

**Decision dated 30.10.2018 regarding Letter dated 9.5.2018 from Under Secretary, MoI&B forwarding complaint dated 26.4.2018 of Mr. Tebasrwn Brahma against telecast of a programme on ABP News on 24.4.2018**

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**Complaint:**

Complainant stated that ABP News had aired a report on 24.4.2018 that the Army, SSB and Assam police launched a joint operation against NDFB(S) in Manash and Ripu reserve forest of Kokajhar. During the said report, the channel used the words “Bodo Ugrawadi”, which was objectionable. He stated that Bodos are an indigenous community residing in Assam from time immemorial; that several historians have observed that Bodos of Assam and Khasis of Meghalaya were the first settlers of the Northeast of India; that the Bodo community is the third largest Scheduled Tribe of India; and that use of the term “Bodo Ugrawadi” unjustifiably brands the entire community of Bodos as Ugrawadis and that had tarnished the image of Bodos. The complainant therefore seeks appropriate action against the channel.

**Response from Broadcaster :**

Broadcaster stated that the use of the word “Bodo” with the word “Ugrawadi” was unintentional and it was never their intention to brand or condemn any community or group. They stated that all that they meant to convey was that the militants belonged to a particular community and not that the entire community were militants.

NBSA at its meeting held on 11.7.2018 considered the complaint, response and also viewed the CD. NBSA was of the view that while reporting the news of joint operation, the broadcaster should have taken care to avoid referring or describing the perpetrators of any objectional act or crime, as belonging to any caste, community or religion. As there was an apparent violation, NBSA decided to issue a notice to the broadcaster to appear before the NBSA at its next meeting and also to inform the complainant to be present at the hearing.

Accordingly, both the parties have been called for a hearing on 30.10.2018

**Complainant** Mr. Tebasrwn Brahma was not present

**On behalf of ABP News Network Pvt. Ltd. [Channel: ABP News]**

Mr. Shambo Nandy, Advocate

Mr. Kishan Singh Rawat, Head – Admin & Regulatory Affairs

Mr. Puneesh Kochhar, Asst. Manager – Legal

The broadcaster reiterated that the use of the word “Bodo” was totally unintentional and it was not an attempt to condemn a group of people or community. What they meant was that the militant belonged to a particular community not that the entire community is at fault or iniquitous. The description was not meant to offend the Bodo community.

**Decision:**

NBSA considered the explanation and the circumstances in which the word “Bodo” were used with reference to their community. NBSA was satisfied that the description by the channel in context was not intended to associate the entire community of Bodos to ‘terror’. In the circumstances, it decided to close the matter subject to the broadcaster clarifying what was stated in writing.

Broadcaster was accordingly requested to submit in writing (on the letter head) to NBSA the circumstances in which the word “Bodo” were used with reference to their community. The description by the channel in context was not intended to associate the entire community of Bodos to ‘terror’. Thereafter, the matter will be closed on receipt of such letter and the MoI&B will be informed accordingly.

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