

Government enforces norms of journalistic conduct through PCI, programme code and IT rules to curb fake and defamatory content across print, tv & digital platforms

After due consultation with relevant Ministries, 43 OTT platforms have been blocked so far for spreading fake news, misinformation & hosting inappropriate content

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Government has a sovereign duty to tackle fake news and misinformation.

Legal Provisions to counter misinformation include

- **Print Media:** Newspapers have to adhere to “Norms of Journalistic Conduct” brought out by the Press Council of India (PCI). These norms inter-alia restrain publication of fake/ defamatory/ misleading news. The Council holds inquiry into alleged violations of the norms, as per section 14 of the Act, and may warn, admonish or censure the newspaper, editors, journalists, etc. as the case may be.
- **Television media:** TV channels are required to adhere to the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995, which, inter alia, provides that content which contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendos and half-truths is not broadcast. Cable Television Network (Amendment) Rules, 2021, provides for a three-tier grievance redressal mechanism to look into the complaints relating to the violation of the Code by the TV channels. Appropriate action is taken where violation of Programme Code is found.
- **Digital media:** For the publishers of news and current affairs on digital media, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (IT Rules, 2021) provide for a Code of Ethics.

A Fact Check Unit (FCU) has been set up under Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in November, 2019 to check fake news relating to the Central Government. After verifying the authenticity of news from authorized sources in Ministries/ Departments of Government of India, FCU posts correct information on its social media platforms.

Under the Section 69A of the Information Act 2000, Government issues necessary orders to block websites, social media handles and posts in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the State, and public order.

The Government has notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media, Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 on 25.02.2021 under IT Act, 2000.

- Part-III of the rules provides for a Code of Ethics for digital news publishers and publishers of online curated content (OTT platforms).

- OTT platforms are under obligation to not transmit any content which is prohibited by law for the time being in force.
- OTT platforms are under obligation to undertake age-based self-classification of content, based on general guidelines provided in the Schedule to the Rules which contain the provisions related to depiction relating to nudity and sex.
- The OTT platforms are also under obligation to put in place adequate safeguards for restricting age-inappropriate content for children with adequate access control measures. Besides, Section 79(3)(b) of IT Act, 2000 provides for notification by appropriate Governments of unlawful act or content to the intermediaries for removing/disabling access to such content.

Government has issued advisory dated 19.02.2025 to OTT platforms and Self-regulatory Bodies of OTT platforms for ensuring adherence to Indian Laws and the Code of Ethics laid down under the IT Rules, 2021 while hosting of content on their platforms.

After due consultation with relevant Ministries, 43 OTT platforms have been blocked so far.

This information is submitted by Union Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting Dr. L Murgan in Lok Sabha today.

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