits:

- '*Bigg Boss*' is a reality show where contestants are kept in a house and isolated from rest of the world. The situations and incidents that takes place are real and unscripted. These personalities mix and reflect different behavioural patterns. We have ensured as a responsible broadcaster that we maintain a balance between creativity and compliances.
- Avinash was entrusted with the responsibility of distributing food in the jail premises created in the Bigg Boss House. All such tasks reflect mentality of the contestants and their character. Since general public votes to oust certain contestants, we wanted to show the circumstances under which Avinash performed. In the weekend episode, Avinash was criticised for his task performance by the show host Salman Khan. However, no derogatory word was uttered.
- We have adhered to the Cable TV Network Regulation Act 1994 and all self-regulating guidelines. Viewer feedback is of paramount importance to us, and we wish to thank our viewers for their constant support and feedback.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)
The appellant is not satisfied with the channel's response and submits:

- The channel is supporting Avinash and they themselves admitted that Avinash did not perform the task to complete satisfaction, yet no punitive action was initiated against him. Elvish and Isha were brought to the house to support Avinash. They get into a gossip session with him, and nobody is bothered to ask as to what these conversations revolve around. They were supporting Avinash when he got into a fight with Rajat and Rathi and they did not stop him from fighting. Colors TV seems to be biased in favour of Avinash.
- Colors TV does not have the permit to show the humiliation of women in the name of creativity and freedom of speech and expression. They have been instilling

negative thoughts in the minds of the young generation. I appeal against the biased behaviour of the show.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
The channel should be given a stern warning, or the show be shifted to 11PM slot.

***DECISION**: BCCC viewed the complaint and found there is no favouritism shown by Bigg Boss. The contestants create bonds to save themselves from being ousted and Alice and Isha bond with Avinash to make themselves safe. They also strategise to bring other candidates towards their group so that they remain safe when they stay collectively. The APPEAL was therefore DISPOSED OF.*

APPEAL- 124

APPEAL NO. BCCC/124/2024 DATED 21/11/2024

CHANNEL: Colors
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Bigg Boss*', 02/11/2024, 9:30PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Threat/Violence

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: Contestant Alice made a death threat against fellow contestant Karanveer Mehra. Channel has shown it and nothing has been done about it.

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

The channel submits:

- We would like to state that the instance mentioned in your grievance refers to a conversation amongst Alice, Eisha and Avinash where they talk about Karan's game and tactics inside the Bigg Boss house. Alice has had an unpleasant experience with Karan and was just venting out her feelings telling the others about how much she dislikes Karan and how she wants to kill him. We hope you understand that Alice's comments in this context must not to be taken in literal sense. Further, since Karan was nowhere near Alice when the comments were made and he wasn't addressed directly, the comments cannot be construed as threat of any kind.
- We would like to assure you that the wellbeing 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.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)
The Appellant is dissatisfied and disappointed by the channel's response. The channel did not clarify this on the 'weekend ka vaar' episode as to how Alice's statement was not meant in relation to what she said. Avinash did try to ask her if she meant to kill Karan in the game to which she said that she wanted to kill Karan physically. The channel did not warn Alice for her comments as there could be many unpleasant moments that can happen between contestants and they can express views against each other. But such threats should at least be addressed and clarified for the audiences.

***DECISION**: BCCC viewed the episode and found that contestant Alice, while speaking to her friends Eisha and Avinash, says she wants to kill Karan. When Avinash asks her if she wishes to kill Karan in the game, she wants to kill Karan physically, she says she wants to murder him and she is aware of the fact that this conversation is being recorded. She adds that Karan is responsible for ruining her relationship. He presented things in an entirely different manner inside.*
It was made as a random comment by the contestant as Karanveer had made some remarks against her. The Council believes that in a reality show, the channel is at liberty to air contestants' views to the public so that they can judge both the strategy of other contestants and the off-the-cuff remark cannot be taken in a literal sense. The Council decided against any intervention and DISPOSED OF the APPEAL.

APPEAL- 125

APPEAL NO. BCCC/125/2024 DATED 29/11/2024
CHANNEL: Colors
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Shiv Shakti*', 18th to 22nd Nov 2024, 8PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Mythology

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The show distorts facts of Hindu Mythology to a very large extent. The channel telecasts completely false manipulative stories. In the name of creative imagination, they are degrading Hindu deities which is not acceptable.

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

The channel submits:

- The show is a fictionalised representation of stories revolving around Lord Shiva and Goddess Shakti and an attempt by the channel to bring the same to viewers.
- India is an amalgamation of different cultures and beliefs and therefore most Indian mythologies have different versions and interpretations. They have been told and retold through eons and some versions are different from others.
- The channel would like to emphasise that the scripts are not sourced from a single text but rather from a multitude of books including Skanda Puran, Markandeya Puran, Shiv Puran Rudra Samhita Sati Khand, Shiv Puran, Rudra Samhita, Parvati Khand, Devi Bhagwat Puran, Linga Puran, Valmiki Ramayana, Adi Parva and Vana Parva. References have also been taken from scriptures, folklores, and fables and the key elements from all these sources are weaved into a narrative and presented to viewers.
- We hope you would appreciate the fact that all tracks/visuals are true in the sense that they become the basis for thought and action of the creative narrative. 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)

- In the name of fiction, the channel has taken too much liberty to insult Gods and Goddesses. In the name of cultural amalgamation of stories, the channel shows utterly nonsensical false narratives. Why are they not fictionalising content of mythology of Muslims, Christians or Sikhs? This is not the first time when this channel has crossed its limit. Before this show, they had also run many Hindu mythological

shows with distorted facts. The channel has no right to hurt our religious sentiments by fictionalising religious content.

- Today, Children are thinking that this fictionalised content is our true mythology, which, in fact, is the opposite since the channel has greatly maligned the image of our Gods Kartikey, Shiva and Parvati to a greater extent.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

It is requested to take action against the channel and the production house. It is further requested to ban this show on national television. Also, the channel should be advised to refrain from such depiction of mythology.

DECISION: The Council viewed some episodes and found that the channel has taken creative liberty in depiction of some episodes. BCCC took on record the channel's reply that it has referred to renowned mythological sources from a multitude of books including Skanda Puran, Markandeya Puran, Shiv Puran, Rudra Samhita, Sati Khand, Shiv Puran, Rudra Samhita, Parvati Khand, Devi Bhagwat Puran, Linga Puran and Valmiki Ramayana Adi Parva and Vana Parva. BCCC took on record that references have also been taken from scriptures, folklores, and fables and the key elements from all these sources are weaved into a narrative and presented to the viewers. The characters are extrapolated from such sources to keep the authenticity intact. The Council opined that there could be various interpretations of mythology and the channel must, in future, be mindful of popular sensitivities in the depiction of mythological figures. The APPEAL was thus DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 126

APPEAL NO. BCCC/126/2024 DATED 16/12/2024
CHANNEL: Sab TV
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Baadal Pe Paon Hai*', 29/11/2024 at 8:20PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Drinking/Alcohol

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: Showing alcohol drinking on national TV without any statutory warning. A grandmother drinking alcohol with son and grandson encourages today's youth to drink alcohol. Showing son drinking alcohol with his dad is the culture we are promoting in our country. Such content should be banned from national television.

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

The channel submits:

- They are conscious of the way their content is portrayed and they ensure that no inappropriate content is shown. All the content has been represented in an aesthetic manner. There are mere indirect suggestions that may imply that the characters are using or consuming alcohol.
- Furthermore, there is no requirement of placing any written and explicit statutory warnings or cautionary message while indirectly suggesting that may imply that the character is using or consuming alcohol.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)
The Appellant wishes to know as to why it is compulsory for only movies or web series to show disclaimer regarding alcohol and cigarette smoking. What will be the impact of such a

show on the mental aspect of kids? Drinking alcohol with dad or grandmother is not part of Indian culture. Ramayana is shown prior to this show which is reflective of the Indian culture and such shows degrade Indian culture.

***DECISION**: The Council viewed the episode and found that during the anniversary celebrations, the grandmother, while having a drink, says, "Why is this glass empty? Fill the glass of Mr Arora." Subsequently, in a different sequence, the father asks his son to have a drink with him as it is his anniversary celebration. While he starts drinking, the father asks him to drink the whole peg in one go (bottoms up). He pours another one and gives his son to drink though he secretly throws away his own drink. The father's intention is to get some information out of his son while he gets inebriated.*
BCCC feels that any fictional narrative on TV cannot be a parameter to gauge public sentiment and cannot be construed to demean or degrade Indian culture. 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 channel's creative liberty and any intervention could mean dictating storylines to channels which is not BCCC's mandate. The APPEAL was thus DISPOSED OF.

0. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 122nd BCCC MEETING HELD ON 3rd March 2025

APPEAL- 127

APPEAL NO. BCCC/127/2025 DATED 13/01/2025
CHANNEL: Star Plus
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Dil Ko Tumse Pyaar Hua*', 05/11/2024 at 6:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Racism/Racial remarks

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The complaint is about the insensitive and racist portrayal of a dark-skinned character. While the show aims to address discrimination against dark-skinned individuals in India, it has cast a fair-skinned actress and used makeup to darken her skin, a practice often known as "blackface" or "brownface".
This approach is deeply offensive and disregards the feelings of dark-skinned people, trivializing their real struggles and perpetuating harmful stereotypes. It suggests a lack of genuine respect for the community the show claims to represent.
Kindly address the issue and avoid such offensive misrepresentations in the future.

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

The channel submits:

- Star Plus, as a responsible broadcaster, is extremely mindful of the message its stories carry and their impact on our loyal viewer base and society at large. '*Dil Ko Tumse Pyaar Hai*' is a show based on the life of a young woman named Deepika, who faces extreme social prejudice due to the colour of her skin. The hugely popular concept of this show resonates deeply with millions and has been widely loved and accepted by the audiences in several languages.
- The show is about the all too real ordeals that someone with a dark skin tone has to go through in our society. This show is our attempt to challenge and change this narrative. Having said that, please note that this is a work of fiction and to create an engaging viewer experience, the makers take certain creative liberties to ensure that the portrayal of character resonates with audiences in an inclusive way to enhance the overall plot. That being said, the intention is certainly not to hurt anyone's sentiments.

- We request you not to judge the maker's intent through what happens in a few episodes and request you kindly continue watching the show to discover the larger narrative which focuses on Deepika's indomitable spirit that refuses to break in the face of life's hardships which showcase the victory of good over evil and sends a very positive and constructive message to our viewers. Upon review this content was not found in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF APPEAL (Level II):

The appellant submits:

- The grievance is about casting and portrayal of the lead character Deepika, a dark-skinned woman, in a manner that perpetuates harmful stereotypes. As per the channel's response, the show aims to highlight and challenge societal prejudices against darker skin tones, my concern lies in the choice of casting a fair-skinned actor and using makeup to darken her skin, a practice commonly referred to as "brownface" or "blackface".
- This choice is both insensitive and offensive, as it trivializes the struggles of dark-skinned individuals by opting for an inauthentic representation rather than casting a dark-skinned actor who could have portrayed the character more authentically. Such practices perpetuate harmful stereotypes and diminish the credibility of the show's supposed message of inclusion and empowerment.
- I believe this portrayal undermines the purpose of addressing discrimination and instead reinforces outdated and problematic notions of beauty and representation.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL

- Kindly review this matter and consider whether the portrayal aligns with the BCCC's guidelines on content sensitivity and ethical representation.
- Direct the channel to take appropriate corrective measures, such as refraining from such casting practices in the future and ensuring authentic representation.

BCCC DECISION:
The Council viewed the APPEAL. It found that the show 'Dil ko tumse Pyaar Hai' is based on the trials and tribulations of a young female character 'Deepika' who is subjected to social prejudices due to her skin colour. The Council after examining the nature of the APPEAL that instead of a dark skinned character who could have portrayed as the lead character instead of the current character who is obviously fair skinned and has been through make-up made brown faced or black faced is not maintainable as it is the channel's prerogative to cast characters as per their storylines. The Council cannot and will not dictate this to channels. However, the Council was also of the view that the storyline's attempt to challenge and change the narrative of girls/women with dark skin who face ordeals is a bold initiative and will not reinforce stereotypes. The Council also felt that the Appellant's call to have a dark skinned girl portray this character to promote inclusivity seems to be preposterous and implausible. The APPEAL WAS DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 128

APPEAL NO. BCCC/128/2025 DATED 22/01/2025
CHANNEL: Zee Kerala
LANGUAGE: Malayalam
PROGRAMME: '*Madhura Nombara Kaattu*', 04/01/2024, 8 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Domestic violence/Dowry

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme contains all kinds of violence including domestic violence. It also shows dowry and sexual activity.

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

The channel submits:

- In this show, the protagonist Nithya is married to Jeevan who has a suspicious mindset and has been diagnosed with mental health issues. He has a tendency to lash out because of his suspicion that Nithya is involved in infidelity. In order to showcase his struggles with mental health, the story requires that effects of his illness be shown. All the scenes have been shot aesthetically and suggestively. None of the scene with any direct harm have been shown.
- Additionally, there are no scenes where any sexual activity is depicted. When Jeevan's mother sees Jeevan's violent behaviour towards Nithya, she stands up against him and shields Nithya from harm. Jeevan's parents then commit him to a mental hospital for treatment. If you follow the show, you must have seen how Jeevan escapes from the mental hospital to harm Nithya and in the process accidentally slips and falls in a river. Even in the real world, unfortunately there are still a number of cases involving domestic violence many of which go unreported. There are victims struggling on a daily basis and choose to remain quiet due to lack of support.
- Through this show, we not only want to inspire such victims to come and speak out and not tolerate misconduct, but also for other members of such households or domiciles to be brave and act against the injustice. Throughout the shooting of these sequences, it has been ensured that no one is harmed physically or otherwise. The channel ensures that the BCCC Code is adhered to and the same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF APPEAL (Level II):
The brief/storyboard of the serial is good. The problem is of a child who is seven years old and who accidently watches the harsh activity and psycho mentality of his father. This has been happening recurrently. Showcasing violence sporadically is still justifiable, but showing violence daily with sharp objects cannot be tolerated. I don't want to complain about the serial, but wish that the channel tones down the violence in the show.

BCCC DECISION:
The Council viewed the APPEAL and found that the episode contains violence, but nothing in this episode depicts savagery beyond what is routinely witnessed on screen. The Council felt that the channel must be sensitized to desist from depicting violence against women as a consistent leitmotif. However, the very theme of this serial revolves around a man who is both unstable, compulsively obsessive, and violent and there is no manner in which the storyline can be altered but the channel can be directed to tone down the violence against women. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 129

APPEAL NO. BCCC/129/2025 DATED 22/01/2024
CHANNEL: Star Vijay
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: '*Company*', 05/01/2025
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Hurting religious sentiments

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: One participant was dressed like a Hindu seer. This mocks the Hindu religion and the religious sentiments of Hindus. Can Vijay TV show such instances with a Muslim Imam or a Christian Father? The programme should be banned and should not hurt the religious sentiments of people.

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

The channel submits:

- This is a reality game show featuring various fun tasks and games. In the episode, a fictitious astrologer character makes an entry to encourage and help the contestants to choose the right number on the LED wall.
- He has not made any statements or comments that could be deemed disrespectful or derogatory to any religion. At Star Vijay, we have the deepest respect for all religions, faiths and belief systems and would never air content that could hurt anyone's sentiments. Request to view this show as a light-hearted program. The content of this show was found to be not in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):
If the channel has shown respect for Hindu religion, can they show a Christian father or a Muslim moulvi? If they have guts to do that the TV studios and offices will be damaged in to pieces and they will face threats. Therefore, showing a Kavi dress with rudraksham is highly wrong and condemnable.

BCCC DECISION:
The Council viewed the APPEAL. The Council found that one of the performers/contestants is dressed as a saint/astrologer and helps the other contestants with numbers while they are playing the game. The performer appears to be dressed like Swami Nithyanand and says that he has come from Ayilaasa hinting at Nithyanad's Aashram on a remote island near Ecuador named as Kailasa. There is no dialogue/comment that could be construed as disrespectful or disparaging against any religion. The APPEAL was not found to be maintainable and DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 130

APPEAL NO. BCCC/130/2025 DATED 24/01/2025
CHANNEL: Zee Marathi
LANGUAGE: Marathi
PROGRAMME: '*Laxmi Niwas*', 15/01/2025, 8 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Ill-treatment of a child

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The episode showed ill-treatment towards a young girl named Anandi. The other character named 'Aaji' in relation to this young kid is such a villainous character who does not know any language or skill. Aaji is used to denote grandmothers in common parlance and it should not be allowed.
Considering the time of the telecast, children should not be exposed to such content. There are people in the family who don't deliberately watch such shows but unintentionally catch few passing glimpses. This disturbs the entire family.

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

The channel submits:

- In this show, currently the child has been orphaned since her father died in an accident. Unfortunately, the present guardians of the child are of dubious nature who want to

take over the estate left behind by her late father. As part of the story, it is a short track where the negative guardians try to intimidate the child.

- Please be rest assured that the well-being of the child has been our priority during the shooting of this show, and she has been taken care of in the most sensitive manner. The character of Aaji is supposed to be negative, but as a person she has been very caring towards the child artist off camera. Unfortunately, in the real world too, there are many such instances where children are subjected to ill-treatment because of property matters or internal family conflicts. It is our responsibility to motivate people to speak up and act against such injustice and that is our endeavour by showing this track in the show.
- As the show proceeds, very soon the negative characters will be removed, and the child will have a proper loving guardian who will keep her in a safe and nurturing environment. The channel ensures that we adhere to the BCCC Code and the same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):
This is the second time it is observed that the content of a television show being insensitive towards children who are part of the show. Earlier the programme '*Punha Kartavya Ahe*' showed insensitive sequence of two girls. Overall, as society we are going way far from being mindful about shows on television. Please stop such content.

BCCC DECISION:
The Council viewed the APPEAL and found that the story revolves around a seven year old child 'Anandi' who has been orphaned is subjected to harsh treatment by her present guardians who are both metabolical and dubious and have the sole aim of upending her estate. The Council also took the reply of the channel on record that the negative and villainous character of 'Aaji' will be removed in due course and for any story to move forward it is of utmost importance to show evil acts and deeds. The Council was also empathetic to the Appellant's perspective that ' Aaji' is still used in hinterlands to denote the grandmother but storylines have been created in such a manner that there will be coexistence of evil and good characters simultaneously. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF with a direction to the channel that such scenes of violence and retribution against children should not be prolonged and kept at a bare minimum.

APPEAL- 131

APPEAL NO. BCCC/131/2025 DATED 04/02/2025
CHANNEL: Star Vijay
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: '*Super Singer*', 04/01/2025, 6:30AM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Hurtful content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: It was disheartening to hear a particular word during the telecast of the said programme. In the programme titled '*Bhakthi Thiruviza*', the children who took part sang with full devotion. But in between the programme a puja called Sumangali Puja was organized in which the mothers of all contestants participated. My question is why it should be called Sumangali Puja? Is it not hurting the women who unfortunately lost their husbands? I think this particular word was used by the anchor without deeper thinking. I would suggest that in future the channel should avoid using words which hurt others.

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

The channel submits:

- As an avid viewer, you are aware that this is a reality show where kids showcase their singing talent. You are referring to one of the songs performed by a contestant in the devotional songs round which is from a Tamil feature film. Sumangali Pooja is a sacred Tamil tradition celebrating marital bliss, prosperity, and the well-being of the family. People believe that it strengthens social bonds and upholds cultural values, ensuring divine blessings for generations to come.
- At Star Vijay, we have the deepest respect for all religions, faiths and belief systems and would never air content that could hurt anyone's sentiments. Request you to view this show as a light-hearted program. Upon review, this content was found to be not in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):
My dissatisfaction was not for the song. A new female anchor while anchoring mentioned about Sumangali Puja. The word is associated with married woman. They could have said Diya Puja. My objection should have been understood by the channel before sending the response. While I appreciate the channel for replying but my issue has not been addressed.

BCCC DECISION:
The Council viewed the APPEAL and found that it is a children's singing reality show. During the devotional round, the compere of the show announces that as performed in temples, the channel would wish the participating singers to perform Sumangali Puja here. The puja was performed by the ladies for the lamp. Sumangali Puja is invariably denoted to the puja performed by married women The appellant's contention that word "Sumangali" should not have been used as it could be hurtful for widowed women seems to be inconsequential as any Puja in this country is performed by married women and that is a stark reality of our society and existence. In this episode, the Council believes that the channel failed to make a cognizant effort not to be prejudicial to widowed women and should not be punished for this inadvertent mistake. The Council directs the channel to be more mindful of its societal responsibilities and try not to repeat such mistakes. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 132

APPEAL NO. BCCC/132/2025 DATED 09/02/2025
CHANNEL: ETV Telugu
LANGUAGE: Telugu
PROGRAMME: '*Jabardasth Comedy Skits*', 11/01/2025 at 9:30PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Racist remarks/ Offensive humour

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The portrayal of racial stereotypes in comedy, particularly those targeting individuals based on their skin colour, is deeply concerning and warrants critical examination. In the scenario described, a comedy show depicts black individuals in a negative light while favouring white individuals, the implications extend far beyond mere entertainment.
Such portrayals can perpetuate harmful stereotypes, reinforce systemic racism and contribute to societal biases that hinder progress towards equality and inclusivity especially in the skits performed by Bhaskar and Immanuel.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT (Level-I):
1. We state at the outset that the program "*Jabardast*", is purely fictional and is created solely for entertainment purposes. It does not promote or endorse any racial stereotypes in its comedy, nor does it target individuals based on their skin colour.

2. In the episode telecast on 11-01-2025, there is no instance where racial stereotypes were promoted nor individuals are targeted based on their skin colour. The content does not depict black individuals in a negative light nor white individuals favoured in any manner.
3. ETV channel believes in providing clean entertainment and discrimination on any ground is a taboo in the channel. The programme is fictional, and we also gave a disclaimer at the beginning of the shows. However, we thank you for bringing this to our attention we will review the content of our program to ensure it aligns with our goal of providing quality entertainment.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

- Although the channel says that no racial/skin colour jokes were made but the episodes dated **11/01/2025 and 08/02/2025** proves the opposite as there were jokes based on skin colour.
- The show is being watched by many Telugu speaking audience. If such jokes on skin colour are encouraged, this will carry huge impact.
- A reputed channel like ETV should make a clean comedy programme. I have personally experienced jokes on skin colour saying "*Kaaraoda*". Such jokes should be avoided henceforth.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
Kindly put an end to such content

***BCCC DECISION**: The Council viewed the appeal and found the programme to be in the comedy genre where participants come and perform their comic skits.*

The Council viewed the episodes and found that in episode dated 11/01/2025, no jokes on skin color or racist remarks were made or depicted. The channel in its disclaimer before every skit makes it categorical that any character/dialogues/scenes depicted in the show are purely fictitious and are used only for purposes of humour.
For the episode dated 08/02/2025, it has been alleged that the word "karooda' has been used which is tantamount to racial stereotyping but a perusal of the complaint showed that the term was not used in the skit. The channel in its reply to the Notice also mentioned about a different programme "ANDAM" produced by their network in which they have depicted the emotional and social journey of a protagonist with dark skin and a facial birthmark. The narrative challenged societal stereotypes around beauty and conveyed a strong message that real beauty lies in a person's character and not in their appearance. However, the Council considering the Reply of the channel on record has asked the channel to be more cautious in showing content which reinforces gender or colour stereotypes as the programme is watched by many. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF with a caution to the channel that it has to be mindful of the content it depicts even for comedy shows keeping societal sensibilities in sight.

