

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING**  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-1825**  
**ANSWERED ON-12.03.2018**  
Guidelines to curb fake news

1825 Shri Derek O'Brien

- (a) whether there has been an increase in consumption of fake news in the country;
- (b) whether Government has taken measures to curb the spread of false content or fake news, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether Government plans to draft a policy regarding guidelines to detect fake news or hold the content generators responsible for spreading fake news, if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (c): Instances of circulation of fake news on social media, print media and private TV channels come to the notice of Government from time to time.

In pursuance of its policy to uphold the freedom of press, the Government does not interfere in the functioning of newspaper industry. However, the Press Council of India, a statutory autonomous body has been set up under the Press Council Act, 1978 with twin objectives to preserve the freedom of the Press and to maintain and improve the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India. In order to inculcate principles of self-regulation amongst the press, the Council under section 13(2) of the Act, has framed "Norms of Journalistic Conduct" for adherence by the media. These norms cover principles and ethics of journalism and also the guidelines for news reporting. Norm 1 and Norm 2 of the "Norms of Journalistic Conduct" prescribe guidelines for "Accuracy and Fairness" and "Pre – Publication Verification" respectively. Norms of Journalistic Conduct is available at <http://presscouncil.nic.in>.

The complaints of content in print media which are violative of the ethical norms of journalism, public taste or professional conduct are adjudicated by the Council in exercise of its powers provided under section 14 of the Act. As per section 14 of the Act read with Press Council (Procedure of Inquiry) Regulations, 1979, the Council, after holding an inquiry, may warn, admonish or censure the newspaper, the news agency, the editor or the journalist or disapprove the conduct of the editor or the journalist as the case may be.

Besides, the content in Electronic Media is regulated as per the provisions of Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Cable Television Network Rules, 1994. 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, 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.

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.

Furthermore, there is provision under Information Technology Act, 2000, administered by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, for removal of objectionable online content for regulation of content on social media. 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. On case to case basis, social media platform are approached for removal of specific objectionable content coming to the notice of Government.

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