

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2948
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.03.2021**

FAKE NEWS AND PROPAGANDA

2948 SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA:

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

- (a) whether Government has a mechanism to control the spread of fake news and propaganda via internet, if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (b) whether news channels are under Government's purview for sensationalisation of news or misguided reporting, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE;
MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING; AND MINISTER OF
HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES
{SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR}**

(a) to (b) The 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.

With regard to electronic media, the Cable Television Networks (Regulations) Act, 1995 and the Rules made there under inter alia provide that no programme shall be carried out which contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggesting innuendoes and half truths.

The Government takes action in cases where Programme/ Advertising Codes are found to be violated by the private TV Channels, including issuance of advisory, warning, running an apology scroll and in extreme cases, directing the channel to be off air for a certain time duration.

The Government has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 under the provisions of Information Technology, Act, 2000. These Rules inter alia provide for CODE OF ETHICS for adherence by publishers of news and current affairs, and publishers of online curated content (commonly called OTT platforms).

A Fact Check Unit has been setup under Press Information Bureau of this Ministry. 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. The Unit also maintains a twitter account @PIBFactcheck and posts cases of fake news, being busted, on the same on regular basis
