

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2170
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.12.2024

STEPS TO CURB FAKE NEWS

2170. SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA:

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

- (a) the steps taken by Government to curb fake news in the country;
- (b) the steps taken by Government to address concerns of overreach and lack of transparency in fact-check mechanisms;
- (c) the number of instances where the Fact-Check Unit flagged content as fake, and action taken thereafter; and
- (d) the measures proposed to combat fake news while ensuring protection of constitutional rights?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND
PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS
(DR. L. MURUGAN)

(a) to (d):The Government takes all possible actions to control the spread of fake and misleading information which has potential to adversely affect the society at large. In this regard, the Government has statutory and institutional mechanisms in place to address fake news on various media platforms.

For Print Media, the newspapers have to adhere to “Norms of Journalistic Conduct” brought out by Press Council of India (PCI) which, inter alia, restrains publication of fake/ defamatory/ misleading news. The Council holds inquiry into alleged violations of Norms, as per section 14 of the Act, and may warn, admonish or censure the newspaper, editors, journalists, etc. as the case may be.

The content on private satellite TV channels is required to adhere to the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, which, inter alia, provides that no content which contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half-truths is broadcast on private satellite TV channels. Cable Television Network (Amendment) Rules 2021, provides for a three-tier grievance redressal mechanism to look into the complaints relating to the violation of the Code by the TV channels. Appropriate action is taken where violation of Programme Code is found.

For the content of publishers and news and current affairs on digital media, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules, 2021) prescribes a Code of Ethics which, inter-alia, requires them to adhere to the Norms of Journalistic Conduct and Programme Code.

A Fact Check Unit (FCU) has been set up under Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in November, 2019 to check fake news relating to the Central Government. After verifying the authenticity of news from authorised sources in Ministries/ Departments of Government of India, FCU posts correct information on its social media platforms. From November, 2019 the FCU has done 2,188 ‘fact checks’.