APPEAL- 133

APPEAL NO. BCCC/133/2025 DATED 22/02/2025
CHANNEL: Zee Tamil
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: '*Ninaithale Inikkum*', 10/12/2024, 11/12/2024 & 12/12/2024
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Hurting religious sentiments (Referred by MIB)

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The appellant through her advocate submits:

- As a staunch devotee of Sree Arunjunai Katha Ayyanar Thirukovil, located at Melaputhukudi Post, Ammanpuram, Thiruchandur Taluk, Tuticorin District, I am writing to bring to your URGENT ATTENTION an egregious incident involving the defamatory portrayal of Sree Arunjunai Katha Ayyanar Thirukovil in an episode of the television serial "Ninaithale Inikkum" on Zee Tamil.
- The temple has a rich history and is maintained well for years. Sree Arunjunai Katha Ayyanar is being worshipped by Lakhs and Lakhs of devotees all over the world. The temple has been following all the rituals properly for years together and yearly Panguni Uthiram festival is celebrated in a massive way for 10 days.
- The episodes mentioned above contained statements, visuals, and implications that directly and unjustifiably malign the reputation and sanctity of Sree Arunjunai Katha Ayyanar Thiru Kovil, which is a place of worship revered by Lakhs of devotees.
- In these episodes, there are wrongful portrayals of the Sree Arunjunai Katha Ayyanar Thiru Kovil being involved in unethical or immoral practices, such as dark magic and contains false and baseless allegations that is completely irrelevant that damages the image and trust associated with the temple.
- The content reflects a complete lack of factual accuracy and respect for the religious sentiments of devotees of this temple. This has caused emotional distress and outrage among devotees, tarnishing the reputation and goodwill of the Sree Arunjunai Katha Ayyanar Thiru Kovil in the community.
- The contents in question reflects gross negligence by the screenplay and dialogue writers, who failed to verify facts or consider the deep cultural significance of the temple. Such irresponsible broadcasting violates the principles of responsible journalism and content creation, as mandated under the Programme Code of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act' 1995, and other guidelines issued by your esteemed Ministry.
- This incident has not only hurt the sentiments of devotees but also risks setting a dangerous precedent for the irresponsible depiction of cultural and religious heritage. As the self-regulatory authority, the BCCC has a pivotal role in ensuring that such instances are prevented in the future, protecting both the rights of individuals and the sanctity of our diverse cultural and religious institutions. We trust that the BCCC will take swift and appropriate action to address this grievance.

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

Further to the interim response, the channel submitted the following:

I. Background & Context:

- Zee, with its three-decade legacy as one of India's leading media and entertainment companies, has established itself through a consistent commitment to responsible programming that respects the diverse cultural and religious fabric of our nation. This commitment is reflected through rigorous internal content guidelines and regulatory compliance mechanisms that govern all our content creation and broadcasting decisions.
- The serial '*Ninaithale Innikum*' (**"Serial"**) exemplifies this approach through its thoughtfully crafted fictional narrative. While the show engages viewers through its dramatic storyline following the character 'Bommi' and her journey within a royal family of sweet makers, it maintains clear fictional boundaries through appropriate disclaimers and careful storytelling choices.

II. Response to Specific Allegations:

- At the outset, Our Client categorically denies all allegations contained in the Notice. Nothing stated herein shall be deemed to be admitted for want of specific traverse.

- The Notice alleges that certain episodes telecast on 10th December 2024, 11th December 2024, and 12th December 2024 contained content that allegedly maligned the sanctity of the '*Sree Arunjunai Katha Ayyanar Thiru Kovil*' (**"the temple"**). In this regard:

(a) Any references to temples or religious practices in the Impugned Serial are entirely incidental and form part of the broader fictional narrative.
(b) The show maintains clear distinctions between fictional elements and real institutions, with no attempt to draw direct associations with any specific temple or religious institution.
(c) The creative content is protected under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India, which guarantees freedom of speech and expression, including creative and artistic expression.

- Without prejudice to the above, ZEEL's deep respect for India's rich cultural and religious heritage guided our immediate response upon receiving the Notice. As a testament to ZEEL's commitment as a responsible broadcaster, we promptly initiated a comprehensive internal review of the concerned episodes. Recognizing Our Client's role in celebrating India's diverse cultural tapestry, and as a gesture of good faith towards the religious sentiments involved, ZEEL has already implemented thoughtful modifications to the Serial across all platforms, including our OTT services, to address the concerns raised. These proactive measures align with ZEEL's fundamental programming philosophy, which is firmly grounded in fostering understanding and respect across all communities, faiths, and institutions. ZEEL maintains the highest standards of sensitivity in its content creation process and categorically affirms that none of its programming is created with any intent to cause distress or disrespect to any individual, community, religious institution, or cultural entity. The modifications undertaken reflect not just a response to the present situation but also reinforce our ongoing commitment to responsible broadcasting that enriches while respecting our shared cultural values.
- The allegations of defamation are legally untenable, particularly when viewed within the context of ZEEL's robust compliance framework and established legal principles. First, the essential elements of defamation - namely, direct reference and demonstrable intent to harm reputation - are conspicuously absent. Second, Indian jurisprudence has consistently protected creative freedom in fictional works, especially within the balanced framework of Articles 19(1)(a) and 25 of the Constitution.
- This legal position is reinforced by ZEEL's comprehensive internal review mechanisms that exceed industry standards. ZEEL's multi-tiered compliance framework includes strict adherence to the Programming Code under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, detailed compliance with Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Guidelines, and regular content monitoring to ensure alignment with both legal requirements and cultural sensitivities.
- Given ZEEL's proactive response to the concerns raised, including concrete remedial measures already implemented, coupled with ZEEL's established track record of responsible programming and robust compliance mechanisms, we respectfully submit that this matter has been appropriately addressed. We therefore request your kind consideration in withdrawing the Notice, assuring ZEEL's unwavering commitment to content that both enriches and respects its shared cultural values while maintaining creative integrity.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):
The appellant is not satisfied with the channel's response.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
The appellant requests the BCCC to:
a) Immediately stop the telecast of the programme.
b) Direct the channel to delete defamatory contents and episodes from all platforms, including television, OTT platforms, and social media.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO BCCC:

- We reiterate that ZEEL's deep respect for India's rich cultural and religious heritage guided our immediate response upon receiving the Notice. As a testament to ZEEL's commitment as a responsible broadcaster, we promptly initiated a comprehensive internal review of the concerned episodes.
- Recognizing Zee's role in celebrating India's diverse cultural tapestry, and as a gesture of good faith towards the religious sentiments involved, ZEEL had already implemented thoughtful modifications to the Serial across all platforms, including our OTT services, to address the concerns raised. These proactive measures align with ZEEL's fundamental programming philosophy, which is firmly grounded in fostering understanding and respect across all communities, faiths, and institutions.
- ZEEL maintains the highest standards of sensitivity in its content creation process and categorically affirms that none of its programming is created with any intent to cause distress or disrespect to any individual, community, religious institution, or cultural entity.
- The modifications undertaken reflect not just a response to the present situation but also reinforce our ongoing commitment to responsible broadcasting that enriches while respecting our shared cultural values.

BCCC DECISION: ***The Council had issued a NOTICE to the channel for hurting the sensibilities of viewers. The channel in its reply mentioned that through the depiction in the episodes, it has apparently not maligned the sanctity of the 'Sree Arunjunai Katha Ayyanar Thiru Kovil' ("the temple"). The channel also informs the Council that the show maintains clear distinctions between fictional elements and real institutions, with no attempt to draw direct associations with any specific temple or religious institution. The channel says that on receipt of Notice it initiated a comprehensive internal review of the concerned episodes and as a gesture of good faith towards the religious sentiments involved, the channel has implemented thoughtful modifications to the serial across all platforms, including their OTT services. The Council after carefully considering the reply of the channel asked it to send an UNDERTAKING that henceforth it will be mindful, conscious and solicitous of depicting any content which has the potential to cause distress or disrespect to any individual, community, religious institution, or cultural entity. The Council also directed the channel to never repeat the impugned episode ever again without suitable modifications and DISPOSED OF the APPEAL.***

P. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 124TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2025

APPEAL- 134

APPEAL NO. BCCC/134/2025 DATED 14/03/2025
CHANNEL: Sun TV
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: '*Malli*', 14/02/2025, 10:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Degrading women, domestic violence and child abuse

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The villainous characters are given so much importance that they are involved in character assassination of the protagonist. They are misrepresenting that she has an affair with someone else. The programme shows domestic violence and child abuse to the core. The programme started getting worse from episode 179. Even in the recent episode no 288 the serial has degraded the status of the female protagonist.

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

The channel submits:

1. The content of the serial fully complies with all applicable laws and regulations. Specifically, the channel confirms that it does not include any scenes or dialogue that promote domestic violence, nor does it depict any form of abuse towards children. It is important to consider the serial within the context of its broader narrative and thematic intentions. The story follows Malliga (alias Malli), the female protagonist, a humble and kind-hearted woman who marries Vijayakumar (alias Vijay), initially against his wishes. Despite the challenges, Malli chooses to honour her marriage in accordance with traditional values. A central theme of the serial is Malli's unconditional love for Vijay's child, whom she fiercely protects and cares for. Through her journey, the serial aims to promote gender equality, challenge societal norms, and empower both men and women.
2. In the episode aired on 14.02.2025, Vijay and his daughter, Venba, are distressed as they are unable to find Malli, who has fainted in the storeroom, where she was sent by Raji to collect a photo album. It is later revealed that this incident was a deliberate conspiracy orchestrated by Vijay's sister, Rajeshwari (also known as Raji), and his former fiancée, Ranjitha. Their plan involved luring Malli into the dust-filled storeroom, causing her to lose consciousness. Additionally, they strategically made calls to Malli from Raji's own number, ensuring that when Vijay attempted to contact her, he would be unable to reach her, thus fuelling his frustration. Taking advantage of the situation, Raji deceives Vijay by falsely claiming that she never assigned any work to Malli. Instead, Raji accuses Malli in front of Vijay of isolating herself in the storeroom to make calls secretly. However, Raji and Ranjitha's true objective extends beyond defaming Malli; their ultimate goal is to emotionally torment Malli to the extent that she chooses to leave both Vijay and the household, paving the way for Vijay and Ranjitha's reunion. Amidst these manipulations, Venba, despite her young age, stands firmly by Malli's side. She offers comfort and support, recognizing Malli's integrity and naive nature.
3. It is important to clarify that while the characters of Raji and Ranjitha are antagonistic, they do not engage in any form of child abuse, either physical or verbal. The intention behind their characters is not to promote harm but to create challenges for Malli, which ultimately strengthens the bond between Malli and Vijay. Raji's methods are consistently hindered, which highlights the ultimate triumph of good over evil. Through characters like Raji and Ranjitha, the channel aims to address real-world issues such as standing up against injustice and inhuman behaviour, particularly the struggles faced by women in similar circumstances. While the portrayal of certain actions may appear harsh when viewed in isolation, the larger narrative underscores the triumph of moral values and personal integrity. The diverse personalities and actions of characters in the serial reflect the complexities of human behaviour, shaped by individual experiences and backgrounds. We emphasize that the characters in the serial are not meant to generalize or stereotype any specific group of people. Rather, they serve to illustrate the diverse facets of human nature, creating a nuanced and thoughtful portrayal of real-life dynamics.
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 is unintentional and is regretted.* We encourage viewers to interpret the serial and its elements from a broader lens and in a more holistic manner. The character's actions and their eventual consequences are intended to create a powerful narrative that resonates with the audience and encourages reflection of 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.

5. Further, the content of the serial is in compliance with the Cable TV Networks Regulation Act, 1995 ("**Act**"), and the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 ("**Rules**"), including the Programme Code mentioned under Rule 6 of the Rules. 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.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):
The programme shows abuse even after the channel's response. Harassment, domestic violence and child abuse is a crime as per law. Such criminal acts are justified in this serial and in the channel's response too. The makers shouldn't be giving so much importance to the negative characters Rajeswari and Ranjita. Even after watching the promos one can understand the cruelty and abuses in this programme.
The latest promo dated 15th March 2025 shows petrol being poured on food just to satisfy the negative character Rajeswari's ego and put Malli down.
They didn't even worry about the kid's food. The entire food was spoiled with petrol and the kid fainted in hunger. This is so disgusting. Also, the child Venba was hit thrice. The channel doesn't seem to take any action against such content.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
Kindly stop such script that favours the negative characters or put an end to this programme.

BCCC DECISION:
14/02/2025: Malli's sister-in-law Raji and another woman Ranjitha are seen plotting against Malli. They want to separate Vijay and Malli who are already married. They plot against Malli and send her to a storeroom where she faints. They blamed Malli in front of Vijay that she was making calls to someone secretively which was to humiliate her and falsify her reputation. Vijay's daughter believes in Malli and is often shown to be standing by her. There is no child abuse but Raji is shown raising her voice on the little girl Venba.

15/03/2025: The entire family plans to go to a temple for puja. They decide to pack food to carry with them. Raji and Ranjitha conspires against Malli and puts petrol bottle in a bag packed with food. On the way, the family opens the food boxes and notices that petrol has contaminated the food which makes it inedible. Both Raji and Ranjitha blame Malli for being irresponsible.

The Council after viewing the episodes decided against any intervention as the channel has the liberty to creative freedom and without showing evil, no story moves forward. The depiction of wrong is absolutely essential and justifiable to show the triumph of good over evil. The Council also believes in the fact that any fictional narrative would entail exploring the complexities of human relationships and emotions and any intervention would commensurate to dictating storylines. The Council also believes that episodes should not be viewed in isolation but holistically and in a broader perspective. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 135

APPEAL NO. BCCC/135/2025 DATED 24/03/2025
CHANNEL: Star Plus
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Jhanak*', 07/03/2025, 10:35 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Sadistic and regressive content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: Every episode shows immoral, unethical and demoralizing content. The writer Leena Gangopadhyay has sadistic mentality of deriving pleasure by inflicting pain. Please stop this show.

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

The channel submits:

- The show '*Jhanak*' is a work of fiction created for the sole purpose of entertainment. In order to create compelling stories, the show relies on larger-than-life drama and hyperbolic highs and lows in the lives of its characters that are not rooted in reality and are not comparable with real life. That said, the prevailing message of the show is extremely positive even though its characters sometime go through great hardship. All negative characters and events are presented as such and not glorified at all. In fact, there is always great denunciation and serious consequences for all problematic actions.
- The channel requests not to judge the maker's intent through what happens in a few episodes and continue to follow the show. Please note that this content referenced in the complaint has been found to be in compliance with all content related regulations, including the BCCC Code.
- Rest assured, the channel 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 appellant submits:

- In the name of fiction, one cannot misrepresent or send a wrong message on what is legitimate and what goes against the law of the land or against scientifically proven methods.
- There are several instances of negativity or illegality being spread through the show and its glorification.
- There is a rapist who forcefully marries her victim and is again celebrated in her family, respected in society, with no guilt or punishment for the last six months.
- The main leads, in spite of sacrificing for accommodating the rapist, are being disparaged in the society and are behind the bars for no legal reason. People trying to escape toxic relationship legally are belittled.
- A hospital sells kids for money but easily escapes by blaming the attender from the family and the attender is behind bars.
- For proving legitimacy of a child, the lawyer claims that DNA test is a difficult procedure, but presents all false witnesses and the court doesn't object.
- The only message people get from such a show is to grab what you want through illegal means. At best you will lose mental peace and get all the material pleasure but if you try to help anyone you lose everything and end behind the bars. Law is bent for the powerful as the entire legal system, procedures and scientifically accepted norms are falsely represented.

- For 500 episodes there is nothing but crime flourishing in the show. This programme is a legal, mental and social hazard.

Please consider it as an appeal against the makers (Leena Gangopadhyay & others). The kind of dialogues they write leaves audience embarrassed and agitated leaving viewers trolling actors on social media or venting out the anger built through this dirt on friends and family.

BCCC DECISION: ***The Council viewed the APPEAL and found that Jhanak like other fictional shows relies on larger than life drama and hyperbolic highs and lows in the lives of its characters who are not real. The antagonistic characters are reflected and depicted as negative characters who are not at all glorified in the programme. Making an interposition would be dictating storylines to channels which the Council wishes to avoid as the channels are at creative liberty to depict storylines as per their narrative. 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. Also, if stories do not have plots and sub-plots and everything is shown to be hunky-dory in the episodes, none of the programmes, would be able to sustain on positivity itself. In addition to this, the Council does not take upon itself the moral authority to tell the channels of what content is to be depicted provided they do not cross the line of being unpalatable and reprehensible. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.***

APPEAL- 136

APPEAL NO. BCCC/136/2025 DATED 27/04/2025

CHANNEL:	Zee Marathi
LANGUAGE:	Marathi
PROGRAMME:	'*Paaru*', 12/03/2025
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:	Domestic violence

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme shows cruelty and domestic violence that too at family viewing time (7:30 PM). Such content should be stopped and they should show that only truth wins. There is zero presence of law and order in this programme. Kindly stop the programme.

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

The channel submits:

- In this episode, the focus is on the protagonist's efforts to escape from a dangerous situation. It may be noted that in the following episodes, he is able to defend himself and his mother from the clutches of the goons and escape to safety. In order to show this a fight sequence ensued.
- Captured by the family enemies Disha and Anushka, Aditya and his mother are held captive while they have to watch them sneering. Amid the chaos, they fight fiercely to escape the situation. Just as hope fades, Paaru bursts in, knocking out the goons. In the chaos Anushka gets caught, and Disha abandons her, leaving her to face consequences alone where she learns her lesson.
- Please note that no domestic violence was depicted in the episode. The intention was to depict a courageous response to adversity, not to glorify violence. The channel ensures that the BCCC code is adhered to and the same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

There is glorification of crime by Disha and complete absence of law and order. The programme is going in no direction. What children/teenagers will learn from Jayant's behaviour? Is there any control over the content being aired?

***BCCC DECISION**: The Council viewed the episode and found that the focus was not on adversity per se but to a tenacious response in wake of a catastrophic situation. The channel's reply is taken on record that the scenes were not depicted to glorify violence but making it a part of the fictional narrative where hyperbolic situation happens both on the higher and lower side. The Council also kept the totality of the context in mind rather than focus merely on select exegetical readings and DISPOSED OF the APPEAL.*

APPEAL- 137

APPEAL NO. BCCC/137/2025 DATED 30/04/2025
CHANNEL: Zee Marathi
LANGUAGE: Marathi
PROGRAMME: '*Chala Hawa Citit Daya*', 8 April 2025
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Violent content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: In this episode, a task labelled as the "compatibility test" was conducted, wherein female mentors (who are not contestants) were subjected to electric shocks for providing incorrect answers about the male contestants they were guiding. These women were made to wear zap bands and were clearly distressed, showing signs of fear and physical discomfort. Shockingly, this entire segment was packaged as comedy with humorous background music while the male contestants watched and appeared entertained.
The content is not only in poor taste; it is deeply unethical and disturbing for the following reasons:

- It subjects non-contestant women to physical harm for viewer entertainment.
- It promotes a dynamic where female pain is made comedic and pleasurable for male viewers and participants.
- It reflects exploitative, misogynistic tropes that bear strong resemblance to violent fetish content.
- It normalizes violence against women under the guise of a reality show "task."

This violates broadcasting standards relating to human dignity, gender sensitivity, and acceptable content for general audiences. Such portrayals can have real-world consequences and send highly regressive messages to viewers, especially impressionable youth.

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

The channel submits:

- In the highlighted episode, participating women are supposed to answer basic questions about the male contestants and vice-versa. In case of them giving an incorrect response, a zap device is shown tied to their hand which represents that they get a shock.
- The channel wishes to inform what actually took place. The device on their wrists is actually a simple vibrating bit and they were asked to act as if it gave them an electric zap. The entire sequence is a play-act and no one is hurt during the shooting of this episode.
- The channel strongly stands against any harmful act that might put the contestants or participants in any risk or distress. The whole act is a mere representation of their

retention capacity and done in a manner that is meant for entertainment and to create a bit of intrigue and suspense.
- Additionally, the participants were informed and they agreed to participate and act in a specific manner. The channel ensures that the BCCC code is adhered to and the same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

The appellant submits:
- In its response, the channel stated that the segment involving female mentors being "shocked" was entirely staged, using vibrating devices rather than actual electric shocks, and that both male and female participants were subject to the same treatment. However, I must respectfully dispute the accuracy of this claim.
- At no point during the episode, were male contestants subjected to comparable treatment. Only the female mentors—who were not contestants themselves—were made to wear these devices and simulate reactions of pain and fear, while male contestants observed and appeared entertained. The assertion of reciprocal participation is therefore factually incorrect.
- Moreover, the ethical concern extends beyond whether the pain was real. The issue lies in the representation of female suffering as entertainment. The segment framed women's discomfort as humorous, complete with comedic background music and audience cues, reinforcing regressive gender dynamics and normalizing coercive behaviour.
- Such content depicts women being "punished" for incorrect answers, reinforcing themes of subjugation; Presents female distress as a source of amusement, particularly for male viewers and participants; Echoes exploitative tropes with disturbing resemblance to violent fetish imagery; Undermines broader efforts toward promoting gender-sensitive media and social norms.
- Regardless of the technical nature of the devices used, the broadcast portrayal raises serious concerns about human dignity, gender sensitivity, and the psychological impact of normalizing such dynamics in entertainment aimed at general audiences.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
- To recommend clear guidelines and restrictions on such exploitative content in reality programming.
- To evaluate the broader societal implications of airing such content, particularly with regard to its influence on impressionable viewers.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episode and found that female contestants are punished for writing wrong answers. They appear to be given electric shocks and shout in pain and then shown smiling the next minute. The sequence portrayed seems to be real but appears to be staged. The channel in its reply to the APPELLANT mentions that segment involving female mentors being "shocked" was entirely staged, using vibrating devices rather than actual electric shocks, and that both male and female participants were subject to the same treatment. The channel also elaborates that the device on the women's wrists is actually a simple vibrating bit and they were asked to act as if it gave them an electric zap. The entire sequence is a play-act and no one is hurt during the shooting of this episode. The Council directs the channel that women contestants being punished for incorrect answers will reinforce themes of subjugation and present female pain as amusement or entertainment. The Council directs the channel not to explore such themes in which participants are subjected to torture though their actions can neither be a comment on societal values nor is it meant to be a barometer of good behaviour. The APPEAL WAS DISPOSED OF with a directive to the

channel to not promote such depiction of torture solely for the purposes of entertainment.

APPEAL- 138

APPEAL NO. BCCC/138/2025 DATED 30/04/2025
CHANNEL: Colors
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Mangal Lakshmi*', 16 April 2025, 9:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Violent and negative content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: This show, aired during primetime and widely watched by homemakers, including my own mother, has become increasingly disturbing due to its persistent focus on negativity, unrealistic portrayals, and moral degradation.

Following are the appellant concerns:

- The character of Soumya has crossed all boundaries of morality. She is shown committing horrifying acts, including the murder of her own father-in-law, and yet continues to manipulate everyone around her. This constant victory of evil over good is emotionally exhausting and creates a sense of hopelessness among viewers. The rare moments of positivity are short-lived and almost always overshadowed by exaggerated drama and injustice.
- The serial consistently sacrifices logic and morality for the sake of sensationalism. For example, even though the court sentenced Jiya and her mother to jail, they were released almost instantly without any reasonable explanation. Jiya was shown to be mentally unfit, but her mother's release had no justification. In another irrational turn, Lakshmi was arrested purely on Jiya's baseless accusation, even though multiple witnesses denied the charges. These plot holes are illogical and misleading.
- Instead of uplifting viewers or promoting meaningful narratives, Mangal Lakshmi continues to stretch toxic storylines where evil characters like Jiya and Soumya are given undue dominance. These characters are shown with such exaggerated demonic traits that they misrepresent the image of women in society. Their actions are not just immoral but psychologically distressing, especially since they rarely face consequences, which sends a dangerous message that wrongdoing prevails over truth and justice.
- As a regular observer, I have noticed a pattern in these kinds of serials where the so-called "right" characters are humiliated repeatedly. Social values are constantly challenged, and morality is trivialized. Watching such content creates emotional stress, which I've personally experienced, and I've noticed that my mother, too, unknowingly absorbs this stress after watching each episode.
- I understand that fiction allows for creativity, but when a show reaches mass audience, especially homemakers and elderly women, there is a responsibility to maintain a balance and not glorify cruelty, manipulation, or injustice. Mangal Lakshmi fails in this regard and has turned into a source of emotional distress rather than entertainment or meaningful storytelling.
- I request BCCC to kindly investigate the content of this show and take appropriate steps to ensure that it adheres to responsible storytelling that does not compromise public mental well-being or social values for the sake of sensational drama.

