

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1143  
ANSWERED ON:20.03.2012  
PAID NEWS  
Rathwa Shri Ramsinhbhai Patalbhai

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

- (a) whether the Editors Guild and the Press Council of India (PCI) have expressed their concern over the issue of paid news in the media sector;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted any inquiry on the aforesaid allegation;
- (d) if so, the outcome thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard;
- (e) whether a Group of Ministers (GoM) constituted to examine the recommendations made in the report of PCI on this issue, has submitted its report to the Government; and
- (f) if so, the terms and references thereof and the time by which GoM is likely to submit its report?

**Answer**

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

(a)to(d): Yes Sir. The Editors Guild of India (EGI) in its press note dated 22.12.2009 has condemned the unethical practice of Paid News and called upon all editors of the country to desist from publishing any form of advertisements which masquerade as news. The Press Council of India (PCI) has also taken cognizance of the serious issue of paid news and expressed concern over the instances of paid news in the media.

The PCI, an autonomous body set up under the Press Council Act, 1978 to maintain and improve the standards of newspapers in India, has deliberated upon the issue and released a 'Report on Paid News'. The PCI has made following recommendations in the Report,

- 1) Representation of the People Act 1951 be amended to make incidence of paid news a punishable electoral malpractice.
- 2) The Press Council of India must be fully empowered to adjudicate the complaints of 'paid news' and give final judgement in the matter.
- 3) Press Council Act be amended to make its recommendations binding and electronic media be brought under its purview, and
- 4) Press Council of India should be reconstituted to include representatives from electronic and other media.

(e)&(f): The Government has constituted a Group of Ministers (GoM) on Paid News. The terms of reference of the GoM are as follows: to examine the 'Report on Paid News' prepared by the Press Council of India, and to give views on a comprehensive policy and institutional mechanism to address the phenomenon of Paid News.

The GoM has not yet submitted its recommendations and no time frame has been fixed for the GoM for submission of its report to the Government.