

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:164

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REGULATING OBJECTIONABLE CONTENT IN MEDIA

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

- (a) whether the depiction of violence, obscenity and vulgarity through television programmes and advertisements on various television channels including Doordarshan channels and print media is increasing ;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto and the number of such instances reported during each of the last three years and the current year alongwith the action taken thereon during the said period, media-wise and channel-wise;
- (c) the details of existing mechanism to regulate objectionable contents in both the media;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to improve/modify the existing code of conduct to regulate the same; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the other corrective measures taken in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) No such specific study has been brought to the notice of the Government. However, some instances of violence, obscenity and vulgarity shown on Private television channels have been brought to the notice of the Government. So far as Print media is concerned, the Press in India is free from Government control. In pursuance of its policy to uphold the freedom of the press, the Government does not interfere in its functioning. However, the Press Council of India (PCI) - a statutory autonomous body has been set up under the Press Council Act, 1978 for maintaining and improving the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India to inculcate principles of self-regulation among the press. Accordingly, PCI, in order to prevail upon the Press to practice self-regulation, have formed norms of journalistic conduct under Section 13(2)(b) of the Press Council Act, 1978. The PCI monitors and takes cognizance, suo-motu or on complaints, of contents in Print Media which prima facie, are violative of the ethics of journalistic practice. A statement showing the action taken on such complaints against satellite TV channels and Print media during last three years and current year is annexed.

(c) There is no pre-censorship of the Programmes telecast on Private satellite TV channels. However, all programmes and advertisements telecast on TV channels transmitted/retransmitted through the Cable TV network, are required to adhere to the Programme and Advertising Codes prescribed under the Cable TV Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Rules framed thereunder. Action is taken as per rules whenever violation of Codes is brought to the notice of the Government. So far as Print Media is concerned, the complaints of content in Print Media, which are violative of 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' are adjudicated by PCI under Section 14 of the Press Council Act, 1978 read with Press Council (Procedure of Inquiry) Regulations, 1979.

(d) & (e) The Government had constituted a committee for reviewing the existing Programme and Advertising Codes prescribed under the Cable TV Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the rules framed thereunder to provide greater specificity to the provisions of existing codes. The Committee has submitted its report and made recommendations in the form of draft 'Self-regulation Guidelines for the broadcasting sector' which is available on the Ministry's website <http://mib.gov.in> under the heading "Codes and Guidelines".

Ministry has been holding consultations with all concerned stakeholders to arrive at a broad consensus on the recommendations of the Committee. Recently a Task Force has been set up under the Chairmanship of Secretary (I & B) for holding wider consultations with stakeholders to arrive at a consensus regarding the provisions of the draft content code. The Task Force has completed consultations.

Further, this Ministry has constituted an Inter Ministerial Committee (IMC) to look into specific complaints or take suo-motu cognizance of the violation of the Programme and Advertising Codes. Action is taken as per rules whenever violation of Codes is brought to the notice of the Government.

This Ministry has also set up an Electronic Media Monitoring Centre to monitor the content telecast on Private television channels which sends reports of violation of Programme and Advertising Codes to this Ministry and action is taken as per the provision of the Cable Act whenever specific violation is found.

So far as Print Media is concerned, the 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' have been formulated by PCI under Section 13(2)(b) of the Press Council Act, 1978. These norms cover general principles and ethics of journalism as well as guidelines on specific issues such

as communal disturbances, terrorism, AIDS, financial journalism, election reporting etc. The PCI's 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' have been evolving over the years and presently, the year 2010 edition is being followed by the Press.