

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH

NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY
1998

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1. PREFACE :

The telecommunications¹ sector in Bangladesh has been characterized by a very low level of penetration, limited capability to meet the growing demand, low level of investment and old outdated systems and technologies necessitating reactive remedial measures. In order to develop a national sound telecommunication infrastructure to support the economy and welfare of the country by providing telecommunication facilities on demand, assuring satisfactory quality of service and ensuring value to the customers , a sound National Telecommunication Policy is essential. This is also imperative to ensure the cost based pricing² of the present as well as the future services to satisfy the need of specialized groups in particular and the public in general . With this in view, this new policy will ensure the orderly development of the telecommunications sector through the provision of services in all the areas of the country, to satisfy the unserved demand³ for telecommunications and to provide equitable opportunity and competition amongst the service providers.

2. VISION:

The Strategic Vision of the Government is to facilitate Universal Telephone Service throughout the country and where there is a demand, all those value added services such as cellular mobile telephone paging, data services, access to Internet (including electronic mail), Voice mail and video conferencing – all at an affordable cost without compromising performance.

To achieve the Vision, Government's role as a service provider will diminish as the private sector's role increases. The Government's objective will be to create a new policy environment to support this new scenario. Its ability to create policy, regulate and facilitate will be strengthened through a new Telecommunications Act which reflects the Government's new policies, objectives and strategies and the establishment of new institutions including a

Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (TRC) which will become the guardian of the Act and fulfil its regulatory functions.

1 as recommended by ITU it means any process that enables a correspondent to pass to one or more given correspondents (telegraphy or telephony) .or possible correspondents (broadcasting), information of any nature delivered in any usable form (written or printed matter, fixed or moving pictures, words, music , visible or audible, signals , signals controlling the functioning of mechanism, etc) by means of any electromagnetic system (electrical transmission by wire, radio transmission, optical transmission, etc or a combination of such systems)

2 refers to system of pricing in which the actual cost of providing service establishes the basic charge to which a fixed mark –up is added to collect a standard charge to all users without discrimination.

3 refers to pending registered applications waiting for a long time to get connections due to paucity of capacity both in the switching or in the external line plant. It also includes the probable applications which will be forthcoming if it becomes possible to give connections not long after it is applied for.

The Government understands that this Universal Service – affordable and reliable – will be achievable only through reforming the sector to encourage a plurality of private and public operators conducting their business within a competitive environment. Within this environment interconnection and revenue sharing will be clear and fair to all service providers and their subscribers.

3. **THE POLICY OBJECTIVES:**

The policy document , upholding the commitment of Government to resolve the prevailing shortcomings, outlines the objectives, strategies and other related aspects of telecommunications. The policy is formulated to ensure the orderly and rapid growth of telecommunications services, both in quality and quantity and the use of telecommunications technology in order to support the socioeconomic development , in line with the national aspirations . The objectives of the National Telecommunications policy , inter alia, include.

3.1 **Exchange of Information** : The freedom for exchange of information is recognized as an important element of human rights and efforts are to be made to provide people with greater access to all informations except the ones that are considered harmful to the society, prejudicial to national interest and security.

- 3.2 **Promotion of National Integration:** Telecommunications are to promote national integration and to safeguard the social and cultural fabric of the nation by directing the expected influence of the technology towards the greater benefit of the society.
- 3.3 **Universal Access:** Access to and delivery of a full range of modern, sophisticated, efficient and cost effective services of both basic¹ as well as value added² telecommunications are to be provided to as many people as is economically and socially justifiable to ensure universal access³.
- 3.4 **Digitalization:** Replace of all analogue switching equipment by the year 2002 and analogue transmission equipment by 2005 . This will improve existing and potential telecommunications service for both basic and value added services. In addition to improving the quality and reliability of the telecommunications infrastructure, full digitalization will facilitate a quicker and easier interface mechanism for all private and public operators.
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1 refers to local exchange residence and business telephone service and telegraph service without additional features and any other services defined as such in future.

