

Broadband India Forum (BIF) hails amendments to the Unified License, boosting competition in the broadband landscape by allowing smaller and local ISPs to offer their services

New Delhi 23rd Aug, 2023: Broadband India Forum (BIF) welcomed the amendments made by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to the unified licensing conditions. The think-tank body praised the government for inserting a new clause that prohibits licensees from entering into any exclusive contract/agreement with any public entity or any person for providing public telecom services or Right of Way (RoW).

According to the prominent policy forum, this amendment will break the barriers for services provider to enter the market, allowing smaller and local ISPs and other telcos get access to the venues in a FRAND manner and expand their operations.

The Indian Telegraph Act 1885 allows TSPs to install their infrastructure after following due process and approvals. However, in practice, many of the RWA's gated communities, owners of the malls, shopping complexes, business complexes, etc. enter into exclusive agreement/contract with one of the service providers for their services. The rest of the service providers are either not allowed to install their telecom infrastructure inside the premises or are permitted only after paying exorbitant charges which are arbitrarily decided by the incumbent service provider.

Welcoming the DoT amendment, BIF President T V Ramachandran said, "This is a futuristic decision and in favour of consumers. With this legislation, India would be able to create a level playing field for all service providers and ensure a healthy competition in the market, resulting in competitive prices for consumers. This will facilitate India provide affordable and personalised broadband services to its citizens. Additionally, this will assist in putting an end to current monopolistic market practices."

The availability of multiple options of service providers will help consumers purchase plans as per their needs and requirements and bring down costs.

About Broadband India Forum: Broadband India Forum (BIF) functions as an independent policy forum and knowledge-based think-tank that works for the development and enhancement of the entire broadband ecosystem in a holistic, technology- neutral and service-neutral manner. BIF has established itself as a thought leader and a credible and effective voice, to help propel the nation to achieve the country's ambitious vision of creating a Digital India. To achieve this, BIF works to promote the rapid development of policies, so as to facilitate affordable and high-speed ubiquitous broadband throughout the country.