

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO: 2975

ANSWERED ON: 04.01.2018

Suspension of Newspapers from Receiving Advertisements

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LAKHAN LAL SAHU

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Will the Minister of

INFORMATION AND
BROADCASTING

be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether the Government has suspended 51 newspapers from receiving Government advertisements and if so, the details thereof along with the reasons therefor;
- (b) the data as to number of dailies/media representatives against which action has been taken by the Government on the charges of "paid news" and breaching "the norms of journalistic ethics" during the last three years;
- (c) whether the private news media and multi-social media are broadcasting fake news these days;
- (d) if so, the number of such cases brought into the notice of the Government during the last three years and the current year and the action taken by the Government against the persons found guilty as well as TV channels to multi-social media;
- (e) whether the Government has evolved any mechanism to weed out fake news spread through electronic, print and social media and if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the steps taken by the Government to have a comprehensive mechanism, uniform, guidelines, regulation and policy regarding restriction of fabricated content/fake news on electronic, print and social media?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING {COL RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (Retd.)}

(a) & (b) The complaints regarding breach of 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' and paid news in respect of newspapers are examined by Press Council of India (PCI). After examining such complaints, PCI has censured 61 newspapers for violation of these norms, during last three years. This includes 51 newspapers which were censured by PCI in 2017, which were accordingly suspended from DAVP empanelment on 13.09.2017 for two months.

(c) & (d) Instances of circulation of fake news on social media and private TV channels come to the notice of Government from time to time.

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Instances of inflammatory, harmful and hateful content on social networking sites is brought to the notice of Government by Security/ Intelligence Agencies and action in such cases is taken under the provisions of Information Technology Act, 2000 in the overall interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defense of India, Security of state, friendly relation with foreign countries or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence in such matters. On case to case basis, social media platform are approached for removal of specific objectionable content coming to the notice of Government. However, the data regarding incidences on fake news/rumors on social media and action taken thereon are not maintained centrally and are available with security agencies of the State Governments.

In so far as Private Satellite TV Channels are concerned, the cases of broadcast of fake news are dealt under the provisions of Rule 6(1)(d) of the Programme Codes under Rule 6 of the 'Cable Television Network Rules, 1994' which provides that no programme should be carried in the Cable service which contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half truths. In this regard, six cases have been brought into the notice of the Government during the last three years and the current year for violating the Programme Code by Private Satellite News Channels. These channels have been issued advisory / warned or issued orders directing to run apology scroll or prohibit the transmission / re-transmission of the channel for one day.

(e) & (f) There exists a comprehensive mechanism for regulation of content in Print, Electronic and Social Media to address the problem of fake news, briefly details as follows:-

? For regulation of content in Print Media, Press Council of India (PCI) has laid down 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct', to be adhered to by Print Media as a self-regulatory mechanism. Action on complaints of printing of fake news in newspapers is taken by PCI as per the provisions of Press Council Act, 1978.

? Similarly for Electronic Media content is regulated as per the provisions of Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Cable Television Network Rules, 1994. Besides there is a self-regulation mechanism for TV news channels through News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA) of News Broadcasters Association (NBA) and Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC) of Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF). NBA monitors its member TV channels for broadcasting fake news. Besides this, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has set up Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) to monitor the content of private TV channels with reference to the violation of Programme Code. An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) has also been set up to look into specific complaints regarding violation of the programme code by private TV channels.

For regulation of content on social media, Information Technology Act, 2000 has a provision for removal of objectionable online content. Also the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2011 under Section 79 of the IT Act requires that the Intermediaries shall observe due diligence while discharging their duties and shall inform the users of computer resources not to host, display, upload, modify, publish, transmit, update or share any information that is harmful, objectionable, affect minors and unlawful in any way.
