

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2038
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12/02/2021**

GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING OF SUICIDE CASES

2038. SHRI ANUMULA REVANTH REDDY :

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

- (a) whether at present there are any guidelines for reporting of suicide cases in media and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether there is a need to issue fresh guidelines to TV channels, and other media to ensure sensitive reporting of cases of suicide especially when suicide cases and other mental health issues are on the rise during COVID and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the action was taken on certain section of media for the way they reported certain film actors' death;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the steps being taken by the Government to check such practice keeping in view that sensational reporting of cases of suicide affects the mental well being of viewers with mental health issues and it also affects the families of those who have died of suicide?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE;
MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING; AND
MINISTER OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES AND PUBLIC ENTERPRISES
(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)**

(a) to (b): As per existing regulatory framework, programmes telecast on TV channels are regulated in terms of the Programme Code prescribed under the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994. All channels are required to adhere to the said Programme Code which contains a wide range of parameters.

The Programme Code has specific provisions that no programme should be carried which offends against good taste or decency or which contain anything defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half-truths or criticizes, maligns or slanders any individual in person or certain groups, segments of social, public and moral life of the country, etc.

Press Council of India (PCI), set up under the Press Council Act, 1978, has framed “Norms of Journalistic Conduct” for adherence by the print media. These Norms prescribe guideline for reporting of suicide cases as well as mental health patients.

(c) to (e) Ministry has issued advisories from time to time to all private satellite TV channels advising them to adhere to the Programme Code scrupulously. The PCI has also issued advisories on the subject on 28th August, 2020 and 29th January, 2021 advising media to adhere to the norms framed by it.

Complaints were received in the Ministry about the media coverage of death of Shri Sushant Singh Rajput. The complaints were forwarded to News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA) which is a self-regulatory body in respect of their member news broadcasters. NBSA issued an Advisory on 13.08.2020 to all its member channels regarding coverage of that case by member broadcasters, highlighting specific guidelines covering reportage and the manner in which media should report on cases of suicide. NBSA also examined various complaints referred to it and vide its Order dated 06.10.2020, took penal action against member channels to air apology, censure, warning and fine.
