

Competition Landscape in India: Insights and Future Trends

Year in Review 2025

Justin Coombs, Jincy Francis, Neha Georgie, Avinash Mehrotra, Kadambari Prasad¹
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1 Introduction

2025 was a busy year for the Competition Commission of India (the “CCI”) and the courts, with a focus on digital regulation and AI. Competition regulation in the digital sector saw important recalibration in 2025, with policymakers signalling caution on sweeping *ex-ante* rules while strengthening traditional enforcement. There is a push from industry participants for a phased, evidence-based approach to digital regulation, greater capacity for the CCI, and stronger protections for small and medium-sized enterprises – amid strong industry pushback against broad upfront obligations.

At the same time, enforcement standards were tightened: the Supreme Court’s *Schott Glass* ruling made effects-based analysis mandatory in abuse of dominance cases, while the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (the “NCLAT”) diluted strict data-sharing bans in favour of user opt-outs in the WhatsApp case. Merger control saw a transaction filing taken to Phase 2, making it the first Phase 2 merger in six years, and was subsequently cleared with modifications.

Updated cost regulations now better reflect digital business models, improving market assessments, although the CCI has adopted a light-touch stance on Artificial Intelligence (“AI”) for now, focusing on transparency and internal safeguards rather than immediate regulation.

Looking ahead to 2026, India’s competition framework is positioned for more active enforcement and robust merger control, supported by new regulations and rising deal volumes. The CCI is expected to prioritise conduct investigations, conclude stalled cases, and see greater use of settlements and commitments, while continuing to fine-tune procedural rules such as deal value thresholds. Digital markets will remain a core focus, alongside growing institutional capacity and technical expertise – particularly in AI – suggesting a more mature, effects-driven competition regime rather than blunt regulatory intervention.

1.1 *Ex-ante* regulations hit a roadblock while *ex-post* investigations of digital markets continue

Competition issues in the digital sector remained in the spotlight. In 2025, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance reviewed the CCI’s role in India’s economy, particularly the digital

¹ We thank Mudit Dhakar, Tanya Patil, Arpita Pattanaik and Padma Todi for their assistance.

landscape. In its report, the committee called for a phased, nuanced and evidence-based approach to digital competition regulation in India.²

Key observations and recommendations in this report include:

- adopting a nuanced approach to the ex-ante regulation: use ongoing market studies as inputs for refining the provisions including the thresholds for designating firms subject to the *ex-ante* regulation; allow digital players to rebut their designation under the regulation in exceptional cases; and avoid blanket prohibitions in the regulation.
- increasing the institutional capacity and funding of the CCI: fill human-resource gaps; explore flexible engagement models; ensure adequate budget allocations; and invest in advanced analytical tools.
- protecting small and medium enterprises: reassess the newly instituted deal value threshold for filing mergers, so that large corporations cannot acquire smaller firms without regulatory scrutiny; and continue proactive investigations into predatory pricing and deep discounting by dominant online platforms.

Digital players continued to opine on the potential use of *ex-ante* regulation. Both global and local technology firms strongly resisted it, warning of ‘over-capture’ and arguing that the proposed thresholds and the lack of rebuttal mechanisms would hurt innovation and investment.³ In November 2025, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs issued a request for proposal for a market study on the qualitative and quantitative thresholds under the proposed *ex-ante* regulation.⁴

1.2 Post-Schott Glass, effects-based analyses are now unavoidable in abuse of dominance cases

The Supreme Court *Schott Glass* judgement set a precedent for abuse of dominance cases assessed under the Competition Act. In 2012, the CCI found in that Schott Glass abused its dominant position, by offering preferential terms to its downstream arm, refusing to supply downstream firms that engaged other suppliers and offering anti-competitive volume-based rebates. The Supreme Court has now overturned the CCI’s order primarily because the CCI had not conducted a sufficient effects-based analysis. It stated that an analysis of effects was necessary not only in this case, but in all abuse of dominance cases. This was a landmark judgement which has now brought effects analysis into mainstream analysis and we expect that going forward the CCI will have to present an analysis of effects in its orders.

