



Date: April 16, 2020

To,

Justice (Retd.) A.K. Sikri

Chairperson, News Broadcasting Standards Authority

C/o News Broadcasters Association

Mantec House, C-56/5, 2nd Floor, Sector 62, Noida - 201 301

(authority@nbanewdelhi.com)

SUB: Complaint by CJP against a program aired by Zee News titled “DNA: Jammu में ज़मीन के 'इस्लामीकरण' का DNA टेस्ट” (DNA test of Islamic conversion of land in Jammu) hosted by Sudhir Chaudhary available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R83Z_E6EM-0

Dear Sir,

Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP) is a human rights movement dedicated to upholding and defending our fundamental freedoms, in the courts and beyond. With a presence in all states of India, CJP draws its strength from the people who are determined to protect the rights of every individual, especially the weak and marginalised.

CJP has been actively campaigning against Hate Speech. Our objective is to not just bring to light such instances, but also [help people understand what constitutes hate speech](#) and how even they can take action against it by filing FIRs or by filing complaint with the NBSA. We have pursued our objectives on two fronts; by publishing informative and educative content about hate speech on our website, and by filing complaints and petitions against the perpetrators.

CJP had, in the recent past, brought to your attention a show on the news channel Aaj Tak titled “देश के सबसे बड़े फैसले पर सबसे बड़ी बहस अयोया से Rohit Sardana के साथ” in which an individual who was addressed as “Swami Karpatri Ji Maharaj” had expressed some controversial and abhorrent views with respect to the Ayodhya case. This was a provocative statement made without a disclaimer by the channel especially when the verdict, in such a sensitive and crucial matter, from the Hon’ble Supreme Court was awaited. NBSA had taken cognizance of this incident and in January, [reprimanded Aaj Tak](#) for broadcasting such communally divisive and inflammatory content and also directed Aaj Tak to remove the programme in its entirety from its YouTube channel.

We have kept our endeavour to fight hate crimes to the best of our efforts, on-going and in this process, we have come across the news channel “Zee News” where the program titled “DNA: Jammu में ज़मीन के 'इस्लामीकरण' का DNA टेस्ट” (DNA test of Islamic conversion of land in Jammu) was aired on national TV on March 11 and is now available for public viewing on their YouTube channel at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R83Z_E6EM-0

A complaint has already been sent to Mr Mayank Aggarwal, Senior Manager, Strategy & Planning, Zee Media Corporation Limited. Essel Studio, FC-19, Sector 16-A, Noida – 201301 email id: mayank.a@zeemedia.esselgroup.com on March 24, 2020. Since we have not received any response from Zee News we are filing this complaint before NBSA for necessary action. We request the NBSA to kindly condone the delay, if any, caused in filing this complaint for reasons that can be attributed to the nationwide lockdown in the light of outbreak of COVID19 and our organization has been relentlessly involved in [providing relief material](#) to low income families, [migrant workers](#), and others in need not just in Mumbai but is the state of [Assam](#) as well.

Annexed hereto is the complaint sent by us dated March 24, 2020 to the broadcaster.

In the aforementioned program, the host, Mr. Sudhir Chaudhary, showed his viewers a Jihad diagram propagating various types of Jihad in the country categorising them as soft jihad and hard jihad. In a country which is walking a tight rope when it comes to its communal issues, such a brazen display of cooked up concepts and types of Jihad is an attempt to create and propagate Islamophobia among the masses.

It is not only the view point of CJP, but many well-known journalists as well as many regular netizens have also criticised the so called “Diagram of Jihad” presented by Mr. Chaudhary and called him out for not focusing on the prime issues in the country and instead propagating unwarranted communal content.

He then went to explain how there were two types of Jihad – Hard Jihad and Soft Jihad further ‘educating’ his viewers by saying, “Hard Jihad includes Population Jihad, Love Jihad, Land Jihad, Education Jihad, Victim Jihad and Direct Jihad, while Soft Jihad includes Economic Jihad, History Jihad, Media Jihad, Movies and Songs Jihad and Secular Jihad.” The Following diagram was displayed during the show:



On the YouTube channel of Zee News, this video has now garnered more than 4.5 lakh views which is an increase of about 1.5 lakh views from the time we sent the complaint to Zee News.

