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February 18, 2019

Mr. Arvind Kumar

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Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

Mahanagar Doorsanchar Bhawan

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Dear Sir,

Re: News Broadcasters Association's (NBA) Comments on the Consultation Paper dated December 03, 2018 on Review of Television Audience Measurement and Ratings in India (Consultation Paper) issued by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)

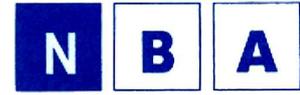
Q1. Whether BARC has been able to accomplish the purpose with transparency and without any bias for which it has been established? Please elaborate your response with justifications. Also, suggest measures to enhance the effectiveness of BARC to give TV ratings with transparency and without bias.

Comment/s:

Broadcast Audience Research Council of India (BARC) was established originally in order to achieve transparency, accuracy and neutrality in respect of conducting the monitoring of ratings of television channels including important events relating to elections etc. BARC operates within the terms of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's (MoIB) Policy Guidelines For Television Rating Agencies in India notified on 10.01.2014 ("Guidelines"), which is itself based on TRAI's recommendations dated 13.09.2013. NBA submits that the BARC ratings in respect of the news genre are neither transparent nor accurate.

1. BARC faces a number of challenges and needs to take several measures to enhance and increase its effectiveness and bring about greater transparency.

(a) As per the Guidelines framed, BARC was to have increased the sample panel size, being the number of homes where the audience measurement device is placed, to 50,000 by the end of 2018 whereas till date the panel size that have been installed is only 33,000 which data then does not give the entire scenario in respect of viewership. Therefore, there is an urgent need that BARC devise concrete plans to achieve the targeted figures of household samples at the earliest.



- (b) The panels installed in homes must be changed quarterly to avoid manipulation and tampering with the meters as is presently happening.
- (c) In order to bring complete transparency, BARC must share the market sample size with the broadcasters.
- (d) The sample panels should be replaced regularly in the households that they have been installed to avoid tampering/manipulation.
- (e) The Guidelines need to be changed in respect of the niche channels as presently niche channels are facing extreme fluctuations in the ratings due to the Guidelines used by BARC for measurement. Niche Channels, like certain channels of general entertainment, sports, business and infotainment do not command a very large subscriber/ viewer base and have a very specific audience. Therefore, these channels need to be adequately represented in order that they are compared with only those channels which fall under the category of niche channels, for analysing their viewership/ audience measurement.
- (f) There still exist some anomalies in rating for some channels especially during the late night time bands. This rating takes place without any major differentiating factor or quality of programming when comparing other channels programs telecast during the same time. These issues need to be addressed by BARC in a satisfactory manner.
- (g) Apart from quantity of sample, BARC must also focus on enhancement of quality of viewership measurement.
- (h) BARC must take initiatives to prevent tampering at the ground level and stringent action should be taken once the tampering of meters etc. is reported.
- (i) Since the outliers are not picked up most of the time and considering that BARC follows regular process of audits therefore, audit mechanism can also be used to check and report as to what are the outliers and other filtering mechanisms used and whether the division of BAR-O-Meters and the respective weightage are more representative.
- (j) BARC must permit quarterly or six monthly third party audits on a regular basis and the auditor must be chosen from a panel of broadcasters.
- (k) The selection of the members of the technical committee of BARC must be more transparent.



(1) BARC should consider establishing a Grievance Redressal Forum where complaints /disputes relating to ratings can be dealt with in a fair and objective manner. In cases where channels are found to be guilty of any manipulation/tampering, BARC ratings for such channels should be suspended and necessary actions should be taken against such channels. Stringent penal action should be taken for any violations.

There have been instances where a news channel has been replaced by other news channel of a different language by a Multi System Operator without giving any reason and the ratings of the said news channel were affected. Furthermore, the matter could not be brought before any forum as BARC doesn't have any control on the DPOs. Usually tampering in respect of ratings by DPO's would be done probably in collusion with the channels. The selection of the aforementioned Grievance Redressal Forum should be transparent.

Q2. Do you feel that present shareholding/ownership pattern of BARC ensures adequate representation of all stakeholders to maintain its neutrality and transparent TV ratings? How its credibility and neutrality can be enhanced further? Please elaborate your response with justification.

