

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING**

**RAJYA SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1509  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.12.2018**

**STING OPERATION BY COBRA ON PAID NEWS**

**1509. SHRI AMAR SINGH:**

**Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether Government is aware that sting operations conducted by Cobra Post, highlight the prevising Phenomena of paid news in media and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the sting operation had drawn attention to the report of sub-committee of Press Council of India title "Paid News: How Corruption in the Indian Media underlines democracy" and if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) whether Government has taken action on the said report and if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) : The Government is aware of phenomena of paid news in media. Paid News has also been an item of discussion in Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology and also in Press Council of India. Press Council of India is a statutory body which deals with instances of paid news reported to it. The Election Commission of India examines all the suspected cases of Paid News in connection with elections through its Media Certification and Monitoring Committees (MCMC) constituted at district level and state level throughout the country.

(b) The PCI, in view of the wide ramifications of the issue of paid news, had constituted a sub-committee which released its 'Report on Paid News' in 2010 *inter alia* recommending that Representation of the People Act, 1951, be amended to make incidence of paid news a punishable electoral malpractice.

(c) The Government of India is seized of the matter and the Law Commission had in 2015 made recommendation for appropriate amendments in the Representation of the People Act, 1951 to address the issue of paid news.

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