



# Multi-stakeholder Body for Net Neutrality

## Why in News

Recently, the [Telecom Regulatory Authority of India](#) (TRAI) has recommended the creation of a **multi-stakeholder body** (MSB) to ensure that Internet access providers adhere to the provisions of [net neutrality](#).

- The MSB should be set up as a **non-profit entity**.

## Key Points

### ▪ Roles and Responsibilities:

- To provide **advice and support to the Department of Telecommunications** (DoT) in the monitoring and enforcement of net neutrality principles.
- To **investigate complaints** regarding the violation of net neutrality.
- To help DoT in the **maintenance of a repository of reasonable traffic management practices**.

### ▪ Stakeholders:

- It could include telecom service providers, Internet service providers, content providers, researchers, academic and technical community, civil society organisations, and the government.

### ▪ Net Neutrality in India: The DoT accepts **TRAI's recommendations in favour of net neutrality** which:

- **Bars telcos from discriminatory treatment** on the web, based on content, sender, receiver, protocols or equipment.
- **Penalises for violation of license rules** on net neutrality.
- **Includes exceptions for critical services** such as remote healthcare diagnostics, self-driving cars, etc.
- **Exempts content delivery networks**, which do not use public Internet from open web rules.
- **Applies equally to [5G technology](#)** as well because the principles are technology-neutral.

## Net Neutrality

- Net neutrality has been defined as a principle that **Internet Service Providers** (ISP) also called **Internet Access Providers** (IAP) should **enable access to all content and applications regardless of the source**, and **without favouring or blocking particular products or websites**.
- This means when the **customers pay an ISP for a data plan**, they **should be able to access all content online** (news, social media, videos, games, etc.) at the **same broadband speed** which they had opted for.
- **Arguments in Favour:**
  - It **democratises the internet space** as the telecom provider cannot charge differently

for different websites and allows everyone on the internet to participate in it.

- It **does not let ISPs to act as “gatekeepers”** and control, filter or block data according to their will without a court order.
- It **provides a level playing field** to all the big and small companies in the Information Technology (IT) sector and does not let a handful of companies control the internet.
- It **ensures that all people and websites have equal access** to each other, regardless of their ability to pay hence fosters the principle of freedom of speech.

▪ **Arguments Against:**

- It will **stifle innovation** on the internet as it will **not be possible to explore consumer choices** and create content accordingly.
- ISPs will **not be able to make an investment in Broadband** services.
- It will **kill competition as every data packet will be treated the same** and content providers will not get a chance to advance their data at a better rate by paying the telecom providers.

**A QUICK REMINDER**

# What is net neutrality?

All traffic on the internet should be treated equally.

<b>NO BLOCKING</b>	Your internet access provider (IAP) cannot block you from accessing legal content of your choice.
<b>NO THROTTLING</b>	Your IAP cannot intentionally throttle legal internet traffic to slower speeds than other traffic.
<b>NO PAID PRIORITIZATION</b>	Your IAP cannot sell 'fast lane' service to content providers who can pay more than others.

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