2 5 refers generally to the services such as (i) Electronic Mail, (ii) Voice Mail ,(iii) Data Services ,(iv) Audio Text Services, (v) Video Text Services, (vi) Video Conferencing, (vii) Radio Paging, (viii) Cellular Mobile Telephones, (ix) Facsimile, (x) Global System for Mobile GSM, (xi) Global Mobile Personal Communication by satellite (GMPCS) and any other future services to come.

3 refers to the availability of reliable and affordable telecommunications services in both urban and rural areas of the country.

3.5 **Competitive Framework:** Creation of an environment of competition in the field of telecommunications enhancing rapid development in volume, efficiency and accessibility , shall be ensured to make telecom services available within the affordable limit of the general users.

3.5.1 **Market Oriented Regime:** Telecommunications Services are to be efficiently and cost- effectively provided in particular fields, to be decided by the Government from time to time, by establishing market oriented regime, appropriate sets of

regulations, standards, procedures, conditions and investment climate & competition.

3.5.2 Users' Choice: Development of telecommunications facilities and services shall be user friendly. The users shall have multiple choices for access to networks & markets of different services, systems and carriers at a competitive and reasonable price.

3.6 Private Sector Development : The Government has opened the telecommunications market to the private sector. The Government acknowledges the private sector's increasing resolve and ability to meet the growth demands of the country, as well as the fact that the private sector will become a much stronger force in telecommunications development in the coming years. The Government will provide all assistance to make the private sector more vibrant and robust in keeping with their anticipated role in the coming years.

3.7 Resource Mobilization: Resources to the sector are to be maximized through participation of both public and private entrepreneurs in operating the services in areas where it is economically and socially justified. Efforts shall be geared up and coordinated to create an investment climate to help optimization of resources from both national and international sources.

3.7.1 Local : Local resources may be mobilized through ADP Allocation, domestic private investment , issue of Telecommunication Bonds, allocating a part of the revenue earnings, Bank Loans etc.

3.7.2 Foreign: Investment from sources outside the country may be arranged through Suppliers Credit, joint Ventures, BLT/BOT/BOO/ BTO agreement etc., in addition to the usual loans and grants from international organizations as well as through bilateral agreements with other countries in conformity with the industrial policy of the Government.

3.8 Liberalized Tariff Policy : Tariff polices are to be liberalized ,with regard to the area or the service ,from time to time ,in certain market segments and efforts are to be continued to

encourage extension of maximum service at minimum cost with particular emphasis in supporting the industrialization efforts of the country .

3.9 Access to New Technology : Research and development activities to facilitate the absorption of new technology and to upgrade the facilities and services in telecommunications are to be encouraged and the regional cooperation in telecommunication sector is to be enhanced through common development and operational strategies and network standards Continuous updating of information on new and latest technology and transfer of the same for the benefit of the users ,shall be encouraged.

3.10 Private Sector Investment: The Government will achieve a more vigorous development through intensified private sector participation ,encouraged by the enabling environment created by the Government; a more proactive telecommunications industry responsive to users' needs and creation of an environment with healthier competition & more significant multi-operator participation, all of which accelerate the reality of universal service.

By opening the telecommunications sector to competition and consolidating an independent regulatory board reporting directly to the Government, private sector investment, both domestic and foreign, is encouraged. This tenet will improve access to and quality of both basic and value-added services which historically, have been monopolistic. Investment is encouraged through BLT.BOO.BOT .BTO and other joint venture schemes which, by greatly increasing the capacity ,quality and type of services, will create greatly improved efficiencies in other sectors such as transportation , energy and the textile industry .

3.11 Foreign Investment : Foreign investors are encouraged to demonstrate their commitment to Bangladesh by forming joint ventures with local companies and within the telecommunications sector .Government will consider equity participation of up to 100% of the overall shareholdings of the telecommunications operating company .

