

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING**

**RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION No.*207
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15.03.2021**

NEWS RELATED TO COMMUNAL TENSIONS

***207 SHRI BINOY VISWAM :**

Will the Minister of INFORMATION & BROADCASTING be pleased to state:-

- a) whether Government has taken note of various instances of news related to communal tensions that have occurred during the last year, if so, the steps Government is taking in such cases;
- b) if not, whether Government is of the view that such communal news reports do not exist;
- c) the total number of complaints received by the Press Council of India (PCI) across various mediums of TV news, newspapers, etc;
- d) the number of organisations/individuals against which action has been taken by the PCI during the last three years; and
- e) the steps Government and PCI have taken to address this problem?

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 (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) TO (e) OF THE
RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 207 TO BE ANSWERED ON
15.03.2021 ON “NEWS RELATED TO COMMUNAL TENSIONS”**

(a) and (b) : As per existing regulatory framework, programmes telecast on private satellite TV channels are required to adhere to the Programme Code prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994 framed thereunder. The said code contains a wide range of parameters to regulate content on TV including content of communal nature. Specifically, Rule 6(1)(c) of the Programme Code provides that no programme should be carried in the cable service which contains attack on religions or communities or visuals or words contemptuous of religious groups or which promote communal attitudes.

An advisory dated 25-02-2020 was issued to all TV channels to ensure strict compliance with the Programme Codes.

The Press Council of India (PCI) has framed “Norms of Journalistic Conduct” for adherence by the media. These inter alia include guidelines on the subjects, “Covering Communal Disputes/ Clashes” and “Violence not to be Glorified”.

The Press Council of India also issued an advisory dated 26-02-2020 to the print media for adherence to these guidelines.

The Government has notified Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Codes) Rules, 2021 on 25th February, 2021 which inter-alia provide for Code of Ethics to be followed by digital news publishers which includes adherence to:

- (i) Norms of Journalistic Conduct of the Press Council of India under the Press Council Act, 1978;**

- (ii) Programme Code under section 5 of the Cable Television Networks Regulation Act, 1995;**
- (iii) Content which is prohibited under any law for the time being in force shall not be published or transmitted.**

(c) to (e) : In case of violation of Norms, as per section 14 of the Press Council 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.

During last three years, PCI received, 2384 complaints and adjudicated 487 complaints including cases for publication of communal news.

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.
