TRAI CHAIRMAN, PD VAGHELA ON TRAI’S ROLE IN FUTURE

TRAI chairman is all for transparency and wants TRAI to be an enabler.

TRAI is getting its act together and wants to facilitate as an enabler rather than a disruptor. Recently the TRAI chairman spelt out some of his thoughts on TRAI.

“The way technology is changing and the way new players are coming, we must ensure a level playing field for all. We should not impose regulations or restrictions on the new players; less regulation is the best regulation,” affirmed PD Vaghela.

On OTT, Vaghela feels that OTT has no licensing fee and the same is the case with telecom. Under TRAI act, there is a mandate to regulate only those service providers to whom the government is giving license.

Vaghela feels broadcasting to be slightly difficult to regulate and the reasons as the stakeholders who are involved have very diverse interests and many times they are diametrically opposite to each other.

He cited an example of TRAI’s New Tariff Order 3.0. There was a huge controversy and debates over that. Vaghela believes that TRAI has no business controlling the tariff.

He further added, "When we went for consultation, broadcasters, and to some extent DTH operators, wanted complete freedom and forbearance but when it comes to LCOs, and to some extent MSOs, they wanted regulation from TRAI. LCOs say that TRAI should completely regulate the pricing of the industry. For us it becomes very difficult to balance the interests of the stakeholders."

Vaghela is happy if the industry sits together and gives TRAI a roadmap on how everyone can go about with the problems. He feels that LCOs have problems and they have to be protected. There are a large number of LCOs whose subscription base is going down, their revenue is going down and this is a transition thing. This is a transition stage where all stakeholders have to take care of them. That is one concern TRAI has.