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

The channel submits:

- This is a fictional show and, like all other shows of this genre, all incidents portrayed in the show are fictional. These characters behave in different ways under different

circumstances, thereby taking the story forward. While some characters are black others are white and all the characters play instrumental roles in weaving the narrative. Further, the fictional incidents depicted help in weaving the narrative and taking the story forward; however, the distinction between reality and fiction under such circumstances must be appreciated.

- While in keeping with the nature of storytelling of these shows, the positive characters, Mangal and Lakhsmi, suffer temporary setbacks and hindrances due to the deeds of negative characters, the end objective of each story arc within the show is to depict the victory of right over wrong. One would appreciate that all the tracks culminate with them being vindicated. The antagonists across different story arcs within the show represent the challenges that are strewn on the sisters' paths and each track portrays how both Mangal and Lakshmi use their emotional quotient, love and respect for others and their sensibilities to tackle all these difficulties. Due to their innate good nature, they refuse to deter from the path of fairness and truth. They are emotional but they do not let their sentiments mar their judgements; rather they channel their feelings in the right direction and objectively deal with every situation keeping the wellbeing of their loved ones in mind.
- It is further submitted that while the triumph of truth, fairness and honesty cannot be shown without depicting conniving and nefarious characters indulging in immoral acts, the negative characters and their actions are not a comment on societal values. They are not meant to be a barometer of good behavior; they are human and therefore fallible in their actions.
- As for the portrayal of legal facets within the show, certain tracks are not shown in a full-scaled manner and are consciously kept fast-paced in keeping with the nature of storytelling of the show. 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.

<u>SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL</u> (Level II):

The appellant expresses dissatisfaction with the channel's response and submits:

- While the channel's reply acknowledges the fictional nature of the content, it fails to address the deeper and more impactful concerns, particularly related to viewer well-being and logical consistency in the storyline.
- The show's excessive portrayal of negativity—particularly through the characters Saumya and Jiya—has become mentally distressing for many viewers, especially housewives who turn to such programmes for some relaxation after a day of hard work. Instead of offering relief or inspiration, the repeated and drawn-out negativity undermines mental wellness and emotional peace.
- The show recently portrayed an illogical legal scenario: Jiya and her mother were sentenced by the court and yet were shown outside the jail the very same day. The justification given was Jiya's health, but her mother was also seen at home with no explanation. Later, Jiya falsely accused Lakshmi of murder and called the police, who arrested Lakshmi without verifying facts, even though Jiya herself was under court order. This not only misguides the audience about the legal process but also sets a dangerous precedent of glorifying manipulation and injustice, even if temporarily.
- While the channel's creative freedom is respected, the content must remain within the bounds of social responsibility. Viewers, especially in small towns and villages, often internalize what is shown, and such unrealistic portrayals of law and values can have serious consequences. Also, the repeated extension of negative story arcs with little resolution erodes viewer trust and impacts their mental health. The current pattern of storytelling lacks balance and ethical sensitivity, and a change is

needed to ensure that entertainment also upholds basic values of truth, justice, and mental well-being.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

The appellant requests to review the matter seriously.

***BCCC DECISION**: The Council viewed the APPEAL and found that the episodes depict a lot of plots and sub-plots along with villainous characters. For somebody like Mangal who has been sent behind bars, the female antagonist tries to get her killed in prison. The other protagonist Lakshmi has lost her son and her husband and the other female antagonist resorts to her frivolous ways to stop them from meeting and thereby prohibiting their reunion in some manner or the other. It is a fictional story in which there is a lot of twists and turns and some characters have shades of black others have shades of white. These characters are required to take the story forward. The narrative is primarily Mangal and Lakshmi emerging triumphant despite obstacles thrown in their way by antagonistic characters from time to time but it is the beauty of their innate nature and resilience of their characters that they overcome these challenges. The Council decided against any intervention in the fictional narrative as fictional programmes do not necessarily have to adhere to accuracy and can creative freedom of rendition. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.*

APPEAL- 139

APPEAL NO. BCCC/139/2025 DATED 02/05/2025
CHANNEL: Star Vijay
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: '*Oom Solriya Oohm Solriya - Yes or Miss*', 13/04/2025, 1:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Inappropriate questions

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: Priyanka, the host of the show, asks a question to the guest about a man in Pune who was married to his wife and three lovers in the same house for 90 days without anyone knowing. Making such comments in the name of questions in a show watched by families, including children, without any social responsibility can never be accepted. Appropriate action should be taken against the host of this show.

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

- This is an entertaining game show featuring various celebrities/actors as participants. The format of the show is such that the hosts states or describes a scenario and asks the participants to choose whichever option they think is true. The participant who chooses the right answer wins the round. In the episode referenced in the complaint, the host Priyanka presents a light-hearted but clearly hyperbolic and somewhat outlandish fact before the participant. Upon review, the question was not found to be inappropriate. However, on hearing the feedback, the channel has passed on the same to the program creators for their consideration.
- Rest assured, being a responsible broadcaster, the channel is keenly aware of the impact our shows have on our wide viewer base and would never air content that carries inappropriate messaging or is disparaging towards anyone.
- All shows on Star Vijay, go through a fine lens of content compliance by trained professionals who ensure that the content presented to viewers is in good taste and

family friendly. The channel requests the appellant to enjoy this light-hearted game show purely from an entertainment point of view.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):
The channel's response that the question asked by Priyanka doesn't seem to be wrong has caused great distress to the appellant. The question asked was not a conversation between two people behind a closed wall. It was shown on TV, which is watched by children and adults together. Is that not the social responsibility of the hosts of the show? Is this what my 10-year-old son wants to know in this show that he watches for entertainment? Analysing it from a father's point of view would get a better understanding of the complaint being raised.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

The appellant demands action against the host of the show.

***BCCC DECISION**: The Council viewed the episode which have a lot of questions (tricky ones) which do not fall under the category of factual questions. For example, one question that was put up before the contestants was if a person in Pune who stayed with his wife had three other girls staying with him for three months without any one finding out. Other question was if the men folk in Odisha have filed a police complaint for women drinking in their houses. The Council felt that such questions do not fall under the realm of factual questions and they cater to a particular level of audiences. The Council cannot be directing the channels to ask factual or credible questions as this would be tantamount to trying to impinge on their creative freedom. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.*

APPEAL- 140

APPEAL NO. BCCC/140/2025 DATED 14/05/2025
CHANNEL: Star Vijay
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: '*Chinna Marumagal*', 24/04/2025, 9:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Regressive content
SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme doesn't uphold women education. The protagonist is married into a wealthy family and they don't support women education. Such content would impact the society.

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

The Channel submits:

- "*Chinna Marumagal*" is a show about the life of a young girl Tamilselvi, an aspiring doctor, who faces challenging situations at her in-law's house, which is a regressive and patriarchal family.
- This is a work of fiction and an attempt to depict social problems that are prevalent and convey a strong messaging against them. However, sometimes fictional content does rely on hyperbolic and dramatic situations to make for engaging storytelling.
- Kindly allow the story to unfold to get clarity of the content makers intent. Star Vijay, being a responsible broadcaster, is extremely sensitive towards the message its content carries and is aware of the impact its programming has on its wide viewer base.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

The channel's response reflects that a story can be regressive or completely taboo irrespective of social standards and measures under the name of fiction. The channel's creative team will conclude in a single episode saying that this is a taboo and wrong after several episodes of showing negative content. This needs to be addressed to create fictional stories with social responsibilities.

***BCCC DECISION**: The Council viewed the programme and found that the storyline revolves around a young girl who aspires to be a doctor. The protagonist is shown to be strong and determined as she overcomes all the hurdles. Her husband and father-in-law, who were initialling against her studies, later on supported her. The hurdles shown seems necessary for the programme to show the female protagonist overcoming all challenges. The message the programme is positive in nature as the female protagonist gets admission in a medical college even after she is in the family way. The Council also felt that any engaging fictional content will rely on hyperbolic and dramatic situations. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.*

APPEAL- 141

APPEAL NO. BCCC/141/2025 DATED 17/05/2025
CHANNEL: Zee TV
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: Promo of '*Tum Se Tum Tak*' (Programme start date: 16/06/2025, 7 PM)
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Age-inappropriate romance

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme shows intimate relationship between an old man and a girl who has just graduated from high school. Broadcasting a show that glorifies this age-cap scenario as a romance/love story must be stopped. Creators of today should no longer bank their stories on disturbing content that is made to look like cute onscreen irrespective of their age gap and begin portraying life with futuristic depictions.

Viewers, who are part of our society, will imbibe this in a positive way only because a popular channel features it, while in actuality, the concept of the show is condemned and completely derogatory to young girls and single men in their forties.

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

The channel submits:

- In this promo, the couple is shown with an age gap of 27 years between them. This show has a unique story with varied characters and situations that lead to this union of both our protagonists. What we have shown in the promo is strictly legal and possible in the real world. Choosing a partner for life is an extremely personal and independent decision and must be respected by the society, especially if the couple is able to find happiness with one another.
- However, the channel understands the appellant's concerns and urges the appellant to watch the show with an open mind once it launches, we are certain that the concerns will be addressed when the show is seen in totality. The channel ensures that the BCCC code is adhered to and the same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):
The appellant respects the ideology of the show and the creativity behind the team of artists putting up the show. However, the appellant submits the following:

- My concern is not about the age-gap of 27 years for two people to find love but was more centric to the ages of the girl and the man. Notice how I use 'girl' instead of

'woman' as the trailer depicts her to be in the 18-25 age group and 'man' instead of 'boy' as the trailer depicts him as a 40-year-old. While the writers and creators of the show have adhered to legalities, I urge them to look at the storyline from the point of view of the audience who are currently undergoing revolutionary transitions in their outlook towards females (all ages included) who for centuries have been ill-treated/harassed/disrespected and are now fighting for a change.

- My concern again, does not intend to stop the show from releasing (which of course will never be the case because of a single complaint) but instead requests the creators to, at the least, portray the characters as 30-year-old woman and a 57-year-old man. This maintains the age gap and also includes two mature individuals choosing each other as their life partners which will be viewed with much kinder eyes by the public and would contribute to the uniqueness of the show.

BCCC DECISION: ***The Council viewed the promo and found that it depicts a brewing romance of a 46-year-old man with a young girl who is 19. The Council did not find anything objectionable in the promos and decided to DISPOSE OF the APPEAL.***

APPEAL- 142

APPEAL NO. BCCC/142/2025 DATED 29/05/2025
CHANNEL: Sony
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Radhika Dil Se*', 13/05/2025, 9:10 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Body-shaming/Harassment

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The protagonist is constantly fat-shamed in the programme. Now an elderly member of the family has resorted to physical punishment because she is not aware that the woman in question is the daughter-in-law of the family. We are working on women empowerment and equality but this programme completely abandons all of these realities and the thought processes are archaic.

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

The channel submits:

- The programme aims to highlight the impact of societal beauty standards, focusing on challenges women face around body image and self-worth. Through Radhika's journey, the show aims to highlight the struggles faced by girls who are often judged more for their appearance than their abilities or character.
- It emphasizes the value of inner strength, resilience, and kindness over superficial judgments. Kindly view the show in its entirety to better understand its intent and the message it strives to convey.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

The appellant submits:

- I appreciate the character of Radhika and the change that she has brought about in her marital home. I also admire her for her simplicity, strength of spirit, devoutness and never say die attitude. However, it is painful to see, how continuously, in this series and in other series, so many conspiracies are made to bring down the daughter-in-law. It also pains to see that so much time is spent on the plotting and planning against the daughter-in-law. Yet, when it comes down to finding out who the conspirators were and punishing them, it takes less than half an hour on one day and that's done.

- Agreed, that we should promote good souls, hard work, resilience, devoutness and also the fact that physical attributes are not everything. Beauty is not just skin deep. However, with all the plotting and scheming going on, the content is also encouraging society at large to do the same things with their daughters-in-law. We come from a society where we are not kind to daughters-in-law, in general. Over a period of time, we are trying to change this stereotype, yet serials like Radhika Dil Se, showcasing the mother-in-law, the aunt, the grandmother (Dadi who has come from the village) all plotting against one person is little much. Plus, we have added Kali to add to Radhika's woes.
- In tomorrow's episode, Radhika is going to wear a Superwoman/wonder woman costume. Everyone at home is going to make fun of her and children from outside are going to shame her as well. Where does this end? Just because Radhika is over-weight, she is called "*Genda Phool*". She is posing as the servant for her family, and these same people are backstabbing her. Somewhere, there has to be some justice. Right now, there are at least four women against one. Is that fair?
- I have personally experienced all of this. My own marriage broke down because of things like this. How much of this is being accepted and promoted in society at large is actually scary. We have a responsibility. Please take into consideration what I have said.

***BCCC DECISION**: BCCC had issued a **Notice** to the channel and called it for a **HEARING**. During the HEARING, the channel's representative maintained that the show was over and its focus was on acceptable beauty standards as envisaged in society. The show focussed on the resilience of Radhika, the lead protagonist, and the challenges she faced around body image and self-worth. The channel's representative also pointed out that the primary objective of the show was to show how women are still judged more for their appearance than their abilities or character and through Radhika's journey, the channel was able to showcase this journey juxtaposing wrong with right.*

The channel's representative maintained that the channel is entitled to creative liberties to take the programme forward in keeping with the storyline, and in this case, it had taken around nine to 10 episodes to depict the transformation. The BCCC noted the point that the channel did not go overboard with the graphic depiction and the visuals were not repetitive, but disagreed on the point that the channel's intent was immaterial as the impact was astounding. BCCC also felt the channel did not use the mindfulness while curating the show and the paradigm or the threshold of violence as depicted on screen seemed to be protracted and prolonged.

BCCC asked the channel not to repeat the episodes on its network without suitable modifications and apply more forethought while curating such shows which may have positive messaging but that gets lost in storytelling and dramatic depiction.

BCCC DISPOSED OF the APPEAL with a caution and admonition to the channel with an instruction that the Council does not take upon itself the moral authority of telling channels of what content can be construed to be unpalatable or morally reprehensible.

APPEAL- 143

APPEAL NO. BCCC/143/2025 DATED 30/05/2025
CHANNEL: Sony
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Radhika Dil Se*', 13/05/2025, 9 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Body-shaming/Harassment

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:
The protagonist Radhika is subjected to extreme torture and harassment. Such stories raise concern for women in the society as people can imitate the same in real life. They treat Radhika like an animal. It is very disturbing.

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

- As a response, the channel would like to clarify the intent and context of the programme; it aims to highlight the impact of societal beauty standards, focusing on challenges women face around body image and self-worth.
- Through Radhika's journey, the show aims to highlight the struggles faced by girls who are often judged more for their appearance than their abilities or character. It emphasizes the value of inner strength, resilience, and kindness over superficial judgments. The channel encourages the viewers to view the show in its entirety to better understand its intent and the message it strives to convey.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

The channel's response is baseless and the content has crossed all limits even if such things happen in real life.

Following are the concerns:

- Making body-shaming as the base, Radhika, who is the daughter-in-law of the house, is asked to act as a maid just to hide a truth from relatives.
- A random person is brought in front of Radhika to act as her husband and she is being forced to stay with him in one room.
- Radhika is also subjected to violence. Today in which society a woman doesn't raise her voice and stays silent after all the harassment.
- Is it the objective of the programme to show that Radhika is a helpless woman who can't say a word against all wrongdoings?
- Through the show they are portraying women as weak and helpless. This is not acceptable.

BCCC DECISION: BCCC had issued a Notice to the channel and called it for a HEARING. During the HEARING, the channel's representative maintained that the show was over and its focus was on acceptable beauty standards as envisaged in society. The show focussed on the resilience of Radhika, the lead protagonist, and the challenges she faced around body image and self-worth. The channel's representative also pointed out that the primary objective of the show was to show how women are still judged more for their appearance than their abilities or character and through Radhika's journey, the channel was able to showcase this journey juxtaposing wrong with right.

The channel's representative maintained that the channel is entitled to creative liberties to take the programme forward in keeping with the storyline, and in this case, it had taken around nine to 10 episodes to depict the transformation. The BCCC noted the point that the channel did not go overboard with the graphic depiction and the visuals were not repetitive, but disagreed on the point that the channel's intent was immaterial as the impact was astounding. BCCC also felt the channel did not use the mindfulness while curating the show and the paradigm or the threshold of violence as depicted on screen seemed to be protracted and prolonged.

BCCC asked the channel <u>not to repeat</u> the episodes on its network <u>without suitable modifications</u> and apply more forethought while curating such shows which may have positive messaging but that gets lost in storytelling and dramatic depiction.

BCCC DISPOSED OF the APPEAL with a caution and admonition to the channel with an instruction that the Council does not take upon itself the moral authority of telling channels of what content can be construed to be unpalatable or morally reprehensible.

APPEAL- 144

APPEAL NO. BCCC/144/2025 DATED 24/06/2025
CHANNEL: Zee TV
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Bhagya Laxmi*', 20/05/2025, 8 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Violence against women and children

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE:
The programme is showing crime against a pregnant woman repeatedly. It shows killing of a child. The culprits are shown to be escaping every time without investigation. It contains excessive cruelty which is encouraging crime in the society.

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

The channel submits:

- This show is a saga comprising of a large family setup added with varied characters, possessive exes, people with ulterior motives having different views and perspectives. The show has successfully run for over a thousand episodes where interesting plot twists and parallel tracks take place on a regular basis.
- The basis for this show is family drama meant solely for entertainment purposes and all the characters and plots are purely fictional in nature. However, even in real life, on a regular basis, we get news of atrocities and crimes that happen within families which sound and seem stranger than fiction and still take place in real life. And these are just the tip of a large iceberg of incidents that never get reported.
- Having said that, all stunts/acts and criminal activities depicted are shot with immense care and attention towards the wellbeing and safety of the artists and the crew members. As the show proceeds, the viewers will see how the perpetrators are brought to justice. The channel ensures that the BCCC code is adhered to and the same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

Appellant is not satisfied with the answer and requests to immediately stop the show.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO BCCC'S NOTICE:

- We would like to confirm that the show *Bhagya Laxmi* is no longer airing on Zee TV. We admit that the show had a lot of negative characters who played a big role in the show's story and helped it move forward and run for a considerable amount of time.
- The concerned programming team has been notified of this issued notice, and we assure that the channel will be careful in the depiction of such negative characters, we will also

ensure that there is a balance maintained in the present and future shows between the positive and the negative characters.

***BCCC DECISION**: The Council had issued a Notice to the channel. In its reply, the channel maintained that indeed the show had a lot of negative characters and too many subplots who/which were instrumental in taking the story forward. The programme thrives on various twists and turns of lead characters in which there are machinations both by male and female antagonists in almost every episode. The channel also said that the programme has ended after completing more than 1000 episodes, but it has notified its programming team of the Notice received from the Council on excessive depiction of evil. BCCC directed the channel that if it wishes to repeat the impugned programme on its network channels it has to strike a balance between inordinate and reasonable depiction of women in its programmes and be mindful of viewer sensibilities. BCCC also felt that it was not its remit to prescribe the plot and storyline to channels who have the right to make informed choices on these matters. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF.*

APPEAL- 145

APPEAL NO. BCCC/145/2025 DATED 01/08/2025
CHANNEL: Zee Tamil
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: '*Dance Jodi Dance*', 12/07/2025, 8 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Mocking Hindu deities/Hurting religious sentiments

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: In accordance with the Level 1 of the Grievance Redressal Mechanism under the CTN Rules (Amended) 2021, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) had sent a grievance letter to the channel against the programme "Dance Jodi Dance" on Zee Tamil.

As per the Ministry's grievance, the said programme contains visuals which are in violation of Rule 6[I] (c) of the Programme Code prescribed under Cable Television (Networks) Rules, 1994. The said provision of these rules' state that "No programme should be carried in the cable service that contains attack on religions or communities or visuals or words contemptuous of religious groups or which promote communal attitudes."

In view of the above, the Ministry had directed the channel to furnish its comments.

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

The channel submits:

- Zee Tamil has always strived to deliver entertainment with a deep sense of responsibility and cultural sensitivity. Our intent has consistently been to celebrate and honour the diverse traditions and beliefs that form the fabric of our society.
- In the current season of 'Dance Jodi Dance,' episode telecast on July 12, 2025, we curated a special devotional round to pay homage to deities and spiritual practices with utmost reverence. Each performance in this segment was thoughtfully designed to reflect devotion, dignity, and cultural authenticity. As part of this effort, we also invited local folk artists—who traditionally embody goddesses as part of their devotional art forms—to participate and showcase their faith and artistry on our stage.
- We regret that a part of this presentation has hurt the sentiments of our viewers. That was never our intention, and we deeply regret that an act meant to express

devotion was perceived otherwise. We offer our heartfelt and unconditional apology to the viewers who felt offended and disrespected by the performance.

- On receipt of MIB's letter, we have taken immediate action by removing the performance/video from Zee5 and all associated digital platforms. We would also like to clarify that the performance in question was meant purely for entertainment and was not intended to target or belittle any religion or community. In addition, in the episode aired on July 20, 2025, a scroll was carried thrice, whereby we expressed our regret for having hurt the sentiments of any community or religion as that was not our intention.
- Moving forward, we will take even greater care in reviewing any content that touches upon religious or cultural themes, ensuring such depictions are handled with the highest level of sensitivity and respect. We remain committed to creating content that uplifts, celebrates, and respects the diverse spiritual and cultural heritage of our viewers.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):
Post the response received from the channel, the Ministry has requested BCCC to take necessary action in accordance with the Level-II of grievance redressal mechanism prescribed under Cable Television Networks (Amendment) Rules, 2021. 3. Action taken in the matter may kindly be communicated to the Ministry.

CHANNEL'S SUBMISSION TO BCCC:

- On receipt of MIB's letter, we had immediately removed the said performance from repeats on television and from the OTT platform. In addition, to the above, on our own, we also carried an apology scroll multiple times, during the final episode of this show. The said scroll stated "This programme was created for entertainment purposes. We would like to sincerely clarify that it is not our intention to hurt anyone's sentiments or social beliefs. If anything has unintentionally caused offense, we express our regret."
- We would like to take a moment to address the feedback we'd received for this performance where Gods were shown dancing with a contestant. First and foremost, we want to say that this concept came from a place of deep respect and positive intent. The story was about a contestant who felt alone and defeated and, in that moment, the deities come down to lift him up, to remind him that he's not alone and a contemporary folk song was chosen simply to reflect the life of a normal human being today.
- The performance was formed with the intention of delivering a symbolic and motivational message showing that in moments of despair, faith and divine support can uplift and inspire us. A contemporary folk song was chosen to reflect a celebratory and hopeful mood, never to diminish the dignity of our revered Deities.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE TO BCCC'S NOTICE:

We would like to reiterate our explanations and pray before the Council:

- Zee Tamil has always strived to deliver entertainment with a deep sense of responsibility and cultural sensitivity while maintaining the integrity of our deities and their reverence.
- In the episode telecast on July 12, 2025, a special devotional round was curated to pay homage to Deities and spiritual practices with utmost reverence. Each performance in this segment was thoughtfully designed to reflect devotion, dignity, and cultural authenticity. As part of this effort, we also invited local folk artists, who traditionally embody Goddesses as part of their devotional art forms, to participate and showcase their faith and artistry on our stage.

- We regret that a part of this presentation has hurt our viewers' sentiments. That was never our intention, and that an act meant to express devotion was perceived otherwise.
- On receipt of MIB's letter, we took immediate action by removing the performance/video from any repeats on television and Zee5 and all associated platforms. We would also like to clarify that the performance in question was meant purely for entertainment and was not intended to target or belittle any religion/community.
- In addition, in the episode aired on July 20, 2025, a scroll was carried thrice, whereby we expressed our regret for having hurt the sentiments of any community or religion as that was not our intention.
- Moving forward, we will take even greater care on content that touches upon religious or cultural themes, ensuring such depictions are handled with the highest level of sensitivity and respect. Be assured that we remain committed to creating content that uplifts, celebrates and respects our viewers' diverse spiritual and cultural heritage.

