

Draft Registration of Press and Periodicals Bill, 2019

December 6, 2019

Source: PRS India

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting published the Draft Registration of Press and Periodicals Bill, 2019. The draft Bill seeks to replace the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867.

Key features of the bill

- **Applicability:** The draft Bill provides for the regulation of printing presses engaged in publishing newspapers and other periodicals, and books meant for public distribution. It also provides for regulation of publishers of news on digital media. News on digital media has been defined as the news in a digitised format that can be transmitted over the internet, computer, or mobile networks, News on digital media is currently not covered under the Act.
- **New Regulatory Authority:** The Act provides for a Registrar of Newspaper for India (RNI). The draft Bill provides for a new authority **named Press Registrar General of India**.
- **Functions of the Press Registrar General** will include:
 1. Issuing a certificate of registration to a publication
 2. Maintaining a register of registered newspapers and other periodicals, and
 3. Framing guidelines for admissibility and availability of title of a periodical.
- **The Press Registrar General will have powers to:**
 1. Seek information from publications
 2. Revise, or suspend the registration of a periodical,

and

3. Impose fine and penalty.

- **Registration of publishers:** A printing press engaged in any kind of publication will be required to furnish intimation containing certain specified information before the District Magistrate or any other specified authority. A printing press engaged in the publication of periodicals will be required to register with the Press Registrar General. A publisher of news on digital media will be required to register with the Registrar of Newspaper for India. The draft Bill removes various provisions related to registration of books under the Act.
- **Criteria for benefits from government:** Central and state governments may prescribe the conditions under which they will issue advertisements, grants or any other benefits to the publications.
- **Offences and penalties:** Under the Act, a publisher may be subject to a punishment of Rs 2,000, or imprisonment for a term up to six months, or both for violating the provisions of the Act. The draft Bill removes the provision for imprisonment. The fine has been increased to Rs 50,000, along with revocation of registration.