The Government will make all endeavours to remove all procedural and other impediments for quick implementation of the projects including investment proposals from foreign investors in the telecom sector to meet the growing and unmet demands of telephones in the country . For quick implementation of the projects, the Government reserves the right to take decisions as appropriate.

3.12 Implementation Strategy :Government will the participation of the public and private sectors, intends to meet its goals and objectives through a combination of policy – related technical and financial strategies. It will ensure that the present inadequate infrastructure is alleviated through the formulation of competition and performance standards. While supporting the private sector as the engine of growth it will continue to support BTTB in the short to medium term as the Government, assumes its just role as policy maker, regulator and facilitator. The Government objective is to see an orderly transition from a monopolistic to a multi- operator environment

3.13 Human Resource Development: Human resource development being in tandem with the need of the telecommunications sector, standards and qualifications for different categories of personnel of all operators are to be set based on their services.

3.14 Defense and Security: Defense and security interests of the country are to be protected.

3.15 Information Technology: The role of the technologies of telecommunications and computers which are becoming increasingly interdependent of and complementary to each other, leading to the age of information technology is to be acknowledged and encouraged for the benefit of the nation.

3.16 Local Manufacturing: Promotion of local manufacture of viable telecommunications equipment will be encouraged to meet the local and regional demand and a vision to compete in international markets in near future is to be inculcated.

3.17 Regulatory Framework: Assignment, monitoring and

management of radio frequency spectrum¹ is to be conducted in an effective, fair rational and equitable manner. Telecommunication network standards & their management should be compatible with international standards.

3.18 Protection of users' Interest and Service Standards:

Protection of the users' interests shall be ensured regarding the services provided, facilities offered, technology used and prices charged.

4 STRATEGIES:

The National Telecommunication Policy will act as a catalyst towards the growth and development of telecommunications in the country with a view to producing a modern, balanced and dynamic society. The policy measures are designed to achieve a range of benefits which include but not necessarily limited to the tasks of increasing the number of telephones in a systematic and comprehensive manner.

the entire range of radio frequencies used for telecommunications

4.1 TARGETS: A set of targets consisting of telephone density and accessibility of telecommunications facilities and services to the people is given below.

4.1.1 Telephone Penetration:

(a) **Teledensity (Short Term)** : The present teledensity of the country is about 0.4 telephone for every 100 persons. The target of expansion of telephone penetration is fixed at 1,300,000¹ line, units including associated inland and overseas transmission links and facilities by the year 2000 in order to substantially eliminate the unserved demand and increase the teledensity from 0.4 telephone to 1 telephone for every 100² persons.

(b) **Accessibility upto Village Level:** The aim will be to lay emphasis on the efforts to upgrade the semi-urban and rural telecommunication facilities and make the telecommunication services with the latest technology available in phases to all the Thanas,

Unions, Growth Centers and ultimately to the Villages by the year 2005 . The private sector operators who are licensed for the purpose will contribute all their efforts towards this end.

(c) **Teledensity (Mid Term):** Raising the penetration to 4

telephones for every 100 persons by the year 2010 is to be achieved through increase in basic telecommunications facilities, expansion of existing networks and provision of new ones.

(d) **Teledensity (Long Term) :** Short and mid term targets are to be reviewed at regular intervals for realistic target setting. Teledensity is to be 10 telephones per 100 population within the first quarter of 21st century. However, this will include value-added services and GMPCS (Global Mobile Personal Communication by Satellite) and other new services.

4.1.2 Future Telecom Services - Role of Public and Private Sector Operators: Telecom sector needs rapid expansion to meet the unmet demands for telecom services. Public and private operators are to work as partners to develop telecommunications in the country . The present status is that

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1. Present capacity is 4.75.036 line-units of which more than 55% are of digital technology .Some projects are in the implementation stage while plans of some are being finalised. It is expected that a large number of new digital switches will also be commissioned by the private sector operators.
 2. this takes into account the increase of population during the period at a projected rate of growth.

eight operators are in operation/licensed to develop and operate telecom services. Out of them, one is in public sector – BTTB, the largest one having basic telecom services , transmission and international network; others are private operators licensed to provide to basic telephone services in rural areas and value added services all over the country .