Comment/s:

NBA states that the present pattern of ownership shareholding of BARC i.e. Indian Broadcasting Foundation (Broadcasters 60%), Indian Society of Advertisers (Advertisers 20%) and Advertising Agencies Association of India (Advertising Agencies 20%) is adequate since all the major beneficiaries get sufficient representation and therefore neutrality and transparency in television ratings can be maintained. It may be noted that the technology used by BARC is also internationally accepted. BARC has also taken on board the public broadcaster, Prasar Bharti for larger representation of viewership.

However, TRAI may consider the following suggestions to further enhance the credibility and neutrality of BARC:

(a) In order to ensure a larger degree of transparency and neutrality, a reasonable representation from each TV genre/broadcaster should be acceptable.

(b) BARC should consider establishing a Grievance Redressal Forum where complaints /disputes relating to ratings can be dealt with in a fair and objective manner. In cases where channels are found to be guilty of any manipulation/tampering, BARC ratings for such channels should be suspended and necessary actions should be taken against such channels. Stringent penal action should be taken for any violations.



3. Is there a need to promote competition in television rating services to ensure transparency, neutrality and fairness to give TAM rating? What regulatory initiatives/measures can be taken to make TV rating services more accurate and widely acceptable? Please elaborate your response with justifications.

Comment/s:

(a) NBA submits that previously the industry had not seen many participants operating in the field of television audience measurement. In 2008, only TAM Media Research and aMAP (i.e., Audience Measurement and Analytics Limited) were providing rating services, and their operations too were restricted to a few large cities. The panel size was restricted to approximately 6000 and 7000 meters for TAM and aMAP respectively. This led to the establishment of BARC.

(b) In view of the submissions made in paragraph 1 above, there is no requirement for multiple rating agencies to enter the TV ratings sector particularly as BARC is a joint industry body, where all major beneficiaries of rating (Broadcasters, Advertisers and Advertising Agencies) are represented. The industry should work to strengthen the lacunas in the system/technology/methodology applied by BARC. Existence of multiple agencies may promote competition but at the same time it may also lead to confusion, difficulties, and regional fractions as well as invite concerns related to the comparative accuracy of the final data/ ratings supplied. Furthermore, all agencies will be based on a sample of households; the output from different agencies can differ widely. The sample estimates and different studies/analysis may produce different results as in the case of print media where NRS and IRS came up with varying results at the same time leading to major issues in the advertising industry.

(c) It may be noted that if multiple agencies are introduced to report television audience measurement and rating it will lead to:

1. Increased cost of operations
2. The increase in cost of operations would be passed on to the broadcasters and ultimately to the end users/ consumers.
3. Possible conflict with respect to the accuracy and reliability of ratings.

(d) In any case there are sufficient checks and balances provided by the MoIB and TRAI in respect of the reporting requirement and the audit requirements. MoIB can conduct audits under its Guidelines and TRAI can audit the system and procedures.



(e) The only regulatory initiatives/measures that can be taken to make TV rating services more accurate is to strive towards increasing sample size and gathering of viewership patterns on the basis of Return-Path-Data (RPD). This would make the system of measurement more transparent.

(f) For the aforesaid reasons the establishment of multiple agencies for television audience measurement and ratings in the country is not desirable. Strong measures need to be taken to provide a mechanism for corporate governance which is transparent and efficient.

Q4. Is the current audience measurement technique used by BARC apposite? Suggest some methods, if any, to improve the current measurement techniques.

Comment/s:

The methodology, Watermarking technology used by BARC is largely appropriate, is an internationally accepted system of measurement and is an up gradation from the previous technology used by TAM.

However, certain improvements do need to be made to the methodology/technology:

(i) There is a scope to increase panel size, regulate the mechanism for selection of sample homes, improve quality of panel, and include out-of-homeviewing and incorporate RPD to make it more robust. Furthermore RPD must be introduced in the modern set top boxes (STB) along with online reporting.

(ii) It is advisable that BARC disclose the sample size in granular cuts, state wise, to increase the transparency and credibility.

(iii) Ensure an equal representation of all channels in the sample homes for carrying out a more accurate analysis. For e.g. if the sample homes included in the overall analysis subscribe to only (say) Channel A, then the ratings of (say) Channel B automatically come down. Hence due to unequal distribution of sample homes subscribing to Channel A viz-a-viz Channel B, there is an inevitable error in the ratings. Therefore, as far as possible, all sample homes should have subscription of similar/ all channels available on the platforms of respective DPOs.

