

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 248
(TO BE ANSWERED ON 08.12.2022)

MEDIA OWNERSHIP BY POLITICAL PARTIES

248. SHRI G.V.L. NARASIMHA RAO:

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

- a) whether there are any regulations that restrict direct print, television ownership by political parties, if so, the details thereof;
- b) whether the Ministry is aware that a number of regional political parties indirectly own and/or operate newspapers and TV channels;
- c) whether the Ministry has received such complaints;
- d) the manner in which such complaints are dealt with;
- e) whether the media ownership by political parties vitiate democratic process;
- f) the restrictions exist in developed countries on media ownership by political parties; and
- g) whether Ministry undertake any steps to curb control of political parties over newspapers and TV channels?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING; AND MINISTER OF
YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS
{SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR}**

- (a) :** Print Media is regulated by Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867. No regulation regarding ownership of print publications by political parties have been contemplated under this Act. As for ownership of TV Channels, the permission is granted under the Guidelines for Uplinking and Downlinking of Satellite Television Channels in India, 2022 to only Indian companies/ Limited Liability Partnerships (LLP).
- (b) to (g) :** The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting does not establish indirect ownership of the newspapers and TV channels by the political parties at the time of grant of permission to uplink and downlink a TV channel or registration of print media. However, to maintain and improve the standards of newspapers and news agencies i.e. print media in India and also to inculcate principles of self-regulation among the press, the Press Council of India(PCI), a statutory autonomous body, has been setup under the Press Council Act, 1978. In furtherance of its objectives, the Council, under Section 13(2)(b) of the Press Council Act, 1978, 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 on various specific issues.

The council takes cognizance, suo-moto or on complaint, of the contents in print media which are in violation of the 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct'. As per section 14 of the Act, 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.

The content of the TV Channels is regulated as per the provisions of the Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act, 1994 and the rules framed thereunder.

The Rules provide that in order to ensure observance and adherence to the Programme Code and the Advertising Code by the broadcaster and to address the grievance or complaint, if any, relating thereto, there shall be a three-level structure (complaint redressal structure) as under:

Level I - A self-regulation by broadcasters;

Level II - Self-regulation by the self-regulating bodies of the broadcasters; and

Level III - Oversight mechanism by the Central Government.