BCCC DECISION: **BCCC has directed the channel to run an APOLOGY SCROLL. A DETAILED ORDER has been passed for this programme.**

APPEAL- 146

APPEAL NO. BCCC/146/2025 DATED 06/08/2025
CHANNEL: &TV
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Bhabhi Ji Ghar Pe Hain*', 16/07/2025 (Episode: 2637), 10:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Vulgar content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: In the said episode, there was a dream sequence where Anita's character comes to meet Tiwari and asks for autograph on her back. The whole sequence is extremely vulgar and sensual. If any child watches this inappropriate scene, it will affect the kid's psychology. If the makers wish to show such scenes, they should tone it down or give an 18+ age rating during the show. Kindly watch the episode and review it. The makers are showing vulgarity in the name of comedy.

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

The channel submits:

- In this story, Manmohan Tiwari has been approached by a movie director to feature in one of his films. The director praises Tiwari for his acumen at expressing emotions and Tiwari is convinced that he can act and starts dreaming of becoming a huge movie star. In this imagination of his, he pictures that he will have a lot of fans including Anita Bhabhi. His dreams consist of Anita being a fangirl and falling head over heels for Tiwari's attention.
- In one of the scenes, she is shown asking Tiwari to autograph her hands or her back. Tiwari tries to oblige at all times but does not end up actually signing. This show is all about an innocent and childish infatuation of Tiwari and Mishra towards Anita and Angoori. The show has always maintained a level which may be called flirtatious but never goes towards obscenity in the dialogues or actions of these characters. Moreover, the timing of the telecast of this show is post 10PM which puts the show into the R category according to the BCCC guidelines laid out for television.
- The channel ensures that the BCCC code is adhered to and the same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

The appellant submits:

- The channel, in its response, is just manipulating the words to get away with it. The channel has submitted that it was just a dream sequence. Just because it was a dream sequence, can they show any kind of vulgarity and get away with such obscene content? This doesn't give them the right to show vulgarity.
- It is requested that the channel should put an 18+ disclaimer before the show. As per the channel's submission the show is aired at 10:30 PM, which is an adult viewing time slot, but the re-telecast of the show is at 8:30 AM. The show has a repeat telecast throughout the day so that cannot be called as adult time slots.
- The only concern is that a dream sequence should not go so far for some cheap laughs and such scenes should be toned down.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
The appellant requests that the channel should put 18+ disclaimer before the show

BCCC DECISION: ***The Council viewed the episode and found that one of the male protagonists, Manmohan Tiwari has been approached by a director to act in films, he dreams of being on a film set and is dressed like Sanjeev Kumar. The character Anita (Bhabhiji) asks for an autograph seductively on her back. She is wearing a halter blouse with his name written over it with a heart embedded in the blouse. Since his hands are tied, he holds the pen in his mouth and is about to give an autograph on her back but he gets up from his sleep and says oh this was a dream but in reality, no one will come between me and Bhabhiji's back. The Council decided to caution the channel that such sequences borders on profanity and vulgarity irrespective of the show being shown during watershed hours. The Council decided to caution the channel against depiction of such comedy irrespective of the show timings. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.***

APPEAL- 147

APPEAL NO. BCCC/147/2025 DATED 15/08/2025
CHANNEL: Zee Telugu
LANGUAGE: Telugu
PROGRAMME: 'Laxmi Niwasam', 30/07/2025. 7 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Incorrect portrayal of legal/criminal procedures

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme shows that the suspect is released by the police without any court proceedings. Such content which is made for entertainment purpose is misleading Indian illiterate audience about the judicial system.

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

The channel submits:

- The story behind the track shows that the female lead is falsely framed and accused of stealing a necklace from the deity of a temple and the police arrests her for this crime. The cops put her in jail and prepare to take her to the court for further proceedings.
- The male leads, knowing the good character of the heroine, figure out that the whole plot has been made against her by a negative character who plants the goons to steal the necklace and abduct the goldsmith thus ensuring that the heroine is charged with theft. The heroes then rescue the goldsmith after a brief fight with the goons, they

then present him to the cops and the goldsmith verifies that the necklace does not hold any value and is actually almost a fake.

- Once the cops realise their fault in verifying the crime apologise to the heroine and let her off. It may be noted here that this is a fictional setup and showing the entire process of dropping charges and paperwork involved would make the show cumbersome and tedious for our viewers. We trust that our educated viewers will not confuse a television show with reality.
- The channel ensures that the BCCC code is adhered to and the same was done here too. We thank you for your continued patronage and love for our shows and hope you will keep enjoying them with your family.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):
The appellant submits that he filed a complaint regarding the said scene because it is for the court to decide who is innocent and who is not and, in the scene, it is shown that the police release the suspect on its own.
And secondly, in its response, the channel says, "The educated viewers will not confuse reality and television show." Majority of their audience belongs to rural areas. Telecast of such incorrect information can mislead Illiterate or semi-literate people.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
The channel may be asked to avoid such scenes and keep it closer to reality.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episode and found that the female protagonist is falsely implicated of stealing a necklace from the deity of a temple and the police arrests her for this crime. The cops put her in jail and prepare to take her to the court for further proceedings. Later she is allowed to leave after the police find out that she has been falsely framed. The Council felt that any fictional presentation will thrive on such plots and twists and the progression of the show does not essentially endorse the narratives of following the rule of law and its depiction in the truest form. The Council decided against any intervention as it would tantamount to usurping the creative liberty of the channels to show stories as per their narratives. Also, fiction is not to be confused with reality. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 148

APPEAL NO. BCCC/148/2025 DATED 19/08/2025
CHANNEL: Zee Tamil
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: '*Dance Jodi Dance Reload*', 12/07/2025
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Mocking Hindu deities/ Hurting religious sentiments

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: In accordance with the Level 1 of the Grievance Redressal Mechanism under the CTN Rules (Amended) 2021, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) had forwarded a grievance of Mr K Kameswaran to the channel against the programme "Dance Jodi Dance" on Zee Tamil.

The Ministry directed the channel to take appropriate action on the complaint in accordance with the Cable Television Networks (Amendment) Rules, 2021.

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

The channel submits:

- The concept of the performance where gods were shown dancing with a contestant, came from deep respect and positive intent. The story was about a contestant who felt alone and defeated and, in that moment, the deities came down to lift him up, to remind him that he's not alone and a contemporary folk song was chosen to reflect a celebratory and hopeful mood, never to diminish of our revered deities.
- The channel deeply values cultural and religious sentiments of our audience. Nonetheless, we have deleted the performance and also a scroll was carried during the finale episode of the series stating that this programme was created for entertainment purposes. We would like to sincerely clarify that this is not our intention to hurt anyone's sentiments or social beliefs. If anything has unintentionally caused offense, we express out regret."
- The channel ensures that the BCCC code is adhered to and the same was done here.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):
The appellant submits the following:

1. CONTEXT AND GROUNDS FOR APPEAL

A. **CONTINUING PATTERN OF VIOLATIONS**
The episode of 'Dance Jodi Dance' aired on Zee Tamil on 12-07-2025, submitted as video evidence, depicted Hindu deities — including Shiva, Ganesha, Hanuman, Murugan — dressed in costumes performing sexually provocative, obscene and vulgar dance moves with scantily-clad female actors, including gestures and words lowering their dignity and sacredness. Lord Shiva was shown addressing Hanuman in a mocking manner ("*vaanaram*"), and Hanuman was depicted wagging his tail obscenely, in a setting akin to a vulgar party.

Such portrayal is brazenly contemptuous of Hindu religious icons, violates the Programme Code Rule 6(1)(c) (Cable Television Networks Regulation Act, 1995), and is designed to shock, insult, and commercially exploit deeply-held religious beliefs for TRP and profit.

This is not an isolated offence. Zee TV and its platforms have established a deliberate pattern of targeting Hindu themes for ridicule, distortion, and commercial exploitation:
"Godman" webseries (Zee5 Tamil, June 2020), Anti-Hindu, anti-Brahmin content, questioning sacred practices and portraying religious figures with malice
-- Series like Radhakrishna, Mahabharata, Shiv Shakti, etc. -- Scriptural distortions, fabrication of myths, and misrepresentation for soap opera content.
-- Junior Super Star Season 4 (Jan 2022) – Children coached into skits mocking Indian leaders with veiled religious overtones.
Complaints have also been raised regarding Zee channels mocking other faiths:
-- Zee News: Operation Sindoor coverage (2025), DNA (Sudhir Chaudhary, Kerala FIR, 2020)
-- Content interpreted as targeting Muslims, legally prosecuted under Sec 295A IPC
-- Zee News Holi Programme (Mar 2025): Sensationalized tickers and hate speech against Muslims, communal incitement

The attached Ministry forwarding (Kameswaran complaint) and Zee TV's subsequent reply only demonstrate a perfunctory response, with no genuine remorse, no adequate corrective action, and a patronizing justification that the intent was "positive" – contrary to facts and the public outrage witnessed.

2. LEGAL ARGUMENTS
A. **Violation of Programme Code (Rule 6 (1)(c))**
"No programme should be carried in the cable service which contains attack on religions or communities or visuals or words contemptuous of religious groups or which promote communal attitudes."

B. **Violations under Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995**
Section 19 empowers authorities to prohibit transmission of content likely to promote disharmony, hatred, ill-will between communities or disturb public tranquillity. Section 16 provides for penalties, including fines and imprisonment, for contraventions.

C. **Section 295A IPC – Outrage of Religious Feelings**
As established by Supreme Court (Ramji Lal Modi v. State of UP; Amish Devgan v. Union of India), deliberate, malicious acts which outrage the religious feelings of a class of citizens are cognizable and non-bailable offences. The deliberate depiction of Hindu gods in obscene ways, in a dance programme, triggers the core ingredients — intention, public outrage, visible representation, and harm.

D. **Article 25/26 Constitution – Right to Religious Practice**
The repeated insult to Hindu faith, through ridicule, distortion and vulgar display, violates the right of the community to manage and honour its affairs and religious beliefs (Art 25, 26). The commercial entertainment model cannot override this constitutionally protected right.

E. **Pattern and Severity**
Zee TV's continued, recurring pattern of violations shows both intent (deliberate production choices) and seriousness (mass harm caused to millions). The channel has received repeated notices, police complaints, and public condemnation, yet continues to profit from such content, demonstrating wanton disregard for law and ethical standards.

F. **Policy and Guidelines Breach**
The BCCC Guidelines grade violations by their degree, duration, actual and potential harm caused, and financial gain. Zee TV's apology scroll was minimalist and delayed, while the financial benefits accrued remain undisgorged. The harm is not reversible by mere content deletion.

G. **Other Faiths**
Zee TV has also been the subject of FIRs and court-ordered action for anti-Muslim content. The channel's content ecosystem not only targets Hindu beliefs, but has also endangered communal harmony by targeting other religions in a sensational and divisive manner.

3. IMPACT ON HINDU COMMUNITY

A. **Massive Public Outrage**
The Dance Jodi Dance incident, along with the history of derogatory content, has caused enormous anger among millions of Hindus worldwide. The sense of hurt, betrayal, and outrage is palpable and continues to swell in civil society and social media, with calls for severe action and boycott.

B. **Commercial Meretriciousness**
The channel has used the sacred for the profane, converting deities revered by millions into objects of dance and mockery for entertainment. Such acts strike at the roots of our harmonious, multi-religious society.

C. **Ineffectiveness of Apology**
Zee TV's current response does not address the gravity of the harm, nor has it undertaken substantial corrective measures, accountability, staff training, or assurance against recurrence. Minimal compliance and cosmetic apology cannot substitute substantive justice and deterrence.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

- Conduct a full hearing on Zee TV's repeated Programme Code violations, including Dance Jodi Dance and previous cases (Hindu, Muslim, other faiths)
- Imposes maximum possible penalties as per BCCC Guidelines and the Cable TV Act: financial fines, mandatory apology scrolls, public apology, off-air periods, content audit, and referral to MIB/Police for criminal prosecution under IPC Sec 295A
- Consider recommending suspension or cancellation of Zee TV's broadcast license, or application of restrictive conditions, unless demonstrated remedial action and accountability are undertaken
- Mandate religious sensitivity training for all creative and management staff at Zee TV
- Publish a detailed, public record of the proceedings and findings to ensure transparency and deterrence
- Ensure all future religious content on Zee TV channels be subject to mandatory pre-broadcast screening by an independent committee
- The sanctity of all religions in India is protected by law, and the freedom of speech does not extend to deliberate, malicious insults and commercial exploitation of faith. The role of BCCC is central to upholding communal harmony and the constitutional values of our Republic. I urge the BCCC to act decisively and restore public faith in the broadcasting ecosystem.

***BCCC DECISION*:** **BCCC has directed the channel to run an APOLOGY SCROLL. A DETAILED ORDER has been passed for this programme.**

APPEAL- 149

APPEAL NO. BCCC/149/2025 DATED 22/08/2025
CHANNEL: Sun TV
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: '*Ethir Neechal*', 04/08/2025, 9:30 PM (Also forwarded by MIB)
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Violence

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme showed excessive violence against women. Close-up shots of domestic violence and blood were shown in the said episode. All episodes aired after the said episode (5th to 10th August 2025) show blood shots.

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

The channel submits:

- We would like to assure that the content of the serial fully complies with all relevant laws and regulations. The serial does not feature any scenes or statements that encourages domestic violence against women or any form of violence against women.
- The storyline revolves around women (co-sisters) in the family i.e., Eshwari Gunasekaran, Renuka Gnanasekaran, Nandhini Kathirvel, and Janani Shakthivel, all representing struggle and empowerment. They all have to face firm male chauvinism, but they respond to the offensive conduct running rampant within their family. Janani, one of the daughters-in-law in the serial in particular, resonates deeply with the frustrations and aspirations of countless women who have endured selfish and oppressive treatment at the hands of men in their lives. Through her bold defiance of her in-laws and her unapologetic expression of beliefs, Janani not only challenges the status quo but also inspires women in the family to assert their voices, creating a solidarity that fuels the collective struggle against gender inequality. By emphasizing the strength and determination of women such as Janani, we hope to

spark an important conversation about women's rights and economic independence. We hope to empower women, challenge negative societal norms, and combat the pervasive gender discrimination that still exists in so many communities. Through the depiction of these strong women, we hope to create awareness, stimulate important dialogue, and create change on these important issues.

- In the episode aired on 04.08.2025, Eshwari approaches her husband, Gunasekaran, expressing that she needs to talk to him. She confronts him about his past wrongdoings and accuses him of ruining their children's life merely to satisfy his superiority complex. She firmly warns him not to interfere in Dharshan's life (their son) while urging him to let Dharshan live peacefully and asks him to stop the marriage between Dharshan and Anbukarasi, as Dharshan is uninterested towards such marriage arrangements. This sparks a heated argument between Eshwari and Gunasekaran, which quickly escalates. In a fit of anger, Gunasekaran forcefully pushes Eshwari against the wall before storming out of the room. The impact leaves Eshwari with a severe injury to the back of her head, though the family does not notice it at the time.
- The following morning, Nandhini enters Eshwari's room with a cup of coffee, only to notice heavy traces of blood near the doorway. Alarmed, she pushes the door open and is horrified to find Eshwari lying unconscious in a pool of blood. Nandhini panicked by the situation, cried out for help, drawing the family members to the scene. With the assistance of Dharshan and Dharshini (Eshwari's son and daughter), Nandhini rushes her to the hospital for immediate treatment.
- In the following episodes, Eshwari's co-sisters learn that she has been admitted to the hospital and earlier that morning when Eshwari was found unconscious at house no one in the family came to her assistance. Outraged by this indifference, they take a stand against the rest of the family for failing her. In the midst of this, Janani, convinced in her belief, assumes that Gunasekaran is responsible and openly accuses him, vowing to uncover the truth and bring the guilty person to justice. Taking her resolve a step further, Janani officially lodges a criminal complaint through Kotravai a fearless police officer renowned for her honesty, sincerity, and unwavering perseverance. Known for standing tall against injustice, Kotravai's involvement adds a new force of integrity and determination to the battle. Furthermore, it is to be noted that, Janani, together with her co-sisters driven by an unyielding sense of righteousness, challenges the family's unjust behaviour. Through their unity and courage, they embody the strength of women who refuse to remain silent, setting a powerful example of resilience and solidarity even against deeply rooted societal norms.
- We would like to clarify that all the visuals depicting blood in the episode aired on 04.08.2025, as well as in subsequent episodes, are presented in sepia tone and have been carefully kept within the permissible broadcast guidelines.
- It is imperative to emphasize that the serial does not glorify domestic violence, gender inequality, and/or any form of violence against women, as alleged in the complaint. On the contrary, the narrative consistently portrays strong female characters and certain male characters such as Shakthivel who actively resist oppression, speak up against injustice, and uphold values of equality, dignity, and empowerment. While certain scenes may appear harsh in isolation, we encourage viewers to consider the broader context. The actions of the characters aim to create a narrative resonating with compassion, empathy, and justice, shedding light on the significance of opposing injustice and the triumph of good over evil.
- 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 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):

The appellant is not satisfied with the channel's response and submitted the following:

- The channel has mentioned in their reply as "In a fit of anger, Gunasekaran forcefully pushes Eshwari against the wall before storming out of the room. The impact leaves Eshwari with a severe injury to the back of her head, though the family does not notice it at the time." But the fact is that Gunasekaran character attempt to kill his wife Eashwri - **which is a conscious choking/attempted killing act - This content is highly disturbing and promotes violent behaviour, which can negatively influence viewers, especially children and young adults.**
- According to Section 6 of The Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994, (1), No programme should be carried in the cable service which is likely to encourage or incite violence or contains anything against maintenance of law and order or which promote anti-national attitudes;
- The content of the said programme doesn't comply with the Cable TV Networks Regulation Act, 1995 ("**Act**"), as amended by the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 ("**Rules**"). The duration of this scene was more than a minute and even in further episodes, this scene was repeatedly shown.

CHANNEL'S RESPONSE FURTHER TO THE APPEAL:

With reference to the appeal dated 22.08.2025, limited to the four grounds expressly pleaded/raised therein:

1.1 characterization of the impugned scene as a "*conscious choking/attempted killing act*";
1.2 allegation that the content "*promotes violent behaviour*," particularly affecting children and young persons;
1.3 alleged contravention of Rule 6(1)(e) of the Programme Code; and
1.4 assertions that the scene's duration exceeded one minute and that it was repeated in subsequent episodes (05–10 August). We deny each allegation and demonstrate full compliance with applicable law and self-regulatory standards.

2. Applicable Framework (*for ease of reference*):

2.1 Programme Code (Rule 6, Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994). The Rule inter alia:

a. prohibits programmes "likely to encourage or incite violence or [containing] anything against maintenance of law and order" (Rule 6(1)(e));
b. proscribes denigration of women (Rule 6(1)(k));
c. requires that programmes meant for children not contain bad language or explicit scenes of violence (Rule 6(4)); and
d. mandates that programme unsuitable for children are not carried when the largest number of children are viewing (Rule 6(5)).

2.2 IBDF/BCCC Self-Regulatory Guidelines: Broadcasters must self-classify content into "G" (generally accessible/with parental guidance) or "R" (restricted). The Guidelines also provide Theme 1: Crime & Violence standards, and detailed audio-visual limits for "G" (e.g., no excessively explicit or gruesome violence, no close-ups or prolonged shots of dismembered/disfigured bodies, no depiction of dead or seriously wounded persons or gruesome/gory scenes).

2.3 BCCC Advisory on Portrayal of Gender-Based Violence (01.07.2021): The Advisory cautions against prolonged depictions and "sensational" treatment, it encourages contextual narratives that do not titillate or propagate further subjugation and that avoid over-indulgence in extreme forms of gender-based violence.

3. Ground (i): Alleged "conscious choking / attempted killing act" - Not borne out by the broadcast.

3.1 The actual telecast depicts a domestic argument culminating in the husband pushing his spouse, there is no depiction of choking, manual strangulation, or a sustained attack intended to kill. The broadcaster may produce the relevant episodes for ready reference at the Secretariat.
3.2 In adjudication, BCCC relies on the broadcast itself, not subjective labels. On the facts as aired, the allegation of "attempt to kill/choking" is incorrect. (This addresses the appellant's quotation and re-characterisation of our response.)
3.3 Rule 6(1)(e) addresses *incitement/encouragement* of violence, not the mere contextual depiction of wrongdoing. The Programme Code does not create a per se ban on any portrayal of violence; it controls manner, context, and likely impact. The scene, as aired, does not cross that threshold.

4. Ground (ii): "Promotes violent behaviour; harmful to children and young adults" - Not made out.

4.1 Context condemns violence. The storyline treats the conduct as wrongful, triggers medical care and legal recourse, and centres women's agency challenging abuse. Such treatment does not encourage or glorify violence and, instead, models lawful accountability, fully aligned with Rule 6(1)(e) and the Theme 1: Crime & Violence subject-matter controls which prohibit inducing/justifying/glorifying violence or presenting it as glamorous/acceptable.
4.2 Safeguarded audio-visual treatment. For "G", the Guidelines forbid excessively explicit/gruesome violence and close-ups or prolonged shots of dismembered/disfigured bodies or seriously wounded persons. The impugned sequence, as broadcast, used muted grading and brief, non-lingering visuals to avoid gore, it does not show close-up/prolonged gory imagery or a seriously wounded person in a gruesome manner. Hence it remains within "G" audio-visual limits.
4.3 Child-safety obligations are respected. Rule 6(4) requires that programmes meant for children not contain explicit scenes of violence, and Rule 6(5) requires that unsuitable programmes not be carried when the largest number of children are viewing. The programme's treatment, non-gruesome, non-lingering and contextually condemnatory, keeps it suitable for general viewing with parental guidance, and therefore does not breach these rules.
4.4 BCCC Advisory compliance. The Advisory warns against prolonged or sensationalised portrayals of gender-based violence and tilting into titillation. The episode does the opposite: brief depiction, censure of the perpetrator, and a justice-seeking arc. This complies with the Advisory's scheme.

5. Ground (iii): Alleged breach of Rule 6(1)(e) ("*likely to encourage or incite violence*") - No contravention.

5.1 Incitement vs. depiction. The Programme Code provision is aimed at content likely to encourage or incite violence or against maintenance of law and order. Where a narrative condemns violence, activates police/medical responses, and empowers victims, the

likelihood of encouragement or incitement is negated. The scene and the ensuing track plainly do not encourage emulation of violence.
5.2 Self-regulatory mirror. Theme 1 (Crime & Violence) directs that content shall not "induce, incite, encourage, justify, reinforce or glorify" violence, present it as glamorous, or encourage emulation—standards met here.

6. Ground (iv): Duration (>1 minute) and repetition (05–10 Aug) - Editorially warranted: within "G" limits.

6.1 Duration is not a standalone breach. Neither the Programme Code nor the Guidelines impose a per-se time cap on a dramatic beat, the controlling tests are the nature of depiction (e.g., not excessively explicit/gruesome, no prolonged gory close-ups) and the context (non-glorifying). A minute-long sequence that avoids gory close-ups and is necessary to the story does not by itself offend the Code or Guidelines.
6.2 Recaps were brief and warranted. In an ongoing serial, short recaps that remind viewers of a critical plot point are editorially warranted and permissible so long as they do not reintroduce prolonged or gruesome imagery. The recap inserts here were restrained and remained within "G" audio-visual constraints.
6.3 Scheduling remains compliant. Only "R" content is restricted to 11:00 pm – 5:00 am. Because the episode and recaps did not cross into "R" by showing prolonged/explicit gore, 9:30 pm scheduling is permissible.

7. Women's dignity and positive portrayal (Rule 6(1)(k) & Rule 6(2)) – Affirmative compliance.

7.1 The Programme Code prescribes denigration of women (Rule 6(1)(k)) and urges broadcasters to project women in positive/leadership roles (Rule 6(2)). The track here centres women's agency, co-sisters challenge abuse, pursue justice, and condemn wrongdoing, fully consistent with these provisions.

