

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO. *37
TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.07.2024

MENACE OF FAKE NEWS

*37. SMT. SMITA UDAY WAGH:
SHRI VIJAY BAGHEL:

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of fake news which are being spread at large scale through various platforms of media disturbing the social fabric of the country;
- (b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Government is taking any steps to tackle the menace of fake news in the country;
- (d) if so, the details thereof particularly with regard to the State of Maharashtra;
- (e) whether any steps have been taken by the Government to deal with fake news on social media including making the appointment of a Lokpal/ombudsman mandatory to investigate into the fake news;
- (f) if so, the details thereof;
- (g) whether the Government has any proposal to bring a legislation in this regard; and
- (h) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the said legislation is likely to be brought?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING, AND
ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) to (h): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (h) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. *37 TO BE ANSWERED ON 24.07.2024 ON MENACE OF FAKE NEWS

(a) to (h): The Government is committed to take all possible actions to control the spread of fake and misleading information which has potential to weaken our democracy and create fissures in the society. In this regard, the Government has statutory and institutional mechanisms in place to address fake news on various media platforms.

A Fact Check Unit (FCU) has been set up under Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in November, 2019 to counter fake news relating to the Central Government. After verifying the authenticity of news from authorised sources in Ministries/ Departments, FCU posts correct information on its social media platforms.

For Print Media, the newspapers have to adhere to “Norms of Journalistic Conduct” brought out by Press Council of India (PCI) which inter alia restrains publication of fake/ defamatory/ misleading news. The Council holds inquiry into alleged violations of Norms, as per section 14 of the Act, and may warn, admonish or censure the newspaper, editors, journalists, etc. as the case may be.

PCI has informed that during the period from 2021 to 2024, it has adjudicated five complaints of fake news with regard to the state of Maharashtra.

Content on TV Channels is required to adhere to the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, which inter alia provides that no content which contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half-truths is broadcasted on private satellite TV channels. Cable Television Network (Amendment) Rules 2021, provides for a three-tier grievance redressal mechanism to look into the complaints relating to the violation of the Code by the TV channels. Appropriate action is taken where violation of Programme Code is found.

For the content of digital news publishers, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 provides for a Code of Ethics.
