

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 260  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 19/07/2018**

**NBSA GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING WOMEN RELATED CASES**

**260. SHRI K.R.P. PRABAKARAN:**

Will the Minister of **INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING**

be pleased to state:

- (a) whether News Broadcasting Standards Association (NBSA) has issued any guidelines to TV channels on reporting women related cases;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has also issued any guidelines to news channels and print media in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken or being taken to ensure that maximum sensitivity is exercised while reporting women related cases?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF  
INFORMATION & BROADCASTING [COL RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (Retd.)]**

(a) & (b): As part of self-regulatory mechanism, News Broadcasters Association (NBA) - a representative body of news and current affairs channels - has set up News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA). NBA has formulated a Code of Ethics & Broadcasting Standards covering a wide range of principles to self-regulate news broadcasting. The Code of Ethics and Broadcasting Standards lay down, inter-alia, principles of self-regulation on depiction of violence or intimidation against women and children, sex and nudity. NBSA has also issued guidelines on 07.01.2013 (available on NBSA website i.e. [www.nbanewdelhi.com](http://www.nbanewdelhi.com)) on reportage of cases of sexual assault advising member channels, that in reporting on cases of sexual assault on women, victims of child abuse and juvenile delinquents, their privacy be respected. The name, photograph and other details that may lead to disclosure of their identity or that of the family shall not be broadcast or divulged and that news channels must exercise sensitivity, discretion and sound judgment.

(c) & (d): As per existing regulatory framework, all programmes and advertisements telecast on private satellite TV channels and transmitted/re-transmitted through the Cable TV network are required to adhere to the Programme Code and Advertising Code prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 framed thereunder. In this regard, some specific provisions made in the said codes are brought out as under:

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- (a) **Rule 6 (1) ( k) of the Programme Code** provides that No programme should be carried in the cable service which denigrates women through the depiction in any manner of the figure of a women, her form or body or any part thereof in such a way as to have the effect of being indecent, or derogatory to women, or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals,
- (b) **Rule 6 (2) of the Programme Code** provides that the cable operator should strive to carry programmes in his cable service which project women in a positive, leadership role of sobriety, moral and character building qualities,
- (c) **Rule 7 (2) (vi) of the Advertising Code** provides that no advertisement shall be permitted which in its depiction of women violates the constitutional guarantees to all citizens. In particular, no advertisement shall be permitted which projects a derogatory image of women. Women must not be portrayed in a manner that emphasises passive, submissive qualities and encourages them to play a subordinate, secondary role in the family and society. The cable operator shall ensure that the portrayal of the female form, in the programmes carried in his cable service, is tasteful and aesthetic, and is within the well established norms of good taste and decency.

The Ministry has set up Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) to monitor the content telecast on private TV channels with reference to the violation of Programme and Advertising Codes. An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) has also been set up in the Ministry to take cognizance suo-moto or look into specific complaints regarding violation of Programme and Advertising Codes by private TV channels. The IMC has representatives from the Ministries of Home Affairs, Defence, External Affairs, Law, Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare, Consumer Affairs, Information & Broadcasting and a representative from the industry in Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI). The IMC meets periodically and recommends action in respect of violation of Programme and Advertising Codes by private TV channels. Appropriate action is taken against defaulting TV channels, if any violation of the Programme and Advertising Codes is established.

Apart from this, the Ministry has also issued directions to States to set up District level and State level Monitoring Committees to monitor content telecast on cable TV channels.

In so far as Print Media is concerned, it is stated that in pursuance of its policy to uphold the freedom of press, the Government does not interfere in the functioning of newspaper industry. However, in print media, the Press Council of India, a statutory autonomous body has been set up under the Press Council Act, 1978 with twin objectives to preserve the freedom of the Press and to maintain and improve the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India.

In order to inculcate principles of self-regulation amongst the press, the Council under section 13(2) of the Act, has framed 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' for adherence by the media. Norm 17 the titled "Obscenity and vulgarity to be eschewed" is enclosed at **Annexure.**

The complaints of content in print media which are violative of the ethical norms of journalism, public taste or professional conduct are adjudicated by the Council in exercise of its powers provided under section 14 of the Act. As per section 14 of the Act read with Press Council (Procedure of Inquiry) Regulations, 1979, 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.

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**ANNEXURE AS REFERRED TO IN PARTS (c) to (d) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 260 FOR 19.07.2018**

**EXTRACT OF NORMS OF JOURNALISTIC CONDUCT**

**17. Obscenity and vulgarity to be eschewed**

- i) Newspapers/journalists shall not publish anything which is obscene, vulgar or offensive to public good taste.
- ii) Newspapers shall not display advertisements which are vulgar or which, through depiction of a woman in nude or lewd posture, provoke lecherous attention of males as if she herself was a commercial commodity for sale.
- iii) Whether a picture is obscene or not, is to be judged in relation to three tests; namely
  - a) Is it vulgar and indecent?
  - b) Is it a piece of mere pornography?
  - c) Is its publication meant merely to make money by titillating the sex feelings of adolescents and among whom it is intended to circulate? In other words, does it constitute an unwholesome exploitation for commercial gain.

Other relevant considerations are whether the picture is relevant to the subject matter of the magazine. That is to say, whether its publication serves any preponderating social or public purpose, in relation to art, painting, medicine, research or reform of sex.

- iv) A photograph or a painting is a work of art and the artist enjoys artistic liberty in its portrayal. However, it is to be understood that a work of art is enjoyed, judged and appreciated by the connoisseurs. The pages of a newspaper may not be the most appropriate place for such painting.
- v) The globalisation and liberalisation does not give licence to the media to misuse freedom of the press and to lower the values of the society. The media performs a distinct role and public purpose which require it to rise above commercial consideration guiding other industries and businesses. So far as that role is concerned, one of the duties of the media is to preserve and promote our cultural heritage and social values.
- vi) Columns such as 'Very Personal' in a newspaper replying to personal queries of the readers must not become grossly offensive presentations, which either outrage public decency or corrupt public moral.
- vii) The attempt of the press should be to ensure coverage that is in keeping with the norms of the society at large and not merely a few. It is also our duty to prevent the degeneration of culture and standards and press with its reach and impact carries an immense potential in moulding the psyche and thought process of a society.
- viii) The Indian reader is much more mature and able to appreciate good journalism and in the long run, the attempts to copy the west by promoting the 'so-called popular permissiveness' may defeat the very aim of the paper to boost circulation.
- (ix) The newspaper may expose the instances of immoral activities in public places through its writings but with proper caution of restrained presentation of news or photographic evidence.