1.3 Data sharing remedies less likely to hold up; opt-outs more likely

Remedies in digital market assessments that ban data sharing now have a lower chance of success in India. In the *WhatsApp* decision, the CCI had found that WhatsApp abused its dominance in implementing a policy update which compelled users to accept sharing data with Meta to continue

² See Parliament of India. *Press Release, 11th August, 2025*.
https://www.sansad.in/getFile/lsscommittee/Finance/pr_files/Press%20Release%2025th%20Report.pdf?source=loksabhadocs.

³ See Times of India. *Many digital companies oppose tighter norms*.
<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/many-digital-companies-oppose-tighter-norms/articleshow/108474601.cms>.

⁴ See MCA. *Request for Proposal (RFP) to undertake a Market Study on “Qualitative and Quantitative thresholds for Big Tech Companies and Core Digital Services (CDS)”*.
<https://www.mca.gov.in/bin/dms/getdocument?mds=laUa9LfQ2aOI0UnQJmc%252BMQ%253D%253D&type=open>.

using its service. The CCI's directions included a five-year ban on WhatsApp sharing user data with other Meta companies for advertising purposes. WhatsApp appealed the decision to the NCLAT, which affirmed the CCI's decision but set aside the CCI's data sharing remedy. Instead, the NCLAT determined that an opt-out mechanism would protect users.

1.4 Updated regulations likely to inform better decision-making for digital market assessments

Digital market assessments in particular are likely to benefit from updated regulations that have revised the cost metrics the CCI will use in its assessments. Standard costs used in these assessments, like "long run average incremental cost" and "total cost", have now been redefined to encompass issues that are typical for digital firms. The inclusion of sunk costs in these assessments enables more accurate analyses of firms that have high upfront costs. Overall, these changes are expected to enable more consistent and streamlined assessments.

1.5 Approach to AI remains light-touch

The CCI's approach to AI was laid out in its recently published market study. Current indications are that the authority will tread lightly in the first instance, considering but not regulating competition issues that arise from the use of AI. While the study highlighted potential concerns including predatory pricing and exclusionary practices, the CCI has limited next steps to broad recommendations along the lines of self-audits, increased transparency and advocacy, while considering strengthening its technical capacity.

1.6 Looking ahead to 2026

The year ahead is expected to set the pace for India's competition landscape. After the regulatory overhaul of India's competition law in 2023-2024 and developments that followed in 2025, the foundation for enforcement and merger activity in India is now in place.

We expect merger activity in India to remain robust, building on the stronger deal volume in the second half of 2025, with businesses moving forward despite the ongoing uncertainty around geopolitics.⁵ Combined with the CCI's updated merger guidance and timely merger reviews, prospects for merger control look promising. One factor to watch out for is capacity - the coming months may indicate whether the CCI will consider expanding its capacity to keep pace with increased merger filings.

We anticipate that the CCI will prioritise antitrust investigations, given that the number of cases nearly doubled from 2024 to 2025. The authority is also expected to finalise existing investigations, which were previously stayed due to challenges in the courts. We also foresee a higher number of settlement and commitment applications, as both the CCI and practitioners have gained greater experience with these processes over the past year.

We may also see further clarifications on procedural and substantive issues, reflecting the learnings from the operations of the new regulations. The CCI may be able to assess whether the deal value thresholds have been capturing the type of transactions that they were intended to capture, and whether their implementation can be streamlined.

Digital markets are likely to continue to attract enforcement attention, in line with the trends we see globally. In parallel, we expect the CCI to enhance its advocacy initiatives and further build technical

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See The Economic Times. *M&A activity set to remain strong in 2026 after \$104 billion domestic consolidation in 2025*. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/ma-activity-set-to-remain-strong-in-2026-after-104-billion-domestic-consolidation-in-2025/articleshow/126271672.cms>.

expertise in artificial intelligence. This could include the CCI setting out its approach to case-specific issues as the regulatory landscape evolves, potentially in collaboration with other competition authorities. The CCI has already taken steps in this direction, recently having organised a workshop as a preparatory event in the lead up to the India AI Impact Summit to be held in February 2026.⁶ The summit will host numerous discussions relevant to the CCI's efforts, ranging from sector-specific AI issues that could inform analyses to embedding AI in the authority's own processes.⁷

In what follows, we summarise the key regulatory developments (in Section 2), describe the most prominent competition cases (in Section 3) and outline highlights from the CCI's AI market study (in Section 4).

