GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1506
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02-08-2021

REGULATION OF FAKE SOCIAL PLATFORMS

1506 SHRI SATISH CHANDRA DUBEY:

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

(a) the steps taken by Government to curb and regulate fake social media platforms, news and misinformation; and
(b) the measures adopted by Government to prohibit the misuse of social media and to curb and remove illegal content in election campaigns?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING; AND MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR)

(a) Government has statutory and institutionalized mechanism in place to tackle fake news including the following:

i) **For Print Media, Press Council of India has framed 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' under the Press Council Act, 1978.**

ii) **For Television, the Programme Code under Section 5 of the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995. This Ministry issues advisories from time to time to private satellite TV channels for adherence of the**

Programme Code under the Cable TV Network (Regulation) Act, 1995.

iii) For Social Media and Digital News Publishers, the Government has notified Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 under the provision of IT Act, 2000, which inter alia provides for due diligence by intermediaries, including social media intermediaries, and for a Code of Ethics for adherence by digital news publishers.

A Fact Check Unit has been set up under Press Information Bureau of this Ministry in November, 2019. This Unit takes cognizance of fake news both *suo-motu* and by way of queries sent by citizens on its portal or through e-mail and whatsapp. The Unit responds to the relevant queries with correct information when the same pertains to Central Government or forwards them to States/ UTs in other cases.

(b) The Election Commission of India has taken various steps and issued guidelines from time to time as follows:

i) The Commission issues a Press Note in all the general elections, incorporating guidelines issued by the Press

Council of India, News Broadcasters Association and Voluntary Code of Ethics to be observed by print, electronic and social media during election.

ii) **The Commission has a set of comprehensive guidelines dated 27th August, 2012 regarding constitution of District level and State level Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC), which includes a Social Media Expert to monitor any election related violation on Social Media.**

iii) **The Commission appoints Social Media Nodal Officer at ECI level for coordinating with Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) and Social Media intermediary platforms during elections.**

iv) **Model Code of Conduct is applicable to content on internet including social media.**

v) **Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) in consultation with Election Commission has implemented a set of 'Voluntary Code of Ethics' during Lok Sabha Election 2019 and all Legislative Assembly Elections held after that.**

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