



Extraordinary Together

Via- Email

“WITHOUT PREJUDICE”

23.08.2018

To,  
Mr. Anil Dharker, President  
The Citizen for Justice and Peace (CJP)  
Nirant, Juhu Tara Road, Juhu, Santacruz (West),  
Mumbai-400049 Maharashtra  
Email: [info@cpi.org.in](mailto:info@cpi.org.in)

**Re: YOUR COMPLAINT DATED 24.07.2018 TO THE NEWS BROADCASTING  
STANDARDS AUTHORITY FORWARDED TO ZMCL ON 02.08.2018**

Dear Sir,

Zee Media Corporation Limited (ZMCL) is in receipt of an e-mail dated 02.08.2018 from the Hon'ble News Broadcasting Standards Authority along with the complaint dated 24.07.2018 (hereinafter referred to as “Complaint”) filed by you inter alia, that the ZEE NEWS on 08.07.2018, had allegedly broadcasted a programme on “Kya Kehta hai India”. We are surprised to read the contents of your complaint, which contains no truth and are devoid of any fact and specific allegations.

1. That, ZMCL is nation's foremost media company and has been disseminating news worthy content for close to two decades. That Zee News, the channel under the spotlight is owned by ZMCL is a prominent and leading Hindi news channel and is known for its ethical and unbiased reporting. At the outset, ZMCL denies all the averments made by your good-self in the Complaint except those which are specifically admitted herein below.
2. At the outset it is vehemently denied that programme in question attempted to foster disharmony, hatred and incite violence. Your Complaint contains no truth

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An **Essel** Enterprise  
GROUP


and is devoid of any fact and specific allegations and, however we would like to respond to your notice without prejudice to any rights of ZMCL.

3. That the broadcaster is entitled for right to the Freedom of Speech and Expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) and also provide a platform to eminent persons for expression of their views. The Freedom of Speech and Expression is the basic pillar of any democracy and is extremely critical and vital for its smooth functioning. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in various pronouncements has held that right to speech and expression is sacrosanct and need not be interfered ordinarily.
4. The programme in question provided platform to eminent and acclaimed Hindi poets, wherein they presented their views on nationalism, issue of Kashmir, anti-India sentiments being spread by Separatists, serious problems being faced by Army personnel in discharging their duties, obstacles created by stone pelters to affect the Army operations, in poetic manner. The issues dealt with by the poets were not artificial but are indeed being faced by Army personnel in their day to day affairs. The contents of the complaint apparently give an impression that expressing views on nationalism and speaking against the stone pelters and separatists, who are working against the interest of India and posing serious threat to national security is vice. It is significant to mention here that these poets have not expressed their views first time but are doing the same continuously at public platforms.

#### **REPLY ON MERITS**

5. The content of the said program was based on the events of 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016 wherein border skirmishes between India and Pakistan began following reported "surgical strikes" by India against militant launch pads across the Line of Control in Pakistani-Occupied Kashmir. The Indian operation was said to be in retaliation for a militant attack on the Indian army at Uri on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2016 in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, that left 19 soldiers of the Indian Army martyred and had caused severe damage on Terrorist outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba(LeT).

6. The said “Surgical Strike” by the Indian Army was highly politicised wherein several politicians and the representative of the people had questioned the authenticity and the said brave act of the Indian army. It was disturbing to see that instead of lauding the valour and bravery of our soldiers the politicians had stooped low by calling the same “*farzical strike*” just to gain some political mileage and had questioned the credibility of the Indian Army. In response to the same the government had released the footage of the said covert surgical strike to the public to laud our brave soldiers. The said program was intended to be on nationalism and shower praises to our brave hearts. It is highly unfortunate that instead of going into the content and the intention of the broadcasted program your Complaint is based on some selective lines and stanzas picked up at your own convenience and an attempt at your behalf to distort the facts and giving it a coloured and communal tint.
7. That, in your complaint you have targeted our panelist of poets wherein they had expressed their anguish and view on the stone pelters protesting the killing of five Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists in an encounter in Shopian and killed a 22-year-old tourist from Tamil Nadu. We would like to share the fact that a leading Indian Magazine, India Today had conducting an investigative operation in the Valley, has reported that some stone-pelters are paid for protesting by separatist forces. India Today interviewed five protesters from Baramulla district who confessed on camera that they are paid an amount of Rs 5,000-Rs 7,000 a month and are also provided with clothes and shoes. One of them also said that separate funds are given for making petrol bombs. They refused to disclose the identity of the financiers.<sup>1</sup>
8. We are shocked to see the contents of your complaint wherein you have targeted poets who have orated poems on the valor of our soldiers and praised motherland India. It is unfortunate that in your complaint by picking up selective lines and stanza of the poets you have tried to give it a communal tint and have insulted the




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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/jammu-and-kashmir-stone-pelters-hizbul-mujahideen-burhan-wani-968402-2017-03-29>

feeling of nationalism of these poets. It is unfortunate that in your complaint you have not even spared an innocent and young boy painted him in the same communal color in your complaint just because he orated a poem praising our soldiers and comparing them to mythological character and story. The said poets have expressed their views and opinions and have the Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression which is enjoyed by each and every citizen. Nowhere in the said program any community was insulted or demeaned but your selective choice of paragraphs and stanza is a feeble attempt to give it a communal tint and paint the panelist and poets in a bad light.

9. It is unfortunate that you have gone ahead and tried to malign a respectable and responsible news channel by stating that “*a communal hate and violence was propagated from a platform provided by Zee News*” which is simply motivated and devoid of any merits at all and the contents mentioned in the complaint are false and defamatory in nature. Notwithstanding this, we categorically state that the contents of the said news programme was not instigate and target marginalized community or create communal disharmony, as alleged. The intention of the program is to showcase and celebrate the valor of our soldiers by poems and proses by reputed poets.

10. However, Zee News takes exception to your contents of your complaint, whereby you preferred to falsely accuse Zee News of dividing the society on communal lines and instigation communal tension. Zee News has always stood for brotherhood and harmony among people and thus levelling such false accusations, raises serious questions over your intention. Zee News never endorses division in the society and always believe in neutral and fair reporting unaffected and unbiased by any caste/religion/colour or anything which divides human beings across globe. That all the accusations levelled against Zee News are denied vehemently.



11. It is reiterated that all channels owned and managed by ZMCL, including Zee News are responsible channels and take due care and caution while broadcasting

any news. ZMCL has always abided by journalistic principles of fair, objective and neutral reporting and conforms to all guidelines provided under law and NBSA 'Code of Ethics and Broadcasting Standards'.

12. In view of the aforementioned, it is stated that ZMCL has abided by the principles of news reporting, broadcasting and journalistic norms and the Complaint has failed to establish any deviations therefrom by ZMCL. Thus, the Complaint ought to be dismissed at the outset. However, if NBSA wishes to proceed with the matter further we request that an opportunity of personal hearing be accorded to ZMCL.

This reply is without prejudice to rights and contentions of the ZMCL.

Thanking you



Prasanna Raghav

For Zee Media Corporation Limited

Copy to: News Broadcasting Standards Authority