



Broadcasting only through Prasar Bharati

For Prelims: Prasar Bharti, TRAI.

For Mains: TRAI and its Powers.

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) has issued an advisory stating that any kind of broadcasting be done only through **Prasar Bharti**.

What is Prasar Bharti?

- Prasar Bharati is a statutory autonomous body. It is the Public Service Broadcaster of the country.
- It was established under the Prasar Bharati Act in 1997.
- The Prasar Bharati Corporation's main objective is to provide autonomy to Doordarshan and Akashvani in order to "educate and entertain the public."

What is the Advisory?

- It states that ministries, departments of the central government, state governments, and union territory (UT) administrations or entities related to them would not be allowed to enter into broadcasting or distribution of broadcasting activities.
- In case central ministries, states, UTs and **entities related to them are already broadcasting their content**, it would now be done through the public broadcaster Prasar Bharati.
- It is in line with the recommendations of the [Telecom Regulatory Authority of India \(TRAI\)](#), the [Supreme Court](#) judgment and the legal opinion given by the Ministry of Law and Justice.
 - As per the Supreme Court, **Public service broadcasting should be in the hands of a statutory corporation** or corporation set up under a statute **to ensure their impartiality in political, economic, and social matters**.
- As per the existing policy guidelines for setting up of community radio in India, government universities, colleges, schools, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, central / state universities, including autonomous bodies and agricultural universities are eligible for setting up of community radios.

What were the TRAI's Recommendations?

- In 2012, the TRAI had suggested that the Central and State governments, their companies, undertakings, joint ventures with the private sector and the entities funded by the governments **should not be allowed to enter the business of broadcasting** and, or, distribution of TV channels.
 - It relied upon the **Sarkaria Commission's recommendation and the Cricket Association** case verdict.
- The importance of Prasar Bharati should also **not be lost sight of**. The body should fulfil the **legitimate aspirations of government entities as regards broadcasting activities**, while at the same time recommending the 'arm's length' relationship between Prasar Bharati and the

government be further strengthened to enhance its autonomy and functional independence.

What is TRAI?

- **Legal Backing:** The **TRAI** was established on 20th February, 1997 by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997.
- **Objectives of TRAI:**
 - TRAI's mission is **to create and nurture conditions for growth of** telecommunications in the country.
 - TRAI regulates telecom services including fixation/revision of tariffs for telecom services which were earlier vested in the Central Government.
 - It also aims to provide a fair and transparent policy environment which promotes a level playing field and facilitates fair competition.
- **Headquarters:** The head office of the TRAI is located at New Delhi.
- **Powers:**
 - **Order for Furnishing Information:** It can call upon any service provider to furnish in writing the information or explanation relating to its affairs as the Authority may require.
 - **Appointments for Inquiry:** The Authority may appoint one or more persons to make an inquiry in relation to the affairs of any service provider.
 - **Order for Inspection:** It is empowered to direct any of its officers or employees to inspect the books of accounts or other documents of any service provider.
 - **Issue Directions to Service Providers:** The Authority shall have the power to issue such directions to service providers as it may consider necessary for proper functioning by service providers.

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