

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:719
ANSWERED ON:27.11.2012
POWER TO PCI
Sugumar Shri K.

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of alleged unethical practices resorted to by some sections of the media, both print and electronic;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard;
- (c) whether the Government has received any proposal from the Press Council of India (PCI) seeking amendments to the Press Council Act, 1978 for arming it with more powers and bringing the electronic and the social media under its jurisdiction;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard;
- (e) whether broadcasters, newspapers and other stakeholders have opposed the said proposal; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI MANISH TEWARI)

(a) & (b): There have been reports of unethical practices being resorted to by the media. The Press Council of India, a statutory autonomous body set up for maintaining and improving the standards of newspapers & news agencies in India, has formulated 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' which covers principles and ethics of journalism and should be adhered to by the media. Of late, there also 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 PCI has taken cognizance of the issue of this unethical practice and has released a Report on Paid News. The recommendations made in the report are under consideration to suggest a comprehensive policy and institutional mechanism to address the phenomenon of paid news.

(c) & (d): 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. PCI has proposed to amend the Act to bring electronic media and social media under its jurisdiction. Further, some of the major amendments intend to arm the Council with more powers with PCI against those who violate journalistic ethics, such as withdrawal of Government advertisements, suspension of registration of newspapers and accreditation of the editor or journalist. The proposed amendments also envisage providing power to PCI to give directions in respect of conduct of any authority including the Government.

(e) & (f): The proposed amendments are at the stage of examination and if considered necessary, the draft amendment to the Press Council Act requires to be drafted carefully after wide consultations with the stakeholders and evolving consensus on the important issues relating to the media.