

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5173
ANSWERED ON:24.04.2015
DEFAMATION CASES
Meghwal Shri Arjun Ram

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

- (a) whether there has been a spurt in the number of defamation cases attributing to misrepresentation of facts by newspapers and electronic media;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to check such menace;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to evolve any quasi-judicial mechanism separately to dispose of the defamation cases; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING [(COL RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE (Retd.)]

(a) & (b): No, Sir. Press Council of India (PCI), an autonomous body under Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, has informed that the defamation complaints in print media received by them during the last three financial years indicates that there is a decrease in number of complaints received in the last financial year 2014-2015 in comparison to the earlier two financial years.

The Press Council has framed 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct' for adherence by the media, which cover the principles and ethics of journalism. The Norm 3 on the issue 'Caution against Defamatory Writings' is relevant in the matter and is available on PCI's website www.pccouncil.nic.in. The Council takes cognizance, suo motu or on complaints, of the contents in print media, which are in violation of the 'Norms of Journalistic Conduct'. The Press Council may warn, admonish or censure the newspapers, the news agency, the editor or the journalist or disapprove the conduct of the editor or the journalist.

So far as electronic media is concerned, the programmes and advertisements telecast on private TV channels are governed by the Programme and Advertising Codes prescribed under the Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act, 1995 and the rules framed thereunder. The Act does not provide for pre-censorship of the programmes and advertisements aired on these channels. However, all these channels are required to adhere to the said codes, which provide for a whole range of parameters to regulate programmes and advertisements on TV channels. Rule 6(d) of the Programme Code provides that no programme should be carried in the cable service which contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half truths; and Rule 6

(i) thereof provides that no programme should be carried in the cable service which criticises, maligns or slanders any individual in person or certain groups, segments of social, public and moral life of the country.

(c) & (d): There is no proposal under consideration of the Government to evolve any quasi-judicial mechanism to dispose of the defamation cases. However, the provisions made under existing Rules and Regulations are adequate to regulate the contents published/telecast on the print and electronic media respectively.