8. On facts, the broadcast shows no choking/attempt-to-kill, avoids gruesome/lingering imagery, and frames violence as wrongful. On law, it satisfies Rule 6(1)(e) (no incitement), Rule 6(1)(k)/6(2) (non-denigration, positive portrayal of women), Rule 6(4)–(5) (child-safety and scheduling suitability), and the IBDF/BCCC Guidelines for "G" content (no excessively explicit/gruesome violence, no close-ups or prolonged gory shots), with "R" scheduling inapplicable.

9. In view of the foregoing, no ground is made out and therefore the present appeal deserves to be dismissed.

<u>BCCC DECISION</u>: The Council viewed the episode and found that in the episode aired on 04.08.2025, Eshwari approaches her husband, Gunasekaran, expressing the desire to speak with him. She confronts him about his past wrongdoings and accuses him of ruining their children's life merely to satisfy his superiority complex. She firmly warns him not to interfere in Dharshan's life (their son) while urging him to let Dharshan live peacefully and asks him to stop the marriage between Dharshan and Anbukarasi, as Dharshan is uninterested towards such marriage arrangements. This sparks a heated argument between Eshwari and Gunasekaran, which quickly escalates. In a fit of anger, Gunasekaran forcefully pushes Eshwari against the wall before storming out of the room. The impact leaves Eshwari with a severe injury to the back of her head, though the family does not notice it at the time.
The channel in its reply also mentions that the storyline revolves around women i.e., Eshwari Gunasekaran, Renuka Gnanasekaran, Nandhini Kathirvel, and Janani Shakthivel, all representing struggle and empowerment. They all have to face firm

male chauvinism, but they respond to the offensive conduct running rampant within their family. Janani, one of the daughters-in-law in the serial in particular, resonates deeply with the frustrations and aspirations of countless women who have endured selfish and oppressive treatment at the hands of men in their lives. Through her bold defiance of her in-laws and her unapologetic expression of beliefs, Janani not only challenges the status quo but also inspires women in the family to assert their voices, creating a solidarity that fuels the collective struggle against gender inequality. By emphasizing the strength and determination of women such as Janani, the channel maintains that they hope to spark an important conversation about women's rights and economic independence. They intend to to empower women, challenge negative societal norms, and combat the pervasive gender discrimination that still exists in so many communities. Through the depiction of these strong women, the channel strives to create awareness, stimulate important dialogue, and create change on these important issues. The following morning, Nandhini enters Eshwari's room with a cup of coffee, only to notice heavy traces of blood near the doorway. Alarmed, she pushes the door open and is horrified to find Eshwari lying unconscious in a pool of blood. Nandhini panicked by the situation, cried out for help, drawing the family members to the scene. With the assistance of Dharshan and Dharshini (Eshwari's son and daughter), Nandhini rushes her to the hospital for immediate treatment. In the following episodes, Eshwari's co-sisters learn that she has been admitted to the hospital and earlier that morning when Eshwari was found unconscious at house no one in the family came to her assistance. Outraged by this indifference, they take a stand against the rest of the family for failing her. In the midst of this, Janani, convinced in her belief, assumes that Gunasekaran is responsible and openly accuses him, vowing to uncover the truth and bring the guilty person to justice. Taking her resolve a step further, Janani officially lodges a criminal complaint through Kotravai a fearless police officer renowned for her honesty, sincerity, and unwavering perseverance. Known for standing tall against injustice, Kotravai's involvement adds a new force of integrity and determination to the battle. Furthermore, Janani, together with her co-sisters driven by an unyielding sense of righteousness, challenges the family's unjust behaviour. Through their unity and courage, they embody the strength of women who refuse to remain silent, setting a powerful example of resilience and solidarity even against deeply rooted societal norms.

The channel states that it is imperative to emphasize that the serial does not glorify domestic violence, gender inequality, and/or any form of violence against women, as alleged. On the contrary, the narrative consistently portrays strong female characters and certain male characters such as Shakthivel who actively resist oppression, speak up against injustice, and uphold values of equality, dignity, and empowerment. While certain scenes may appear harsh in isolation, we encourage viewers to consider the broader context.

The Council took the channel's reply on record. Although the larger message conveyed at the end obliquely supports women to break out of abusive marriages, BCCC cautioned the channel and asked it to tone down the depiction of physical and mental violence against women which borders on being unacceptable. The Appeal was thus DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 150

APPEAL NO. BCCC/150/2025 dated 24 September 2025
CHANNEL: Zee Tamil
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: 'Single Pasanga', 24/08/2025, 8PM

NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Vulgarity

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The complaint is from Voice & Justice Legal Alliance legal team who are collective of advocates and legal professionals. The complainant has issued a legal notice against the telecast of vulgar and objectionable content by Zee Tamil Channel.

The complainant submits:

- In the programme, a social media performer, Mr. Thangapandi of Koomapatti, was allowed to present a so-called "First Night Concept Dance." This performance, under the full glare of channel's production team and in the presence of the programme's judges and anchors, was permitted to go on air without any content check or censorship.
- The said dance was presented in the most suggestive, vulgar and sexually themed manner, under the caption of "First Night Concept." Such content is wholly unbecoming of a family entertainment show which is watched by lakhs of families across Tamil Nadu and elsewhere, especially since the telecast time was during prime family viewing hours. It is a matter of grave concern that innocent children were forced to witness suggestive enactments of a private marital act, something that is culturally offensive, morally degrading, and psychologically harmful for impressionable viewers.
- The action of Zee Tamil in approving, producing and broadcasting such content amounts to a serious breach of law, morality, and broadcasting standards. Your conduct violates Rule 6 of the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994, which specifically prohibits the telecast of obscene or indecent material and anything which denigrates women and children. It also amounts to an offence under Sections 292–293 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, dealing with obscenity and distribution of indecent content. Further, it is in direct violation of the constitutional mandate under Article 39(e) and (f), which places a duty on all institutions to ensure that children are not exposed to exploitation or material injurious to their well-being.
- It is further pertinent to point out that television channels nowadays operate in an uncontrolled manner without any effective censorship or pre-screening of programmes. Unlike films, which are subject to certification by the CBFC, television programmes are being broadcast freely without any prior approval mechanism. This has resulted in frequent violations of public decency and child safety norms, as seen in the present case. Therefore, it is high time that the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and the regulatory bodies create and enforce strict compliance rules and pre-broadcast content review mechanisms to prevent recurrence of such objectionable telecasts.
- It is shocking that the channel's editorial team, content directors, and judges of the programme gave tacit approval for such a vulgar performance to be staged and broadcast. This raises the following serious questions which you are legally bound to answer:
  - What was the editorial review mechanism that allowed such a sexually themed performance to be passed for telecast?
  - Was any age rating or parental guidance warning issued to protect child viewers?
  - How does Zee Tamil justify exposing children and families to marital intimacy themes on a dance competition platform?
  - Does Zee Tamil take responsibility for the social and psychological damage caused by such content?
  - What disciplinary measures are you initiating against the persons responsible for approving and airing this content?

- By allowing such obscene content, Zee Tamil has not only committed a legal violation but has also gravely betrayed the trust of its viewers, many of whom rely on your channel for safe, cultural and family-oriented entertainment. It must be emphasized that television broadcasting is not an unrestricted commercial activity but a licensed privilege, and with such privilege comes the duty of upholding public morality and decency.

Accordingly, through this notice, the complainant calls upon Zee Tamil Channel to:

1. Issue an unconditional public apology to the viewers for this objectionable telecast;
2. Immediately withdraw the said episode from all repeat telecasts, OTT platforms and social media uploads;
3. Place on record the internal corrective measures and content guidelines you propose to prevent recurrence;
4. Confirm in writing the disciplinary action against the editorial/production team responsible.

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

The channel submits:

- At the outset, the channel categorically denies and reject all the baseless, misconceived, and legally untenable allegations regarding telecast of obscene and vulgar dance performances in one of our Tamil language non-fiction show "*Single Pasanga*" telecasted on Zee Tamil Channel as alleged in Your Notice.
- Kindly note, Zee channels have been in the business of media and entertainment for more than 3 decades. Hence, be assured that we understand and strictly adhere to the rules, regulation and guidelines defined by the various compliance authorities including Cable and Television Act, Cable and Television Rules and Regulation, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Therefore, we specifically deny that we have violated any rule and/or regulation as alleged in you Notice.
- The Notice erroneously refers to the programme as *"Dance Jodi Dance"*. The performance you refer in your Notice was in fact telecast in our original format show *"Single Pasanga"*. The programme "*Single Pasanga"* is a creative, original show conceptualised by Zee Tamil. The show features young, unmarried men from diverse backgrounds including digital creators and television participants who are paired with celebrity mentors (referred to as "angels"). The purpose of the show is to help participants enhance their self-confidence, overcome social insecurities, and express themselves positively in a family entertainment format.
- The performance mentioned featured contestant Mr. Thangapandi, a rising social media content creator from Tamil Nadu. His performance was based on a light hearted, comic-romantic theme inspired by an iconic Tamil language film, "*Surya Vansam" (staring R. Sarathkumar and Devayani,)*. The performance depicted a playful conversation between a newly married couple on the importance of understanding personal boundaries, eventually culminating in mutual respect and closeness.
- At no point of time did the performance include obscene gestures, sexually suggestive acts, or content that could be termed vulgar, as alleged by you. On the contrary, the entire performance was wholesome in tone, interlaced with humour, romance, and dignity.
- We categorically and unequivocally state that neither any of its performer nor Zee has violated any law. The programme and the specific episode in question was thoroughly reviewed by our internal Standards & Practices (S&P) Department prior to telecast and were found to be fully compliant with all applicable laws and regulations, including:

  - Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994: The content did not, in any manner, violate Rule 6 or any other provision of the Programme Code. No obscene, indecent, defamatory, or denigrating content was broadcast.

- Advertising and Programme Code: The episode was fully compliant with the Programme Code prescribed under the CTN Act. It neither promoted vulgarity nor undermined cultural or moral values.
- BCCC Code: Zee is committed to following the BCCC guidelines in letter and spirit. The performance in question was consistent with the standards prescribed, and no aspect of it can be reasonably interpreted as harmful to children or offensive to public morality.
- Other Applicable Laws (including Sections 292 & 293 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 & Article 39(e) and (f) of Indian Constitution): The performance cannot, by any objective standard, be classified as obscene under law. It does not depict sexually explicit conduct, nor does it have the effect of corrupting or depraving viewers.

- Accordingly, the allegations made in the Notice and Reminder are baseless, speculative, and contrary to the actual content that was broadcasted. Further, the Notice makes sweeping assertions about harm to children and violation of cultural sensibilities.
- These allegations are unsupported by any factual or expert assessment. The show was aired during regular prime time family hours and designed to be suitable for all viewers. The performance contained elements of humour and positive messaging, not obscenity. Any contrary interpretation appears to be based on subjective perception or preconceived bias rather than an objective assessment of the content. We are constrained to observe that the Notice appears to have been issued in haste and without due application of mind. By misidentifying the show and mischaracterising the performance, the Notice casts unfounded and defamatory aspersions on Zee. Such careless and motivated allegations amount to harassment and unwarranted interference in our legitimate business activities.
- While we have provided this detailed clarification in good faith, we must place on record the Zee continues to abide by all applicable laws, including the CTN Act, the Programme & Advertising Code, and the BCCC Code. The performance referred to in your notice was entirely compliant, wholesome, and family-appropriate. Your allegations of obscenity, violation of law, and harm to children are false, misleading, and legally untenable.
- In view of the above clarifications, it is evident that there is no violation of law or code on our part. Consequently, we are under no obligation to comply with any of the requisitions contained in your Notice, including apology, withdrawal of telecast, or disciplinary action. On the contrary, we call upon you to formally withdraw your Notice in writing, failing which Zee shall be constrained to treat your action as malicious and reserves the right to pursue further remedies available under law.
- Needless to state that the present Reply is issued without prejudice to Zee rights and remedies available under law and equity, all of which are hereby expressly reserved. In case the complainant initiates any proceedings against Zee the same shall be defended entirely at costs and consequences, please note.

GIST OF COMPLAINANT'S REBUTTAL TO CHANNEL'S RESPONSE:

- The channel's response is not only legally untenable but also morally indefensible. Instead of exercising accountability, the channel has attempted to hide behind technicalities, internal reviews and self-serving descriptions of the performance, calling it humorous, comic-romantic, and wholesome. This evasive stance itself proves the Zee Tamil commercial intention and the complete disregard for the genuine concerns of the public.

- The undeniable reality is that children who watched the episode in question were disturbed and confused. One child who saw the show asked his parents**, "What are**

those uncle and aunty doing under the blanket?" This single incident reflects the most damaging impact of your telecast. It shows beyond any doubt that your programme has corrupted the minds of impressionable children and has forced parents into an awkward and humiliating position. By trivialising these concerns in your reply and labelling them as biased or unfounded, Zee Tamil has displayed an alarming insensitivity towards child welfare and public morality.

CHANNEL'S FURTHER RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINANT:

In relation to a particular scene of a dance performance in 'Single Pasanga' where it has been alleged to be obscene or vulgar, the channel submits:

- As shared earlier too, that the particular dance performance is reenactment of a sequence from a 90's feature film 'Surya Vansam' (1997), certified by CBFC as "U."
- Further, R. Sarathkumar acted featured in this movie and is a renowned actor, acted in more than 150 films and received two Tamil state awards for his exemplary contribution to cinema. He is now also the member for the Rajya Sabha.
- The Central Broad of Film Certification approved the film as "U" back in the 90s with this scene in it. It is clear that there was no obscenity or an adult theme to the movie from their keen perspective, and we trust their judgement without any doubts.
- It is indeed surprising that re-enacting such a simple and wholesome scene from a celebrated movie almost 30 years later for TV was found to be offensive and obscene. Zee Tamil is a well-known and loved channel, and we are proud of the content it showcases and are grateful that it is loved by our audience. Hope the above explanation from the content standpoint has allayed your concerns. If the complainant still wishes to pursue this matter on legal grounds or initiate action against Zee, then Zee reserves it right to respond accordingly to protect its rights and reputation. The channel ensures that the BCCC code is adhered to and the same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL TO BCCC (Level II):

- Despite raising formal complaints and legal notices regarding the obscene nature of the performance, the channel has issued replies which are not only evasive and misleading but also completely fail to address the genuine concerns of parents and viewers. The specific dance performance involved a male and female participant enacting intimacy under a blanket in a prime-time family entertainment show, which disturbed children watching the programme. One child innocently asked his parent, *"What are that aunty and uncle doing under the blanket?"*, reflecting the immediate and harmful impact of such content on young and impressionable minds.

- In its replies, Zee Tamil has repeatedly attempted to justify the performance by citing a 1997 feature film (*Sooryavansham*), its CBFC "U" certification, and the stature of the actor involved. These arguments are entirely irrelevant to the issue at hand. The complaint is about the **broadcast of sexualized content in a family television show today**, not about a film released decades ago. The standards applied to feature films in theatres for adult or general audiences in the 1990s cannot absolve a television broadcaster from its duty to protect children and uphold family viewing norms. The Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994 requires each programme to be evaluated on its own merits and its potential impact on viewers, especially minors, and not on historical references or the reputation of actors.

- The broadcaster's reliance on its internal Standards & Practices (SnP) review is equally inadequate. The SnP team's approval does not address the actual effect on viewers or the moral and psychological impact on children. By dismissing parental concerns and labelling them as subjective or legalistic, Zee Tamil has failed to discharge its duty under Rule 6 of the Programme Code, which prohibits the telecast of content that is obscene, vulgar, or indecent. Furthermore, broadcasting such material in prime-time slots violates the constitutional mandate under Article 39(e) and (f) to protect children from material harmful to their development.

- It is deeply concerning that Zee Tamil has also attempted to defend its broadcast by referencing its own "popularity" and audience reach. Public trust and the moral responsibility of broadcasters cannot be substituted with popularity or the commercial stature of a channel. The very fact that children have been exposed to sexualized content during family viewing hours underscores the channel's negligence and the urgent need for corrective action.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

I urge the Council to direct the channel to:

- Immediately cease and withdraw any obscene or sexually suggestive performances in *Single Pasanga* and other similar programmes,
- Issue a public apology to viewers acknowledging the lapse, and ensure compliance with the Programme Code and BCCC guidelines to prevent recurrence of such broadcasts. I further reserve my right to pursue additional legal remedies, including filing a Public Interest Litigation before the Hon'ble High Court, should adequate action not be taken.

This appeal is being submitted in the larger public interest, to protect children, safeguard family values, and uphold public morality. The content broadcast by Zee Tamil is neither harmless nor "wholesome" as claimed, and requires urgent scrutiny and remedial action by the Council.

***BCCC DECISION**: The Council had issued a Notice to the channel. In its reply, the channel said the show featured young, unmarried men from diverse backgrounds who are paired with celebrity mentors also known as angels. The performance featured Mr Thangapandi, a rising social media content creator from Tamil Nadu. The channel mentions that the performance was based on a light-hearted, comic-romantic theme inspired by an iconic Tamil language film, 'Surya Vansam' (staring R Sarathkumar and Devayani). The performance depicted a playful conversation between a newly married couple on the importance of understanding personal boundaries, eventually culminating in mutual respect and closeness. The channel also mentions that during the performance, there were no obscene gestures, sexually suggestive acts, or content that could be termed vulgar. On the contrary, the entire performance was wholesome in tone, interlaced with humour, romance, and dignity.*

The Council asked the channel to modify/edit the impugned scene in which the performers are shown suggestively under the blanket which raised eyebrows and be more mindful of the impact that it can have on impressionable minds when such depiction happens.

The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF with a rider that the channel exercise extreme caution when such shows are shown on primetime and the likelihood of many children watching it.

APPEAL- 151

APPEAL NO. BCCC/151/2025 dated August & September 2025

Complaints received from People for Animals against the programme "Neeya Neena" on Star Vijay (Multiple complaints)

Pre-telecast complaint to BCCC: The theme of the episode "Dog lovers vs Dog haters" is highly sensitive and has the potential to spread hatred against community and pet dogs. It will encourage acts of cruelty towards animals in society and will create unnecessary conflict among citizens
Such content would be in direct violation of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 and could also attract provisions of IPC Sections 428 and 429, which criminalize cruelty and killing of animals. It is requested to stop the telecast of this episode in the interest of public harmony and animal welfare based on the promo videos.

Post-telecast complaint to several authorities including BCCC: The grievance is on behalf of animal feeders and welfare volunteers across Tamil Nadu regarding escalating harassment, cruelty, and even physical assault, particularly of women feeders at night. This includes deliberate nuisance behaviour such as video-recording feeders, lodging false complaints, and forcing feeders to appear at police stations.
Despite Supreme Court and High Court directives, police officials in many districts remain unaware that feeding community dogs is a recognized legal right. No court has banned feeding, yet this lack of awareness is leading to repeated law-and-order issues, mob harassment, and violence against feeders.

Following the recent Vijay Television (Neeya Naana) debate hosted by Gopinath and false allegations spread by Mr. Muralidharan (Incare) regarding stray dogs:

- Mr. Muralidharan Sivalingam has been spreading false and misleading information through social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) and public interviews. His actions provoke the public toward unlawful behaviour, resulting in harm to stray animals and to people who care for them.
- His influence has led to increasing incidents of animal cruelty, including killings, poisoning, threats, and abusive language. Such actions disturb public harmony, create unrest, and endanger both animals and citizens.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episode and found that the debate held on the topic of 'Dog Lovers' and 'Dog Haters' had representation from various walks of the society. There were people who were impacted by their loved ones being mauled by stray dogs, nurses who treat patients with dog bites, dog lovers and people who wanted to talk about the money that Government could have saved, had it not been spent on dog vaccines. The debate overall was balanced and did not border on taking a perspective which may or may not have been popular in appeal. The Council firmly believes that any debate shown on television on a topic like this has to be proportional and counterbalanced. However, it is outside the Council's purview to take action on social media pages which may be reflective of a particular viewpoint. Also, the Council wishes to steer away from dictating any topics to the channels on which it can conduct debates. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 152

APPEAL NO. BCCC/152/2025 dated 14 October 2025
CHANNEL: Sun TV
LANGUAGE: Tamil

PROGRAMME: 'Ethir Neechal', 27/09/2025, 9:30PM (Episode no. 274) (Also forwarded by MIB)
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Violence

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The episode showed a brutal murder of a person. As per the rule 5 of the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994 No programme should be carried in the cable service which is likely to encourage or incite violence or contains anything against maintenance of law and order or which promote-anti-national attitudes and is not suitable for unrestricted public exhibition

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

The channel submits the following:

1. We have taken note of the concerns raised in respect to the serial. The channel values the opinions, inputs, and feedback of its viewers and works towards aligning its operations with the tenable feedback it receives.

2. The channel assures that the content of the serial fully complies with all relevant laws and regulations. We confirm that the serial does not feature any scenes or statements that encourage violence, disrupt public order, or promote anti-national sentiments.

3. The storyline revolves around women (co-sisters) in the family i.e., Eshwari Gunasekaran, Renuka Gnanasekaran, Nandhini Kathirvel, and Janani Shakthivel, all representing struggle and empowerment. They all have to face firm male chauvinism, but they respond to the offensive conduct running rampant within their family. Janani, one of the daughters-in law in the Serial in particular, resonates deeply with the frustrations and aspirations of countless women who have endured selfish and oppressive treatment at the hands of men in their lives. Through her bold defiance of her in-laws and her unapologetic expression of beliefs, Janani not only challenges the *status quo* but also inspires women in the family to assert their voices, creating a solidarity that fuels the collective struggle against gender inequality. By emphasizing the strength and determination of women such as Janani, we hope to spark an important conversation about women's rights and economic independence.

4. In the episode aired on 27.09.2025, the storyline revolves around the events leading up to the wedding of Dharshan (Eshwari and Gunasekaran's son) and Anbukkarasi (Arivukkarasi's sister). In this sequence, a brief 40-second scene depicts the antagonist, Arivukkarasi, confronting a photographer who has been persistently blackmailing her and demanding Rupees One crore in exchange for a video retrieved from a damaged mobile phone. The video contains evidence of Gunasekaran pushing his wife Eshwari against a wall in a fit of anger, resulting in her falling into a coma. Arivukkarasi's motive in this sequence is to ensure that her sister's wedding is not jeopardized by the possible exposure of this video. Driven by that intent, she goes to extreme lengths to recover the video from the photographer and, in a moment of emotional turmoil, ends up stabbing him with a knife. It is important to note that no visuals of the stabbing or any physical assault were shown. The scene focuses entirely on the characters' expressions and emotional responses, portraying Arivukkarasi's psychological distress rather than any act of violence.

5. The channel clarifies that the subsequent episodes clearly establish the moral conclusion, where truth and justice prevail, culminating in Arivukkarasi's arrest by the police for the crime. This reinforces the serial's consistent messaging that wrongdoing leads to lawful consequences.

6. It is imperative to emphasize that the depiction in the Serial was purely narrative-driven and, in no way, likely to encourage or incite violence, contravene the maintenance of law and order, promote anti-national attitudes, or be unsuitable for unrestricted public exhibition, as alleged in the complaint. On the contrary, the narrative focuses on portraying the psychological impact of the events on the characters and reinforces moral values by showing that wrongdoing leads to lawful consequences. While certain scenes may appear harsh in isolation, we encourage viewers to consider the broader context. The actions of the characters aim to create a narrative resonating with compassion, empathy, and justice, shedding light on the significance of opposing injustice and the triumph of good over evil.

7. 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. Sun TV is part of a responsible broadcasting network and remains committed to adhering to the law of the land. The Channel has not violated any of the provisions of the Rules while airing the serial, including but not limited to the Programme Code.

8. 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 is unintentional and we regret the same.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL TO BCCC (Level II):

The complainant has filed an appeal with the BCCC as she is not satisfied with the channel's response.

***BCCC DECISION**: The Council viewed the episode. Although the murder sequence was suggestive and lasted only a few seconds, it cautioned the channel and asked it to be more sensitive towards the large impact that such content may have on impressionable minds. The APPEAL WAS DISPOSED OF.*

APPEAL- 153

APPEAL NO. BCCC/153/2025 dated 24 October 2025

CHANNEL:	Star Maa
LANGUAGE:	Telugu
PROGRAMME:	Bigg Boss (Multiple episodes)
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:	Vulgar and Abusive content

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The complainant K. Jagdishwar Reddy had filed a complaint/petition with the MIB for the above programme with no specific episode dates. The Ministry forwarded the complaint to the channel (Level 1) for appropriate action.