2 Updated guidance welcomed

The CCI took steps in 2025 to clarify how competition law would be applied. This included updating regulations and informal guidance.

First, the CCI updated its cost of production regulations clarifying how cost metrics should be determined. Two key changes in the regulation relate to definitions of cost metrics: (i) the regulations include an expanded definition of "long run average incremental cost", with an explicit reference to the inclusion of sunk costs and the common costs for multi-product firms; and (ii) "total cost" is now defined to include depreciation and exclude an explicit reference to finance overheads.⁸ The inclusion of sunk costs is especially relevant to digital market assessments, as firms operating in this sector typically have high upfront costs (e.g., costs of developing software and infrastructure set-up) and more limited marginal costs associated with adding users. This revised definition of total costs ensures greater consistency and simplifies interpretation of these cost benchmarks.

Second, following the amendments to the Competition Act and the updated regulations, the CCI also updated its *informal guidance on mergers*, to provide much needed clarity to stakeholders. The clarifications related to:

- the material influence standard for determining 'control': the definition of control was expanded to include the ability to exercise material influence on an enterprise's management or strategic affairs. The guidance details the types of rights to consider while determining if there is control. This is relevant for identifying entities that should be included in market share calculations;
- the deal value threshold: including clarity on what is included in the value of a transaction (in particular, call options are included whereas put options are not), how 'substantial business operations in India' will be assessed (at the level of the enterprise being acquired), and the definition of 'digital services' (specifically the emphasis on facilitation of transactions). The guidance has thus cleared up the ambiguity on how the deal value threshold will be applied; and
- interconnected transactions: clarifying that a single merger notice should be filed in cases where the intended transaction involves multiple interconnected steps.

⁶ See CCI. *CCI and Nasscom Organised Workshop on Artificial Intelligence, Competition & Governance*. <https://www.cci.gov.in/antitrust/press-release/details/603>.

⁷ See India AI Impact Summit. *Agenda*. <https://impact.indiaai.gov.in/agenda>.

⁸ See CCI. *The Competition Commission of India (Determination of Cost of Production) Regulations, 2025*. <https://www.cci.gov.in/legal-framework/regulations/119/0>.

Lastly, the CCI also revised its penalty recovery regulations to streamline the recovery process.⁹

Overall, we expect these amendments to increase clarity and efficiency in the analysis as well as in the procedural matters.

3 Key CCI orders and court judgements issued in the past year

This section outlines the CCI's key merger and antitrust decisions in 2025. We focus on significant developments that impact the enforcement of competition law in India.

3.1 Mergers

In 2025, the CCI considered 134 mergers (a handful more than it did in 2024). Of those:

- 18 were approved under the Green Channel (an automatic system of approval for mergers where there the parties' activities do not overlap);
- 114 were approved without any modifications;¹⁰
- one was approved with modifications in Phase 1 (the acquisition of J. B. Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals Limited by Torrent Pharmaceuticals Limited, where the detailed case order is pending); and
- very unusually – one was taken to Phase 2, making it the first Phase 2 merger in six years, and subsequently cleared with modifications.

The CCI did not prohibit any mergers in 2025. In fact, it has not prohibited any merger since India's merger control regime came into force in 2011.

The 134 mergers the CCI considered included 17 in the power and energy sector, 16 in the finance sector, eleven in the healthcare and pharmaceutical sector and seven in the food and beverages sector.

3.1.1 Bharat Forge-AAMCPL merger

The CCI granted a conditional Phase 2 approval to Bharat Forge Limited's ("BFL") acquisition of AAM India Manufacturing Corporation Private Limited ("AAMCPL").¹¹ BFL primarily manufactures and sells metal forging products (e.g., vehicle components) within and outside India and AAMCPL manufactures and sells axles for commercial vehicles in India. Certain promoters of BFL had controlling interests in two of its joint ventures that operated in the axle manufacturing business.

