



Censorship of Web series – Pros & Cons

Description

The Bombay HC has issued notice to the I&B Ministry, Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Law and Justice, Ministry of Home Affairs and the Nagpur police commissioner and asked for their response, in regard to the PIL filed by Divya Ganeshprasad Gontia. The court has advised setting up of a pre-screening committee to regulate the movies and shows which are released directly on online platforms like Netflix & Hotstar. Thus it is clear that censorship for web series and content on digital medium is very much on the cards.

But online platforms like Netflix, Hotstar, AltBalaji, SonyLiv and others have signed self-censorship code, which prohibits signatories from showing any content that has been banned by Indian Courts. Amazon Prime Video, the streaming service of e-commerce giant has kept out of the code stating that the existing laws are adequate.

While the decision of probable censorship has aroused a mixed reaction on social media by Indian film industry and the general public, it is important to understand the pros and cons that would come along.

Pros :-

- Due to the advantage of wide reach, the web series and content on digital media is easily accessible to all. Children are at major disadvantage when they view content that is related to violence, strong language and sex.
- In the past years people have filed legal complaints regarding the harsh content on digital platform and arguing for censorship on series and movies released on internet that have the potential to create bad influence.
- The Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has reported that the casual usage of sex and crass language in such web series is a bait to attract the audience. This raises a question if the online entertainment industry should be kept law free and what affects this would have on children.

- Some people feel worried about the increasing foreign culture influence that web series and movies promote censorship will control this to some extent.

Cons :-

- Producer Ritesh Sidhwani, who has produced series like “Inside Edge” and “Mirzapur”, believes that censorship will hamper the originality of the story. He said it the responsibility of the makers to take care of the content and depict only the reality.
- People feel that by making the web series industry regulated the lawmakers will only be covering up for a reality that is widely evident in certain states.
- The censorship norm is being criticised as people feel that it is curbing the freedom and creativity of Indian filmmakers, who are anyways at a disadvantaged position due to constraints on movie content.
- People also feel that rather than censoring the content, it is more important to pay attention to the ratings that are provided. Moreover it is the responsibility of the audience to perceive the content in a respected manner.

Conclusion :-

It can definitely not be denied that streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime provide wide reach and help the Indian filmmakers in displaying their real creativity. But the concerns regarding content showing nudity, or engaging in violence stand valid too. Thus self-censorship appears as a good solution.

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Your Turn...

Do you think web series should be censored? Express your thoughts in the comment section below. Subscribe to our blog to read answers to trending GD topics.

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