

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

**LOK SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1887  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 30.07.2021**

**FAKE NEWS ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

**1887. SHRI DULAL CHAND GOSWAMI:  
SHRI MITESH RAMESHBHAI PATEL (BAKABHAI):  
SHRIMATI SHARDABEN ANILBHAI PATEL:**

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

- (a) the steps taken by the Government to check and regulate fake news and misleading information on electronic, print and social media platforms;
- (b) the details of the cases where penal action has been taken against fake news in print, electronic and social media platforms;
- (c) the measures taken by the Government to curb the misuse of social media platforms especially during election campaigns; and
- (d) the details of the other steps taken by the Government which could be effective in limiting the circulation of fake news through print and electronic media?

**ANSWER**

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

**(a) Government has statutory and institutionalized mechanism in place to tackle fake news including the following:**

- i. For Print Media, Press Council of India has framed 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' under the Press Council Act, 1978,**
- ii. For Television, the Programme Code under Section 5 of the Cable Television Networks Regulation Act, 1995,**
- iii. For Social Media and Digital News Publishers, the Government has notified Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 under the provision of IT Act, 2000, which inter alia provides for due diligence by intermediaries, including social media intermediaries, and for a Code of Ethics for adherence by digital news publishers.**

**A Fact Check Unit has been set up under Press Information Bureau of this Ministry in November, 2019. This Unit takes cognizance of fake news both *suo-motu* and by way of queries sent by citizens on its portal or through e-mail and whatsapp. The Unit responds to the relevant queries with correct information when the same pertains to Central Government or forwards them to States/UTs in other cases.**

**(b) PCI has informed that in 6 such cases punitive action has been taken during January 2020-January 2021. Further, PIB Fact Check Unit has responded to over 25000 actionable queries.**

**Besides, action has been taken against 12 TV channels for telecasting false, defamatory programmes etc. in violation of Rule 6(1)(d) of the Programme Code during the years 2018-2021.**

**Election Commission has informed that during Lok Sabha Election 2019 and all Legislative Assembly Elections held after that, 167 cases of fake news/ misinformation have been reported to Social Media Platforms for removal of content.**

**(c) The Election Commission of India has taken various steps and issued guidelines from time to time as follows:**

**(i) The Commission issues a Press Note in all the general elections, incorporating guidelines issued by the Press Council of India, News Broadcasters Association and Voluntary Code of Ethics to be observed by print, electronic and social media during election.**

- (ii) The Commission has a set of comprehensive guidelines dated 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2012 regarding constitution of District level and State level Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC), which includes a Social Media Expert to monitor any election related violation on Social Media. .**
  - (iii) The Commission appoints Social Media Nodal Officer at ECI level for coordinating with Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) and Social Media intermediary platforms during elections.**
  - (iv) Model Code of Conduct is applicable to content on internet including social media.**
  - (v) Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) in consultation with Election Commission has implemented a set of 'Voluntary Code of Ethics' during Lok Sabha Election 2019 and all Legislative Assembly Elections held after that.**
- (d) This Ministry issues advisories from time to time to private satellite TV channels for adherence of the Programme Code under the Cable TV Network (Regulation) Act, 1995.**

**Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology through a program, namely, Information Security Education & Awareness (ISEA), has been creating awareness among users highlighting the importance of following the ethics while using Internet and advising them not to share rumors/fake news. A dedicated website for information security awareness (<https://www.infosecawareness.in>) provides all the relevant awareness material.**

**Ministry of Home Affairs has informed that law enforcement agencies regularly monitor the social media against the misuse of platforms for circulation of misleading information and take legal action against the offender under the relevant acts.**

\*\*\*\*\*