

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1591
ANSWERED ON:03.08.2010
INDECENT DEPICTION OF WOMEN IN MEDIA
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Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there are any legal provisions to take action and penalise indecent depiction of women in the print and the visual media sector;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any action has been taken under such provisions against violators in the print and the visual media sector;
- (d) if so, the details thereof during each of the last three years and the current year; and
- (e) the corrective measures taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. JATUA)

(a) & (b): The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 has provisions prohibiting indecent representation of women through advertisements, publications, pamphlets, etc. Any person who contravenes the provisions of the Section 3 and Section 4 of the Act shall be punishable with imprisonment and fine.

The law relating to obscenity is also codified in Sections 292, 293 and 294 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

Besides, the Press Council of India, a statutory autonomous body has been set up under the Press Council Act, 1978 for the purpose of preserving the freedom of the Press and maintaining and improving the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India to inculcate principles of self-regulation among the Press. The Council, in exercise of its powers under Section 13(2)(b) of the Act has built 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' which cover principles and ethics with regard to journalism as also guidelines on reporting the specific issues of public and national importance. Para 17 of the 'Norms' relating to 'Obscenity and Vulgarity to be eschewed' is annexed at Annexure -I.

In respect of the visual media sector, Rule 6 (1) (k) of the Cable Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 provides that no programme should be carried in the cable service which "denigrates women through the depiction in any manner of the figure of a women, her form or body or any part thereof in such a way as to have the effect of being indecent, or derogatory to women, or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals". Rule 7 (2)

(vi) of the above Rules provides that no advertisement shall be permitted which "in its depiction of women violates the constitutional guarantees to all citizens. In particular, no advertisement shall be permitted which projects a derogatory image of women. Women must not be portrayed in a manner that emphasises passive, submissive qualities and encourages them to play a subordinate, secondary role in the family and society. The cable operator shall ensure that the portrayal of the female form, in the programmes carried in his cable service, is tasteful and aesthetic, and is within the well established norms of good taste and decency".

(c), (d) & (e): The PCI adjudicates on complaints of violation of the 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct'. A list of cases relating to obscenity and vulgarity adjudicated by PCI during the last three years is at Annexure-II. Action is also taken by the Government against the TV channels which violate the provisions of Cable Networks Act. A statement showing the Show Cause Notices issued to various private TV channels for indecent depiction of women and final action taken thereon during the last three years and during the current year is at Annexure-III.