



Press Council of India
New Delhi

Sub-Committee to Examine the Issue of Advertisement

CAMP

DEHRADUN (UTTRAKHAND)

December 2-3, 2015


(Gurinder Singh)
Convenor


(Prabhat Kumar Dash)
Member

COMMITTEE REPORT TO EXAMINE THE ISSUE OF ADVERTISEMENT

The Council in its meeting held on December 19, 2014 while considering the issue threats/problems being faced by the Medium and Small newspapers for non-adoption of the Model Advertisement/Accreditation Rules-2014 framed by the Press Council had constituted a two member Sub-Committee to examine the issue of Advertisement comprising of S/Shri Gurinder Singh, Convenor and Prabhat Kumar Dash, Member.

The Sub-Committee visited Dehradun, Uttarakhand from December 2-3, 2015 and invited stakeholders from Big, Small and Medium newspapers as well as the authorities of the State Government of Uttarakhand to interact simultaneously on December 2, 2015 across the table to avoid communication gap and follow the principle of transparency.

About 50-60 Stakeholders from Big, Small and Medium newspapers and Nodal Officer appointed by the Government of Uttarakhand namely Dr. Anil Chandola, Additional Director, Information and Public Relations Department along with his team of officers were present in the Conference Hall, Information & Public Relations Department, Government of Uttarakhand, Dehradun.

DEPOSITION

The stakeholders from Small & Medium Newspapers submitted that the previous Director General, Information & Public Relations Department had invited their suggestions for framing new Advertisement policy but the Government framed New Advertisement Policy without adding their suggestion. They informed that after implementation of new policy many Small & Medium Newspaper are on

the verge of closing and new policy is framed tactfully to curtail the survival of Small & Medium Newspapers in the state.

They submitted that the Government imposing VAT, CST and other Bills on Small & Medium Newspapers which is costly and unbearable to Small & Medium Newspapers.

DAVP/PCI's Advertisement policy has not been adopted by the State Government.

They informed that there is no policy for checking of newspaper which are vernacular specially Urdu papers. People bring out Urdu newspapers just to get Government Advertisements. A large number of fake newspapers got the advertisements due to inefficiency of the Information and Public Relations Department. They submitted that there must be specific qualification for bringing out a newspaper.

The stakeholders submitted that a clause which is added in the new policy by the department for renewal of newspapers in every 18 months is not justified and this clause should have been removed by the State Government.

Bills from printing press are not demanded by DAVP, then how can state Information & Public Relations Department of Uttarakhand can demand of the same.

They submitted that the Committee constituted for the purpose is invalid because there are only 8 persons in the Committee and no one from the organizations which are notified by the Press Council of India.

Verification of circulation of newspaper is done by RNI only and the State Government should have not done this. They submitted that Regional Level Papers and State Level Papers should have been combined and VAT and other Taxes should have also been removed from the new Advertisement Policy.

There is no encouragement for the hilly areas papers as they go through lots of hardships in collecting news and distributing their paper.

They submitted that the major part of the budget allocated for the media is eaten up by the electronic media.

Survival of Small & Medium Newspapers is not possible if they will not get sufficient advertisements from the State Government. They also submitted that the new policy framed by the State Government is a tactic to eliminate the Small & Medium Newspapers from the state.

They also submitted that State Government has withdrawn the facility of bus pass from the accredited journalists and there are no medical facilities for the journalists in the state.

FINDINGS

1. Resentment in totality of the stakeholders in formation of the new advertisement policy of the State Government of Uttarakhand.
2. Priority is not being given to language newspapers while releasing advertisements.

3. Weekly, fortnightly and monthly newspapers are not being considered for State Government advertisements.
4. Small & Medium Newspapers are not being considered for display advertisements.
5. Payment of Advertisement bills is not being made within a specified time.
6. The total budget sanctioned for advertisements in Rupees is not being utilized in the ratio of 50%, 35% and 15% for Big, Medium and Small newspapers respectively.
7. No representation of the Press Bodies in the newly constituted Inter Departmental Committee.
8. Electronic media taking the major share of the advertisement budget.

GOVERNMENT VIEW

While interacting with the Sub-Committee Shri Vinod Sharma, IAS, Director General-cum-Secretary, Information & Public Relations Department, Government of Uttarakhand informed the Sub-Committee that the print media advertisement rules had been made in favour of the media. He has informed that they will re-address the problems of the newspapers by exempting the taxes and agreed to follow the annexure-12 of DAVP Policy to simplify the procedure. He agreed to revisit the Advertisement Policy.

The Secretary informed that this is the first time in the State, when the advertisement rates have been increased for all types of

newspapers by the department. The procedure for issuing advertisements has been made transparent and necessary amendments will be made as per the directions given by the Committee.

The Secretary stated that the government is providing free transportation facility in roadways buses to journalists accredited at the District and State levels and a government order will be issued soon after necessary amendments to facilitate free transport for reporters in roadways buses for inter-state travel.

He further apprised the Committee that the state government is taking all possible steps for the welfare of journalists. The journalists welfare fund had been increased and special care is taken of medium and small newspapers in advertisements released periodically.

He further apprised that in 2014-15 advertisements worth Rs.13.21 crores, Rs. 3.56 crore and Rs. 8.41 crore were released for big, medium and small newspapers respectively. Apart from this in the current financial year, about Rs.15 lakh has been spent in cases of reimbursement of medical treatment expenses of journalists.

Shri Sharma also informed the Sub-Committee that process is underway to implement the pension scheme as directed by the Chief Minister for journalists aged above 60 years. The State is also in the process of granting heritage status to recognized newspapers which are being published before the State's formation.

The Committee met the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttarakhand who is also the Minister of Information & Public Relations of the State. He welcome the Sub-Committee cordially & thanked Press Council of

India for sending such a Committee to Uttrakhand. After elaborate discussions he assured to revisit the advertisement policy in *toto* & agreed to implement the Model Guidelines of Press Council of India & DAVP. He instructed the department officials to follow suit. He requested the Press Council of India to give some guidelines for multiple numbers of publications being brought out from one house & family. This type of publications is eating out the advertisement share of genuine players of the trade, he observed. When discussed he was also of the opinion of giving heritage status to publications which played a major role in the freedom of the state and Special Pension Scheme for journalists above the age of 60 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Advertisement Policy should be prepared in conformity with the Model Advertisement Rules-2014 prepared by the Press Council of India.
2. Advertisement rates should be revised after a specific period of time.
3. The newspapers/periodicals should be exempted to specify the quantity of newsprint used, proportionate cost of the newsprint used, proportionate VAT, CST paid and printing expenses incurred and submit the same in a form of affidavit as these are measures only to find the shortcomings and discontinue advertisements.
4. The Information & Public Relations Department, Government of Uttrakhand should follow the directions/suggestions/rules/acts of

the RNI and DAVP in case of circulation figures and rate contract, in letter and spirit.

5. The total budget sanctioned in rupees for advertisements should be distributed in the ration of 50% for Big, 35% for Medium and 15% for Small Newspapers, which has been totally ignored by the Information & Public Relations Department, Government of Uttrakhand.
6. Representation of Members of Press Bodies notified by the Press Council of India should be included in the Inter departmental Committees to bring transparency and to curtail fake publications.
7. Priority to be given to vernacular media while giving empanelment and issuing advertisements.
8. The newspaper/periodicals which have played a significant role in progress of the State should be considered in "Special Category" and to be provided extra facilities.


(Gurinder Singh)
Convenor


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