Below is the summary of the complaint:

This show promotes obscene, vulgar, and culturally insensitive content that violates

the Programme Code under Rule 6 of the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994, harms the youth, and undermines the cultural ethos of our beloved nation. Despite my persistent efforts including filing Public Interest Litigations (PILs) in the Telangana High Court (2018) and Andhra Pradesh High Court (2024), lodging complaints with the Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC), the Prime Minister's Office, and the Home Minister's Office, and organizing protests at Jantar Mantar (Delhi), Vijayawada, Hyderabad, and Chennai, no effective action has been taken.
The complainant urges the Ministry to enforce pre-telecast censorship, reschedule the show's airing to post-midnight hours, and regulate its content to protect our society and cultural values.

The complainant requests the Ministry to take following measures:

- Enforce Pre-Telecast Censorship: Mandate that all episodes of Bigg Boss Telugu undergo pre-telecast review by a competent authority, such as the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) or a dedicated television censor board, to ensure compliance with the Programme Code, particularly Rules 6(1)(a), 6(l)(b), and 6(1)(d).
- Reschedule Telecast to Post-Midnight: Shift the airing of Bigg Boss Telugu to after 11:30 PM, as done in 2010, to restrict access by younger audiences and align with the show's mature content.
- Regulate Endemol Shine India: Issue directives to Endemol Shine India to ensure content respects Telugu and Indian cultural sensibilities, addressing their apparent disregard for our heritage.
- Strengthen Oversight: Direct the BCCC and Inter-Departmental Committee to conduct regular audits of Bigg Boss Telugu and impose penalties for Programme Code violations.
- Issue a Public Advisory: Release an advisory to Star Maa TV and Endemol Shine India to adhere strictly to the Programme Code and refrain from broadcasting obscene, vulgar, or culturally insensitive content.

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

The channel's response is attached as per Annexure A

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL TO BCCC (Level II):

In the programme, there are repeated instances of vulgarity, abusive language, suggestive content and morally inappropriate behaviour. Such content not only violates the broadcasting standards and ethical guidelines laid down by BCCC but also has a detrimental psychological and moral impact on young and family audiences.

Concerns pertaining to specific episodes:

1. September 7, 2025: During the grand launch, contestants engaged in suggestive physical interactions and flirtatious banter bordering on vulgarity, setting an inappropriate tone from the outset (approx. 8:15-8:45 PM).
2. September 4, 2025: Heated arguments among housemates involved abusive name-calling and derogatory remarks, leading to a forced apology segment that failed to address indecency (approx.9:30-9:50 PM).
3. September 19, 2025: A punishment task included contestants in revealing attire, accompanied by lewd jokes and body shaming comments (approx. 9:20-9:40)

4. September 28, 2025: Immunity challenge escalated into personal attacks with profane language directed at female contestants. (approx. 9:45-10:05PM)
5. October 5, 2025: Nomination task included explicit discussions and indecent gestures, desensitizing viewers to moral boundaries (approx. 9:10PM-9:30PM)
6. October 12, 2025: Wildcard entry episode showcased aggressive confrontations, vulgar slurs, and inappropriate physical proximity (approx. 9:35-10PM)
7. October 18, 2025: Eviction episode featured abusive outbursts and suggestive dance performances crossing into vulgar territory (approx. 9:25-9:55PM)
8. October 19, 2025: Post eviction segment replayed indecent clips from prior days, featuring offensive Telugu slang (approx. 9:15 to 9:35PM)
9. October 20, 2025: "Confessions" task included graphic personal stories with abusive undertones, unsuitable for family audiences (approx. 9:40 to 10PM)
10. October 21, 2025: Captaincy task involved manipulative tactics and indecent body language encouraging voyeuristic behaviour (approx. 9:20 to 9:45PM)
11. October 22, 2025: Episode featured escalating vulgar dialogues and unfiltered abusive exchanges among contestants (approx. 9:30 to 9:50PM)
12. October 23, 2025: Luxury budget task included provocative role-playing scenarios and innuendo-laden dialogues glorifying indecency (approx. 9:25 to 9:50PM)

During September-October 2025, multiple segments aired on Colors Kannada showcased open verbal abuse, personal targeting, and objectification of contestants. Telecast on Colors TV and Jio Cinema, the Hindi version has also faced repeated criticism for vulgar dialogues and scenes promoting aggression and indecency (Times Now Entertainment, India TV showbiz, NDTV). The repeated broadcast of such objectionable content across language versions of Bigg Boss has caused widespread public concern, particularly among parents, educators, and social organizations. The normalization of vulgar speech, physical indecency, and gender insensitivity poses serious risks to young viewers and undermines the moral fabric of Indian society.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL

1.To review the cited episodes from Bigg Boss 9 Telugu, Bigg Boss Kannada 10, and Bigg Boss Hindi 18.
2. Issue directives to the concerned broadcasters to maintain broadcasting ethics and protect family-friendly viewing standards.
3. Recommend strict pre-screening and monitoring mechanisms to prevent future telecasts of vulgar or indecent material.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the appeal regarding multiple episodes of 'Bigg Boss' (Telugu) and found appellant's concerns to be generic in nature. The appellant states that the episodes contain vulgar slurs, abusive outbursts, indecent gestures, lewd jokes and aggressive confrontations without mentioning any specific incident or citing comments that were made in the programme.

The appellant's prayer that the content needs to be pre-certified by a competent television authority is outside BCCC's mandate. BCCC has from time to time passed necessary directions on all specific complaints across all languages of the show on a case-to-case basis. The Council is also of the view that it is a reality show and the contestants are consenting adults who voluntarily participate in the show. It is a reality show containing unscripted situations and actual occurrences between groups of people who live in a closed environment away from external influences. BCCC feels the show is aimed at an audience that appreciates satire and human conflicts. The results range from angry confrontations to genuine and tender connections. ***The Appeal was thus DISPOSED OF***.

APPEAL- 154

APPEAL NO. BCCC/154/2025 DATED 06 NOVEMBER 2025
CHANNEL: Colors
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Bigg Boss*',
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Abusive remarks against women

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: This is a formal grievance against Bigg Boss Season 19 for serious violations of broadcasting ethics, gender dignity, and legal standards. Contestant Mr. Amaal Mallik has repeatedly engaged in sexually explicit, defamatory and violently threatening speech toward Ms. Farrhana Bhatt and others on national TV. Despite the gravity of these remarks, the show's producers and host have taken no meaningful action, effectively endorsing this misconduct and undermining public trust in regulated content.

Documented Incidents of Abusive Conduct

- Sexual insult: "R** ki beti*" – beeped but clearly identifiable, aimed to degrade a woman's dignity.
- Obscene remark about a woman's mother: "Tumhari maa B-grade hai".
- Violent threat: "Isko patak patak ke marunga".
- In addition to repeated intimidation, character assassination, and humiliation of fellow contestants broadcast without consequence.

These are not isolated incidents—they reflect a pattern of misogyny, verbal violence, and psychological intimidation, broadcast for mass consumption under the guise of entertainment. It is a clear breach of IBDF content Guidelines and these remarks fall under actionable criminal offences.
In previous seasons, contestants have been evicted, censured, or publicly condemned for similar or lesser remarks. Yet, in this case, offensive comments by Mr. Mallik were ignored, trivialized, or completely brushed aside, reflecting systemic favouritism based on his industry background. Meanwhile, other contestants faced harsh reprimands by the host for minor, non-abusive discussions—highlighting blatant double standards and preferential treatment driven by nepotism.
This selective enforcement is not only ethically unacceptable but also a direct violation of IBDF's mandate for fair and responsible broadcasting. This broadcast behaviour normalizes misogyny, encourages violent speech and erodes viewer confidence in broadcast regulations
I hereby demand decisive regulatory intervention, including:

1. A formal investigation into these incidents and the broadcaster's failure to act.
2. Public acknowledgement and corrective action against the contestant and the channel.
3. Implementation of accountability measures to ensure equal treatment of all participants, irrespective of their background or influence.

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

The channel submits:

- At the very outset we would like to state that the expletive muted was not the one being assumed, and it was not sexual in nature.
- 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. It has a mix of personalities, and they behave/react differently due to

their different inherent traits; hence there are clash of opinions which lead to occasional arguments. We understand that contestants might appear belligerent at times, in terms of body language and spoken words, but the well-being of the participants is our topmost priority as a network.

- As responsible broadcasters, we ensure that no abuses are audible in the televised episodes. Further, all such occurrences are spoken about by Salman Khan in the weekend episodes, and this helps the participants to see right from wrong.
- In the instance mentioned, Amaal and Farhana got into an altercation wherein both were discordant, but the matter was addressed in all its seriousness during the weekend episode. Not only was Amaal called out for his behaviour, but his father was also asked to speak to him about how his conduct was impacting his family outside the Bigg Boss house. His father spoke to him personally as well and asked him to refrain for unruly conduct and be mindful while speaking. Amaal understood that he has erred grievously and apologized to Farhana. The broader message given to the contestants during the episode was that no matter what, family members of the participants should strictly be kept out of arguments inside the house.
- 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 in the programme.
- We have always sensitively and judiciously edited the content in case of aberration in participants' behaviour. The interactions we choose to show are always edited to convey the dynamics of interpersonal relationships and arguments so that the narrative thread is carried forward.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II)

The appellant is not satisfied with the channel's response and states that:

- The channel's reply attempts to downplay the gravity of the incidents by claiming that the muted expletive "was not sexual in nature" and that the issue was resolved through an apology. However, the remarks aired were clearly recognizable to viewers and explicitly targeted a woman and her family, violating multiple provisions of the IBDF Content Guidelines and Indian Penal Code.

- The following breaches are evident:

a) IBDF Content Guidelines Violations:
Clause 3.1 – General Offence: Prohibits any content that denigrates individuals or promotes aggression.
Clause 3.4 – Sexual Decency: Forbids derogatory references to womanhood, sexuality, or family.
Clause 3.5 – Hate and Harm: Disallows any language inciting hostility or violence.
Clause 6 – Dignity of Women: Mandates that women not be portrayed in a manner that is degrading or denigrating.

b) Statutory Provisions Potentially Violated:
   - IPC Section 509 – Insulting the modesty of a woman.
   - IPC Section 294 – Obscene acts or words in a public setting.
   - IPC Section 499 – Defamation through damaging statements.
   - IPC Section 506 – Criminal intimidation.

- The network's assertion that such content was merely "muted" or "addressed through an apology" does not absolve responsibility. The repeated broadcast of degrading language and behavior—under the pretext of unscripted entertainment—amounts to an endorsement of misogyny and verbal harassment on national television. The broadcaster's selective editing and failure to take prompt disciplinary action against the contestant, despite prior incidents (including derogatory remarks about Ms. Bhatt's mother being "B-grade"), demonstrate negligence in upholding mandatory ethical and gender-sensitivity standards.
- This complaint is about the violation of a woman's dignity and the erosion of public trust in regulated content. The measures described by the channel are insufficient and largely cosmetic, lacking accountability or deterrence.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

1. A formal review of the relevant footage and the network's handling of these incidents under BCCC supervision.
2. A directive to Colors TV/ JioStar India Pvt. Ltd. to issue a formal, public acknowledgment of non-compliance.
3. Implementation of stricter accountability measures for participants and producers to prevent recurrence of such misconduct.

***BCCC DECISION**: The Council viewed the episode and found that in the episode the contestants Amaal Malik and Farhana got into an altercation where he said something which was muted. In the weekend episode, Amaal was called out for his behaviour and his father spoke to him about how his conduct was impacting his family outside the Bigg Boss house. His father spoke to him personally as well and asked him to refrain for unruly conduct and be mindful while speaking. Amaal understood that he has erred grievously and apologized to Farhana. The undercurrent of mutual sparring bordering on acted '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 apparent objective was to make the contestant Amaal Malik understand the serious implications of his behaviour and demeanour.*
The Council also took the reply of the channel on record that no abuses were audible in the televised episodes. The Council believes that such reality shows in which structural torture and violence is used as a subtext, is carried forward through the consent of the participants who are all mature adults. All the interactions that happens in Bigg Boss house are always edited to convey the dynamics of interpersonal relationships and arguments so that the narrative thread is carried forward. The Council DISPOSED OF the APPEAL.

R. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 125TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 30 JANUARY 2026

APPEAL- 155

APPEAL NO. BCCC/155/2025 DATED 11/11/2025
CHANNEL: Colors
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Bigg Boss*', 03/10/2025 (Episode 41) & 7/10/2025 (Episode 45)
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Abusive language/Violence/Biased show

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The Appeal is against rampant abusive language and specific incidents in *Bigg Boss*. Amal Malik and Shehbaz are often shown using abusive language as a pattern which also encapsulates family humiliation.

In episode dated 03 October 2025 (Episode 41), Amaal and Shehbaz used very profane and abusive language, and also made very vulgar comments on Ashnoor Kaur and Abhishek Bajaj. Shehbaz seemed to be working in cohort with Amaal. Kunika was also dragged into this. Kunika has entered Bigg Boss House as a contestant and not her family.

The 07 October Episode (Episode 45) shows Abhishek and Shehbaz getting into a fight in which Shehbaz says, "If you have drank your mother's milk, you meet me outside." Not only this hurts the upbringing of Shehbaz but also it is an open challenge to inflict more violence once you meet outside the Bigg Boss House.

The host seems to have a clear bias which makes the show one-sided. Salman Khan not only undermines such statements but also provides them unsolicited moral support. Ashnoor and Abhishek Bajaj were unnecessary humiliated though they were standing up to the provocation. We believe there are favoured players who will not be subjected to elimination. Mridul Tiwary is not given any task so that Shehbaz and Amaal Malik benefit from this. If the channel wishes to give the Bigg Boss trophy to Amaal Malik or Shehbaz, its should not behave that it is conducting a reality show which is a farce.

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

The channel submits:

- We would like to state that *Bigg Boss* is a reality show, featuring unscripted situations and real-life events, unfolding among a group of individuals living in a confined environment, isolated from external influences. It features a mix of diverse personalities, and they behave/react differently due to their varying inherent traits.
- In the example cited by you, all the contestants engage in a heated argument, but no abusive language is used in the televised episode.
- We would like to clarify that the contestants' behaviour reflects their spontaneous character and mindset, and their true personalities emerge through their interactions. These episodes are designed to provide our viewers with a holistic and unbiased perspective. We hope you understand that since voting plays a crucial role in determining the fate of *Bigg Boss* participants, and viewers vote based on what they see, it was our responsibility as a broadcaster to show them what transpired. While we have always strived to maintain authenticity in our portrayal, we also take utmost care to adhere to regulatory guidelines and viewer sensitivities.
- We would also like to mention that at the beginning of each episode, the channel airs a disclaimer advising viewer discretion and parental guidance for children.
- Please note that all the content we provide complies with the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994, and self-regulatory content guidelines, while also respecting creative freedom of expression.
- Our viewers' opinions and perspectives are extremely valuable to us, and we express our gratitude for your continued support and patronage.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

In an episode, Farhana humiliates Mridul Tiwary by saying that his followers should die by drowning as he has come to Bigg Boss House by begging. This is a direct insult to viewers and such language is not acceptable to the audiences. Farhana was not shown the door despite such bad behaviour, but Neelam and Abhishek were shown the door which reflects the channel's unilateral behaviour.

The host is hell bent on proving some contestants like Mridul Tiwary as a weak contestant which casts a shadow on the show's partiality. We expect BCCC's intervention to main the show's neutrality and ensure that all contestants are treated with equal respect and equality.

***BCCC DECISION**: BCCC found that in the weekend episode, host Salman Khan appreciates Mridul Tiwary for his values, upbringing and actions in the Bigg Boss House, and for his overall conduct. He goes on to say that all Bigg Boss House contestants should emulate Mridul for his honesty and conduct. He also asked all other contestants about what they thought about Mridul and not a single contestant had anything negative to say about him. Mridul broke down or got overwhelmed after hearing the host's comments. BCCC also found that the accusation that the host has to be blamed for his partiality is implausible and farfetched and it is beyond the remit of the Council to prescribe fairness and righteousness to the channel in a reality show. The complaint was DISPOSED OF.*

APPEAL- 156

APPEAL NO. BCCC/156/2025 dated 17 November 2025
CHANNEL: Asianet
LANGUAGE: Malayalam
PROGRAMME: *Bigg Boss* (10,13, 17 & 18th September 2025)
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Hate speech against queer community

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The complaint is from the secretary of an organisation named Disha registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The organisation has been defending the rights of the marginalised communities, including the queer community for the past 10 years.

The complainant submits:

- The complaint is regarding repeated hate speeches made against the queer community by Lakshmi Harikrishnan alias Ved Lakshmi as part of '*Bigg Boss*' (Season 7, Malayalam), a nationally broadcast TV reality show. The hate speech by the said individual constitutes offences punishable under Sections 196,197 of BNS, 2023.
- The show is aired on Asianet every weekday (Monday to Friday) from 9:30 PM to 10:30 PM and weekends (Sat and Sun) from 9 PM to 10:30 PM. The show is also live-streamed 24×7 on the Jio-Cinema/ Disney+ Hotstar Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms. Contestants are selected from diverse sections of society, including members of the queer community.
- In episode 39 of 10 Sept 2025, contestant Lakshmi Harikrishnan alias Ved Lakshmi made derogatory and hateful remarks at fellow contestants Adhila Nasrin and Noor Fathima - a queer couple. Video evidence capturing these offensive statements is enclosed herewith to substantiate this complaint and facilitate appropriate investigation. In the said video, Lakshmi Harikrishnan alias Ved Lakshmi is seen and heard stating that people belonging to queer communities such as Adhila Nasrin and Noora Fathima are not worthy of being welcomed into any household.
- Subsequently in episode 42 of 13 September, show host Mr Mohanlal, an eminent actor, strongly criticised the hate speech made by Lakhsmi Harikrishnan alias Ved Lakshmi. However, not only did she refuse to apologise, but also continued to make derogatory remarks amounting to hate speech against the queer community.
- The following are the statements made by Lakshmi Harikrishnan alias Ved Lakshmi:
  - Episode 39 (10 Sept 2025): "You know why others don't have a problem? Because they're all supporting these two. The ones who can't even live in society. I can't plead to them. I have self-respect. They won't even be let into your homes."
  - Live telecast (17 Sept 2025): "I have a problem with normalizing them. I don't think it is normal."

- Episode 42 (Sept 13): “I don’t agree with normalizing the relationship of lesbian couples. My son is also seeing this. So I have a problem with normalizing this.”
- Episode (18 Sept 2025): “I don’t want to talk about it (queer), I don’t want to normalize it much.”

- Hon’ble Supreme Court in Navtej Singh Johar vs UOI and suprio@supriya chakraborthy and anr. vs UOI has upheld the rights of the queer community. It has been recognised and treated as a separate community.
- The impugned statements against the queer community were aired on national television, streamed live on the OTT platforms, and widely circulated on social media, making them publicly accessible. These statements were humiliating and clearly incited prejudice and hatred against the queer community and has created ill-will against the queer couples - Adhila Nasrin and Noor Fathima, based on their sexual orientation. It is brought to the notice of the authorities that this conduct attracts punishment under **sub-sections (a) and (b) of Section 196 (1) BNS, 2023**. The accused person has through *words spoken and visible representations promoted disharmony, feeling of enmity and hatred* against the queer community *which has disturbed the public tranquillity*. The statements have caused severe mental anguish to the targeted contestants and have incited hostility, discrimination, and violence against members of queer community.
- The accused person, through her words, actions and visible representations, propagated that Adhila Nasrin and Noor Fathima, by being part of the queer community, *be denied, or deprived of their rights as citizens of India and in essence stated that by reason of their being members of the queer community they cannot bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established*. Lakshmi Harikrishnan alias Ved Lakshmi’s conduct furthered disharmony or feelings of enmity or hatred or ill-will between such the queer and non-queer community. **Section 197 (a), (b) and (c) of BNS, 2023** is also attracted against the accused person.
- The accused also acted in direct violation of the Fundamental Rights guaranteed under Part III of the Constitution, particularly Articles 14 (right to equality), 15 (prohibition of discrimination on grounds of sex and sexual orientation), and 21 (right to life with dignity). It is pertinent to bring to your attention that the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India in the case of *Navtej Singh Johar vs Union of India* (WP Cri No 76 of 2016) acknowledged that queer individuals had the right to express their choices without any fear. I would like to also apprise the authorities that in the case of *Justice KS Puttaswamy (Retd) vs UOI* (2017) 10 SCC 1, the Hon’ble Supreme Court emphasized that the right to privacy is intrinsic to life and liberty under Article 21, encompassing decisional autonomy, sexual orientation, and the right to intimate association.
- The hate speech by the accused person against the queer community has promoted enmity between queer community and non-queer community on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity and has caused hatred and ill-will against the queer community among the non-queer community. This intentional dehumanization attempt by the accused person fosters intolerance, emboldens discriminatory behaviour, and undermines societal efforts to cultivate equality, acceptance, and inclusion. The aforesaid statements are now widely circulating and are being misused as a tool to vilify and attack members of the queer community. Such dissemination fosters hatred and animosity between queer and non-queer community. This conduct is clearly prejudicial to the maintenance of communal harmony and poses a serious threat to public tranquillity. By publicly opposing the normalization of queer relationships, the accused person has actively promoted social disharmony, which

has escalated into verbal abuse, social ostracism, or even physical attacks on queer individuals.

- As a direct consequence of the aforementioned incident, extensive hate campaigns targeting the queer community have erupted across various social media platforms. These campaigns include derogatory comments, threats, and targeted harassment against the entire queer community of which I am part of. The continued circulation of such content not only perpetuates prejudice but also creates an environment of fear and hostility for queer persons at large. Relevant links and screenshots of these social media posts are enclosed herewith for your reference and necessary action.
- The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in *Vishal Tiwari v. Union of India and Others*,2025 INSC 647, held as follows:
  "10. ……. we make it clear that any attempt to spread communal hatred or indulge in hate speech must be dealt with an iron hand. Hate speech cannot be tolerated as it leads to loss of dignity and self-worth of the targeted group members, contributes to disharmony amongst groups, and erodes tolerance and open-mindedness, which is a must for a multi-cultural society committed to the idea of equality. Any attempt to cause alienation or humiliation of the targeted group is a criminal offence and must be dealt with accordingly."
  The words of the accused person Lakshmi Harikrishnan alias Ved Lakshmi are clearly intended to attack the queer community and fall squarely within the definition of hate speech.
- In view of the above, I request you to: Direct the concerned grievance redressal officers to take immediate action against the aforesaid hate speeches by contestant Lakshmi. We also request BCCC to issue guidelines or advisories to channels against telecasting queerphobic contents and to take stringent actions against persons spreading hate speech against queer community.

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

The channel submits:

- *Bigg Boss* is an unscripted reality show and all views expressed in the programme are independent views of the respective participants and do not reflect the channel's views nor are they endorsed by the channel in any way.
- The show's format and house rules do not tolerate and/or allow any kind of discrimination on grounds of caste, community, gender, or sexual orientation and any conduct and/or action by the participants in violation of this is never endorsed by the Channel. Instead, the Channel ensures that the participants are strictly reprimanded for such negative actions/behavior.
- The Channel being a responsible broadcaster also has a strict internal content review process that monitors the show to ensure compliance with regulatory guidelines and standards.
- We reviewed the episode where (during the weekly nomination process) contestant Abhishek S nominated contestant Abhishek K for eviction citing some regressive and bigoted ideas. When Abhishek S made this regressive comment on the show, to ensure that his comment/views are not construed to be an endorsement by the Channel we ran a disclaimer/scroll stating: ***"'Bigg Boss' is an unscripted reality show and all views expressed in this programme are independent views of the respective participants and do not reflect the views of the channel. We respect all communities and do not support disparaging or discriminatory language towards anyone and strongly condemn the same."***
- You will note that Immediate protests broke out among the co-contestants when they heard these unsavory/derogatory remarks by Abhishek S. The contestants opposed and condemned Abhishek S as being outrightly wrong and went on to nominate Abhishek S for this reason. Further in the subsequent weekend episode,

host Mr Mohanlal raised this issue and very strongly reprimanded Abhishek S for his conduct/actions.

