General Network Access

Why in news?

The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission came out with a draft proposal to facilitate regulatory framework for General Network Access (GNA).

What is General Network Access (GNA)?

- GNA refers to non-discriminatory access (**open access)** to the inter-State transmission system for an estimated maximum injection and for a consumer to draw for a specified period.

How is GNA different from point-to-point access concept?

- Today a power generator has to work out how the supply will be done due to the point-to-point access concept which, according to the producers, is restrictive.
- GNA will allow them to supply from any point, as long as the quantum contracted for is met.
- This allows access or withdrawal on the entire belt of transmission
- Thus it provides generators and procurers (states) the choice of injection and withdrawal.
- A generator focuses only on producing power and the consumer focuses only on buying it.
- How the power is transmitted will no longer be a challenge for the producers.
- This will benefit both the power generator and the consumer.
- This is expected to create a level playing field.

Who is eligible to apply for GNA?

- **State Transmission Utility** connected to intra-State transmission system and other intra-State entities.
- **A buying entity** connected to intra-State transmission system.
- **A distribution licencee or a bulk consumer**, seeking to connect to ISTS directly with a load of 50 MW and above.
- **Trading licencees** engaged in cross-border trade of electricity in terms of the Cross Border Regulations.
- **Transmission licencee** connected to ISTS for withdrawal of auxiliary power.
- Entities not covered here
    - but are connected to the inter-State Transmission
    - for whom Connectivity granted under Connectivity regulations has become effective

    as on the date these regulations come into force for the quantum equal to the quantum of connectivity.

What is the reason for replacing the existing regulations?

- **Hassle Free Transmission -** If power cannot be injected and transmitted anywhere hassle free it undermines the utility of ‘one nation one grid’

- **Less say for end users in capacity building -** Inter-State Transmission Charges have been shared by end-users (states) but they have a little say in such capacity building.This is avoided in GNA.
- **Payment of transmission charges -** Existing transmission network producers are seeking long-term agreements to avoid the paying monthly transmission charges.
- Hence Central Electricity Authority initiated the idea of GNA for:
    1. proper planning of transmission system
    2. assured recovery of transmission charges from the applicant.
- **Issues In Bidding Process -** Due to issues in bidding process only few distribution companies had tied up their power requirement from these generating stations.
- GNA does away the unnecessary contracts between power producers and the bulk consumers for delivery of power.
- **Withdrawing more than allotted –** The withdrawal requirement of many States like Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh is more than the allocated power.
- However the charges are shared by all the beneficiaries.
- They should proportionally share the point of connection charges at the point of withdrawal.
- In the current scenario if short term/ medium/PX transactions are curtailed it results in significant bottling up of generation and distress to Discoms.
- **Beneficial for consumers -** A consumer is not worried about where the supply will come from and what energy source it will come from.
- The quantum contracted will be transmitted to the consumer.
- GNA will also result in tariff rationalisation to some extent.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/will-india-plug-into-general-network-access/article38175486.ece

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