Through the co-operation of the operators under the guidelines set by the Government the telecom infrastructure of the country is to be built up. For that short, mid and long term services and service areas are defined:

- (a) **Short Term** : In the short term perspective the operators will continue to consolidate & develop up to the year 2000 in their respective fields for which they have licenses. BTTB will upgrade its trunking and transmission networks/links (both inland and overseas) to meet the increasing interconnection demands of its own & private operators. Besides, it will continue its expansion programmes in its areas to meet the growing and unmet demands for telephone lines. Furthermore , the Government reserves the right to license additional operators if appropriate and if needed, take measure to open basic telecommunication services to the private sector operating entities.
- (b) **Mid-Term**: On the basis of the performance of the private operators in the short term period, more service areas are to be opened up for private participation in basic telephone and long distance networks after the year 2000 or earlier.
- (c) **Long- Term**: As a long term strategy, development of telecom infrastructure and services in all the fields are to be opened up for private participation after the year 2010 and if needed , this can be opened up earlier than the year 2010. The above time frame and targets, however, are to be reviewed by the Government at the end of year 2000.

4.1.3 Information Infrastructure: An integrated and reliable transmission network that covers the entire country and is capable of providing voice, video, data and imaging services will be ensured. The network may include fiber optic, radio and also satellite systems. The aim is to create the National Information Infrastructure (NII) and integrate it through the Information Super Highway to the Global Information Infrastructure (GII) thereby creating the potential to enter the global market for information processing.

4.1.4 International Network: Continuous efforts will be made to expand the network for international traffic through terrestrial radio, submarine cables and satellite systems Reliance

on more than one network and system will be encouraged to ensure fall-back alternative facilities in times of need. More active and expanded participation in programmes/activities organized or sponsored by the regional and international telecommunications agencies and bodies is to be pursued to uphold the interest of the country in the international fora.

4.1.5 New Services: New services¹ that are already developed or will be developed in future shall continue to be introduced in the country on the basis on the basis of market surveys and users' needs and satisfaction.

4.1.6 Master Plan: A Master Plan will be prepared for expansion and development of telecommunication services in the country so that Bangladesh can reap full benefits of information technology revolution.

4.2 THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK:

4.2.1 Commission by Act: A separate autonomous Regulatory Commission under the Ministry of Post & Telecommunications will be established by an Act of Parliament and it may consist of a Chairman and a number of Members² to be appointed by the Government. No members of the Commission will be from among the serving employees or directors of any telecommunication operator. Part time members may also be appointed as and when deemed necessary.

4.2.2 Features of the Commission:

(a) **Independence:** The Regulatory Commission will be an autonomous commission which will retain its independence. The head of the Commission as well as the Members will be appointed for a fixed period of time.

(b) **Transparency:** The Commission will be transparent in all its activities to the operators, interested parties engaged in telecommunications, Government agencies and the people in general. It will ensure equity & fair play by providing a level playing field for all operators.

- 1 a number of value added new services like GSM.gmpcs. Video Conferencing . GMDSS Telecommunication are already in service or in the process of being introduced.
- 2 the members of the Regulatory Commission may be appointed from amongst persons in and out side the Government service including retired officers with the back ground of telecommunications , finance, law and management .

(c) **Adaptability** : Telecommunication technology is fast advancing and continuously changing. The Commission will have the ability and obligation to adapt to the changing environment in the sector .

(d) **Objectivity** : The activities of the Commission will be objective in nature. In the formulation of regulations, guidelines etc the objective should be compatible to the role as a catalyst making the country a member of the global telecommunication family .

