

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3186

ANSWERED ON:15.03.2011

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEDIA

Naranbhai Shri Kachhadia;Owaisi Shri Asaduddin;Patel Shri Devji

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

- (a) whether the Government proposes to introduce code of conduct for the electronic and the print media;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the progress made so far in this regard;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to evolve a two tier system for self regulation in both the media;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the extent to which these steps are likely to regulate the electronic and the print media; and
- (e) the strategy chalked out by the Government for individual channels within the Cable Networks Act and the proposed functions of the new system?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) The Cable TV Networks (Regulation) Act 1995 and the Rules thereunder already provide for Programme and Advertising Codes. All service providers viz. cable operators, Direct-to-Home operators and broadcasters are required to ensure that the content generated and transmitted is in conformity with these Codes. In so far as print media is concerned, the Press in India is free from Governmental control. 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 and to inculcate principles of self-regulation among the press. PCI with a view to prevailing upon the Press to practice self-regulation, have formulated Norms of Journalistic Conduct 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.

(c)&(d) The Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF), an industry body representing major satellite TV channels, is in the process of setting up a two tier self-regulatory mechanism on content for entertainment channels with the first tier at the level of broadcaster and the Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC) at the second tier. The BCCC is proposed to be a 13 Member body consisting of a Chairperson being a retired judge of Supreme Court or High Court and 12 other Members. The BCCC will have the mandate to look into all complaints relating to violation of Code by entertainment channels, and give suitable directions to concerned channels to modify or withdraw any objectionable content. Since majority of the members of BCCC are drawn from persons of eminence and from Statutory Commissions, the BCCC is likely to provide a credible and acceptable self regulatory mechanism for addressing the issues relating to objectionable content on TV Channels. In so far as Print media is concerned, the Press Council of India 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.

(e) All TV Channels are required to adhere to the Programme and Advertising Codes prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995. These Codes are in the form of prohibition for carrying certain content which is inconsistent with the contemporary community standards, public order, morality, integrity and security of the country etc.