Net Neutrality

It's a good thing that TRAI has now banned the differential pricing of data services. Still, it seeks users' reviews about the same and on the net neutrality. Still, there are players in these fields also. What about just banning their basic services? Shouldn't we do some more? After that it will be like Arnab Goswami's 'nation wants to know' thing if they seek the answers to these questions. Right now, the readers would rather be interested to know about net neutrality more than him.

What is net neutrality? It is the basic principle in the internet which states that the government should treat all the data on the internet same, ranging from the net speed, user, content, site, platform, application, type of attached equipment, or mode of communication. The term was coined by Columbia University media law professor Tim Wu in 2003, as an extension of the longstanding concept of a common carrier. It gained its popularity in 2014 post Lok Sabha elections and was also made popular amongst the people by political parties; irony is that they only used this as a medium for blaming each other for not proper implementation. Also, parodies and videos by AIB with slogan "**SAVE THE INTERNET**" also ensured popularity for the regular internet users. Implementation of net neutrality also ensures that the In essence, Net Neutrality implies that all Internet data pack should be treated equally, that there should be no fast or slow lanes for Internet, or that users should pay differently for accessing some websites.

For startups, in a developing country like India, net neutrality means the profit for them as many of them are dependent on the medium for their success of their business.

Rishabh Gupta, COO, Housing.com, says, "Net neutrality has played a significant role in keeping the internet a level-playing field, simplifying customer outreach for businesses across industries. Further, the platform has encouraged new age entrepreneurs to bring in innovative business models making technology as an integral part of business; be it banking, mobile payments, e-commerce, real estate, etc."

But what did TRAI faced? Appraisals and criticisms. Well, less appraisals and more criticisms. As TRAI made it difficult for One The Top (OTT) players like WhatsApp, Viber, and Skype etc. to concentrate over their business as they have to follow the basic rules but The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) has slammed TRAI saying OTTs are already regulated and governed by the IT Act.

A statement issued by IAMAI President Subho Ray said: "It looks like TRAI, in its consultation paper, has copy-pasted from submissions of telcos. India has a robust and at times, overbearing IT Act." Expressing support for Net Neutrality, his statement said, "The paper makes an assumption that Internet doesn't come under any regulations, which is incorrect.

All Internet companies are regulated by IT Act". IAMAI includes firms like Google, Facebook, Snapdeal, Ola, MakeMyTrip and Saavn as its members.

Facebook, on the other hand tried to maintain its strategy of the free basics but failed to do so in India as TRAI is giving them stiff competition to do so. Well, Facebook's market capture won't get so much affected but as everybody has its good as well as bad time, Facebook will find trouble surrounding its market capture and strategies near future.

While TRAI's paper has received criticism, it should be noted that the paper does devote a significant proportion to discussing Net Neutrality and the negative impact it could have if India overlooks the principle. Applying Net Neutrality ensures that the big players behind the scene like Reliance, Airtel won't be getting much profits as expected. They won't be able to extract out.

You also can't forget the political powers behind this. They are acting as the catalysts to trigger the criticisms. In future, whether it works out or not, but surely it will create a war in the internet; in other words- **THE VIRTUAL WORLD WAR III.**