

Content Regulation on violence against women – a must practice in journalism



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Syed Miraz Ahmed 23 July 2012 Updated 12 Feb 9416 views

The recent broadcast of mob violence against a women-member of Assam Legislative Assembly and a teenager by News Live and other television news channels gives rise to a question. How were the contents passed off by the editors?

These harrowing incidents were not the only of its kind. The 2007 molestation of an [Adivasi](#) teenager is a well documented history, never to be forgotten. The electronic media is on a free run much like those in the jungles in the name of armed conflict. The competition is who can unearth how much of violence and broadcast how much of it and how fast; not how ethically.

Are the editors of these television news channels aware that senior editorial control must be exercised for selecting material in relation to telecast of violent events, accidents and natural calamities, in addition to examination by the Content Auditor? Any scene, clipping, footage depicting excessive violence, nudity, obscenity and vulgarity that is not suitable of viewing by children and in family setting must be avoided.

The usage of non-judgemental language and the modest use of graphic detail go hand in hand. All depends on how sound the [journalist](#) is. According to the International Federation of [Journalists](#)'s Guidelines for Reporting on [Violence Against Women](#), the language of reporting should avoid suggestions that the survivors may be to blame, or were otherwise responsible for the attack or acts of violence against them. People who suffer in an ordeal will not wish to be described as a 'victim' unless they use the word themselves. The use of labels can be harmful. A term that more accurately describes the reality of a person who has suffered in this way is 'survivor.'

Does the electronic media of Assam identify violence against women accurately through the internationally accepted definition in the 1993

UN Declaration on the Elimination of [Violence Against Women](#)?

The audience at the receiving end is subjected to moolah-raking news. Fed on daily doses of varying types of sensationalism, the viewer's mentalscape is grossly invaded. To [stop](#) this viewers can file a legal complaint against incompatible content beamed by a news cast.

The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act 1995 is a basic framework to regulate the operations of cable television broadcast across the Indian Territory. According to Chapter II of this act, channels on [TV](#) and radio are bound to adhere to advertising and programme codes prescribed by the law. Non-adherence to the standard codes can [lead](#) to legal proceedings under the Criminal Procedure Code.

The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act was amended in 2000 and 2002 to include new developments in broadcast media, such as direct-to-home services. Apart from that, The Cinematographic Act, 1952, also gives powers to government nodal agencies to regulate content in films and video productions.

Likewise the Electronic Media Monitoring Center was set up under the guidance of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in 2007 to check violation of content and advertising guidelines by private television channels and radio stations. It works as a nodal agency to facilitate consumer complaints against broadcast media. An online complaint can be filed at <http://emmc.gov.in/> which after verification is forwarded to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for action. Violations under which complaints are entertained are: Child Abuse, Child Marriage, Violence against Women, Contains anything obscene or nudity, Superstition, Half truth, Communal speech, Promote communal violence, Provocative statements, Drugs, alcohol and solvent abuse, Sexual conduct, Coarse and [offensive](#) language, Imitative behavior,

Impartial reports, Contains criticism of friendly countries, Against any law and order, Bad language or explicit scene of violence and Attack on any particular religion.

Private entity News Broadcaster Association (NBA) is another agency which entertains consumer complaints against unlawful reporting. It is an industry consortium for news broadcast channels that aims to promote self-regulation in news reporting.

Issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Self-Regulation Guidelines for the Broadcasting Sector (Draft 2008) is a regulatory guideline television news channels are expected to abide with. Since Freedom of Press comes under Article 19 of the [Constitution of India](#), the government is free to impose restrictions on grounds specified in Clause (2) of Article 19.

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