

**Welcome Address by Chairperson**  
**Inauguration of CCI Regional Office (South) in Chennai**

Hon'ble Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman Ji, Hon'ble Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur Ji, Secretary, MCA Shri Rajesh Verma, my colleagues in the Commission and officers of CCI, Good Afternoon. I welcome you all to the inauguration of the first Regional Office of the Competition Commission of India in Chennai.

The objective of the Competition Act, 2002, has been to eliminate the practices having adverse effect on competition, promote and sustain competition, protect the interest of consumers and ensure freedom of trade carried on by other participants in markets in India. CCI, in the last 10 years, has been able to vigorously pursue this legislative mandate and build a robust competition architecture in the country.

CCI has crossed important milestones since its establishment. The Commission has so far reviewed 1,118 cases under anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominance, and 815 mergers and acquisitions notices. In cases of contravention, CCI has been using diverse remedies including cease and desist orders, besides, in appropriate cases, monetary penalties have been imposed.

However, more than that, the thrust of the Commission all along has been to remedy the market imperfections, promote competitiveness,

innovations and enhance consumer welfare. On the combinations front, we have striven to balance rigor with speed in reviewing notices filed with us. The Commission has imposed remedies only in 22 out of 815 cases, and has endeavoured to complete the review in shortest possible time. At present, we take on an average 20 days for processing merger and acquisition filings. The Commission has recently introduced a Green Channel mechanism for automatic approvals which is first of its kind in the world. It has been hailed by the stakeholders as a progressive step towards 'Ease of doing business'. So far, under Green Channel route, 26 merger filings have been approved.

CCI has been undertaking market studies in different sectors of the economy to understand the market structure and potential competition concerns arising therein. These studies also help build capacity for effective discharge of its regulatory mandate. Recently, we have done two studies, one on E-Commerce and second on Telecom Sector. Study on Pharma Sector is underway.

One of the other key activities undertaken by the Commission pertains to providing inputs in formulation of public policies to make them competition compliant. We have written to all the Ministries and I am happy to inform that we have started getting draft legislations for giving our views.

CCI has been interacting and engaging with the NITI Aayog by taking up Model Concession Agreements (MCAs) in various infrastructure and public service delivery sectors such as railways, ports, airports, coal, national highways, warehouses, etc., for competition assessment. The competition assessment of the MCAs focuses on highlighting the

competition concerns, if any, during the lifecycle of the concession agreement and how to mitigate these concerns while structuring, granting, and implementing the concession agreements. This will help in pre-empting competition intervention later.

A need was felt for sustained and institutionalised efforts towards increasing awareness on competition issues at the State level and accordingly, CCI has recently launched State Resource Persons Scheme. Under the scheme, two retired officers from the State Government are appointed by CCI. These officers disseminate awareness on competition law by imparting training and organising workshops and seminars in each State for the procurement Officers of various State Departments. Through this scheme, CCI aims to make the States active partners to promote competition in every part of the country.

The pandemic posed an unforeseen and stiff challenge in continuing our enforcement and advocacy activities. We leveraged technology and made sure that competition regulation continues unabated. Considering restrictions placed on physical movement, CCI allowed flexibility, within its procedures - including electronic filing of antitrust cases as well as combination notices including Green Channel notifications. A dedicated helpline was also set up to attend to the queries of stakeholders during the pandemic.

Given the gamut of Commission's activities and countrywide spread of stakeholders, need of Regional Offices of the Commission was felt for greater reach and flexibility in carrying out its functions. We in CCI are

privileged and honoured that Hon'ble Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Madam Nirmala Sitharamanji has kindly consented to inaugurate the Regional office (South). We are also privileged and honoured that Hon'ble Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Shri Anurag Singh Thakur ji has kindly consented to bless the occasion. I take this opportunity to thank Shri Rajesh Verma, Secretary, MCA for his support and guidance. We are greatly encouraged by the presence of dignitaries on this occasion.

The Regional Office (South) in Chennai is a step towards augmenting the Commission's regional presence and fulfilling its duties as a federal regulator by engaging closely with State governments, PSUs, Industry bodies and the Academia who are important stakeholders in fostering greater competition in the economy. The region, consisting of prominent industrial clusters, has been at the forefront of India's economic progress. The regional office is going to facilitate Commission's advocacy outreach, which has been at the core of competition regulation. It will also facilitate enforcement by acting as a center for filing and receiving cases, facilitating investigation, follow up court cases and online deposition in coordination with Delhi Office. The Regional Office will cater to the five States i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tami Nadu, Telangana and two Union Territories i.e. Puducherry and Lakshadweep.

With your blessings Madam and Sir, I am sure that this regional presence will go a long way in developing competition culture in the country. Once again, I welcome you all to the inauguration of CCI Regional Office in Chennai. Thank you.