4.2.3 **Functions of Commission** : The Primary Functions of the Regulatory Commission are (i) issue operator licenses, (ii) regulation of tariffs, (iii) setting of technical standards (iv) monitoring of service quality and adherence to rules and regulations by the operators (v) management of radio frequency spectrum, (vi) preparation of national numbering scheme, (vii) assistance in preparing routing, charging and transmission plans, (viii) guidance for interconnection between the operators and revenue sharing for inter- operator traffic, (ix) stimulation for investment to facilitate introduction of new services, (x) representation of the country in the international telecommunication bodies¹, (xi) setting standards & qualifications for different categories of personnel of all operators based on their services and (xii) any other functions and activities as may be considered necessary by the Government .

4.2.4 **Spectrum Management and Monitoring** : the frequency spectrum, considered to be a valuable resource will be managed in an orderly and equitable manner and will be used as the basis for creation

of complete radio communication network systems. The Commission will resolve the problem of overlapping frequency at shared borders of the operators . It will ensure the assignment of frequency bands with the neighbouring countries according to the Table of Frequency given by ITU . It will also set up Frequency Monitoring Cell and will impose penalty in case of infringement upon assigned frequencies or unauthorized use of frequencies.

4.2.5 Licensing Procedure: A comprehensive licensing system will be developed to ensure its orderly , efficient and effective application. The issuing of licenses to respondents who are qualified according to the set criteria will be carried out through a bidding or an open tender or any other procedure set by the Government .

1. these include among others the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) . Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) . Commonwealth Telecom Bureau (CTB). Telecommunications units of OIC and SAARC etc.

4.2.6 Budget: The budgetary resources for the Regulatory Commission itself will be generated from the license fees including the fees for use of the frequency spectrum, duties, royalties etc. Other sources like charges for specific services, fees, contributions and parliamentary appropriations may supplement the financial resources.

4.2.7 Staff of Commission : The Regulatory Commission will be manned by qualified and competent personnel. It will have full freedom in matters of staff requirement and salaries, subject to the provisions in the budget .

4.2.8 Annual Report: The Commission will present its Annual Report to the Government, as may be specified in the Act.

4.2.9 Inter- connection and Revenue Sharing : Understanding that revenue sharing agreements vary widely in different countries and are never easy to formulate the Government takes the position that revenue sharing agreements should be negotiated between carriers and that they will generally be cost based. However, in the event for a dispute between any parties which are unable to negotiate successfully, the Commission shall consider dispute through hearing and the

decisions of the commission shall be final though they may be appealed to Government .

4.2.10 Representing the Country: The Commission may attend the meetings of the regional and international telecommunications bodies, dealing with the questions of general sectoral policy and participate in framing of international regulations in this field.

4.2.11 Protection of Users' Interest: The Commission will be responsible for the supervision of the telecommunications services to ensure that the interests of the users are protected and balanced .It will also ensure that the interests of the nation are given priority over other interests. The Commission will define the mechanism in which the views of the operators and the users of the telecommunications services could be periodically obtained. The Commission may hold public hearings on important issues of public interest.

4.2.12 Enforcement Mechanism: The Regulatory Commission will be vested with definite duties and power to implement the policy decisions and ensure compliance of set rules and procedures. The Commission will have legal authority to ensure and enforce regulatory measures, keeping in view the national security public order and defence of the country. It will monitor implementation of development programmes of and ensure operation of telecommunication services by the operators in accordance with the provisions of the concerned license. The Commission will have authority to take punitive actions ranging from imposing fine to closure of services against the defaulting operators.

4.2.13 Network Management : Under the Commission a network management cell will be created to overview the harmonization and optimization of the networks available and to be developed in future. It will set network standards, numbering /code plans and prepare network master plan etc. This is imperative in an inter- operator environment .