(iv) The mechanism for selection of sample homes by BARC should be regulated.

(v) There should be a mandate to release data separately for each of the following category of platforms:

- a. DTH
- b. HITS



- c. IPTV
- d. Digital Cable
- e. DD Free Dish (should be a separate category under Free DTH)

The number of sample homes under each of the above category of the platforms and further for each DPO should be determined basis the actual subscriber base of the DPO. Each DPO should be allocated sample homes basis a certain uniform percentage (%) of its subscribers.

(vi) Currently BARC only monitors household data. While the investors could be based out of households, the real audience of the Business News Channel is out of home while consuming the channel in their respective offices/business establishments. Unfortunately, BARC does not include the out-of-home audience which is the core viewer for the genre. Hence currently only a small section of the universe gets captured in the viewership data which makes the monitoring process incorrect and unjustified for the Business News Genre. BARC has to strengthen its monitoring methodology for Business News Genre in order to ensure that the viewing habits of its consumers are captured and tracked in the true sense.

(vii) Furthermore, Relative Error (RE) remains an issue. RE is simply the permissible deviation of estimates from the true value. High RE is diluting the accuracy of results. RE depends mostly on the sample size. While comparing the population-sample proportion of USA (0.036%), it can be seen that BARC has only a 0.022% reach and therefore BARC needs to increase the sample size to 71,000 homes.

News channels and Niche channels suffer more by high RE due to low sampling.

(viii) A state like Kerala should be specially addressed in respect of RE. Comparatively with a low spread geography and a high TV viewing penetration (89% of the population are TV viewers) among the states of the country, Kerala is marked with a high RE (1.6%, only behind to North East and Odisha) (Ref. BARC India Relative Error white paper). In the kids genre, Kerala has the highest RE (6.5%) among the states of India. Comparatively a high homogeneous state where the Urban-Rural divide is minimal, this high RE indicates that Kerala is not properly addressed in BARC sample selection.

Q5. Does broadcasting programmes that are out of their category or in different language for some time during the telecast affect the TAM rating? If so, what measures should be adopted to curb it?

Comment/s:



(i) Channels with mixed genres create confusion in terms of rating numbers particularly in the news category when infotainment channels are considered news channels but the news content in such channels are not adequate for them to be considered as such. It may be noted that in the Uplinking Guidelines issued by MoIB, a News & Current Affairs TV Channel has been defined as “a News & Current Affairs TV channel means a channel which has any element of news & current Affairs in its programme content”, this definition creates a confusion in respect of the news genre as even a music/GEC channel having an element of news is considered as a news channel. For the comparisons of channels to be accurate the major content of that channel should define the category/genre of the channel and then rated. Furthermore broadcasters should strictly adhere to their genre or category.

(ii) Programmes that are out of their category or in a language different from the language of channel adversely impact television ratings since, they tend to give an edge to channel doing so vis-à-vis its competitors. Broadly, all DPOs array their channels on the basis of genre and language e.g., news channels may be arrayed in a manner that all Hindi language news channels may be listed together, followed by all English language news channels. Considering that Hindi language will have a far bigger viewership base when compared with English language channels, therefore, with an aim to take advantage of higher viewership base, minimal Hindi language content may be included by some English language news channels so as to justify stacking of such channels among Hindi language news channels. Such practices ought to be discouraged so as to ensure that level playing field is maintained amongst shareholders.

(iii) The decision to introduce programmes to cater to any specific audience/ in specific language is made by the broadcasters after extensive research of the market factors. Channels with specific demand i.e. the Niche Channels are introduced taking into consideration factors like the percentage of audience having specific television viewing needs, the reach and demand of niche channels, cost of operation of such channels etc. This involves huge investments made at the broadcaster’s end.

Q6. Can TV rating truly based on limited panel homes be termed as representative?

Comment/s:

(i) NBA states that estimation through sample size is a scientific methodology to be representative enough provided the sample size /panel homes are large and viewership patterns are gathered on the basis of RPD. The statistical studies with scientific methodologies such as the sample method will give good results with minimum relative error level provided the sample should be properly and scientifically selected. However, in today’s technical capabilities, the RPD model tracking can deliver much higher accuracy in results by dramatically expanding the base.



