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Govt didn't interfere in Prasar functioning, but cast a "shadow", says Jawhar Sircar

The CEO said he had no say in "news control" at Doordarshan.

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By: **Express News Service** | New Delhi | Updated: May 6, 2014 9:12 am



Prasar Bharati CEO Jawhar Sircar on Monday launched an extraordinary attack on the way his organisation is run, and said it was possible he would not have accepted the job had he known more about it.

Sircar, who has been forced to explain the editing of a Doordarshan interview with [Narendra Modi](#) from which bits about Priyanka Vadra and [Sonia Gandhi](#)'s close aide Ahmed Patel were left out, compared the "issue of autonomy" of Prasar to a child stricken by polio.

He said the government did not "interfere" with the running of the public broadcaster, but cast a "shadow" over its functioning, which was "enough".

"Frankly, if I knew half of it, I would not have taken up the job," Sircar said at the Idea Exchange at [The Indian Express](#) when asked how much he knew of what he would have to face when he started out at Prasar Bharati.

"If I knew that 25-30 years there would be no promotions (for Doordarshan staff) and I had to look at these faces, if I knew there would be no recruitment for 20 years... Every station (that) I go to, the first one hour you explain to the employees that something is happening. If I knew that this amount of recall would come on every good proposal from my own colleagues, I may not have taken it up," Sircar said.

The independence of Prasar, which is a statutory autonomous body established under the Prasar Bharati Act, was a "polio child", Sircar said. "From birth, it has been afflicted with polio. The Act was passed in 1990... two sections stand out like sore thumbs... two sections spoil the whole Act by saying you have autonomy, but please come back to me with my car at 7... You have autonomy, but please take a chaperone and go..."

The CEO said he had no say in "news control" at Doordarshan. "One glaring anomaly in our functioning is that news is given to us by the Act. But the operation part of news, that is the news control, vests with the Government of India. They appoint, they disappoint, they transfer, they post, and we learn it from the newspaper that somebody has been posted there... I have no say altogether. I have tried desperately with my colleagues to have a say..." he said.

ultimately somebody who controls your destiny may not look upon it well, is good enough to cast a shadow,” he said.

Sircar said it would have been “more appropriate” for the public broadcaster to have telecast the whole interview with Modi, rather than editing out key portions — especially since it knew someone else had a copy.

“In this very charged atmosphere of this election, it may have been more appropriate to have the whole thing out since you took it out... And since you knew that somebody had a copy,” he said.

Sircar added that one expected a “certain degree of clinical approach” and “balancing approach” from the public broadcaster.

He said that Prasar had sought legal opinion on whether the editing of the interview should be subjected to a formal inquiry. “If an inquiry is done, we have actually sought legal opinion... If it doesn’t lead to the end of it, why open up another wound?” he said.

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