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THE NEWSPAPER (PRICE AND PAGE) ACT, 1956

ACT No. 45 OF 1956

An Act to provide for the regulation of the prices charged for newspapers in relation to their pages and of matters connected therewith for the purpose of preventing unfair competition among newspapers so that newspapers may have fuller opportunities of freedom of expression.

[7th September, 1956]

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the Newspaper (Price and Page) Act, 1956. Short title, extent and duration.

(2) It extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

(3) It shall cease to have effect on the expiration of a period of five years from its commencement except as respects things done or omitted to be done before the expiration thereof, and section 6 of the General Clauses Act, 1897, shall apply on the expiry of this Act as if it had then been repealed by a Central Act.

10 of 1897.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,

(a) "daily newspaper" means a newspaper which is published on not less than six days in a week, and includes any supplement or special edition of such newspaper;

(b) "newspaper" means any printed periodical work containing public news or comments on public news appearing at intervals of not more than a week.

Definitions.

3. (1) If the Central Government is of opinion that for the purpose of preventing unfair competition among newspapers so that newspapers generally and in particular, newspapers with smaller resources and those published in Indian languages may have fuller opportunities of freedom of expression, it is necessary or expedient so to do, the Central Government may, from time to time, by notification in the Official Gazette, make an order providing for the regulation of the prices charged for newspapers in relation to their maximum or minimum number of pages, sizes or areas and for the space to be allotted for advertising matter in relation to other matters therein. Power to regulate prices and pages of newspapers, etc.

(2) An order under this section—

(a) may be made in relation to newspapers generally or in relation to any class of newspapers;

(b) may contain different provisions for daily newspapers and newspapers appearing at other periodical intervals and for different classes of newspapers, and may, in particular, make separate provisions for weekly editions of daily newspapers whether appearing under the same title or not, and also for supplements or special editions of newspapers issued on special occasions;

(c) shall be made relatable to such period of time as the Central Government may deem reasonable;

(d) may provide for incidental or supplementary matters.

(3) An order under this section shall be made with due regard to the need for reasonable flexibility with reference to the fall of news, the flow of advertisements and other matters connected with the normal working of newspapers.

(4) Before making any order under this section, the Central Government shall consult associations of publishers, and such publishers likely to be affected by the order as it may think fit with respect to the action proposed to be taken.

Prohibition of publication and sale of newspapers in contravention of order under section 3.

4. No newspaper shall be published or sold in the territories to which this Act extends in contravention of any of the provisions of an order made under section 3.

Returns to be furnished by newspapers.

5. For the purpose of verifying whether an order made under section 3 is being complied with or not, the Press Registrar appointed under the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, may, from time to time, direct the publisher of any newspaper to which such an order applies to furnish to him such weekly returns and statistics with respect to any of the particulars referred to in section 3 as the Press Registrar may, from time to time, require and the publisher of every newspaper shall comply with such direction.

Penalties.

6. (1) If any newspaper is published or sold in contravention of section 4, the publisher of the newspaper shall, on first conviction, be punishable with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees and on any second or subsequent conviction, with fine which may extend to two thousand rupees.

(2) If the publisher of any newspaper—

(a) refuses or neglects to comply with any direction of the Press Registrar given under section 5; or

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(b) furnishes or causes to be furnished to the Press Registrar any weekly returns or statistics which he has reason to believe to be false.

he shall be punishable with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees.

7. No court shall take cognizance of any offence punishable under this Act except upon a complaint in writing by the Press Registrar appointed under the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, or by any officer authorised by him in writing in this behalf.

Cognizance
of offences.

25 of 1867.
