

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1792

ANSWERED ON:04.12.2012

PAID NEWS ON TV CHANNELS

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

- (a) whether the number of incidents of paid news in various television channels have been increasing;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, channel-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has received any complaints from any quarters in this regard;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the action taken by the Government against such TV channels and to restrain paid news in the electronic media?

Answer

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

(a) to (d) There have been media reports that sections of the electronic and print media have received monetary considerations for publishing or broadcasting in favour of particular individuals or organisations or corporate entities for what is essentially "advertisement" disguised as "news". This has been commonly referred to as "paid news". While this is not a new phenomenon, it is being widely discussed and debated across the country.

(e) Taking cognizance of the wide ramifications of the issue and expressing concern over the instances of paid news in electronic and print media, the PCI has deliberated upon the issue and released its 'Report on Paid News' on 30th July 2010. The PCI, in the Report has recommended amendment in the Representation of the People Act to make incidence of paid news a punishable electoral malpractice and also amendment in the Press Council Act for more powers to PCI. The Report has also suggested various other measures to curb the menace of paid news, which includes setting up of a Special Cell in Election Commission for action against complaints of paid news, self-regulation by media, education of voters and awareness generation amongst the stakeholders to enable them to differentiate between paid news items from genuine news.

The recommendations made by PCI in its report were submitted to the Group of Ministers (GoM) on Paid News for examination and for suggesting a comprehensive institutional mechanism to check the menace of paid news. The issues were deliberated upon by the GoM, however, the recommendations of the GoM could not be finalized.