The CCI observed that the parties' combined shares were high – it calculated these would range from 35-40% in the wider market for the supply of axles for commercial vehicles to 60-65% in the narrower market for supply for medium and heavy commercial vehicles. It was further concerned that the parties were close competitors as they participated in the same bidding processes, and the merger could result in adverse effects on innovation, reducing OEMs' incentives to develop proprietary products. Ultimately, these factors could be particularly damaging to competition given

⁹ See CCI. *The Competition Commission of India (Manner of Recovery of Monetary Penalty) Regulations, 2025*. <https://www.cci.gov.in/legal-framework/regulations/117/0>.

¹⁰ We use 'modifications' to refer to the voluntary commitments offered by the parties in a Phase 1 merger investigation.

¹¹ See CCI case order. <https://cci.gov.in/combination/order/details/order/1482/0/orders-section31>.

that OEMs find it difficult to switch suppliers in practice, and have limited buyer power. The CCI concluded that the merger could have an appreciable adverse effect on competition.

The parties proposed behavioural commitments that included BFL's joint ventures in their scope, given the overlap between the business of AAMCPL and these entities. The commitments relating to these joint ventures included maintaining separate business operations and preventing these entities from coordinating or exchanging competitively sensitive information. BFL clarified that it classifies these joint ventures as its affiliates. The CCI accepted these commitments, which will stay in force until 2031, and cleared the merger in Phase 2.

3.2 Antitrust

In 2025, the CCI analysed 47 antitrust cases. Of these:

- 29 were dismissed based on *prima facie* assessments;
- 13 were referred for detailed investigations (almost double the number of cases in 2024);
- three resulted in financial penalties for anticompetitive conduct: UFO Moviez India Ltd and others were fined INR 2.7 crores (USD 294,000) for vertical restraints,¹² Pune Municipal Corporation and others were fined a total of INR 4.4 crores (USD 480,000) for price fixing,¹³ and Federation of Publishers' and Booksellers' Association in India and its members were fined a total of INR 6.4 lakhs (USD 7,000) also for price fixing;¹⁴
- one resulted in no financial penalties despite a determination of anti-competitive cartel conduct (the CCI ordered Maharashtra Wine Merchants Association and others to cease and desist);¹⁵ and
- one was settled with commitments (*Android TV*), making it the CCI's first settlement order since the regulation came out in 2024.

In addition, the appeal courts delivered important judgements. In particular:

- the NCLAT delivered its judgement in *WhatsApp*, refining how data sharing remedies will be considered; and
- the Supreme Court delivered a judgement where it – notably – overturned the CCI's order in *Schott Glass*, due to insufficient effects-based analyses.

Below we summarise the decisions in *Android TV*, *WhatsApp* and *Schott Glass*.

3.2.1 *Android TV*

The CCI accepted Google's settlement application and closed its investigation into Google's alleged abuse of dominant position in the markets for both 'licensable smart TV OS' and 'app stores for Android smart TV OS'.¹⁶ This makes it the CCI's first settlement order since the regulation came out in 2024. In 2023, the CCI found that Google was dominant in both these markets, and engaged in conduct it found provisionally anticompetitive. This included:

¹² See CCI case order: <https://cci.gov.in/antitrust/orders/details/1181/0>.

¹³ See CCI case order: <https://cci.gov.in/antitrust/orders/details/1212/0>.

¹⁴ See CCI case order: <https://cci.gov.in/antitrust/orders/details/1192/0>.

¹⁵ See CCI case order: <https://cci.gov.in/antitrust/orders/details/1215/0>.

¹⁶ See CCI case order: <https://cci.gov.in/images/antitrustorder/en/order1745235602.pdf>.

- mandating pre-installation of its apps for pre-installing the Play Store. The CCI argued this imposed unfair conditions and supplementary obligations on smart TV OEMs and tied Google's other apps with Play Store; and
- preventing OEMs from selling smart TVs enabled with alternative or forked versions of Android. The CCI argued that this imposed anticompetitive obligations on smart TV OEMs.