- Addressing the audiences, Mr Mohanlal, in very strong words, acknowledged that derogatory remark made by Abhishek S had caused great pain and displeasure to co-contestant Abhishek K and his community, and the larger audience outside. He stressed that the show emphasizes equality and respect of housemates within the house and condemns such disparaging remarks. Mr Mohanlal warned that contestants repeated violation will result in immediate eviction. Abhishek S also then went on to offer an unconditional apology for his conduct. As punishment, Abhishek faced direct nomination for the next two weeks and exclusion from the power team selection.
- It is important to highlight that the show always aims to reflect the diversity of its participants and their experiences. As such, the show features individuals from various backgrounds, including those who identify as being a part of the LGBTQAI+ community because we believe that all individuals, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, deserve to be represented. In the spirit of inclusion, we have used the massively popular platform of the show by casting members of the LGBTQIA+ community and celebrating the unique voice and perspectives they bring to the show. When an untoward incident happens, the show does not try to ignore, hide, or censor it, but takes the opportunity to confront and call out what is wrong. With this mindset, we feel the show and host Mr Mohanlal did a good job of strongly condemning the hateful remarks of Abhishek S on national television and sending out the message to millions of viewers that such an intolerant thought process is regressive and deserving of reproach and punishment.
- We'd like to say that as a responsible broadcaster, we are deeply aware of the impact our shows have on our wide viewer base and would never air content that would be detrimental towards our society or any community.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL TO BCCC (Level II):

1. It is submitted that the complaint was filed before the Grievance Officer, Asianet regarding repeated hate speeches made against the queer community by Lakshmi Harikrishnan alias Ved Lakshmi as part of '*Bigg Boss*' (Season 7, Malayalam) - a nationally broadcast TV reality show. The hate speech by the said individual constitutes offences punishable under sections 196,197 of BNS, 2023.
2. Based on the said complaint, an order was issued by the Grievance Officer, Asianet. The remarks made in a widely viewed reality show perpetuate stereotypes and hostility towards the queer community. The harm caused by such speech cannot be mitigated solely by a rebuttal; broadcast and retention of such material without prior warning or content modification violates ethical obligations.
3. The remarks by the aforesaid contestant targeted sexual orientation and sought to prevent normalisation of same-sex relationships. They amount to hate speech, perpetuating stigma against a marginalised community. Such content is inconsistent with Articles 14, 15, 19(2) and 21 of the Constitution and contradicts the social values protected under the Programme Code.
4. While the host's remarks are commendable, they do not erase the harm already caused by airing homophobic speech. The response claims that the host intervened in a later episode and that the show fosters inclusivity by featuring LGBTQIA+ contestants. However, the corrective action came *after* the hateful remarks had already been broadcast to a wide audience, causing harm to the queer community. No visible disciplinary action was taken against the contestant to prevent repetition of discriminatory remarks. Hence, the broadcaster failed to meet its duty of care. Since no disciplinary actions were taken against the contestant, she continued the hate speeches which was also telecast through the live platforms.

5. It is submitted that the Grievance Officer observes that content must be seen in the context of a reality show format, where editorial intervention occurs post-facto. This assertion is factually incorrect and misleading. The so-called "reality" show is not a live telecast; rather, it is a deferred broadcast edited and curated from footage captured by over 72 surveillance cameras installed within the house.
6. The production and editorial teams continuously monitor, select, and compile the portions of footage that are ultimately telecast or published on Asianet. Thus, every scene aired, including the impugned homophobic remark, passes through a deliberate editorial review and selection process before publication. The channel, therefore, cannot disclaim responsibility by calling it "unscripted" or claiming lack of control.
7. By choosing to broadcast the discriminatory statement in the episode, even after the footage was available for editing, the channel exercised conscious editorial discretion to publish such content without warning or omission. This directly contradicts the claim that editorial action occurs only after telecast and demonstrates a failure of due diligence and violation of the preventive obligation the Code of Ethics.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

The appellant requests the Council to:

- Set aside the impugned order dated 27/10/2025 issued by the Grievance Officer, Asianet;
- Direct Asianet to take stronger corrective measures including: issuing a public statement condemning the remarks, inserting a content warning and sensitivity disclaimer on the concerned episode, and ensuring diversity and inclusivity training for participants and production staff;
- Issue guidelines for broadcasters, especially for unscripted/reality-format programming, on portrayal of queer identities, to ensure prohibition of hate speech, discriminatory remarks and stereotyping.
- Pass such other and further orders as this Hon'ble Council may deem fit in the interest of justice and equality.

BCCC DECISION: BCCC viewed the episodes and found that remarks were made by contestant Lakshmi Harkrishnan alias Ved Lakshmi against the queer community which perpetuated stereotypes. The contestant made this derogatory and hateful remark directed at fellow contestants Adhila Nasrin and Noor Fathima, a queer couple.

Perhaps this whole fracas and the host dramatically chastising a participant for political incorrectness with regards to the LGBT community for expressing her displeasure at normalizing same sex relationships was a way to depict how progressive the channel is on issues of gender justice and sexual preferences. For a show that implicitly encourages violent and confrontationist conversations to profess peaceful coexistence, it is somewhat paradoxical. However, given that the channel bent over backwards to showcase its progressive and legally sensitive credentials through the dramatic moral indignation and repeated chastising of an errant participant by its host Mr Mohanlal repeatedly and publicly reiterating its position on the rights of the LGBT community clothes it with immunity against any action by BCCC at this point.

BCCC also felt that no action against the channel is maintainable at this juncture. The channel was deft in its response and also strategically offered fairly satisfactory correctives after the airing of the impugned episode during the wrapping up of the series in question. The APPEAL was thus DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 157

APPEAL NO. BCCC/157/2025 DATED 27/12/2025

CHANNEL: Star Pravah
LANGUAGE: Marathi
PROGRAMME: *Mi Savitribai Jyotirao Phule*, 05/01/2026, 7:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Caste-based hatred

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The complainant submits:

- **Promotion of Social Discord:** The programme repeatedly depicts narratives that are designed to create friction and caste-based animosity among different social groups.
- **Targeting a Specific Community:** The core of the complaint is directed at content that explicitly spreads hatred and malice against the Brahmin community (ब्राह्मण विरुद्ध द्वेष).
- **Violation of Public Interest:** Instead of promoting progressive ideas or stories relevant to a modern, inclusive society (नवीन समाज घडवायचा सोडून), these broadcasts deliberately focus on old, divisive caste narratives, thus working against the public interest and the constitutional mandate for fraternity and equality.
- **Breach of Programme Code:** Such content potentially violates the Programme Code under the CTN Act, which prohibits content that: Offends good taste or decency, contains anything defamatory or contemptuous of any caste, community, or religious group and encourages violence or promotes anti-national attitudes.

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

The channel submits:

- This series is a historical biopic set in 1863 that seeks to respectfully portray the extraordinary life of one of India's most revered educator and social reformer, Savitribai Phule, who is widely regarded as modern India's first female teacher. It is a sincere tribute to her courage, resilience, and pioneering efforts to establish education as a fundamental right for women and marginalized communities in a deeply unequal society.
- As the narrative is set in a specific historical period, it is necessary to depict the ground realities prevalent at the time, so that viewers may fully understand the formidable social and political barriers she confronted. We sincerely respect your concerns; however, it would not be appropriate to ignore historical realities. The intent of such a portrayal is educational and inspirational, highlighting courage, reform, and the importance of equality.
- To ensure accuracy and balance, the show has been developed following extensive research conducted by a panel of eminent subject matter experts. We would also like to reassure you that Star Pravah, as a responsible broadcaster, is committed to presenting content that carries messages of hope and positive outcomes. We humbly encourage you to watch the series to better understand the intent and sensitivity of the makers.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

The Appellant is not satisfied with the channel's response and submits:
As per the broadcaster, the content has been reviewed and found not to be in violation of the BCCC Code. It is respectfully submitted that this conclusion requires reconsideration through a detailed and holistic review.

1. Nature of the Grievance

While the undersigned fully acknowledges and respects the immense historical contribution of Savitribai Phule as a pioneering social reformer and educator, the grievance is not against historical depiction or reformist narratives.

The concern lies in the manner, tone, repetition, and narrative framing adopted in the serial, which repeatedly portrays members of a specific caste/community (Brahmins) in a uniformly negative, hostile, and contemptuous manner; Converts' critique of historical practices into generalised demonisation of a living community; Lacks adequate balancing perspectives, progressive counter-voices, or contextual nuance. Such portrayal goes beyond historical realism and enters the domain of present-day caste stereotyping and social antagonism.

2. Promotion of Social Discord & Caste-Based Animosity
The programme, through dramatized dialogues, visual language, and recurring character archetypes, creates an atmosphere of caste-based hostility, which has a real and measurable impact on contemporary viewers.
Under the BCCC Guidelines and Programme Code, the depiction must not promote social disharmony; Content must not encourage contempt or hatred against a caste or community; Creative freedom does not extend to repeated negative generalisation of an identifiable group. The intent of the makers, even if stated as educational, cannot override the social impact of such portrayals. 160 years gone already justice prevailed enough facilities, atrocity acts, reservation given and post 150 years, Brahmin community is the one now who is suffering still you want us to repay by showing old animosity which will spread hatred towards us. The impact can be checked on social media platform the wrath and hatred towards current Brahmin community is itself on channel social media pages.

3. Violation of CTN Act, Programme Code
The content prima facie attracts violations of the Programme Code, including but not limited to: Content contemptuous or defamatory of a caste/community; Content likely to disturb public harmony and fraternity; Narratives that reopen historical wounds without proportional balance, thereby working against constitutional values of equality and brotherhood.
Historical setting does not provide immunity from the Programme Code, especially when dramatization amplifies negative stereotyping.

4. Inadequacy of Broadcaster's Reply
The response from the broadcaster relies primarily on assertion of "historical reality", Claims of expert research and stated intent of positivity.
However, it does not address: The cumulative effect of repeated negative portrayals; Viewer perception and social consequences; Whether sufficient balance and plurality of viewpoints are presented.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

1. Undertake a fresh, episode-wise review of the serial in its entirety;
2. Examine whether the portrayal crosses from social reform into caste-based vilification;
3. Direct the broadcaster to:
   - Introduce clear contextual disclaimers, and/or
   - Ensure balanced representation, and/or
   - Modify or edit scenes/dialogues that promote caste hostility;

4. Pass such further directions as deemed appropriate in the interest of social harmony and public order.

This appeal is submitted in good faith, with respect for creative freedom, but with a firm belief that creative expression must coexist with constitutional fraternity and responsibility.

BCCC DECISION: ***The Council viewed the episodes and found that the programme is a historical biopic set in 1863 that portrays the life of social reformer Savitribai Phule. The show is neither a reflection nor an aspersion of the Brahminical perspective or attitudes prevalent in those days but depicts the ground realities of the times when women and other marginalised communities were deprived of education. The deeply fractured social mandate during the pre-Independence era gets revealed in the programme with certain comments made against the Brahmin community or certain antagonists of the Brahmin community who tried to test Savitribai Phule's resilience and pioneering efforts in imparting education to girls and women. No way can this be judged as an affront to the Brahmin community or any other community/caste.***
BCCC has always believed that any historical representation has various interpretations, and it is for the viewers to choose their own. BCCC believes the intent of the narrative is more on the hardships that Savitribai Phule faced during those challenging times which made her a path-changer. Her personality and thoughts shaped and continues to shape the current generation and BCCC does not believe in intervening and examining this programme from the myopic prism of caste. The APPEAL is DISPOSED OF.

APPEAL- 158

APPEAL NO. BCCC/158/2025 DATED 13/01/2026

CHANNEL:	Zee Marathi
LANGUAGE:	Marathi
PROGRAMME:	*Tula Japnar Aahe*, 25/12/2025, 10:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE:	Superstition

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The programme spreads superstition all over Maharashtra. The episode depicts the lead character performing occult and superstitious practices by turning a doll into an evil doll. Kindly stop such superstitious content.

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

- This show is a work of fiction depicting supernatural elements within a family drama. The episode highlighted by you is part of an ongoing story track where the negative character Manjiri is shown stealing a doll from a child and attempting to complete a ritual involving dark arts. Her reason for doing so is to attain eternal youth and stay pretty forever.
- It has been established right from the initial episodes that Manjiri is a negative character whose actions and thoughts are not endorsed or supported by the channel but rather show how she keeps failing and the good somehow always wins over her evil and malicious plans. She is merely a medium to move the story forward and show the greater good of the other main characters.
- During the depiction of scene where the ritual takes place, awareness scrolls were put in place to notify the viewers that the content is entirely fictional, and the channel does not promote or validate occult practices, superstition or irrational beliefs.
- Additionally, the show's theme is such that it will, time and again, have some supernatural occurrence. Hence, the show's timing is after 10 PM, when children are not watching TV and that adults can enjoy it. The channel ensures that the BCCC Code is adhered to, and the same was done here too.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):
The Appellant submits that the channel's response gives the impression that it will continue to promote and spread some superstition by performing witchcraft and black magic through the character named Manjiri. Has BCCC ordered to broadcast such series after 10 PM in

which superstition, witchcraft, black magic is allowed to be shown? Due to such series, the behaviour and nature of the public can be reflected towards witchcraft activities. The channel has admitted that right from the beginning, it has shown Manjiri doing superstition, witchcraft, and black magic to increase the TRP, and I believe they will continue to do so.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
Stop the telecast of this serial.

***BCCC DECISION**: BCCC viewed the episodes. The programme is a work of fiction, depicting supernatural elements within a family drama. The episode shows Manjiri, the negative character, stealing a doll from a child and attempting to complete a ritual involving occult and superstitious practices to attain eternal youth and staying pretty forever. The channel had put disclaimers during the depiction of such scenes. BCCC also felt that themes cannot be dictated to channels as it is their creative liberty to explore themes based on their strategy or market research, but BCCC decided to direct the channel that despite the show being shown in watershed hours, the depiction cannot be prolonged and exaggerated. The Appeal was, thus, DISPOSED OF.*

S. APPEALS TAKEN UP IN 126TH BCCC MEETING HELD ON 22 MAY 2026

APPEAL- 159

APPEAL NO. BCCC/159/2026 DATED 27/01/2026
CHANNEL: Colors
LANGUAGE: Hindi
PROGRAMME: '*Mangal Laxmi*', 12/01/2026 at 8:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Crime & Violence

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: This programme regularly shows violence. Although violence can be part of the storyline but characters like Saumya are openly committing crimes and getting away with it.

In this particular episode, Saumya planted a bomb resulting in death of two persons. She managed to escape as always. Such content encourages crime in our society. Previously a character named Barkha burnt 6 policemen alive without getting caught. What psychological effect such content will have on viewers who are watching? Action must be taken against such writers and directors before they harm our society even more.

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

The channel submits:

- Mangal Lakshmi is a fictional show revolving around the lives of two sisters Mangal and Lakshmi and how they navigate the curveballs that life throws at them. It portrays how both Mangal and Lakshmi use their emotional quotient, love and respect for others and their sensibilities to tackle all these difficulties. Please note that like all other shows of this genre, its characters behave in decidedly hyperbolic and highly dramatic manner, and it would be dearly amiss to compare it with how things pan out in real life as such.

- Further, Saumya, is presented as a formidable enemy who goes to great extent to get what she wants, but also someone who will inevitably meet her fate as justice remains an integral part of the show's narrative. We were extremely mindful in

how the scene played out in the episode, making sure to keep it suggestive and not distressing. We urge you to continue watching the show to find out how life unfolds for its characters.

- 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):
I am not satisfied with the channel's response as no one can justify bomb blast for creativity. The channels seem to have no responsibility what the serial is creating in minds of audience who are watching.
The negative characters committing crime in the programme never faced any investigation leave alone getting punished for planting a bomb. Bomb blasts are associated with very serious crime due to terrorism but no investigation is done in the programme after the bomb blast. Bomb blasts create a very serious threat to security of a country. The channel should be more responsible while showing such things as it is are creating a very serious threat to security of our country.

***BCCC DECISION**: The Council viewed the episodes in question and found that it is a fictional show in which one of the antagonist characters, Soumya Saxena, uses every trick to overshadow the female protagonist Mangal. The former places a bomb with the help of a local goon in the coconut that Mangal was supposed to break during a puja ceremony. However, Mangal gives the coconut to a small orphan girl to break it and in turn the young girl is critically injured. The subsequent episodes show that Soumya tries to usurp Adit's property and in a dramatic move, it is brought to the notice of all family members, that Mangal and Adit have not been divorced in a court of law. The violence shown is suggestive. The actual act of bomb explosion is not shown but there is a boom sound to suggest that the bomb has taken off.*
The Council DISPOSED OF the APPEAL keeping the totality of the context in mind rather than focus merely on select annotative readings. The story focuses more on the protagonist's resilience than her suffering. The Appeal was DISMISSED.

APPEAL- 160

APPEAL NO. BCCC/160/2026 DATED 26/03/2026
CHANNEL: Star Vijay
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: '*Bigg Boss*', 02/01/2026 at 9:30PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Abuse and violence

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The episode was traumatic as it normalised the abusive and violent behaviour of two contestants towards a woman contestant. This could have been edited as it was shown during prime time. The second half of the episode is too vulgar and not suitable for all ages. This show should be shown with 'trigger content' warning and age restriction card. This is high time the show is defined with age restriction notice.

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

The channel submits:

- Bigg Boss is an unscripted, format-based reality show created solely for entertainment purposes. The format places contestants in unconventional situations to observe their personalities, resilience, and responses to various challenges. As the

events inside the Bigg Boss house unfold organically and spontaneously, disagreements and conflicts may occasionally arise. During the 'Ticket to Finale' car task, an incident occurred involving aggressive behaviour by VJ Paaru and Kamrudin towards their co-contestant, Sandra. As a responsible broadcaster, we do not condone violence or harassment in any form. Accordingly, a red card was issued to both contestants, resulting in their immediate eviction from the show.

- Such decisions are never taken lightly and are challenging for both the contestants and the Channel. However, this action was necessary to uphold fairness, transparency, and the values we stand by. It was therefore important to provide viewers with a clear understanding of the circumstances that led to this decision.
- We have a robust internal Self-Regulation Mechanism that reviews and monitors all programme content to ensure strict adherence to the Programme Code and all applicable statutory and self-regulatory guidelines, and the episode was carefully curated to ensure suitability for broadcast audiences. Following a thorough review, this content was found not to be in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

The appellant submits:

- I am not satisfied as my primary request is not even considered and the channel's response states the events and aftermath steps taken by them.
- I understand that the show is unscripted showing participant personalities and the producer/channel take an editorial call in telecasting.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
I would request BCCC to ask the channel to display age restriction card and trigger warning in case any physical or abusive language used by participants in telecast/re-telecast of events. This would help vulnerable to decide to either view the programme or not.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the content and found that contestants were asked to perform a task in which all of them had to sit in a car parked in Bigg Boss's house. The contestant who would stay in the car for the longest time would be declared the winner of the task. Nine contestants or inmates of the Bigg Boss House were asked to do this task. During the task, VJ Paaru and Kamruddin got into an argument with Sandra and after a while they pushed her out of the car forcibly. She had a seizure attack and she was attended to immediately by the medics in the Bigg Boss house which was not shown. The entire incident of Sandra being pushed out of a stationary car was shown and the anchor Vijay Setupati was shown to be watching it with the audiences. He finally took a decision and issued a RED CARD to both Paaru and Kamruddin and they were evicted from the Bigg Boss house. Sandra was traumatized and did not wish to even look at Kamruddin or Paaru and before exiting the Bigg Boss house Kamruddin tried to seek forgiveness for his actions but Sandra was unrelenting. She did not even look at him when he kneeled down to seek forgiveness whereas the other contestant Paaru was unrepentant. She displayed no emotion when she was asked to exit the Bigg Boss House.
BCCC felt that Bigg Boss is a reality show in which implicitly encourages violent and confrontationist conversations and creating difference between contestants (in considering the quality of tasks they have to do) is part of the show. The exchange of harsh words too is provocative and done to tickle audience interest. The APPEAL was DISPOSED OF as no action against the channel is maintainable at this juncture.

APPEAL- 161

APPEAL NO. BCCC/161/2026 DATED 17/03/2026
CHANNEL: Sun TV
LANGUAGE: Tamil
PROGRAMME: '*Moondru Mudichu*', 21/02/2026 at 9PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Class based discrimination/Harassment

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The serial portrays repeated humiliation of economically weaker individuals and promotes a strong discriminatory narrative between rich and poor families. In particular, the storyline centres on the ill-treatment of a young woman from a poor background who is married into a wealthy household. The continuous emotional abuse, humiliation, and normalization of such treatment send a deeply troubling message to viewers.

The serial appears to glorify class-based discrimination and indirectly promotes domestic violence by portraying abusive behaviour as acceptable or justified within family settings. Such content not only undermines human dignity but also negatively influences societal attitudes, especially among impressionable viewers.

Television has a powerful role in shaping social values. I respectfully request that your channel review this content carefully and take appropriate corrective measures to ensure that entertainment does not come at the cost of promoting inequality, abuse, or harmful stereotypes. I hope the concerned authorities will treat this matter with seriousness and uphold responsible broadcasting standards.

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

- We have taken note of the concerns raised by you regarding the content of the Serial. The Channel values the opinions, input, and feedback of its viewers and works towards aligning its operations with the tenable feedback it receives. We acknowledge the concerns raised regarding certain episodes and character portrayals in the Serial and wish to clarify that the Channel places the utmost importance on viewer feedback and remains committed to responsible storytelling that aligns with all applicable laws, broadcasting regulations, and ethical standards
- The Serial's narrative revolves around Nandini, a resilient and principled young woman from a middle-class family, raised by her single father in a village. She is depicted as compassionate, selfless, and determined to protect her family's well-being. In contrast, the male protagonist, Suryakumar (Surya), belongs to a wealthy joint family and harbours resentment towards his mother due to an unresolved incident from his past. His marriage to Nandini, is motivated by his desire to provoke his mother, forms the crux of the Serial's emotional conflict. Despite this, Surya is shown to be kind and respectful towards Nandini and her family members.
- The complaint arises from a specific scene in the episode aired on 21.02.2026, where Nandini folded Haritha's dried clothes, inadvertently mixing her own garments with them. Haritha separated her clothes, scolded Nandini for the mix-up, and burned her own clothes in disgust. Surya, learning of this and Nandini's overburdened chores, confronted Sundaravalli and Haritha (who supported each other), defended Nandini, warned Haritha against such behaviour, urging her to show basic humanity by ceasing insults or mistreatment, and asserted that Nandini holds equal rights in the household as everyone else.
- We clarify that the sequence in the episode forms part of a larger narrative highlighting challenges faced by individuals from economically weaker backgrounds in unfamiliar, socially unequal environments. The portrayal of Nandini's humiliation

by another character neither endorses nor glorifies discriminatory behaviour but reflects harsh social realities. Importantly, the storyline does not normalise or justify such actions. In the same sequence, Surya confronts Haritha's conduct, strongly condemns Nandini's mistreatment and emphasizes her equal rights and respect within the household. Through these character responses, the narrative underscores that discrimination, humiliation and abusive conduct are unacceptable and must be challenged. As a fictional drama, this Serial uses conflict to examine and critique regressive attitudes, promoting equality, dignity, and mutual respect. We remain committed to responsible content creation and assure that it does not promote inequality, domestic violence, or harmful stereotypes.

