

## TRAI recommends amendment in Cable Act to enable telecom broadband services

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- **TRAI said the government may take suitable measures to facilitate and promote sharing of cable infrastructure by the local cable operators with the TSPs.**

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Wednesday recommended that the government may amend the rules under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act that govern the cable TV distribution sector in the country to enable the use of the last mile infrastructure they have created by the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) for promoting broadband connections.

In its recommendations, TRAI said the government may take suitable measures to facilitate and promote sharing of cable infrastructure by the local cable operators with the TSPs.

"Cable operators may strive to provide last mile access to access service providers, Internet Service Providers in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner for proliferation of broadband services," it stated in its recommendations.

It also pointed out that India's large cable TV distribution sector does not require any additional regulations or corrective measures to enhance the level of competition but the developments should be monitored and necessary interventions to be considered at appropriate time.

TRAI's recommendation come on the back of a letter from the ministry of information and broadcasting (MIB) dated February 2021 which said the regulator's earlier recommendations on "Monopoly\Markey Dominance in the Cable TV Services Sector" were made in 2013 and a considerable time has elapsed with the media and entertainment landscape having transformed since.

Consequently, TRAI issued a consultation paper on "Market Structure\Competition in Cable TV Services" in October 2021 and closed all stakeholder comments in December.

After studying stakeholder comments, TRAI said that globally, cable TV broadband (CATV) has become very popular as it is less expensive, quick to deploy and easier to handle. CATV broadband offered to customers via the existing CATV network can deliver higher broadband speeds. "In India, Cable TV industry has tremendous reach, deep into urban and rural areas. Because of its affordability and ubiquity, cable broadband could be, for India, a super-fast highway for broadband communications for most homes and businesses in the foreseeable future," it noted.

TRAI said cable operators can play an important role in the delivery of broadband if an appropriate policy framework is put in place. For accelerated growth of cable broadband, a harmonized effort is required by the industry and the Government.

The telecom and broadcast sector regulator noted that provisioning of broadband and provisioning of Television content are dealt by two different licenses, one controlled by the Department of Telecommunications and other by Ministry of I&B. "The extant rules/ regulations for the use of cable television infrastructure for providing broadband require suitable review. A cable operator lays the network as per the rights available as per the Right of Way Rules under the Cable Television Networks

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(Regulation), Act 1995. In order to promote use of cable network for broadband services, Rules under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation), Act 1995, need to be suitably amended to encourage cable operators to provide last mile access to service providers for provisioning of broadband services," TRAI said.