

Daily Current Affairs - 2020

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Resources: The Hindu / PIB

**Topic: For Prelims and Mains** 

## Adjusted Gross Revenue(ADR):



**Why in News?** The Supreme Court has come down heavily on the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for issuing a notification last month that asked for no coercive action against telecom companies even though they had not paid **the adjusted gross revenue (AGR)** dues by the stipulated deadline of January 23.

The Court also initiated **contempt proceedings** against the telecom companies for not **paying the AGR dues.** 

• The court also asked **DoT to immediately withdraw the notification** which said that there would be no coercive action against telcos.

#### Background:

Last year, the Supreme Court upheld the definition of **Adjusted Gross Revenue** (AGR) calculation as stipulated by **the Department of Telecommunications.** 

The order by the top court means that the **telecom companies will have** to immediately clear the pending AGR dues, which amount to nearly Rs 1.47 lakh crore.

#### What is AGR?

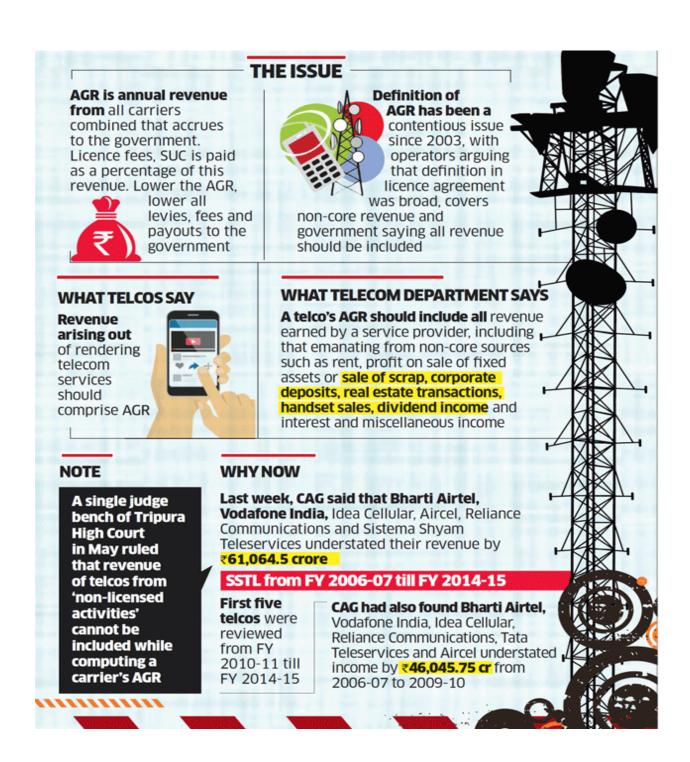
Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) is *the usage and licensing fee* that telecom operators are charged by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).

It is **divided into spectrum usage charges and licensing fees**, pegged between 3-5 percent and 8 percent respectively.

#### Why the definition of AGR is important?

Because it has revenue implications for both government & Telecos.

- **For government** it means increase in its revenue collection which helps maintaining fiscal deficit and undertake welfare measures
- **For Telecom Operators** Added financial burden especially at a time where their assets ae over leveraged and profits are under pressure from severe competition (after Jio's entry).



### <u>Implication of the Supreme Court's 2019 Order:</u>

- On Telecom companies: Increased liability means losses in their operation in short term. It also erodes the telcos' net worth impacting retail investors
- On Telecom Sector: It could potentially lead to Vodafone Idea's exit due to its weak financial position & its inability to pay its dues. This leads to the creation of a **Airtel-Jio duopoly** which may not augur well for the competitiveness in the sector and thus the government's vision of Digital India.
- **On Banking Sector**: AGR issue has triggered panic in the banking industry, given that the telecom sector is highly leveraged. Vodafone Idea alone has a debt of Rs 2.2 lakh crore.
- Mutual fund industry having exposure to telecom sector will also see erosion of value.
- **On Consumers**: Competition in the sector will always lead to better prices and better technology. **Possibility of creation of duopoly** will impact the competition in negative manner.

#### Way ahead:

- Government should realize the consequences of the failure/weakness of the sector on the broader economy & on its long term vision of Digital India.
- Therefore, instead of being inflexible on AGR for **short term revenue gain**, it should accommodate the interests of the telecom operators (like extension of deadline, foregoing interest on dues) so that long term vision is not compromised.



**Topic: For Prelims and Mains** 

#### **Asur Tribes**

#### **About the Tribes:**

Asur is among the nine Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) found in Jharkhand.

- Of the 32 different tribes recorded in the State, only four to five tribes, including **Santhali**, **Ho and Kuruk**, have recorded language scripts.
- As per the 2011 census, the tribe has a population of around 23,000 in **Latehar and Gumla districts**.
- In the community, 50% of population could barely speak in **Asur language**; they are not fluent in the language.
- The Asur language figures in the list of UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the **World's Languages in Danger**.
- Only 7,000 to 8,000 Asur tribals are left in the community who are well conversant in the language.
- With help from tribal rights activists, Asur Tribal Wisdom Centre, an organization involving Asur tribals, was established at Jobhipat village near Netarhat to protect the language and culture of Asur tribals.
- Using mobile radio, the **Asur community** has been spreading the popularity of the language within their geographical limits.

#### About the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs):

**In 1975,** the Government of India initiated to identify the most vulnerable tribal groups as a separate category called **PVTGs** and declared **52 such groups**.

#### Characteristics of PVGT's:

- 1. PVTGs have declining or stagnant population
- 2. Low level of literacy
- 3. Pre-agricultural level of technology
- 4. Economically backward
- **5.** Generally inhabit remote localities having **poor infrastructure** and administrative support.

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#### **Facts for Prelims:**

#### **❖ i-GOT Programme :**

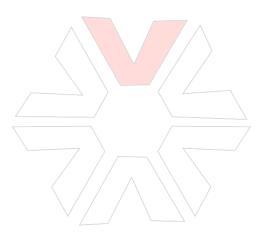
The Government has recently launched the iGOT (Integrated Government Online Training Programme) developed by Department of Personnel and Training, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions.



- It will augment the existing training mechanism with online modulebased training coupled with certification.
- The National Training Policy-2012 mandates that all civil servants will be **provided with training to equip them** with the competencies for their current or future jobs.
- The current structure of training for Government servants including domestic and **foreign training is mostly available to very small section** of the government servants.

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