

ORDER

In the matter of complaint against the Programme 'Kalyana Veedu' telecast on Sun TV on 14/05/2019, 15/05/2019, 28/06/2019 and repeated thereafter

This Council has received complaints from viewers against the Tamil programme 'Kalyana Veedu' aired on Sun TV on 14/05/2019, 15/05/2019, 28/06/2019 at 7:30 PM and repeated thereafter.

- 1) The complaints stated that through this programme, a woman was shown ordering a group to have her sister gangraped in order to seek revenge.
- 2) The female antagonist, through her conversation with this group, says Surya, who complained to the police, should be made to cry and suffer.
- 3) The complaints stated that such conversation would encourage atrocities against women, especially when it comes to sorting out family issues.
- 4) The complaints also stated that such content shown on a channel watched by millions will give new ideas to the younger minds.

On examining the complaints and video clips, this Council *prima facie* found that the episodes violated

Theme-1 of IBF's Self-Regulatory Guidelines, which deals with 'Crime & Violence', and bars telecast of content that:

"Induce, incite, encourage, justify, reinforce or glorify violence or terror or its perpetrators or contain anything against the maintenance of law and order or promote anti-national attitudes."

"Present criminality as desirable and/or glamorous."

"Have a traumatic, desensitizing or dehumanizing effect that could lead to psychological disorders or unsocial attitudes or behaviour, particularly among minors."

Category-G (programmes for unrestricted viewing and/or under Parental guidance dealing with Theme-1 of Crime and Violence) states:

"Excessively explicit or gruesome crime or violence."

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"Excessively explicit portrayal of eccentric or abnormal behaviour or dangerous behaviour."

Theme-2 of IBF's Self-Regulating Guidelines, which deals with 'Sex, Obscenity and Nudity', and bars telecast of content that:

"Incite or encourage or induce viewers to obscene or indecent behaviour or breach of law."

Moreover, Sections 6 (1) (a) &(k) of the Programme Code states:

"No programme should be carried in the cable service which offends against good taste or decency."

"Denigrates women through the depiction in any manner of the figure of a women, her form or body or any part thereof in such a way as to have the effect of being indecent, or derogatory to women, or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals."

The Council, therefore, issued a Notice to the channel on 27th June 2019 in its 83rd meeting of BCCC with a direction to appear before it on 23/08/2019 in the 85th meeting of BCCC.

The Council also received a new complaint for the same programme's episode of 28/06/2019 and after viewing all the episodes, the Council decided to call the channel for a Hearing.

In its reply, the channel clarified that the programme 'Kalyana Veedu' is a fictional family-oriented serial which emphasises moral values and good ethics of the family and women. The impugned episodes 14/05/2019 and 15/05/2019 portray the evil nature of the villainous woman character. The channel says that all precautions were made to ensure that the dialogues telecast in the episode were not vulgar and obscene.

The channel also attached a letter from the production house M/s Thiru Pictures Private Limited, who have created/produced the programme and who stated that the complainant has not watched the series 'Kalyana Veedu' as a whole.

The reason cited for the rape scene was that it was meant to emphasise the virtue of human life based on the old Tamil adage 'keduvaankeduninaaippan', meaning one who thinks to do evil will become a victim of it. They added that the dialogues were not vulgar or obscene.

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The production house elaborated on the storyline and stated that Roja's elder sister is Soorya. Raja is interested in Soorya and wants to marry her. Roja intends to marry Raja but when she approaches Raja, he insults her by comparing her sister's chastity with hers. Roja has been shown to find ways to keep Soorya and Raja apart. Due to an earlier misdeed, which is against law, police are looking out for Roja. Soorya, her sister, helps police trace Roja and eventually she is arrested.

In the impugned episode, to extract her revenge from Soorya and to create a bad impression of her own sister and also to get Raja to avoid marrying Soorya, she sets some miscreants to rape her sister. The dialogues were based on her hatred, disgust and aversion for her sister. Roja gets entangled in her own wicked plan and gets raped by the same miscreants who she had hired. In its reply, the production house also mentioned that even though Roja is depicted as an evil character, she is a woman. So in the episode of 28/06/2019, the perpetrators face a fitting punishment.

