

# Standing Committee Report Summary

## Review of Mechanism to Curb Fake News

- The Standing Committee on Communications and Information Technology (Chair: Dr Nishikant Dubey) submitted its report on the “Review of Mechanism to Curb Fake News” on September 11, 2025. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
- **Definition of ‘Fake News’:** The Committee noted that the term ‘fake news’ is not defined under any law. It recommended defining ‘fake news’ under the existing regulatory mechanism for print, electronic, and digital media.
- **Regulatory mechanism:** The Committee recommended exploring the option of constituting an independent body for adjudicating cross-platform fake news cases and recommending penalties. This body should have representatives from the Ministry of Electronics and IT, and other stakeholders. It also recommended setting up an expert committee to suggest amendments to address fake news effectively. To address cross-border fake news, it recommended: (i) emulating best practices from other countries, such as French law on election misinformation, and (ii) constituting an inter-ministerial task force.
- **Penal provisions:** The Committee noted an absence of a specific penal provision for the publication of fake news. Currently, it may be penalised under broader regulations where penalties vary for print, TV, and digital media. It recommended: (i) ensuring accountability of editors, publishers, and intermediaries, and (ii) exploring feasibility of cancelling accreditation of a journalist or creator who is guilty of creating or propagating fake news.
- **Self-regulation:** The Committee noted that out of 919 TV channels permitted by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 543 channels were not members of any self-regulatory body (SRB). It noted that the guidelines for satellite TV channels require broadcasters to either join a registered SRB or establish their own SRB. The Committee recommended that all broadcasters must have a self-regulation mechanism. It recommended mandating every media organisation to have a fact-checking mechanism and an internal ombudsman.
- **Grievance redressal:** In case of print media, the Committee noted that there is no time limit for Press Council of India (PCI) to act on grievances. It noted that there is no mechanism to digitally track and notify complainants. It also highlighted a delay in removing fake news videos from circulation once an order against them has been passed. The Committee recommended the creation of a unified digital portal for grievance redressal with respect to fake news. It also recommended increasing public awareness about the mechanism and emulating best practices such as dedicated helpline numbers.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Fake News:** The Committee noted the potential for AI to create as well as combat fake news. Applications of AI in combating fake news include detecting misleading visual content, verifying claims, and identifying networks responsible for spreading misinformation. It recommended a balanced approach where AI tools are leveraged with human oversight. The Committee also suggested inter-ministerial coordination for exploring the feasibility of licensing requirements for AI content creators and labelling of AI-generated content.
- **Intermediaries:** To make social media and other intermediaries more accountable in case of fake news, the Committee recommended: (i) enforcing transparency in algorithms, (ii) introducing stricter fines for repeat offenders, (iii) establishing an independent regulatory body, and (iv) exploring ways to address concerns with algorithmic bias and its role in amplifying fake news. It also recommended the Ministry to develop concrete solutions to deal with ‘safe harbour’ provisions and its implications for combating fake news. Safe harbour refers to exemption to intermediaries from liability for any third-party content, subject to certain safeguards.

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