4.2.14 Service Standard : The Commission will set standards for

different services within the principles and standards set by various Regional and International Telecommunication bodies. In this connection, the commission will set standards, qualifications and number of personnel in each category for all operators based on their services. These standards will be binding on all operators. Failure to meet these standards will attract penal action by the Commission .

4.3 **TARIFFS AND CHARGES:**

4.3.1 **Tariff Structure:** The tariff structure will apply equally to public and private operators and will be set by the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission with prior approval of Government . It will take into account the interests of various parties, benefit to the users and reasonable returns to the operators based on the principle of equity and the market factors and will set the maximum rates and tariffs for all the services on the principle of fair- play . Where data is available, the tariffs will , in principle, be cost-based, subject to revisions from time to time in relation to the changes in the cost of equipment, development in technology, increase in the use of services and socio-economic considerations such as affordability of users, consumer price index, extent of rural service requirement and any other requirements for all telecommunications services as may be notified by the Government or the commission from time to time . The costs of the services are also to be reasonable and comparable with those charged in the neighbouring countries and international market. However, the operators may make submissions to the Commission who will notify the tariff revisions, if any, after obtaining approval of the Government . The Government may also de-regulate tariffs for any service to allow the operators to set tariffs by themselves.

4.3.2 **Re-sale of Services:** In the case of re-sale¹ of services by individuals , permission will be given to add service charges which will be required to be displayed to the users at the point of service. The Commission², however, will retain the right to fix the maximum limits to any such service charges to protect the interest of the users.

4.3.3 **Commission's Fees:** The services rendered by the Commission shall be charged to the operators and other parties in accordance with the schedule published by the commission .

4.3.4 Charges for Frequency Spectrum: The use of frequency spectrum by the operators may be put to charges on initial and recurring basis except for frequency band (s) which are open for general use.

4.4 COMPETITIVE FRAMEWORK:

4.4.1 Liberalization : In accordance with the overall national policy, the liberalization of the telecommunications sector will continue. The approach is to encourage a sound and orderly competition between the private and public sector as well as among the various private sector operators themselves to achieve efficient and quality service concentrating initially on the value- added services .However, the Government retains the sole authority to determine the number of competitors that are economically viable for certain services. The strategy is to provide equal and rational opportunities to all competitors .

4.4.2 International Services: The international services will, however , be operated exclusively by the Government through Bangladesh. Telegraph and Telephone Board or its lawful successor unless other wise decided by the Government .

1 this refers to the services provided by a person or a group of persons forming very small enterprise to extend telecommunications services like overseas telephone calls, telex, telefax services at a nominal additional service charges under license from the service provider .

2.this refers to the Regulatory Commission to set up by an Act of Parliament : details are explained in the previous paragraphs .

4.4.3 Service Obligation : Universal service obligations for basic telephone service will be included in licenses of all network operators Inter –connections between networks, forming part of the public network, will be mandated in accordance with the guidelines to be issued by the commission .

4.5 RESTRUCTURING OF BTTB:

4.5.1 Role of BTTB : Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) has , until recently the only entity having the sole authority to operate and regulate the public telecommunications services its regulatory functions have been taken over by the Ministry of post & Telecommunications as an interim measure and will ultimately be vested in the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission . BTTB will continue for the time being, to remain a Government owned telecommunications service provider.

4.5.2 Adequate Authority : In order to make BTTB function effectively and commercially in competition with other private sector operators in the liberalized environment, the requisite administrative and adequate financial & commercial authorities shall be delegated to BTTB . In this regard the BTTB ordinance of 1979 is to be amended and such other directives, as may from time to time be necessary within the purview of maximum autonomy, will be issued.

4.5.3 Non- core Functions: The non-core functions¹ within BTTB will be gradually divested and could be contracted out to qualified private parties as relevant know-how and expertise have developed in recent years.