- (ii) Since India is a diverse country, it is imperative to have a large sample size to represent all regional areas and economic strata.
- (iii) It is understood that any sample-based study will always have a margin of error as it is not a census. However, in research, it will not be financially feasible to do a census, hence a sample-based approach even with limited panel homes can be quite representative if the panel size is robust and sample selection closer to the universe.
- (iv) Shops, offices, commercial establishments and hotels may also be included in the sample homes/ panels so that the data is more representative as the viewing pattern/preferences at these places are likely to be different from home viewing.
- (v) A mechanism should be prescribed by TRAI so as to ensure that the samples/ panels have an adequate representation of all channels.

Q7. What should be done to reduce impact of manipulation of panel home data on overall TV ratings? Give your comments with justification.

Comment/s:

For advertisers TV ratings are extremely important and therefore the accuracy of these ratings acquires great significance.

- (a) In view of the above, it is suggested that BARC must permit quarterly or six-monthly third-party audits on a regular basis and the auditor must be chosen from the panel of broadcasters. The findings of the audit must be transparent.
- (b) The panels installed in the homes must be replaced every quarter.
- (c) The overall television ratings depend on two parameters; Reach and Time spent. More weightage should be given to 'Reach' in Television Rating calculation. The increase in either of the aforesaid parameters will increase Television Ratings. Wherever it is found that the time spent parameter in respect of ratings is found to be unusually high, BARC should analyse and suspend such ratings. The RPD model tracking can deliver much higher accuracy in results by dramatically expanding the base.

However, if Time Spent is used as a parameter, there is a greater chance of manipulating data by increasing the Time Spent deliberately and this would increase the ratings. An example of such an incident took place in a particular state where one news channel which had a consistently low rating suddenly overtook the top channels in ratings. The said channel had the lowest coverage among the news



channels and had the lowest reach, but because the time spent was abnormally high, its ratings had increased substantially. The solution to such a problem is to give more weightage to Reach than Time Spent, so that the results are more balanced and of value to the advertiser.

(d) Panel manipulation is also of concern as it does not lead to results which are transparent or fair. Panel manipulation should be recognized as a serious, unethical offence and any person/ company indulging in such manipulation should be punished by levying hefty fines, suspension of licenses etc.

(e) Exceptional and unusual rating behaviors in channels for a short period should be excluded from ratings unless such unusual ratings are assessed, analyzed quickly and cleared.

(f) BARC needs to ensure that an effective validation check is in place so that outlier data gets weeded out on a daily basis .

Q8. What should be the panel size both in urban and rural India to give true representation of audience?

Comment/s:

(i) As per the TRAI recommendations in 2008, the design of the panel homes should be in proportion of the Urban - Rural spread of TV Households. Rural India consists of 65% of the population while urban constitutes 35%. However the urban population has greater disposable income and spending power and therefore the TV viewing habits of both Rural and Urban must be taken into account and given weightage to get correct data, representation and analysis. Ideally the sample size should be in line with the Universe proportion. The ideal size should be found out as progress is made and the least error free data could be considered as the best sample size.

(ii) Panel size both in urban and rural India should be increased. This can be done in consultation with BARC keeping in view the monetary implications.

(iii) An increase in sample size of niche consumers and consumers in regional areas will enhance quality of television audience measurement.

(iv) There cannot be a defined number/ panel size that can be held to be adequately representing the entire TV viewing audience. However, attempts may be made to make additions to the current panel size every year. A percentage or a number may be suggested by TRAI itself and the Ratings Agency may take appropriate measures to enhance the same.



(v) The Rural-Urban panel size should perhaps be done state wise in order to attain greater accuracy in the ratings and avoid relative errors that occur.

(vi) The RPD methodology may go a long way in increasing accuracy in TV ratings and would therefore be helpful to the advertisers to make a better analysis in light of the following factors with respect to the consumers' preferences:

1. Consumption capacity
2. Spending capacity/ patterns
3. Income brackets
4. Disposable income
5. Programme preferences

(vii) NBA suggests that the sample homes should adequately represent the urban and rural population. This ratio may be different state wise and BARC needs to take this fact into account.

(viii) Panel size selection is a statistical exercise and should be based on cost consideration and a comparative/ relative error of the sample. It is worth noting that, after a certain point even if the sample is increased, the proportionate improvement in relative error will be marginal. Hence a balance needs to be maintained in terms of sample size, relative error and panel cost management.

