

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 925
TO BE ANSWERED ON 13.12.2022**

REGULATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AGAINST FAKE NEWS

**925. SHRI PARTHIBAN S.R.
SHRI VINCENT H. PALA
SHRI RAJAN VICHARE
MS. RAMYA HARIDAS
SHRI PRADEEP KUMAR CHAUDHARY
SHRI MANOJ KOTAK :**

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

- (a) whether some websites/news publishers on the internet are running fake news through online media and if so, the details thereof;**
- (b) the details of the special provisions and other mechanism available and the steps taken to prevent/curb such misleading or fake news in the country;**
- (c) whether the Government proposes to regulate every website spreading fake news, misleading youths and instigating people especially about caste and religion and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;**
- (d) the details of such cases identified in the country particularly in Uttar Pradesh, district-wise;**
- (e) whether the Government has undertaken any study or survey to determine the prevalence of misleading or fake news on national mainstream news channels and if so, the details of the steps taken by the Government thereon so far; and**
- (f) whether the Government is considering to create a separate regulatory agency to bring in regulations for media houses and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?**

ANSWER

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

(SHRI ANURAG SINGH THAKUR):

(a) to (d): The Government has notified Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules, 2021) under Information Technology Act, 2000, on 25th February, 2021, which inter- alia provides for Code of Ethics to be followed by publishers of news & current affairs on digital media and a three level grievance redressal mechanism for looking into complaints relating to violation of the Code of Ethics by such publishers. The Code of Ethics for news publishers on digital media requires adherence to the Norms of Journalistic Conduct of Press Council of India (PCI), which has specific norms relating to accuracy & fairness and reference to caste, religion or community.

Under the provisions of IT Rules, 2021 the Ministry issues directions for blocking of content of digital news publishers covered under the provisions of Section 69 A of Information Technology Act, 2000. From December, 2021, the Ministry has issued direction for blocking of 104 YouTube news channels, 45 videos and 25 social media accounts/posts/Apps/websites of digital news publishers under these provisions.

The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has set up a Fact Check Unit (FCU) under the Press Information Bureau (PIB) in November, 2019. The Unit is mandated to counter misinformation on Government policies, initiatives and schemes either suo-moto or under a reference via complaints. The Fact Check Unit receives communication/message from the public at large through Whatsapp (+918799711259), email (pibfactcheck@gmail.com), Twitter (@PIBFactCheck) and PIB's website (www.pib.gov.in). Since its establishment, FCU has done fact check in 1405 cases and posted the result about such fact checks on its social media accounts.

State-wise data regarding violation of Code of Ethics is not maintained centrally.

(e) to (f): Under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 every TV channel is required to adhere to the Programme Code laid down thereunder. Vide Cable Television Networks (Amendment) Rules, 2021, the Government has laid down a Three Tier Grievance Redressal Mechanism to address grievances relating to violation of the Programme Code. Appropriate action is taken where such violations are found.

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