

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2140
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14.03.2023**

LEGISLATION TO CONTROL FAKE NEWS

2140. SHRI BHOLANATH (B.P. SAROJ):

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that fake news is being spread through electronic and other social media networks thereby disturbing the social fabric of the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the details of the action proposed to be taken by the Government against such culprits who intentionally spread such fake news to disturb the peace and harmony in the country;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to bring in a legislation to control such malicious activities and if so, the time by which final decision in this regard is likely to be taken; and
- (d) whether the Ministry has instituted any cell that ensures no fake news is reported in the electronic/ print media and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d) Government is aware of fake news on various media platforms. 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;

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.

Appropriate action is taken by the Government and the Press Council in case of violation of the Codes etc.
