

For Immediate Release

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

TRAI conducted an Open House Discussion (OHD) on Consultation Paper on “Making ICT Accessible for Persons with Disabilities”

New Delhi, 9th April, 2018: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) convened an Open House Discussion on Consultation Paper on “**Making ICT Accessible for Persons with Disabilities**” on 5th April, 2018.

Over the last two decades, telecommunication and broadcasting services have become ubiquitous and now reach out to the most remote and underserved areas empowering millions of people. However, persons with disabilities (PwDs) are often not able to access the ICT services on account of lack of necessary accessibility features or unaffordable prices of the equipment or due to unavailability of required services to make them compatible for use by such persons.

2. Keeping the above in view, TRAI suo-moto floated a consultation paper on 20th December, 2017 to identify the key areas where policy interventions are needed to understand the barriers being faced by the PwDs in accessing the telecom and broadcasting services so that affirmative actions at policy level in the form of recommendations to the Government or formulation of regulation or advisory to equipment/service providers or a combination of these can be taken. Thirty-two stakeholders including state governments, industry associations, telecom & broadcasting service providers, NGOs, etc. forwarded their comments on the issues raised in the consultation paper.

3. Further, an OHD was convened on 5th April, 2018 to obtain inputs from all stakeholders. There was a good response to the OHD wherein a number of stakeholders including telecom & broadcasting service providers, industry associations, NGOs, academia etc participated and offered their valuable comments on the issues raised in the consultation paper, viz. challenges faced by PwDs in accessing telecommunication and broadcasting services, reasons for not getting desired benefits despite several past policy interventions, corrective measures required to be taken by the Government, need to adopt international accessibility standards, mandate for telecom and broadcasting services by Government, manner in which CSR fund of the companies can be used for development of assistive tools, services, applications, etc. The stakeholders reiterated the need to have uniform policy on the issue so that the unique challenges faced by the PwD community are addressed.

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