Apart from the extremely offensive and shockingly inflammatory content of this programme, what was especially disturbing was how the host, Mr. Chaudhary was encouraging people to tweet using #ZameenJihad a deeply communal hash tag, a brazenly provocative move that can also incite hate.

The intent of the show, seemingly, was to put forth a point that land in Jammu is owned 90 % per cent by Muslims while Jammu is known to be a Hindu majority region. He even termed it as a conspiracy to turn Hindu populated Jammu into a Muslim dominated region. He even tried to justify his theory by twisting statements made by former political leadership of India during the time of partition and their views of Muslim settlement in India, further communalising his content.

While speaking of Zameen Jihad, Mr. Chaudhary said, “Some people are playing the trick of capturing the government’s land to change the population in terms of religion.” He added that “Islamists” are even trying to “change the religion of land, jungles and rivers”.

This program drew a lot of criticism and also prompted a complaint by a citizen named Saket Gokhale to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

This program violates the Code of Ethics and other guidelines set out by the News Broadcasters Standards Authority (NBSA). The fundamental principles as well as principles of self-regulation which the show violates are as follows:

4) Broadcasters shall, in particular, ensure that they do not select news for the purpose of either promoting or hindering either side of any controversial public issue. News shall not be selected or designed to promote any particular belief, opinion or desires of any interest group.

6) Broadcasters shall ensure a full and fair presentation of news as the same is the fundamental responsibility of each news channel. Realizing the importance of presenting all points of view in a democracy, the broadcaster should, therefore, take responsibility in ensuring that controversial subjects are fairly presented, with time being allotted fairly to each point of view. Besides, the selection of items of news shall also be governed by public interest and importance based on the significance of these items of news in a democracy.

Ensuring neutrality

TV news channels must provide for neutrality by offering equality for all affected parties, players and actors in any dispute or conflict to present their point of view. Though neutrality does not always come down to giving equal space to all sides (news channels shall strive to give main view points of the main parties) news channels must strive to ensure that allegations are not portrayed as fact and charges are not conveyed as an act of guilt.

The program, further violates **Specific Guidelines Covering Reportage:**

2. Impartiality, Neutrality & Fairness

2.1 For balanced reportage, broadcasters should remain neutral and ensure that diverse views are covered in their reporting, especially on a controversial subject, without giving undue prominence to any particular view.

9. Racial & Religious Harmony

9.2 Caution should be exercised in reporting content which denigrates or is likely to offend the sensitivities of any racial or religious group or that may create religious intolerance or disharmony.

It is prayed that the NBSA take cognizance of the aforementioned violations and it is further prayed that the NBSA:

1. Direct Zee News to remove the program “DNA: Jammu में ज़मीन के 'इस्लामीकरण' का DNA टेस्ट” (DNA test of Islamic conversion of land in Jammu) from their website, from their YouTube channel and any other digital platform
2. Direct Zee News to issue a public apology on its channel for posting such hateful content and for hurting the sentiments of certain communities.
3. Direct Zee News to refrain from broadcasting or posting any such content which would contravene the tenets of our constitution which promotes harmony, dialogue and fraternity between all sections of Indians.
4. Direct Zee News to refrain from broadcasting or posting, in the future, any such content which would violate the Code of Ethics and other guidelines issued by the NBSA.
5. Direct Zee News to provide Proportionate Monetary Compensation to be awarded to a Citizen's Group like CJP battling the vicious politics of hatred.
6. Take any other punitive action that the Authority deems fit.

Declaration is made to the effect:

- that the facts stated in the complaint are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief ;
- that we have placed all relevant facts before the Authority and have not concealed any material facts ;
- that no proceedings are pending in any Court of law or other Tribunal or Statutory Authority in respect of the subject matter complained of before the Authority ; and
- that we shall inform the Authority forthwith if during the pendency of the inquiry before the Authority the matter alleged in the complaint becomes the subject matter of any proceedings in a Court of law or other Tribunal or Statutory Authority.

Sir we urge appropriate action from NBSA.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anil Dharker'.

Anil Dharker, President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Teesta Setalvad'.

Teesta Setalvad, Secretary