- In the Serial, the characters Surya and his father are consistently portrayed as morally upright individuals, serving as a clear contrast to characters such as Sundaravalli, Madhavi, Surekha and Haritha. Surya and his father demonstrate compassion, integrity, and genuine concern for Nandini, positioning themselves as her protectors and supporters. They provide her with emotional strength, thoughtful guidance, and consistent encouragement not only towards her but also in their interactions with her extended family member. Their presence serves as a moral compass within the narrative, reinforcing values of fairness and empathy. Throughout the storyline, both Surya and his father actively oppose the actions and motives of the negative characters, frequently expressing their disapproval and taking a principled stand against injustice.
- As a responsible Channel, we strive to remain sensitive to viewers and society at large, always mindful of how our stories and narratives may impact them. Any inconvenience caused is unintentional and we regret the same. We encourage viewers to interpret the Serial and its elements through a broader, more holistic lens. The character's actions and their eventual consequences are designed to create a powerful narrative that resonates with audience, fostering reflection on values like compassion, empathy, and justice. Their upbringing and life experiences shape their thought processes and behaviours, forming distinct identities within the storyline.
- Further, we would like to state that the content of the Serial is in compliance with the Cable TV Networks Regulation Act, 1995 ("**Act**"), and the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 ("**Rules**"), including the Programme Code mentioned under Rule 6 of the Rules. 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):

The channel's response is not up to the mark. I understand that there are too many discriminations in the society but what they portray in the serial is not acceptable. It continues to promote untouchability, inequality and intolerance.

Even in the recent episode date 17/03/2026, where Surya helps Nandhini to clear her arrears and arranges a home tuition. But Sundaravalli and Haritha intervened and wanted to stop her education. As per the story its fine but there was a dialogue 'The value of education is lost as teaching to Nandhini '. What kind of dialogue is this? Is education meant for the rich? What kind of impact they are creating in the society? Most of the people are watching it. How slowly it is poisoning the people's mind. Also, Haritha poured hot tea on the servant.

Isn't it a domestic violence? Is it promoting the rich can do anything they want? Don't they have values?

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
I kindly request you to take necessary action or ban such serial.

***BCCC DECISION**: The Council viewed the content and found that the serial's narrative revolves around Nandini, the female protagonist. She is depicted to be a resilient and principled young woman from a middle-class family, raised by her single father in a village whereas the male protagonist Suryakumar (Surya), belongs to a wealthy joint family and harbours resentment towards his mother due to an unresolved incident from his past. He marries Nandini to provoke his mother which is the vortex of the programme's emotional conflict. The depiction for which the complaint has been received shows Nandini folding her mother-in-law's (Haritha) dried clothes, inadvertently mixing her own garments with them. Haritha separated her clothes, scolded Nandini for the mix-up, and burned her own clothes. Surya, learning of this and Nandini's overburdened chores, confronted Sundaravalli and Haritha (who supported each other), defended Nandini, warned Haritha against such behaviour, urging her to show basic humanity by ceasing insults or mistreatment, and asserted that Nandini holds equal rights in the household as everyone else.*
Through the character responses, the narrative underscores that discrimination, humiliation and abusive conduct are unacceptable and must be challenged. Their presence serves as a moral compass within the narrative, reinforcing values of fairness and empathy. Throughout the storyline, both Surya and his father actively oppose the actions and motives of the negative characters, frequently expressing their disapproval and taking a principled stand against injustice.
BCCC did not find the APPEAL maintainable considering that the story focuses more on the protaganist's resilience than her suffering. The Appeal was DISPOSED OF. The Council also felt that it was not its remit to prescribe the plot and storyline to channels who have the right to make informed choices on these matters.

APPEAL- 162

APPEAL NO. BCCC/162/2026 DATED 21/03/2025
CHANNEL: ETV
LANGUAGE: Telugu
PROGRAMME: '*Manasantha Nuvve*', 27/11/2025 at 8:30 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Child harassment Scenes

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: Children kidnapping scenes are increasing on the channel. Showcasing such content is harmful for the society.

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

The channel submits:

- Both '*Manasantha Nuvve*' and '*Jhansi*' are purely fictional creations intended solely for entertainment purposes. These serials are daily TV dramas depicting imaginary characters and situations to build narrative emotion and viewer engagement. They do not depict real incidents, nor are they designed to target, offend, or demean any individual, family, or social group.

- We wish to reiterate that ETV has always been ahead in upholding family values and social responsibility, while simultaneously providing meaningful entertainment. The channel has a long-standing reputation for supporting children's intellectual

development by telecasting several programmes that encourage and showcase the talent of minors. ETV treats all matters concerning children with *double responsibility and utmost sensitivity*.

- In *Manasantha Nuvve*, Maruthi Rao is depicted as a negative personality driven by revenge against those who had previously harmed him. His acts, including the attempted kidnap drama, are shown as wrongful, and they are eventually exposed in the storyline.

- These characters exist solely to move the plot forward. Their behaviour is not glorified, nor does it encourage wrongdoing. The serials consistently reinforce that good ultimately triumphs over evil.

- In respect of the kidnap-drama sequences mentioned in the complaint, we state that all such scenes were portrayed strictly within permissible dramatic limits. Characters were shown being taken or confined only as part of the narrative conflict. At no point was any character subjected to torture, excessive violence, inhuman treatment, or any portrayal that violates boundaries of decency or acceptability. In both serials, all characters eventually remain safe, and the storyline progresses toward justice and relief.

- We also state that at no point have these serials portrayed any content that is unsafe, inappropriate, or contrary to the values upheld by ETV. ETV strictly adheres to all applicable broadcasting standards, including the Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC) Guidelines and the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994, and ensures that all content remains within the parameters of responsible and culturally respectful programming.

- It is further clarified that ETV accords the highest importance to child safety and welfare. All programmes involving minor characters or portrayals strictly comply with statutory frameworks including the BCCC Guidelines, Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Rules, 2017, the IT Act, the ASCI Code, and other applicable broadcasting and child-protection norms. No minor has been portrayed in an unsafe, indecent, exploitative, or non-compliant manner at any stage.

- We reaffirm that it is never the intention of ETV to disrespect any individual, family, social group, or moral value. The central themes of both serials emphasise family values, responsibility, justice, and the triumph of truth, which ETV has consistently upheld in all its programming.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):
This is to bring to the Council's notice that the problem mentioned in the complaint last time is still continuing. They are showing scene of child harassment and manipulation.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
It is requested to stop the programme if they continue to show child harassment scenes. I also request the Council to take necessary action against the management.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the content. In the mentioned episode of 27/11/2025, there was no scene of kidnapping. However, in the episode of 28/11/2025, the channel has shown a girl's kidnapping. But there are no scenes of harassment of the girl (excepting a man carrying a girl on his shoulder) as mentioned in the complaint.

The male protagonist's parents were also abducted, and they were shown to be taken in a car while the female protagonist following them on foot. The Council found that the characters were shown being taken or confined only as part of the narrative conflict. At no point, was any character subjected to torture, excessive violence, inhuman treatment, or any portrayal that violates boundaries of decency or acceptability. The Council thus DISPOSED OF the APPEAL.

APPEAL- 163

APPEAL NO. BCCC/163/2026 DATED 28/03/2026
CHANNEL: Nick
LANGUAGE: Tamil (Dubbed)
PROGRAMME: '*Motu Patlu*', 05/03/2026 at 9:15 PM
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Cross dressing/ demeaning women

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: While watching this program with my children, it was shocking to see a sequence where the male lead characters (Motu and Patlu) were depicted as female characters in a very demeaning manner. The episode featured posters of them dressed as women, and the characters were shown feeling deeply ashamed and embarrassed about being portrayed as females.

The dialogues used in this context were highly derogatory and insulting towards women. Portraying womanhood as something to be ashamed of or as a tool for mockery is completely unacceptable, especially in a programme primarily viewed by young children.
I request you to take the immediate action on the same.

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

The channel submits:

- This is in reference to the grievance received regarding the episode "Motu Patlu ki Watch Tower." While we appreciate your concern and thank you for taking the time to share your feedback regarding the episode, we wish to place the narrative context, creative intent, and positive message of the episode on record.
- The episode conveys a positive core message of civic responsibility and perseverance. Motu and Patlu undertake an initiative to build a clock tower for the benefit of the city, reflecting teamwork, public service, and commitment to a common good. Despite facing obstacles, their intent throughout the episode remains constructive and sincere.
- The conflict arises when the antagonist deliberately sabotages their efforts by making Motu, Patlu and the Inspector appear in women's clothing without their knowledge, as a prank intended to embarrass them and distract from their project. The humour in these scenes is situational and character-based, relying on surprise and exaggeration, common storytelling devices in children's animation. The joke is directed at the protagonists and the Inspector, who are the targets of the antagonist's mischief, and not at women or womanhood.
- The episode concludes on a clear positive and inclusive note: the protagonists' determination draws public attention to their cause; an advertiser agrees to sponsor the clock tower project. It is pertinent to note that a young girl along with her family appreciates the campaign and actively comes forward to donate for the cause; reinforcing the message that good intent, cooperation, and resilience prevail over sabotage.
- As a responsible broadcaster, we value and respect women and their contributions to society, just as you do, and we do not endorse or promote content that demeans

or undermines any gender. “Motu Patlu” is a fictional animated programme for children and is intended to be viewed through the lens of fantastical storytelling and slapstick humor from a kid's point of view. When viewed in its entirety, the episode promotes positive values of teamwork, persistence, and community service.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):
I am in receipt of the response from Nick TV regarding my grievance. I find their justification highly unsatisfactory and wish to place the following specific evidence on record to prove the derogatory nature of the content:

1. Explicit Verbal Devaluation of Womanhood:
In the Tamil dubbed version of this episode, there is a specific dialogue where the characters are told, **"உங்களை நீங்களே தாழ்த்திக் கொண்டு பெண் வேடமிட்டு இருக்கீங்க" (You have devalued/degraded yourselves by dressing up as women).** This explicitly equates being a woman or wearing women’s attire with being "devalued" or "degraded." This is not "situational humor"; it is a direct insult to gender dignity and instils an inferiority complex in children regarding the female gender.

2. Visual Mockery and Language:
In the visual frames where the protagonists are shown in women’s clothing, the phrase **"Ayyoamma"** is used/written. This specific usage, coupled with the imagery, is designed to incite ridicule and portray womanhood as a state of distress or mockery.

3. Contradiction of Broadcaster’s Claim:
The broadcaster claims the intent is "constructive." However, using gender-based shaming as a plot device to "embarrass" characters directly violates the **BCCC Self-Regulatory Guidelines**, which prohibit content that demeans any gender or encourages derisive stereotypes.

4. Demand for Investigation and Evidence:
I request the BCCC to conduct an independent review of this episode, particularly the Tamil version. I am also looking for the official link/broadcast record of this episode to pinpoint every timestamp where such derogatory dialogues occur, as it is crucial for a detailed investigation.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:
I urge the Council to direct the broadcaster to immediately withdraw this episode from all platforms, issue an apology for the "devaluation" dialogue, and ensure such regressive scripts are not cleared for broadcast in any regional language. I look forward to your intervention in protecting the psychological and social values of our children.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episode, and found that Motu Patlu ki Watch Tower is an episode in which Motu and Patlu undertake an initiative of building a clock tower for the good of the city. There are negative characters who try to sabotage their effort by making all the three characters appear in women’s clothing to distract them from their unrelenting commitment to the clock tower project. ‘Cross dressing’ in the episode is situational and integral to the storyline of reflecting their commitment to the watch tower project. As such it is not to degrade or demean womanhood in any manner or as such it cannot be inferred.
BCCC felt that none of the episodes undermined the sanctity of womanhood. The Council also felt that in such animated series designed to evoke laughter from children, 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 DISPOSED OF with a direction to the channel that it suitably modifies the contentious line which could be construed to debase women for repeat telecasts.

APPEAL- 164

APPEAL NO. BCCC/164/2026 DATED 30/03/2026
CHANNEL: Star Plus
LANGUAGE: Mr. & Mrs. Parshuram, 17/03/2026 at 8:30PM
PROGRAMME: Hindi
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Hurting religious sentiments

SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: I am writing to express my concern regarding the portrayal of Lord Parshuram in the said programme. As per Hindu beliefs, Lord Parshuram is known as the 6th avatar of Lord Vishnu and is deeply respected, especially among the Brahmin community. However, in the serial, there are repeated references to non-vegetarian food (such as fish, prawns etc) and drinking habits being associated with Lord Parshuram, and even suggesting that he enjoys such practices.

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

The channel submits:

- The show is a work of fiction based on the life of Shivprasad, a soft-spoken family man from a Maharashtrian household who leads a seemingly ordinary life. He works undercover as an insurance agent, while in reality he is a covert operative using the code name "Parshuram." He manages this dual life alongside his wife, Shalini, and their two children, who are completely unaware of his dual identity. The show primarily emphasizes his "common man" traits, such as being a devoted father and navigating everyday domestic situations. Elements such as food choices are portrayed merely as a small detail of his family life and are presented as moments of bonding.
- We would like to clarify that the character "Shivkumar Parshuram" in the show is only a fictional code name and is not intended to represent or draw any parallel with the revered Lord Parshuram himself. The portrayal is limited to the fictional narrative of the character and does not seek to associate any cultural or religious figure with the habits depicted in the storyline. There is no intent to hurt religious sentiments, and we remain mindful and respectful of cultural and spiritual beliefs. Upon review, this content was not found to be in violation of the BCCC Code.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):
While the channel claims that the character name "Parshuram" is merely fictional, the actual content of the show contradicts this clarification. In multiple instances, the character explicitly claims to be "the 6th avatar of Lord Vishnu (Parshuram)." This goes beyond the use of a fictional name and directly associates the character with a revered religious figure. Furthermore, the same character is shown engaging in or referring to non-vegetarian food such as fish and prawns, which is contrary to widely held religious beliefs associated with Lord Parshuram. This creates a portrayal that can hurt the sentiments of viewers who hold these beliefs.
The issue is not merely about a fictional storyline, but about the explicit claim of being a divine avatar combined with actions that may be perceived as disrespectful or insensitive.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

I request the Council to kindly review this matter again, considering the above points, and take appropriate action to ensure that religious sentiments are respected in broadcast content.

***BCCC DECISION**: The Council viewed the episodes and found that in this fictional programme, the name of the male protagonist is Shiv Deshmukh, and his code name is 'Parshuram'. He apparently works for some government security agency and his covert name is Parshuram. He is married to Shalini and leads a normal life with his children. The male protagonist uses his line every now and then 'Parshuram is the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu and his weapon was axe and in today's time he is Parshuram whose weapon is six round chamber of revolver. One of his children, the younger son is likes eating fish and especially pomfret and he keeps on requesting his father to get fish from the market for him which his father does quite often. The code name of the agent and the dietary or culinary taste of the family has got no connection and the complaint of hurting religious sentiments does not arise. The culinary habit of the family which is a typical Maharashtrian family which eats non-veg food is not a reflection on the code name of the operative.*
Nowhere in the episodes has the name been used to associate any religious or cultural figure with the intent of hurting religious sentiments. Finding it not maintainable, the Council DISPOSED OF the APPEAL.

APPEAL- 165

APPEAL NO. BCCC/165/2026 DATED 05/04/2026
CHANNEL: Zee Kannada
LANGUAGE: '*Karna*', 02 & 03/03/2026 at 8 PM
PROGRAMME: Kannada
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Hurting religious sentiments
SUMMARY OF GRIEVANCE: The mentioned episodes portrayed a medical student/doctor representing a client in the court of law. The character is played by the female lead who doesn't hold an LLB degree. This was explicitly confirmed in the episode aired on the 2nd March, where other characters specifically state that the character wearing the Advocate's band does not hold an LLB degree.
Despite this, she is shown representing a client while wearing the Advocate's band and a black coat, which is a protected professional uniform under Part VI, Chapter IV of the Bar Council of India.
This is a gross misrepresentation of the noble profession by the channel and is clearly misleading to the general public. Such a portrayal is derogatory toward the legal profession, the judiciary and is in violation of various laws, including but not limited to Rule 6 of the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994.
Specifically, it violates the following subsections of Rule 6: (d) containing anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false, or involving suggestive innuendos and half-truths; (f) containing anything amounting to contempt of court; and (g) containing aspersions against the integrity of the President and the Judiciary.

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

In response to the legal notice sent to the channel, the channel submits:

1. At the outset, we categorically deny each and every allegation, contention, insinuation, and legal interpretation contained in your notice. Nothing not expressly admitted herein shall be deemed admitted. Your notice is factually misconceived, legally untenable, and based on an erroneous understanding of the laws governing broadcasting, intellectual property, artistic expression, and professional attire. Before issuing such a notice, you ought to have acquainted yourself with the applicable statutory framework as well as the binding

Supreme Court jurisprudence on dramatization, fictionalisation, and creative freedom.

2. The serial "Karna" is a dramatized and wholly fictional work, produced solely for entertainment. The episodes referred to by you do not claim or intend to depict actual legal procedure. The Supreme Court has consistently held that fictional works must not be judged by the standards applicable to real-world professional conduct and that dramatization for artistic purposes does not amount to legal misrepresentation. The Court has further held that creative works must be assessed from the standpoint of a "reasonable viewer" and not a hypersensitive individual, and that dramatization of real-life themes enjoys constitutional protection under Article 19(1)(a). Therefore, your objections are contrary to well-settled legal principles.

3. We would like to draw your attention to the standard disclaimer prominently displayed before every episode of the serial 'Karna', expressly stating that the programme is a purely fictional work. The characters, incidents, settings and narrative elements are entirely imaginary, and the show does not claim directly or indirectly to depict real persons, real events, real legal proceedings, or any real-life professional conduct. Any coincidental resemblance is purely unintentional and does not alter the fictional and creative nature of the programme.

4. We would like to clarify that your allegation that the depiction of a fictional character wearing a black coat or band amounts to "impersonation of an advocate" is wholly untenable.

- The Advocates Act, 196L regulates the practice of law, not the portrayal of advocates or legal settings in cinema, television, OTT, or artistic works.
- Numerous films and serials depict characters in advocate attire, including those played by actors who are not advocates, this practice is lawful and well-established.

Therefore, there exists no provision in the Advocates Act that prohibits dramatized depiction of legal attire within fictional content.

5. We would like to bring to Your knowledge that Your interpretation of Rule 6 of the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994 is also incorrect, as depiction of Our content contains:

- No misleading instructions on legal practice,
- No derogatory depiction of judiciary or legal profession,
- No content affecting dignity of statutory institutions.
- Your notice fails to identify any specific clause of Rule 6 that is allegedly violated.

6. Please note that for over three decades, we have been engaged in the Media and Entertainment business and have consistently adhered to all applicable legal and regulatory frameworks. We review all content prior to broadcasting or making it available on the 'ZEES' platform. Therefore, all our content, including the serial "Karna", complies with the relevant laws and rules, including:

- Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995
- Programme Code
- Self-regulatory guidelines of the IBDF / BCCC
- Copyright Act, 1957

Accordingly, your notice does not and cannot demonstrate any breach of these provisions.

7. We would also like to clarify that no reasonable viewer is led to believe that a fictional television character is providing legal education, legal advice, or an authoritative statement of law. The Supreme Court has unequivocally held that a work of fiction cannot be mistaken for a documentary, and viewers are fully capable of distinguishing dramatization from fact.

In view of the above, we call upon you to withdraw the said Notice within seven (7) days of receipt of this reply, your notice is false, baseless, and untenable, and we are not bound to comply with any of the requisitions made therein. Should you still choose to proceed with any action, we shall be constrained to defend the same at your sole risk as to costs and consequences. Needless to state, nothing contained herein shall be construed as an admission of any fact, allegation, or liability. This reply is issued entirely without prejudice to all our rights, contentions, and remedies available under law and equity, including the right to seek appropriate relief against any unwarranted claims or proceedings.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II): The appellant submits that the channel has sent an evasive reply denying the claims and demanding to withdraw the notice. The appellant requests the Council to take necessary action against the said channel and the impugned serial in the interest of justice and equity.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL:

1. **Direction for Deletion/Modification:** Kindly direct Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited to immediately **delete** the impugned episodes from all digital platforms and archives, or in the alternative, **suitably modify/blur** the objectionable scenes where an unqualified character is shown wearing the Advocate's Band.
2. **Correction of Statutory Misrepresentation:** The portrayal currently suggests that professional vestments (the Advocate's Band) are decorative props rather than statutory identities. I pray that the Broadcaster be directed to issue a **scrolling disclaimer** or a clarification during the broadcast, acknowledging the statutory exclusivity of the Advocate's attire under the Advocates Act, 1961.
3. **Adherence to Programme Code:** I reiterate that the broadcast violates Clauses (d), (f), and (g) of Rule 6 of the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994.

BCCC DECISION: The appeal will be taken up in the next BCCC meeting

APPEAL- 166

APPEAL NO. BCCC/166/2026 DATED 21/04/2026
CHANNEL: Star Plus
LANGUAGE: '*Mr. & Mrs. Parshuram*' at 8:30 PM
PROGRAMME: Hindi
NATURE OF GRIEVANCE: Hurting religious sentiments
The show depicts characters associated with the name and identity of Lord Parshuram frequently consuming or being eager to eat non-vegetarian food (fish).
Lord Parshuram is a revered deity and a symbol of Brahmin dignity. Portraying a character with this name and identity in such a manner is historically and religiously inaccurate. It deeply hurts the religious sentiments of the Brahmin community and misrepresents our cultural values. This content violates the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks Rules, specifically regarding content that is offensive to religious sensibilities.

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

- The show is a work of fiction based on the life of Shivprasad, a soft-spoken family man who leads a seemingly ordinary life. He works undercover as an insurance agent, while in reality he is a covert operative using the code name "Parshuram." He manages this dual life alongside his wife, Shalini, and their two children, who are completely unaware of his dual identity. The show primarily emphasizes his "common man" traits, such as being a devoted father and navigating everyday domestic situations. Elements such as food choices are portrayed merely as a small detail of his family life and are presented as moments of bonding.

- We would like to clarify that the character “Parshuram” in the show is only a fictional code name and is not intended to represent or draw any parallel with the revered Lord Parshuram himself. The portrayal is limited to the fictional narrative of the character and does not seek to associate any cultural or religious figure with the habits depicted in the storyline. There is no intent to hurt religious sentiments, and we remain mindful and respectful of cultural and spiritual beliefs. Upon review, this content was not found to be in violation of the prevailing television content code and applicable regulation.

SUMMARY OF THE APPEAL (Level II):

The channel’s justification is that the show is “fiction” and “Parshuram” is merely a “code name” for a brave covert operative. This is highly unsatisfactory for the following reasons:

- Selective Appropriation: The creators have clearly chosen the name "Parshuram" specifically to capitalize on the attributes of bravery, strength, and warrior-prowess associated with the Sixth Avatar of Lord Vishnu. If the name was truly random, any other name would have sufficed.
- Cultural Contradiction: While the show uses the name to project "bravery," it simultaneously depicts the character consuming non-vegetarian food. This is a direct contradiction to the strict Vedic and Sattvic lifestyle inseparable from the identity of Bhagwan Parshuram.
- Hurt Sentiments: Using a revered name to gain "heroic" appeal while disregarding the religious sentiments attached to that name is misleading. It trivializes a cultural icon by stripping away his values while keeping his "brand" of bravery for entertainment purposes.

It is requested that the Council review this matter. Broadcasters should not be allowed to use the names of revered deities as "cool code names" while portraying lifestyles that are diametrically opposed to the sanctity of those figures.

PRAYER BEFORE THE COUNCIL: The appellant requests to take corrective action by removing such scenes and ensuring that the dignity of religious figures is maintained in future episodes.

BCCC DECISION: The Council viewed the episodes and found that in this fictional programme, the name of the male protagonist is Shiv Deshmukh and his code name is ‘Parshuram’. He apparently works for some government security agency and his covert name is Parshuram. He is married to Shalini and leads a normal life with his children. The male protagonist uses his line every now and then; ‘Parshuram is the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu and his weapon was axe and in today’s time he is Parshuram whose weapon is six round chamber of revolver. One of his children, the younger son is likes eating fish and especially pomfret and he keeps on requesting his father to get fish from the market for him which his father does quite often. The code name of the agent and the dietary or culinary taste of the family has got no connection and the complaint of hurting religious sentiments does not arise. The culinary habit of the family which is a typical Maharashtrian family which eats non-vegetarian food is not a reflection on the code name of the operative.
Nowhere in the episodes has the name been used to associate any religious or cultural figure with the intent of hurting religious sentiments. The Council did not find the Appeal maintainable, and DISPOSED OF the APPEAL.

--