

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

RAJYA SABHA

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2635
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23-03-2023**

**CURBING THE SPREAD OF FAKE NEWS, DISINFORMATION AND HATE
SPEECH**

2635. SHRI P. WILSON:

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

- (a) the steps taken by Government to strengthen the existing laws to curb fake news, disinformation, hate speeches and unrest in the community spread through social media platforms;
- (b) whether Government has sent any notices to digital media outlets under the new digital media ethics to take down objectionable content, if so, the details of such orders, for each digital media outlet, with the reasons for the content being objectionable and the number of such orders that have been complied with; and
- (c) the action taken against such media companies / institutions / individuals in case of refusal to take down any content after receiving such a notice?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) The Government has statutory and institutional mechanisms in place to combat fake news, including the following:

- i) A Fact Check Unit has been set up under Press Information Bureau under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in November, 2019 which takes cognizance of fake news relating to the Central Government both *suo-motu* and by way of queries sent by citizens on its portal or through e-mail and social media. The Unit responds to the relevant queries with correct and updated information.**

ii) For Print Media, Press Council of India (PCI), a statutory autonomous body set up under the Press Council Act, 1978, has framed “Norms of Journalistic Conduct” for adherence by the media. These norms inter alia stress upon Accuracy and Fairness, Pre-publications Verification, distinction between Conjecture, speculation, comment and fact avoiding sensational/ provocative headings and justification for the matter printed under them, etc.

In case of violation of Norms, as per section 14 of the Act, after holding an inquiry, PCI may warn, admonish or censure the newspaper, the news agency, the editor or the journalist or disapprove the conduct of the editor or the journalists as the case may be.

iii) For Television, all TV Channels are required to adhere to the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, including that programmes should not contain anything obscene defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half-truths; The Government takes action in cases where Programme Code or Advertising Code is found to be violated by the private TV channels, by way of issuance of Advisories, Warnings, Apology Scroll Orders, Off-air Orders, etc.

During the years 2020-2022 and the current year, the Government has taken action in respect of violation of Programme Code and Advertising Code in 127 cases involving private TV channels, by way of issuance of Advisories, Warnings, Apology Scroll Orders and Off-air Orders, etc.

iv) For digital news publishers, the Government has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 under the IT Act, 2000 on 25th February, 2021, which inter alia provides for a Code of Ethics for adherence by digital news publishers. Under the provisions of IT Rules, 2021, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has issued directions for blocking from public access of 110 You Tube based news channels and 248 user generated URLs, including webpages, websites, posts/accounts on social media platforms, podcasts, and apps for carrying content referred to in section 69A of IT Act, 2000 from December, 2021 to till date.

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