

## Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, 2023

### Why in news?

Recently, the draft Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, 2023 was released by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

#### Broadcasting Regulations in India

- **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**- It is the focal point for matters related to private broadcasting, public broadcasting service (Prasar Bharati), multi media advertising, regulation of print media etc.,
- **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** - It regulates the tariffs payable to subscribers of television channels and service providers in the broadcasting sector.
- **Electronic Media and Monitoring Centre**- It was established to supervise, monitor and record the content that is broadcast on Television channel in accordance with the government norms and regulations.
- **Prasar Bharati**- It is a statutory autonomous body set up by Parliament under Prasar Bharati Act 1990, and comprises of Doordarshan Television broadcasting and Akashvani.
- **Cable Network Act 1995**- It governs broadcaster and distribution registration, and the State government has established many monitoring agencies to ensure proper implementation of the Act.

### What are the key features of Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill 2023?

- **Aim**- To bring a consolidated legal framework for the broadcasting sector.
- **Modernization**-The Bill seeks to replace *Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995* and other policy guidelines governing the broadcasting sector.
- **Extension**- It extends the regulatory purview to the OTT content, digital news and current affairs which are currently regulated through *Information Technology Act, 2000*.
- **Regulation**- The bill provides regulatory provisions for various broadcasting services under a single legislative framework.
- **Adaptability**- The bill adapts to the dynamic world of [OTT](#), Digital Media, DTH, IPTV, and more, promoting technological advancement and service evolution.
- **Comprehensive** - It provides definitions for contemporary broadcasting and other important technical terms for the first time.
- **Differentiated approach**- It allows for a differentiated approach to Programme and Advertisement Code across various services and requires self-classification by broadcasters and robust access control measures for restricted content.
- **Inclusivity**- It aims to make broadcasting more inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities through the use of subtitles, audio descriptors, and sign language.
- It also has a provision for *Disability Grievance Officer*.
- **Accessibility**- It has provisions for infrastructure sharing among broadcasting network operators and carriage of platform services.

- The Bill streamlines the 'Right of Way' section to address relocation and alterations more efficiently
- **Institutional support-**

| Institution                  | About   |
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| Content Evaluation Committee | Self-regulation   |
| Broadcast Advisory Council   | Advise the Central government on programme code and advertisement code violations |

- **Dispute Resolution Mechanism-** The bill established a structured mechanism for dispute resolution.
- **Penalty-** It provides statutory penalties for operators and broadcasters, such as advisory, warning, censure, or monetary penalties.

### What are the concerns of the bill?

- **Affects autonomy-** The regulation could affect the autonomy, as OTT platforms work on a "pull model" where consumers choose the content.
- **Impact on content innovation-** The stringent and subjective codes could lead to content censorship and affect the audience experience.
- **Over regulations-** The bill extends the regulatory purview to OTT platforms which are regulated under IT Act.
- **Pricing regime-** As OTT contents are regulated under the bill, the government may bring the pricing regime for OTT content as it has done for television channels.

### References

1. [Indian Express- Broadcasting Services \(Regulation\) Bill 2023](#)
2. [PIB- Broadcasting Services \(Regulation\) Bill 2023](#)

