

# EDITORIAL

Telecom companies are at an inflection point witnessing a broad landscape of significant changes. There has been a business and customer model disruption, with technologies like AI, big data and the internet of things redefining service-delivery and value-capture models, while start-ups/OTT setting new standards for seamless customer experience. With the pandemic staggering the world in the last two years, the recovery post pandemic has shifted the focus to supporting consumers and businesses through digital transformation and building an ecosystem that adds value. Consumers are heavily relying on bandwidth as activities like remote learning, work from home and gaming have become permanent.

With telcos being the backbone of digital services, it is imperative for them to move beyond connectivity and lead digitization from the forefront to support the growing demand for digital services. With the spectrum auctions taking place now, India can expect by the end of the year to join the ranks of countries with 5G telecom networks. It will also bring a radical change to the telecom sector in India. Telecom companies will need to reinvent themselves to stay relevant and competitive in the enterprise segment.

The telecom industry has noticed a significant reduction in the time it takes to get permissions for the installation of telecom towers and the laying of optical fibre cables across all states since the portal's inception. Prime Minister of India's Gati Shakti Master Plan is a major boost to developing a robust telecom infrastructure in our country, and it is imperative to develop 'state-of-art' network architecture just like other infrastructure facilities such as railway, roads and transportation, and so on, as telecommunication services have become an integral and essential necessity of our daily lives. The advent of Gati Shakti Sanchar Portal has proven to be a game changer in terms of getting long-awaited Right of Way (RoW)

applications approved quickly and efficiently. This is actually a one-step forward towards 'Ease of Doing Business', bringing transparency, accountability and responsiveness to all telecom stakeholders while processing the application. Also providing a strong mechanism to achieve the National Digital Communication Policy-2018 goal of 'Broadband to All.

Further, Prime Minister of India's vision Atmanirbhar Bharat is taking concrete steps in Telecom equipment manufacturing. Production Linked Incentive scheme in telecom sector was launched in 2021. A total of 31 companies are existing beneficiaries for manufacturing of various telecom equipment under the PLI scheme. To promote the entire value-chain in telecom manufacturing, Design-led PLI was launched in June 2022. It provided additional incentives of 1% over and above the existing incentives for products that are designed in India. A total of 32 companies have submitted applications. 17 of these 32 companies have applied as Design-led manufacturers and remaining as Production linked manufacturers. It is heartening that 18 new companies have submitted applications. India is poised to emerge as a design and manufacturing hub for telecom and networking equipment.

The prospect of future competition as well as the evolving needs of their enterprise clients is also making Telcos change the way they have traditionally operated. In their new avatars they will be providers and aggregators of private 5G enterprise services that include solutions in platform, analytics, security and more. Though, Indian telcos are better placed in terms of technology solutions than peers in many other geographies as a delayed entry into 5G has allowed them to leapfrog ahead.

Moreover, professionals like CMAs can suggest the Government by applying Social Cost Benefit Analysis technique to determine whether active or infrastructure sharing are feasible or not for a proposed project. Again, SCBA



also facilitates apt planning, decision-making, evaluation and controlling of project costing. With the help of various cost management techniques, CMAs help to identify the constraint factors that limit the performance of telcos. The CMAs can frame cost competitive tariff and subsidy mechanism to ensure availability of quality service to consumers at reasonable and competitive rates, ensure financial viability of the sector and attract investments, promote transparency, consistency and predictability in regulatory approaches across jurisdictions and minimize perceptions of regulatory risks as well as promote competition in addition to efficiency in operations.

A practicing Cost Accountant is authorized to appear for Telecom Disputes Settlement Appellate Tribunal to resolve the disputes of the service providers. He may even render advisory services to the companies in telecom industry regarding policy decision, cost reduction, maintaining the quality, initiating innovative schemes and carrying out audit for Metering and Billing Accuracy through his professional expertise in costing and accounting. He can also perform Audit of Digital Addressable System -in accordance with the regulatory framework for digital addressable systems comprising of the "Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Service Interconnection (Addressable Systems) Regulations, 2017, "Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services Standards of Quality of Service and Consumer Protection (Addressable Systems) Regulations, and "Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services (Eighth) (Addressable Systems) Tariff Order, 2017. CMAs are also eligible for Reporting and Audit for System on Accounting Separation- Certification Work.

This issue presents a good number of articles on the cover story "Emerging trends in Telecom Industry in India" written by distinguished experts. Further, we look forward to constructive feedback from our readers on the articles and overall development of the Journal. Please send your emails at [editor@icmai.in](mailto:editor@icmai.in). We thank all the contributors to this important issue and hope our readers will enjoy the articles.