

## Inflammatory Journalism

### Why in news?

Supreme Court has questioned the central government on its measures to curb the communally slanted television coverage.

### What is the case about?

- There was communal colour (hate against Muslims) given by some TV channels to the incident of large clusters of COVID-19 infections among those who attended a **Tablighi Jamaat** event in New Delhi.
- So the Supreme Court's is keen to know what action has the government taken under the **Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act** against offending broadcasters.
- The Court also warned that if the government fails to explain its mechanism to deal with the problem, it would create one on its own.

### What is the stand of Central government?

- It stated that media coverage struck a balanced and neutral perspective.
- It is committed to media freedom.

### What Supreme Court's rationale?

- SC is unconvinced with the present mechanism of self-regulation under the **National Broadcasting Standards Authority**.
- The government is empowered under the Act to prohibit transmission of programmes that violate the **programme or advertising codes (Section 19)** and even an entire channel, in public interest (Section 20).
- Though the violations of norms are common but there is a class of violation of norms in broadcasting that needs to be curbed.
- In the past, channels have been asked by the I&B Ministry to take some programmes off the air.
- In the **Sudarshan News case**, which began a series that propagated hate against Muslims.
- The government has merely administered a 'caution' to the channel and asked it to moderate the content of future episodes and avoid breaching the Programme Code.
- Later the court ordered the suspension of further episodes & it distinguished

between free speech and hate speech.

### **What are the key takeaways?**

- The court is involving in the process of judicial overreach in recent times.
- Its intention to create a mechanism on its own to deal with will set a wrong precedence.

**Source: The Hindu**