Before the CCI formed a final view based on the DG's investigation report, Google made a settlement application offering to make the following changes:

- make available standalone licences to Play Store and Play Services for a fee, which do not mandate the pre-installation of other Google apps; and
- waive the requirements that limit OEMs from using alternative and forked versions of Android in their Smart TVs.

In 2025, the CCI accepted this proposal and closed its investigation. One of the three CCI members dissented with the majority judgement and considered that the settlement offer was insufficient to allay competition concerns.

3.2.2 **WhatsApp**

In 2025, the NCLAT upheld the CCI's 2021 decision and the penalty against WhatsApp, but set aside one of the behavioural remedies it proposed – a prohibition on data sharing for advertising purposes.¹⁷ This decision marks a significant development in the evolution of data enforcement in India and aligns domestic competition law with business rationales and India's privacy law. The NCLAT stayed this remedy because data sharing is critical to WhatsApp's business model and the remedy was potentially in conflict with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act.

In 2021, the CCI found that WhatsApp (and its parent, Meta) abused its dominant position via its privacy policy update, which constituted exploitative conduct as users were compelled to accept extensive data-sharing with Meta in order to continue using the service, leaving them with no meaningful choice.¹⁸ The CCI levied a penalty of INR 213.1 crore (USD 25 million) on WhatsApp and ordered compliance with certain directions, one of which prevented WhatsApp from sharing user data with other Meta companies for advertising purposes for a period of five years.

In its appeal to the NCLAT, WhatsApp argued that, in addition to questioning the CCI's authority to impose privacy and data protection requirements: (i) the CCI had relied on potential, likely effects rather than actual effects, and (ii) the behavioural remedy stipulated was disproportionate and would collapse the free business model of WhatsApp, given that advertising is its main source of revenue.

The NCLAT upheld the CCI's decision finding WhatsApp guilty of abusing its dominant position and confirmed the monetary penalty, however it modified one behavioural remedy. It agreed that data was a key parameter of competition and the data integration conferred Meta a significant competitive advantage in online display advertising, raising entry barriers for rival ad-tech firms. However, it set aside the CCI's five-year ban on data sharing between WhatsApp and Meta for advertising purposes, holding that the restriction was not adequately justified. Instead, it noted that

¹⁷ See NCLAT order dated 23 January 2025 in I.A No. 280 of 2025 in Competition Appeal (AT) No. 1 of 2025, *WhatsApp LLC v Competition Commission of India & Ors.*

¹⁸ See CCI case order: <https://cci.gov.in/antitrust/orders/details/1156/0>.

ensuring a transparent, effective opt-out mechanism would sufficiently safeguard user choice and mitigate competitive concerns.

3.2.3 **Schott Glass**

One of the most significant developments in 2025 was that the Supreme Court overturned the CCI's judgement in Schott Glass, primarily because the CCI had not conducted a sufficient effects-based analysis. This was a landmark judgement which has now brought effects-based analysis into mainstream analysis, and we expect that going forward the CCI will have to present an analysis of effects in its orders.

In 2012, the CCI found that Schott Glass had abused its dominant position in the upstream markets for the manufacture of clear and amber neutral glass tubes, which are primarily used by downstream firms (or 'converters') for manufacturing ampoules and vials.¹⁹ It argued that Schott Glass's conduct, which included (i) offering higher discounts and preferential terms to its downstream entity, (ii) refusing supplies to converters who also procured glass from other upstream firms, and (iii) offering volume-based rebates based on the combined volumes of two different type of glass tubes amounted to tying, and was abusive.

The CCI's assessment focused on establishing the existence of the alleged conduct and its potential impact, rather than analysing actual effects, to the extent feasible. For instance, while the CCI observed that higher discounts offered by Schott Glass to its related downstream entity increased that entity's margins while reducing those of downstream competitors, it did not examine in detail whether the margin reduction was attributable solely to Schott Glass's conduct or how it would translate into a long-term reduction in competition.