(ix) Shops, commercial establishments and hotels may also be included in the sample homes/ panels, if needed as a separate category, so as to further increase the panel size/ representation.

Q9. What method/technology would help to rapidly increase the panel size for television audience measurement in India? What will be the commercial challenge in implementing such solutions?

Comment/s:

(i) The existing method/technology being used by BARC can be used to increase the panel size for television audience measurement in India. In this regard, the commercial challenge would be in respect of additional CAPEX and OPEX that BARC may have to incur and its consequent impact on relevant stakeholders. This needs proper consideration before any recommendations or directions are issued by the TRAI.

(ii) However apart from quantity of the panel size, the quality of the sample as demography, strata, state, etc. has to be considered.

(iii) Additionally, increase in sample size can also be achieved by using hybrid STBs capable of transferring viewership data as proposed by TRAI. However,



secured and proven technologies should be deployed to ensure that servers of DPOs act only as 'pass-through' and are incapable of data access, analysis or manipulation.

(iv) Implementation of the aforementioned mechanism would help substantially expanding the panel home sizes and would also help address the issue of panel home tampering that plagues the television industry in India.

(v) However, it must be ensured that data from hybrid STBs installed at genuine subscribers is communicated to the Rating Agency. This is necessary to eliminate any doubt of foul play at DPO's end, which may result in manipulation of ratings. The commercial challenge in respect of expanding panel size by using connected STBs will be in the form of time taken for testing the technologies and costs towards implementation. However, it is important that such checks and balances are set out to ensure that DPOs are not able to manipulate the ratings. Thus DPOs should not filter or process any data at their end and should only forward the data directly to BARC / ratings agency.

(vi) RPD methodology can be used to increase the panel of households for viewership measurement in the country. However, fusion of RPD with current BARC panel, using viewer attribution model will be a challenge and needs to be handled carefully. Furthermore, getting STBs with the provision of return path will be an additional cost.

(vii) Collecting RPD can be a solution for getting more accurate viewership data. The only limitation of this data is no demographic viewership will be available as in the case of panel homes data where it is collected through viewer ID button.

(viii) Socio-Economic data can be obtained by filling a format with the subscriber through the respective service provider at the time of subscription.

(ix) BARC can publish the RPD either separately or in combination with the panel homes data.

(x) Further the security and confidentiality of the panel homes needs to be maintained.

Q10. Should DPOs be mandated to facilitate collection of viewership data electronically subject to consent of subscribers to increase data collection points for better TRP ratings? Give suggestion with justification.

Comment/s:

(i) An issue of getting the DPOs to facilitate collection of viewership electronically subject to consent of subscribers is an issue that requires much more deliberation and detailing before taking a concrete stand.



(ii) It must be noted that if the DPOs are mandated to collect consented subscribers' data through STBs, it will give a census viewership data instead of the existing limited panel homes data and there may be a possibility of it leading to and encouraging unethical practices and may be a source of illegal revenue for the DPOs.

(iii) DPOs are running, either directly or indirectly their own locality specific TV channels, so this method of getting consented subscribers' data through STBs by DPOs may result in the DPOs manipulating and tampering with the TV ratings data.

Q11. What percentage of STB supports transferring viewership data through establishing a reverse path/connection from STB? What will be the additional cost if existing STBs without return path are upgraded? Give your suggestions with justifications.

Comment/s:

(i) Software updation /replacement of existing STBs will help to gather RPD and therefore more accurate information/data will be available. However no adequate research has been done in this field so far, especially in relation to Direct To Home (DTH) subscribers.

(ii) It is very difficult to estimate the percentage of STBs that support transferring viewership data through establishing a reverse path/connection from STB.

(iii) The costs involved if existing STBs without return path are upgraded are not known and if costs were to be imposed then the DPOs would have to be incentivised by way of targeted subsidies so that DPOs can carry out this activity.

(iv) Data can be collected in two forms namely, through connected STBs as well as through BAR-O-Meters. Additional costs in case of STBs will have two components i.e., one towards upgrading STB itself and the other towards maintaining internet / broadband for transmission of viewership data. In so far as capturing of data through BAR-O-Meters is concerned, the costs should be akin to the current expenditure being incurred by BARC.

Q12. What method should be adopted for privacy of individual information and to keep the individual information anonymous?