The Council's Special Invitee, Ms Tara Murali, had transcribed certain objectionable dialogues for the benefit of the other Council members, which was also placed before the channel representatives and the production House who came for the Hearing.

Excerpts from the transcript are reproduced below:

Roja: Soorya who complained to the police should be made to cry and suffer. She must remember what happened to her everyday of her life and die of humiliation. That is what we must do to her.

Selvam: What must be done?

Roja: My elder sister must be gangraped. What you don't understand? A group must violate her sexually.

Roja: Yes Selvam, this must happen. Only then can some sense be put into Soorya. And also only then that foolish fellow Raja, who keeps her calling virtuous, will understand. Take all the three fellows and all of you do this.

In the subsequent episode:

Roja: Listen carefully. The girl you are going to rape is unmarried, a virgin. When you rape her, there should be no mercy or pity in your heart. You should not think that 'we are doing this to Roja Madam's sister, she who has paid us.' There should be no pity at all. However much she wails, there should be no pity, kindness or mercy. Do you understand?

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Roja: Soorya will act well. She will look innocent, childlike, but she is also a sly. She will beg for mercy. Don't fall for anything. Don't get carried away. After you finish the job, make a loud noise to wake up the town. Only then will everyone know what has happened. One more thing. While doing your job, you must ensure that there are visible marks on her face and neck. Most importantly, the news must reach Raja.

Selvam: My conscience was pricked only because there are four of us and it is so evil. I have asked several times if it is necessary and everytime you have said, yes. I have no qualms and so we will start the work. He then says that 'all that you suggested is going to happen to you.'

In the episode of 26/06/2019, the perpetrators of the crime against Roja were shown being attacked by the male protagonist Raja with a sickle. For the other collaborators, Raja is shown be pouring oil on their abdomen/groin area and he asks the victim to light a matchstick which she does. The Council felt that the depiction was reminiscent of 'vigilante justice' and the entire sequence was prolonged.

The Council pointed out to the channel's representatives that such depiction is not in keeping with any guideline and how could such conversation and depiction be allowed to be aired? How could a channel allow such ghastly and heinous act to be telecast for three different episodes and this is not the creativity that the channel should be proud of?

The representatives of the channel and production house apologised for their mistake and after speaking to their management, consented to agree/adhere and comply with the decision of the Council.

Having heard the representatives of the channel and the production house, and having examined the entire gamut of issues, the Council unanimously ORDERS the following:

- 1) To impose a consolidated FINANCIAL PENALTY of Rs 2,50,000 (Rs Two lakh fifty thousand) on SUN TV. The amount of the Financial Penalty shall be sent to the BCCC Secretariat through a cheque/pay order/demand draft drawn in the name of The Indian Broadcasting Foundation.**
- 2) The channel shall run a 30-second APOLOGY in Tamil at the start of every episode of 'Kalyana Veedu' for SIX CONSECUTIVE DAYS whenever the episodes are aired and whenever the episodes gets repeated. As agreed voluntarily by the representatives of the channel and the production house,**

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this APOLOGY shall be in the form of a pre-recorded VIDEO MESSAGE and will be aired from Monday 23rd September 2019 to Saturday 28th September 2019, stating in Tamil that in compliance of BCCC's decision on 23rd August 2019, the channel accepts its mistake for the episodes of 14/05/2019, 15/05/2019 and 28/06/2019. It shall be run right at the beginning of the programme.

The text of the APOLOGY shall be:

In compliance with BCCC's directive of 23 August 2019, SUN TV regrets the prolonged depiction of women's torture, including scenes of gang rape, in the episodes of 'Kalyana Veedu' on 14th and 15th May 2019 and the act of revenge shown in the episode of 28th June 2019. The channel accepts that the social messaging emanating out of the episodes was not constructive and such acts of atrocities committed on women should be condemned.

The channel is also directed to submit a COMPLIANCE REPORT with original clips of the APOLOGY run by it to the BCCC Secretariat on or before 7th October 2019.

For & on behalf of:

Broadcasting Content Complaints Council

Justice Vikramajit Sen (Retd.)
Chairperson



10/09/2019
New Delhi