

Guidelines on Reportage of Cases of Sexual Assault

In the following Guidelines, the term “sexual assault”, in addition to any penal offenses prescribed in law, shall mean and include all forms of unwelcome sexually determined behaviour (whether directly or by implication) such as - (i) physical contact and advances, including eve-teasing and molestation; or (ii) a demand or request for sexual favours; or (iii) sexually coloured remarks; or (iv) showing pornography; or (v) acid attacks; or (vi) any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

1. News channels must bear in mind that news coverage of crime influences the mindset of the viewer and has a significant impact on the public perception of such crime.
2. In reporting on matters involving sexual assault, news channels are advised to carefully balance the survivor’s right to privacy and that of the survivor’s family with public interest.
3. News channels must ensure that no victim of sexual assault, violence, aggression, trauma or a witness to any such acts, is featured in any news report or program, relating to such victim, without concealing the identity of such person. In conformity with this principle any visuals shown of the victim must be completely morphed.
4. In reporting on cases of sexual assault on women, victims of child abuse and juvenile delinquents, to respect their privacy, the name, photograph and other details that may lead to disclosure of their identity or that of the family shall not be broadcast or divulged.
5. News channels must exercise sensitivity, discretion and sound judgment particularly in the following cases:
 - 5.1. when disclosure of details of the sexual assault would only serve to re-traumatize the survivor;
 - 5.2. when details of the sexual assault are needed to be disclosed to secure a safe environment;
- 6.. News channels must take special note of the provisions of Section 228A of the Indian Penal Code 1860 and of Section 21 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 which provide for protection of the identity of victims of sexual offences and of juveniles in conflict with the law.

Place : New Delhi

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