

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:454
ANSWERED ON:08.05.2012
UNETHICAL PRACTICES BY MEDIA
Yadav Shri Ranjan Prasad

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the alleged unethical practices and incessant misreporting being resorted to by a section in the print and the electronic media;
- (b) if so, the number of such incidents reported during each of the last three years and the current year, media-wise;
- (c) the reaction of the Government thereto alongwith the action taken thereon;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to revise the existing guidelines/amend the relevant Acts to improve the functioning of the said media; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the remedial measures being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 454 FOR ANSWER ON 08.05.2012

In pursuance of its policy to uphold the freedom of the Press, the Government does not interfere in its functioning. However, Press Council of India (PCI), a statutory autonomous body has been set up under the Press Council Act to maintain and improve the standards of newspapers and news agencies and also to inculcate principles of self-regulation among the press. The Council has built Norms of Journalistic Conduct which cover the principles and ethics of journalism. The relevant norm no. I of the Norms of Journalistic Conduct on 'Accuracy and Fairness' prescribe that the press shall eschew publication of inaccurate, baseless, graceless, misleading or distorted material and reporting should be backed by irrefutable facts and evidences.

The complaints against the contents in print media which violate the Norms of Journalistic Conduct are adjudicated by the PCI. The PCI has adjudicated upon 161 complaints against the print media in the year 2009-10, 183 in the year 2010-11, 84 in the year 2011-12 and 16 in the current year till date.

So far as electronic media is concerned, the programmes aired on private satellite and cable TV channels are governed by the Programme Code contained in the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the rules framed thereunder. The Code contains wide range of principles which are required to be followed by the channels and it inter alia prescribes that no programme should be carried in cable service which contains anything defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half truths.

So far as the telecast of programmes and advertisements by Private satellite/cable TV in violation of the Programme and Advertising Codes contained in the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994, is concerned, in 94 such cases, advisories, warnings and orders have been issued by the Ministry during the last three years, i.e. from 01.01.2009 onwards.

:: 2 :: In addition, the Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF), the association representing major private non-news TV channels, and the News Broadcasters Association (NBA), the association representing major news TV channels, have both set up self-regulating mechanisms in regard to content broadcast by these TV channels. The self-regulating mechanism set up by the NBA, namely, News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA), is headed by the Justice (Retired) J.S. Verma and that set up by the IBF, namely, Broadcast Content Complaint Council (BCCC), is headed by Justice (Retired) A.P. Shah. As part of their self-regulation mechanism, NBSA and BCCC have both also regulated content on TV in a number of cases. The Norms of Journalistic Conduct are reviewed and updated by the PCI. These Norms were updated in 2010. The Programme Code for electronic media contains adequate provisions. Since above Programme Code contains adequate provisions, there is no proposal, at present, under consideration of the Government, to revise the existing guidelines/amend the Act. In addition, News Broadcaster's Association have also formulated the 'Code of the Ethics and Broadcasting Standards' for the purpose of self-regulation by private news channels. The code prescribes fundamental principle of impartiality and objectivity in reporting.