Comment/s:

It may be noted that BARC rating data is meant for subscribers and advertisers. Many times, individual information has been leaked due to competition amongst service providers.



For keeping the privacy of individual information and to keep the individual information anonymous it is suggested that:

- (i) All data should be in pseudonym form to ensure that privacy of individuals is not compromised.
- (ii) The anonymity and privacy of individuals in the STB driven data can be kept in the same way as it being kept in case of the existing panel homes data. BARC is getting only the data and the STB location is known to the respective DPO only.
- (iii) In order to ensure privacy of individual information and to keep the individual information anonymous, there must be frequent rotation of homes/ households.
- (iv) A system of automatic programming whereby a fixed random number of homes is selected from the total number of homes/ households to assess the required data. The selection of homes to arrive at the ratings can be made rotational over a given period of time say, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, bi-monthly etc.
- (v) Further, outsourcing the installation of BAR-O-Meters by BARC, to an external neutral agency, who will maintain privacy of information, may also be considered.
- (vi) BARC may get a non-disclosure agreement signed to keep individual information private or use codes instead of revealing identities.
- (vii) Dummy STBs may be used in order that the barometer being used for data interpretation is unknown.
- (viii) A strict policy is required to control the Panel Management Agency.

Q13. What should be the level/granularity of information retrieved by the television audience measurement agency from the panel homes so that it does not violate principles of privacy?

Comment/s:

The level/granularity of information retrieved by the television audience measurement agency from the panel homes so that it does not violate principles of privacy should be:

- (i) Socio-economic and demographic data can be taken without disclosing the identity of panel home individuals. Providing virtual id for individuals can be considered.



(ii) Discretion should be exercised with the right to the dissemination of information regarding the households. All the information which requires effective selection of a panel home be it demographics, mother tongue, language of viewing TV, product ownership etc. must be collected from panel homes.

(iii) Information related to demographics i.e. age, average income bracket of households in the area, average disposable income etc. can be shared as part of research and analysis.

(iv) However, minute information like who is watching television, the time at which the household is watching etc should not be shared at all.

(v) Information collection from person is a standard procedure under all research studies; care needs to be taken in not divulging the information to the outsiders and to ensure that the information is used solely for efficient panel management as well as anonymity of the viewer is maintained.

(vi) The RPD method may help maintain the privacy/anonymity of an individual. To start with, data collected through RPD should be used analysed in a manner similar to what is being presently done through BAR-O-Meters i.e., at an overall level. This will also ensure uniformity in data collection and analysis.

(vii) In order to address issue of RPD, it is suggested that MoIB should set out in detail terms of operation of RPD and interaction between DPOs and registered research agencies so as to eliminate any issue of misuse, tampering and manipulation.

(viii) Additionally, while capturing viewership data on the basis of RPD, MoIB should also prescribe that just like BAR-O-Meters, the RPD data too should ascertain certain basic details pertaining to member of household viewing the channel so that common data points are maintained both in case of BAR-O-Meters as well as in case of RPD.

Q14. What measures need to be taken to address the issue of panel tampering/infiltration? Please elaborate your response with justifications.

Comment/s:

There are enough speculations in the market that panel homes could be identified by some broadcasters. Even though BARC had taken measures to increase the credibility by distributing the work to different vendors, the agency involved in the meter installation is under the lens of suspicion.

(i) In fact channels with low viewership attempt to tamper with the panel/ratings. BARC should take action against the violators immediately upon it



being brought to BARC's notice that tampering has happened. It should analyse the rating trend-reach and TSV and take action by sending a vigilance team to conduct the testing on the said programs which show a sudden spike in ratings.

- (ii) BARC should also suo moto analyse unusual behaviours in ratings.
- (iii) Panels should be replaced from time to time.
- (iv) Panel manipulation should be recognised as a serious/unethical offence and any person/ company undertaking it should be punished.
- (v) Some service providers indulge in malpractices such as households in a particular area are contacted by some agents on behalf of broadcasters who carry out promotional activities thereby influencing viewers to watch particular channels . This practice is not acceptable.
- (vi) In case BARC is unable to establish a satisfactory Grievance, Redressal Mechanism or fails to implement strictures on a person/companies who are found to manipulate/tamper with data, TRAI must consider putting in place a mechanism to deal with complaints regarding tampering and manipulation of TV ratings.
- (vii) Simultaneously, BARC needs to ensure effective validation check so that outlier data gets weeded out on weekly basis.
- (viii) BARC should also conduct audits regularly, third party audits should be conducted every quarter or six monthly and such audits should be transparent as suggested.

