

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING**

**RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *176**

TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.12.2022

REGULATION FOR DIGITAL NEWS PORTALS

***176. DR. DHARMASTHALA VEERENDRA HEGGADE:**

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

(a) whether digital news media in the country will be regulated and can face action for “violations” under an amended law that Government plans to bring, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government proposes to bring digital news portals at par with newspapers, if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether digital news publishers have to apply for registration within 90 days of the law coming into effect;

(d) whether the journalists associated with digital media will also be accredited; and

(e) whether Government also proposes to simplify the process of registration of newspapers, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING; AND MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS

(SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR):

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO *176 FOR ANSWER ON 22.12.2022

(a) to (c): The Government has notified Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rule, 2021 under the Information Technology Act, 2000 on 25th February, 2021 which inter-alia provides for adherence to a Code of Ethics by publishers of news and current affairs on digital media and publishers of online curated content (OTT Platforms). Code of Ethics for publishers of news and current affairs on digital media includes the (i) Norms of Journalistic Conduct of the Press Council of India, (ii) Programme Code under Cable Television Networks Regulation Act, 1995 and (iii) not publish or transmit content which is prohibited under any law for the time being in force.

The Rules also provide for a three-level Grievance Redressal Mechanism to address complaints/grievances relating to violation by digital news publishers of the Code of Ethics and taking action thereupon.

There is no requirement for registration by the digital news publishers. Under IT Rules, 2021 they have to furnish information in specified format to the Ministry for communication and coordination purposes.

(d) The Central Media Accreditation Guidelines, 2022 inter alia provides for accreditation of journalists of digital news publishers.

(e) : The office of Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI) has taken several initiatives for streamlining the process of registration and title allotment for newspapers, including steps for rolling out an Automation Project of RNI enabling automated title verification and registration, a special drive to bring down the pendency of applications, identification of inactive titles and defunct publications, establishment of a dedicated enquiry and facilitation cell, placing explainer videos on title verification and registration on its website and YouTube platforms, and enabling physical and online meetings of publishers for addressing queries and grievances of applicants, etc.
