

Ban on adult movies unjustified: Sharmila

New Delhi - Veteran actor and censor board chief Sharmila Tagore says she is opposed to a blanket ban on the screening of adult movies on television, and instead favours a specified time slot when such films can be telecast.

'Nowhere in the world does this (a ban) happen. There's a time for adult films...a specified time is necessary for adult viewing...that would be a practical and reasonable solution. After all, there are many adult films that are relevant and adults would like to see them in the comfort of their own homes...I feel that's a reasonable compromise. I'm in favour of it,' said the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) head.

Such films 'could safely be shown' between 11.00 p.m. and 4.00 a.m. 'because during those hours, parents should assume the responsibility of ensuring their children are not watching television' she told CNN-IBN Devil's Advocate show, to be broadcast Sunday.

Tagore said she is seeking an 'X' category rating to permit adult films in their entirety without censoring or deleting.

She also termed as 'a very bad precedent', the statements of Information and Broadcasting Minister Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi on the controversial film 'The Da Vinci Code', saying she had raised the matter with the minister, who had assured her 'it will not be repeated'. Dasmunsi had directed the CBFC not to clear the Ron Howard-directed film till the ministry had seen it in view of objections raised by a section of the Christian clergy.

According to Tagore, under her the CBFC has no problems with clearing scenes of kissing on screen but opposed proposals by her predecessor to clear pornographic films.

She also called upon the people - particularly organisations who protest on behalf of their communities - to be more tolerant and understanding and to learn to laugh at themselves rather than take offence quickly.

Elaborating on her arguments for a specific TV time slot for adult fare, Tagore mentioned Hindi film 'Omkaara', in which her son Saif Ali Khan has acted.

'Obviously adult material should not be shown to children. That's the main thing. And I don't think children should be exposed to films like 'Omkaara' for instance. We've certified it as 'A' and it's going to be exhibited in halls where we can restrict the audience to an adult audience for an adult film, whereas on television if a film like this is shown, children will be able to see it and we don't want that.'

Speaking about her decision to refer Aamir Khan starrer 'Rang De Basanti' to the Indian Air Force (IAF) before clearing the film and whether this undermined the autonomy and the authority of the CBFC, Tagore described this as a matter of strategy.

'My objective is to achieve my goal. How I do it is my own strategy... I've seen a film is released and then it runs into problems like 'Rising' did. Somebody brings a PIL (public suit), somebody brings a protest and the film is withdrawn from the theatres. That causes a producer far more anxiety and

problems because the film then doesn't pick up....

'It was very positive and we took them (the IAF) along with us,' she maintained.

On the issue of adult films with explicit language or explicit scenes, Tagore was very clear that these could be released in their entirety without censoring or deleting - unde

r certain circumstances.

'There are more and more adult subjects with explicit language or explicit scenes ... Yes, I feel there should be a category for such films so that instead of cutting it, censoring it or deleting a few scenes we can show it in its entirety.'

Tagore maintained that whilst the CBFC under her had no qualms about clearing kissing, provided it was aesthetically pleasing, she would not endorse predecessor Vijay Anand's proposal to permit pornographic films.

'Coming from our point of view, we've allowed a kiss if you feel it's aesthetically pleasing, relevant to the subject and not just a titillating scene ... It now depends on the producers and actors how awkward they are or how free they are. But kissing is allowed.'

As for Anand's proposal, she put her foot down: 'No. I wouldn't endorse that. I don't think society or the Indian people are ready for it. There's a cultural difference between India and the rest of the world.'

(© IANS / India eNews)