



COMMUNICATIONS CONVERGENCE BILL, 2014 ("BILL")

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The Bill seeks to replace the existing telecom laws in India namely the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, the Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933, the Telegraph Wires (unlawful possession) Act, 1950, and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act ("TRAI") of 1997 and bring modification to laws pertaining to Cable TV Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 and Information Technology Act, 2000. Further, under the Bill a singular commission called the Communication Commission of India will be formed in place of TRAI and Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) which will overlook all communication infrastructures. It will consist of seven members. Each member would be a domain expert on areas such as telecom, broadcasting, information technology, law and consumer affairs and finance. Its mandate would be to stimulate market competition in order to ensure better quality services for the consumer and prevent monopolies and take up certain powers of the Censor Board, Ministry Of Environment and Competition Commission of India. This will directly try to regulate the content as well as the carriers who distribute that content.

PSA view – The Bill is expected to get an approval of the Cabinet by the end of September 2015. The implementation of the bill will be viewed as a good change. It will not only help in consolidating the various telecom laws and regulations but will also provide a single regulatory body dealing with all issues related to non-discriminatory access, net neutrality and take into account the changing trends of the communication sector globally like information management, authentication and even financial management.

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