

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 571
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.02.2024**

SPREAD OF FAKE NEWS

571. SHRI SRIDHAR KOTAGIRI:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that fake news has become a big problem resulting in several negative consequences;
- (b) If so, the steps being taken to curb the spread of fake news;
- (c) whether the Government has ordered any kind of study of major apps/news-houses that disseminate digital information to gauge their contribution to the spread of fake news, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to fine organizations that do not stop the spread of false messages, similar to the process in Germany, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and;
- (e) the steps taken to improve media literacy amongst citizens to decrease their susceptibility to fake news?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e) 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 restrain 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.

Content on TV Channels is required to adhere to the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, which inter alia provides that no contents which contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half-truths is broadcast. Cable Television Network Rules, 1994, as amended in 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.

Similarly, the content of digital news publishers is required to adhere to a Code of ethics provided under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. These Rules also provide for a three tier mechanism for redressal of grievance relating to Code of Ethics by them.

A Fact Check Unit (FCU) 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 relating to the Central Government.
