

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.781
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25.07.2023

SUPERVISION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

781. DR BEESETTI VENKATA SATYAVATHI:

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

- (a) whether the Government proposes to set up organisations to weed out fake information and fact- check reports;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government is planning to cooperate with the social media platforms and establish a regulatory agency to supervise the operation of social media platforms and make them accountable for the material that is posted on their platforms; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (d) The Government has statutory and institutional mechanisms in place to combat fake news, including the following:

- i) A Fact Check Unit 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 related to the policies, schemes, guidelines, initiatives, etc of the Government of India.**

ii) For Print Media, 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 provide for “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, Press Council of India under the provisions of Section 14 of the Act, after holding an inquiry, 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.

iii) For electronic media, all TV Channels are required to adhere to the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, including that programmes broadcast by them should not contain anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half-truths;

iv) For digital media, the Government has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 under the IT Act, 2000 on 25th February, 2021, which inter alia provide for due diligence to be observed by intermediaries, including social media intermediaries, and for a Code of Ethics to be adhered to by the publishers of news and current affairs on digital media and OTT platforms. These rules also provide for a three tier grievance redressal mechanism to look into complaints related to violation of Code of Ethics.
