

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:72

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SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF MEDIA

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

- (a) whether any social responsibility has been drawn up for the media sector;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether it has been observed that certain sections of the media are not fulfilling these responsibilities in the true spirit;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken to induce/encourage the media sector to fulfil its social responsibilities in letter and spirit?

Answer

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

(a) & (b): The Press Council of India (PCI), an autonomous body set up under the Press Council Act, 1978 for maintaining and improving the standard of newspapers and news agencies in India and for inculcating the principles of self regulation, has developed 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' under Section 13(2)(b) of the Act. The basic premise of these Norms is the fundamental objective of the journalism, i.e. to serve the people with news, views, comments and information on matters of public interest in a fair, accurate, unbiased, sober and decent manner. The norms cover the principles and ethics regarding journalism and also include specific guidelines for reporting on issues such as communal disturbances, handouts by terrorists/militants, AIDS, financial journalism, election reporting etc.

Similarly, the Programme and Advertising Code under Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994 framed under Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 prescribes that the content on TV channels should be in good taste and decency and should reflect the accepted social norms. A self-regulation mechanism has also been set up by the industry representative bodies, viz., News Broadcasters Association (NBA) and Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF). NBA has set up News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA) and has formulated a Code of Ethics and Broadcasting Standards for self-regulation of news channels. Similarly, the IBF has set up Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC) for self-regulation of non-news channels.

(c) to (e): In regard to electronic media, violations of the Programme and Advertising Code as prescribed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 are examined in the Ministry and appropriate action is taken under the Act. The Press Council takes cognizance of violations of the laid down Norms of Journalistic Conduct and the norms continuously evolve on the basis of adjudications and pronouncements by PCI. The Press Council of India has repeatedly stressed that media should play a progressive role by attacking backward and feudal ideas and practices like casteism, communalism, superstitions, women's oppression etc. and by propagating modern, rational and scientific ideas, secularism and tolerance.