Q15. Should BARC be permitted to provide raw level data to broadcasters? If yes, how secrecy of households, where the people meters are placed, can be maintained?

Comment/s:

- (i) It is not advisable to provide the Raw Level Data (RLD) as it will create confusion in the market and there is a chance of misinterpretation/manipulation of the data. As technology has not progressed enough to protect the information of the homes, therefore RLD should not be permitted to be released to the broadcasters and advertisers for the moment.
- (ii) In the event that BARC receives a complaint in respect of a certain news channels ratings in addition to looking into the complaint, BARC should provide the broadcaster/channel with the RLD. The procedure for the same should be prescribed by the TRAI.



(iii) It may be noted that RLD may not be of much use to the broadcasters at that level because the same is later subject to various permutations and combinations and is further processed and refined for a minute to minute analysis for a better understanding and an efficient targeting of advertisements and social messaging.

Q16. Will provisioning of raw level data to broadcasters, in any manner, either directly or indirectly contravene the policy guidelines for television rating agencies prescribed by MIB?

Comment/s:

Since NBA suggests that it is not advisable to provide RLD as it will create confusion in the market and there is a chance of misinterpretation/manipulation of the data, this question needs no answer.

Kindly refer to NBA's submissions made in Question 15 above.

Q17. Is the current disclosure and reporting requirements in the present guidelines sufficient? If no, what additional disclosure and reporting requirements should be added?

Comment/s:

The present disclosure and reporting requirements are appropriate. However, the following suggested points may also be made part of the said disclosures/ reporting requirements:

- a. The MoIB Guidelines should include disclosure of the sample size on the BARC website and software.
- b. The Guidelines should also include a fair and permissible data usage in promotions (mailers, ads, etc.), since the BARC guidelines currently used by the industry are vague in nature and prone to misinterpretation.
- c. Disclosure regarding the steps taken during the year towards up gradation of technology, any research and development made and the details of expenses undertaken for the said purpose.
- d. Disclosures regarding any corporate actions undertaken by the Ratings Agency or any of its member associations/ agencies to ensure a smooth and transparent functioning.
- e. Geographical classification in BARC reports should provide state-wise information as well, which will be very useful to advertisers and channels. Similarly, BARC should also provide sample size by state in its reports.



- f. Different languages on one channel must not be permitted.
- g. One watermark should not be assigned to two different channels.
- h. The reporting of BARC data (currently every Thursday for previous week (Saturday to Friday)) should not be 5-6 days after the week's completion. It must be released within a day or two for example on every Monday. This will ensure greater accuracy and less chance of manipulation of data.
- i. Landing page should not be given to any channel as this will avoid unfair competition.

Q18. Stakeholders may also provide their comments on any other issue relevant to the present consultation

Comment/s:

1. The market surveys conducted by the TV Ratings agencies should include questions related to the present average income brackets of the users, the consumer durables owned by the users, the present spending capacity of the users etc.

NBA submits that the above questions may also be taken into consideration with respect to the future prospects of the consumers/ users. Accordingly, the questions may also revolve around the expected increase in the income brackets of users in the near future; related increase in the disposable income of the users; intention of the end users to buy consumer durables in the near future, the type of consumer durables that the end users intend to buy etc.

2. Till such time as the RPD method is applied by BARC the DPOs should not be permitted to run locality specific channels either directly or indirectly.

3. Surprise viewership surveys should be taken to compare it with BARC ratings to satisfy BARC that its rating is relatively accurate. If any major variations are found, actions should be taken immediately

4. The reporting of BARC data (currently every Thursday for previous week (Saturday to Friday)) should not be 5-6 days after the week's completion. It must be released within a day or two for example on every Monday. This will ensure greater accuracy and less chance of manipulation of data.

5. In case BARC is unable to establish a satisfactory Grievance, Redressal Mechanism or fails to implement strictures on a person/companies who are found to



manipulate/tamper with data, TRAI must consider putting in place a mechanism to deal with complaints regarding tampering and manipulation of TV ratings.

The response given by NBA is on behalf of its member news channels.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Annie Joseph'.

Annie Joseph
Secretary General