4.5.4 Corporate Restructuring : The Government anticipates a two phase restructuring of BTTB phase-1 would be a corporatization process in which it becomes a limited company (e.g. Bangladesh Telecommunication company Ltd) instead of being a Deptt .of the Government . In this mode it will have full responsibility for managing its assets and operations and being fully accountable for its own profitability . At this point Government will continue to own between 51% and 100% of the shares .Phase-2 would be the full privatization of BTTB at which point the Government will have sold all of its outstanding shares to the private sector. The possibility of engaging an internationally reputed foreign telephone company as strategic /management partner of BTTB will also be explored.

¹ traditionally since the inception of post .Telegraph and Telephone Department in the British –India period, a member of auxiliary functions like printing, building , construction, under-ground cable laying, billing directory, subscriber premises

connection. manufacturing etc, related to telecommunications were performed by the BTTB itself as there were not much know how or the required expertise on those functions outside.

4.5.5 Capital Mobilization: Throughout the corporate restructuring period, with the approval of the Government BTTB will be authorized to raise necessary capitals for the expansion of the existing and introduction of new services through bank loans, issue of telecommunication bonds, share flotation, suppliers, credits and BOO/BLT/BOT¹ schemes etc. It will be authorized to enter into joint venture contracts with any other entities with the approval of the Government .

4.5.6 Staff Standard: BTTB will plan and prepare the staff standard and administer its own staff structure. It will also adopt procedures and methods to run on full commercial terms and optimize the value for money.

4.5.7 Quality of Service: Maintenance and operation are to be such as to give adequate, efficient and satisfactory services in observance of the principles of economy and by maintaining standards set by the commission .

4.5 PRIVATE SECTOR OPERATORS:

4.6.1 Privatization of Basic Services: The private operating entities will be allowed to provide basic telecommunications and long distance transmission facilities in accordance with section 4.1.2 and the value added services where appropriate under license to be issued by the Regulatory Commission .

4.6.2 Maintenance and Operation: In order to provide efficient & satisfactory services, the private operators will manage and operate telecommunications services under their control in a completely professional manner in accordance with the methods and procedures in force in the sector and in observance of the principles of economy . They shall engage sufficiently qualified and adequate personnel for providing the services as per the standards set by the commission .

4.6.3 **Infrastructure:** The private operators are required to keep abreast of trends in demand, establish or expand the services, upgrade the infrastructures and introduce the new ones on the basis of the most advantageous technical and economic approach .

1 BOO refers to Build, Operate & Own. BLT refers to Build, Lease and Transfer while BOT refers to Build, Operate and Transfer.

4.6.4 **Investment and Tariff:** The private operators will prepare annual and multi- annual investment plans and operating accounts, define and propose tariff & service structures, define and initiate rates for new services & changes in rates for existing ones, for approval of the Government of the Commission .

4.6.5 **Dispute Resolution:** In the event of disputes and disagreement between operators , the Telecommunication Regulatory Commission shall consider dispute through hearing for resolution .The decisions of the commission shall be final though they may be appealed to the Government .

4.6.6 **Cancellation of Service:** The private operators may suspend or cancel service to users who fail to meet their obligations as contracted.

4.6.7 **Meetings and Conferences:** The private operators may take part in national conferences, committees and working groups dealing with technical, administrative and operational matters in the field of telecommunications.

5 INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT :

The proper environment will be created within the country, as a national obligation, to promote research and development activities in the telecommunication technology and services, to develop telecommunications training courses in new systems and services and to ensure appropriate human resources development for the efficient

conduct of telecommunications activities. In order to fulfil this obligation, following will remain priority :-

5.1 Research and Development : A National Institute of Research

and Development (NIRD) in telecommunications will be established . The operators, manufacturers and any other organizations and persons involved in telecommunications will be encouraged to carry out research and development activities to support local growth and transfer of technology. The requirement to carry out R&D will be a part of the conditions under which licenses are issued and at least 1% of the annual expenditure should be allocated for the purpose.

