

THIRD ROADSHOW ON COMPETITION LAW ORGANIZED BY COMPETITION COMMISSION OF INDIA ON 18th DECEMBER IN AHMEDABAD¹

The Third Roadshow on Competition Law was organised in Ahmedabad on 18th December, 2018 by the Competition Commission of India with a thematic focus on Public Procurement, Trade Associations, Cartels and Leniency. The Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), a think tank under the aegis of Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India, was the Implementation Partner for the Roadshow. The Roadshow is part of a series of Roadshows being organised across the country on competition law and constitutes one of the major advocacy initiatives of the Commission. This Roadshow brought together various stakeholders from Industry, Trade Associations, Chartered Accountants, Company Secretaries, Lawyers and Researchers to engage in an active discussion on various competition issues that require deliberations for creating awareness and compliance amongst the industry participants.

The Chief Guest for the Conference, the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Government of Gujarat, Shri Vijay Rupani, in his Inaugural Address stated that Gujarat has traditionally relied upon competition as an important policy instrument for business facilitation and economic growth. The flourishing of business in the state has been possible as forces of competition have made the industry competitive. The international competitiveness that the state of Gujarat has been able to achieve could not be possible in the absence of strong competition amongst the businesses in Gujarat. He highlighted that despite having only 5 percent of the workforce, the state is contributing 22 per cent of the total exports of the country. He further said that Gujarat is "embracing competition to emerge as Global Manufacturing hub". The Government is also providing support to the growing SME sector through the vast network of GIDC offices upto *Tehsil* level. The robust SME sector is not only contributing to employment and economic growth of Gujarat but is also making competition much vibrant and broad based. He complimented CCI for hosting the Roadshow in Ahmedabad.

Addressing the participants, Chief Secretary, Gujarat, Dr. J.N. Singh appreciated the CCI's initiative to reach out to states for promoting awareness about competition law. He articulated that Government Officers in charge of policy formulation would be benefitted by deliberations on public procurement and competition law. He further added that trade and industry which are major actors in the state economy stand to gain immensely by being on the right side of the competition law.

Shri Ashok Kumar Gupta, Chairman, CCI, in his theme address, mentioned that the Commission has a mandate to eliminate anti-competitive practices and promote competition in the country. He pointed out that the Act and the Commission, both are consumer and business friendly. In his address he stated that the Commission does not intend to come in the way of ease of doing business, or punish businessmen unnecessarily, but only intends to regulate anti-competitive behaviour. For achieving this objective, the Commission has to balance between its enforcement function and the advocacy function - the pillars on which the edifice of this law rests. According to him, advocacy is a continuous process, which requires fusion of efforts by the regulator and the regulated. The Chairman emphasized that as a market regulator, we appreciate our role as an enabler as much as we see ourselves as an enforcer. He highlighted the importance of building a culture of competition in public procurement systems in India and at the state level. Free, fair and effective procurement has the potential to reduce cost of delivery, free resources and make surpluses available, make the PSUs more competitive and allow the public sector to grow.

¹ Available at: <http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1556578>

Dr. Jaimin R. Vasa, President, Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry, gave the vote of thanks and expressed his gratitude to the Commission for hosting the Roadshow in Ahmedabad. He touched upon the issue of cartels, prevalent among industry, which create a burden on consumers in form of higher prices and loss of competitiveness for industry. Dr. Navneet Sharma from IICA had earlier welcomed the participants in inaugural session and highlighted that CCI is being assisted by IICA in this major advocacy initiative.

Deliberations in the Roadshow were divided in two open house sessions. The first session focused on Infusing Competition in Public Procurement and was chaired by Mr. A. M. Tiwari, Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department, Government of Gujarat. The second session focused on Trade Associations, Cartels and Leniency and was chaired by Mr. Augustine Peter, Member, CCI. The open house sessions were followed up by a session on Vibrant Gujarat. Advocacy booklets were distributed to participants. Each of these sessions saw extensive discussions and active participation from the audience as well.

The Roadshow was attended by senior policy makers from Central Government, Gujarat Government, participants from the public sector enterprises, industry, legal and finance professionals, corporate lawyers, academics, and other relevant stakeholders.

About CCI and IICA:

The Competition Commission of India was established in the year 2003 under the Competition Act, 2002 to prevent practices having adverse effect on competition, and to promote and sustain competition in markets, to protect interest of consumers and to ensure freedom of trade in markets in India.

Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) is a think tank under the aegis of Ministry of Corporate Affairs established for holistic treatment of matters impacting on corporate functioning and provide instruction and capacity building in the subject to a wide range of stakeholders drawn from the government, regulators, professionals and public.

Team ICSI

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