

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4370  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 19/07/2019**

**FAKE NEWS AFFECTING COMMUNAL HARMONY**

**4370. SHRI G.M. SIDDESHWAR:  
SHRI JAYANT SINHA:**

Will the Minister of **INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING**

be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that fake news is being spread through electronic and other social media networks thereby disturbing the social fabric of the country, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the action proposed to be taken against such culprits who intentionally spread such fake news to disturb the peace and harmony in the country;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to bring in a legislation to control such malicious activities and if so, the time by which final decision in this regard is likely to be taken; and
- (d) whether the Ministry has instituted any cell that ensures no fake news is reported in the electronic/print media, if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

**THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE;  
AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING  
(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)**

**(a): Instances of fake news in media have come to the notice of Government from time to time. Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) has intimated that it has taken note of media reports about spread of fake news, misinformation/disinformation on Internet particularly on WhatsApp.**

**Contd. 2/-**

**(b) to (d): The Programme Code framed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 inter alia prohibit telecast of a programme which (i) contains attack on religions or communities or visuals or words contemptuous of religious groups or which promote communal attitudes; (ii) contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half-truths; and (iii) is likely to encourage or incite violence or contains anything against maintenance of law and order or which promote anti-national attitudes.**

**An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), set up by Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, looks into complaints regarding violation of Programme and Advertising Codes and recommends action against the TV Channels. The Ministry has also issued directions to States to set up District level and State level Monitoring Committees to monitor content telecast on cable TV channels. It is being monitored from 2005.**

**Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000 empowers Government to block any information generated, transmitted, received, stored or hosted in any computer resource in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defense of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence related to above. MeitY has informed that notices to WhatsApp were issued on 03.07.2018 and on 19.07.2018 to address the issue of fake news propagated using their platform.**

**The Press Council of India (PCI) has framed “Norms of Journalistic Conduct” for adherence by the media of publishing news which is accurate and fair. The PCI has also an institutional mechanism for redressing any complaint received by it, in accordance with the Press Council (Procedure for Inquiry) Regulations, 1979, and enables it to warn, admonish or censure a newspaper, news agency, editor or journalists, etc.**

\*\*\*\*\*