5.2 Human Resource Development : The creation of trained and skilled manpower in all fields of telecommunications will be stressed. All telecommunications enterprises are encouraged to establish their own training programs. The need to crate short, medium and long term plans for the training of manpower for all operators is imperative. Efforts must be made to establish a National Institute for Human Resource Development in Telecommunications (NIHRDT)¹ in the country by upgrading the existing Telecommunication Staff College of BTTB at Gazipur.

the present Telecommunications Staff College of BTTB situated at Joydebpur, will provide very good and appropriate foundation for setting up of the proposed . NIHRDT.

6 PROMOTION OF LOCAL MANUFACTURE:

The fact being recognised that telecommunications stand at the leading edge of technology and in order to strengthen the economic growth, spur technology transfer and adapt new technology, local manufacture and assembly of telecommunications equipments will be encouraged and geared up for local consumption and competition in the external market. The use of local products of acceptable standard and competitive price is to be made obligatory through regulations for

all the service providers. Moreover, incentives will also be provided to encourage growth of the local telecommunications industry .

The already functioning two large factories namely Telephone Shilpa Sangstha (TSS) , at Tongi and Bangladesh Cable Shilpa (BCS) Ltd. at Khulna, will be vital launching pads to embark upon large scale involvement in the manufacturing field. However appropriate plans for modernization and diversification of products in these two factories need to be implemented as soon as possible. In this regard, joint collaboration¹ with reputed manufacture(s) as already exists (exist) or by induction of new ones, will be taken into consideration. The Government will also consider the privatization of TSS and BCS.

7 **CONSULTATIVE FORUM:**

In order to ensure proper, efficient, effective and timely development of telecommunication infrastructure, consultative fora will be formed where all parties interested in the sector (service providers, users, public and private enterprises etc.) can have open discussion to develop telecommunication services as well as to improve the service standards in the country .

8 **USERS' SERVICES:**

8.1 Users Oriented Services: The telecommunications services shall

be oriented towards meeting the users' demands /needs, not only for new services, but also in respect of performance of the services, transparency of operations , provisions of information and assistance in case of difficulties. Networks shall be planned to be user friendly and shall be equipped with modern technologies and shall be managed by the set procedures.

8.2 One Point Service : The establishment of one – point service centres² by all the operators will be encouraged for the convenience of the users. All the telecommunications service providers will be responsible for the preparation and publication of their own subscriber directories and updating of the same at regular interval (e.g. annually) for the information of the public.

- 1 siemens AG of Germany is already a co-share, holder of the two factories . Their equipments can be manufactured assembled under license as per the Agreements already in existence.
- 2 for the convenience of the customers to redress any of their complaints at one particular point only, is successfully introduced in Dhaka and is found to be highly popular. However, the number of such centres need to be increased substantially .

9 **THE ACTS ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS:**

There are, in the country, a number of Acts which govern and regulate various telecommunications activities like the telecommunications between two points, audio broadcasting of radio messages or programs for the specified group of people or the public in general and telecasting of simultaneous audio –visual programs. The Telegraph Act 1885 ,The Wireless Act 1933 , The Radio Broadcasting Act 1975 and 1992 and The Television Broadcasting Act 1965 which regulate these activities may be considered for a combined Telecommunication Act applicable for all the allied services of telecommunications . While acknowledging the freedom of information as an important element of the modern World, the new Act may include restrictions to communications and broadcasts which are regarded as incompatible to the national security and harmful to the society.

10 **CONCLUSION :**

This National Telecommunications Policy is a summary statement of the philosophy, objectives, strategies and the methodology to ensure equitable and judicious execution of the business of telecommunications in the country . However, the Government may from time to time make changes, modifications, additions to the policy and may review the policy at certain intervals for updating and satisfying the need of the time. The general guideline embodied in this policy document emphasizes faster development of telecommunications network coupled with improved quality of service in line with the national development, thereby fulfilling the vision and aspiration to take Bangladesh to a position of honour in the comity of nations in the 21st century.