

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION No.3306  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.12.2015**

**PAID NEWS**

**3306. DR. SHASHI THAROOR:**

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government proposes to formulate comprehensive policy framework for optimised monitoring and development of mass media, including the radio, television, films, press and print publications, advertising and traditional modes of communication;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government is considering a new policy framework with provisions such as empowerment of the Press Council of India to adjudicate the complaints of paid news, in consultation with the various stakeholders;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) & (b): No, Sir. However, in so far as print media is concerned, Press Council of India (PCI), a statutory autonomous body has been set up under the Press Council Act, 1978 to maintain and improve the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India and also to inculcate principles of self-regulation among the press. In furtherance of its objectives, PCI has formed Norms of Journalistic Conduct under section 13(2)(b) of the Press Council Act, 1978. These norms cover general principles and ethics of journalism. The print media is expected to adhere to these norms.

With regard to electronic media, all private satellite TV channels are required to adhere to the Programme and Advertising Codes prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 framed thereunder which contain a gamut of criteria to be followed while carrying programmes

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and advertisement in such TV channels. FM Radio Channels are required to comply with the terms & conditions of the Grant of Permission Agreement (GOPA) including AIR Code on Content which is executed by them with the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting at the time of grant of permission to run FM radio channels. Clause 7.6 of the GOPA provides that the permission holder shall ensure that no content, messages, advertisement or communication, transmitted in its Broadcast Channel is objectionable, obscene, unauthorized or inconsistent with the laws of India. It is also prescribed under Clause 11.2 of the GOPA that FM Radio Channels should follow the same Programme and Advertisement Codes as followed by All India Radio. The Ministry has constituted a composite Inter Ministerial Committee (IMC) comprising officers from Ministries of Home Affairs, Defence, External Affairs, Law, Women & Child Development, Health & Family Welfare, Consumer Affairs and a representative from Advertising Standards Council of India, to take cognizance suo moto or to look into specific complaints regarding content on private TV channels on any platform including DTH & FM Radio. The IMC meets periodically and recommends action against violation. The Ministry has also set up a state-of-art Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) to monitor the content telecast on private satellite TV channels, FM radio channels and Community Radio Stations.

(c) & (d): The Press Council of India (PCI), an autonomous body established under the Press Council Act, 1978, has proposed amendments in the Press Council Act, 1978 to empower the Council for effective implementation of its directives. With regard to the violation of the contents, it has been proposed that more penal powers may be provided to PCI and besides making observations, the Council may also be given powers to pass such orders and give directions.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) had recommended to add 'Paid News' in category of corrupt practices or electoral offences. The Commission had recommended that the provision should be made in the Representation of the People Act, 1951 to include publishing and abetting of publishing of 'Paid News' for furthering the prospects of election of any candidate as an electoral offence under Chapter III of Part VII of the R.P. Act, 1951 with exemplary punishment of a minimum of two years imprisonment.

(e): Does not arise.

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