

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:87  
ANSWERED ON:01.03.2011  
EMPOWERING THE PRESS COUNCIL OF INDIA  
Abdulrahman Shri ;Balram Shri P.

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the alleged unethical practices being resorted to by some section of the media;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Press Council of India (PCI) is entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining and improving the standard of newspapers and news agencies in the country;
- (d) if so, whether the Government has received any proposal from the PCI seeking amendment to the Press Council Act, 1978 for arming it with more powers;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the action taken thereon?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SMT. AMBIKA SONI)

(a) to (f): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (f) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.87 TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.03.2011 REGARDING EMPOWERING THE PRESS COUNCIL OF INDIA

(a) to (f): There have been a number of media reports that sections of the electronic and print media have received monetary considerations for publishing or broadcasting in favour of particular individuals or organizations or corporate entities for what is essentially "advertisement" disguised as "news". This has been commonly referred to as the "paid news".

The Government, in pursuance of the objective of preserving the freedom of press and maintaining and improving the standards of newspapers in India and to inculcate the principles of self regulation among the press, has set up Press Council of India (PCI) - an autonomous body under the Press Council Act, 1978. 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 Act. These norms cover general principles and ethics of journalism as well as guidelines on specific issues such as financial journalism, election reporting etc.

The complaints of contents in print media, which are violative of the ethics of journalistic practice, public taste or professional conduct are adjudicated by PCI under section 14 of the Press Council Act, 1978. The Council, after holding an inquiry in accordance with Press Council (Procedure of Inquiry) Regulations, 1979, may warn, admonish or censure the newspaper, news agency, journalist or editor, as the case may be. The details of the complaints received by PCI regarding `Paid News` alongwith the status of action taken thereon is annexed.

Press Council of India, having observed that the powers provided under Press Council Act, 1978 are not adequate for effective implementation of its directives, has proposed amendments in the Press Council Act, 1978. The proposed amendments intend to arm the Council with more powers. The proposed amendments to the Press Council Act are under consideration of the Government and will be drafted carefully after wide consultations with the stakeholders and evolving consensus on the important issues relating to the media.