

AS INTRODUCED IN LOK SABHA

Bill No. 104 of 2019

THE PRESS COUNCIL (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019

By

SHRI GOPAL CHINAYYA SHETTY, M.P.

A

BILL

further to amend the Press Council Act, 1978.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventieth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the Press Council (Amendment) Act, 2019.

Short title and commencement.

(2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

37 of 1978.

2. In section 14 of the Press Council Act, 1978, in sub-section (1), after the existing proviso, the following proviso shall be inserted, namely:—

Amendment of section 14.

"Provided further that if a journalist is found guilty of distorting the facts or spreading fake news, his accreditation as journalist shall be cancelled with immediate effect.".

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

Media is a vital part of the Democratic System in India and considered as a fourth pillar of democracy. The persons associated with journalism are considered very respectable and intellectual who are expected to bring truth before the society.

There is no doubt that the Press acts as a mediator between the public and the Government. The Press communicates the Government's activities to the masses and the public activities and expectations to the Government so that the facts of an incident are revealed.

Journalism has not achieved the prominent place in democracy on its own but the society has given it this prominence keeping the importance of responsibilities of journalism towards social causes. Democracy is empowered if journalism keeps playing its positive role towards social causes and put forth the right facts/news before the society.

But it has often been observed that there are certain shortcomings in Indian Press System while playing its role and some journalists have nothing to do with real journalism. The objective of a meaningful journalism is that it should play an important role between the administration and the society. It should not mislead the citizens of the country through yellow journalism, that means, by distorting facts or publishing fake news.

Therefore, the need is to bring an amendment in the Press Council Act, 1978 with a view to ensure that a Journalist does not involve in distorting the facts or spreading fake news while reporting or bringing any material before the society.

Hence this Bill.

NEW DELHI;
June 11, 2019.

GOPAL CHINAYYA SHETTY

ANNEXURE

EXTRACT FROM THE PRESS COUNCIL ACT, 1978

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14.(I) Where, on receipt of a complaint made to it or otherwise, the Council has reason to believe that a newspaper or news agency has offended against the standards of journalistic ethics or public taste or that an editor or working journalist has committed any professional misconduct, the Council may, after giving the newspaper, or news agency, the editor or journalist concerned an opportunity of being heard, hold an inquiry in such manner as may be provided by regulations made under this Act and, if it is satisfied that it is necessary so to do, it may, for reasons to be recorded in writing, 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:

Power to
censure.

Provided that the Council may not take cognizance of a complaint if in the opinion of the Chairman, there is no sufficient ground for holding an inquiry.

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(*Shri Gopal Chinayya Shetty, M.P.*)