The Supreme Court concluded that the CCI had not analysed sufficiently whether the conduct had an effect. It argued that:

- the volume-based rebates were not necessarily abusive or discriminatory. It noted there was no demonstrable evidence of exclusionary effects in the upstream market and available market data (in particular, the increase in capacity or production by competitors, or an increase in imports) was inconsistent with such effects;
- the functional rebates were offered to downstream firms which met certain obligations, and were objectively justified;
- Schott Glass's agreement with its downstream entity did not result in a margin squeeze for downstream rivals. For this, the court relied on the as-efficient competitor principle and a three-limb test, i.e., (i) the respondent must itself operate downstream; (ii) the difference between the wholesale price and retail price must be insufficient for an equally efficient competitor to compete effectively; and (iii) compression of the margin must threaten competitive harm, for example the exit of competitors or generation of barriers to entry; and
- aggregating the sales of the two types of tubes does not amount to tying, rather to a multi-product volume discount, and in any case, such aggregation is objectively justified since the two types of tubes could be regarded as alternative specifications of the same product rather than separate products.

¹⁹

See CCI case order: <https://cci.gov.in/antitrust/orders/details/877/0>.

See Supreme Court order:

https://api.sci.gov.in/supremecourt/2014/19707/19707_2014_5_1501_61745_Judgement_13-May-2025.pdf.

This decision by the court stated that “...an effects-based analysis is an obligatory component of every inquiry under Section 4 of the Act.” (emphasis added)²⁰

4 AI market study

The rapid growth of AI adoption in India has raised concerns about market concentration, high entry barriers for startups, and the limitations of relying mainly on *ex-post* competition enforcement. To examine the structure of the AI ecosystem, assess competition risks, and review the adequacy of the existing regulatory framework, the CCI initiated a market study into AI and published its results in 2025.²¹

The study relied on a literature review and primary research covering a wide range of stakeholders including technology firms, laboratories and consortiums developing AI tools, independent developers, firms supplying inputs (hardware, data, computing), AI development platforms, major deployers of AI, investors, competition law and policy experts and industry associations.

The study found that the market size of AI in India is large and growing, and expected to continue doing so. It identified the AI stack: upstream layers (data, infrastructure, development, foundation models) and downstream layers (including AI application deployment, user interaction and data, finetuning the model). It found that 67% of Indian startups were building AI applications, while the upstream layers were dominated by large multinational firms such as Alphabet, Amazon, Meta, Microsoft, OpenAI, and NVIDIA. Notably, 76% of startup respondents built their applications using open-source technologies. It found that there are a range of Indian firms operating at each of these layers, including large players like Tata Group and Micron, as well as generative AI startups like Observe.AI.

The primary survey revealed that AI was an integral component of business strategy across diverse sectors, yet stakeholders reported several challenges. The study’s survey of startups showed that the perceived competition concerns associated with adoption of AI are mainly collusion (37%), price discrimination (32%) and entry barriers (22%). Other concerns mentioned included predatory pricing, reduced transparency, reduced choice, entrenchment of dominance and exclusionary practices. Specifically, these included:

- price discrimination: AI-driven dynamic, personalised and target pricing was heavily used by respondents. While it has several benefits (such as lower personalised prices for price-sensitive consumers, lower dynamic pricing for patient users), it also generates several risks (including loss of consumer trust, high value extraction from consumers in less competitive markets, welfare loss due to increases in search and transaction costs, and exclusionary abuse of dominance under certain circumstances);
- algorithmic collusion: AI-driven pricing can enable coordination (tacit or otherwise) without explicit human agreement. These are harder to detect and regulate than deliberate human agreements;
- entry barriers: many startups said that closed-source proprietary datasets held by large firms were not accessible to them – in particular, 68% of respondents cited data availability (both in terms of quality and quantity) as the primary obstacle, one that is made harder due to the

²⁰ Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2002 prevents enterprises with a dominant position from abusing their market power.

²¹ See CCI. *Market Study on Artificial Intelligence and Competition*.
<https://www.cci.gov.in/images/marketstudie/en/market-study-on-artificial-intelligence-and-competition1759752172.pdf>.

presence of network effects. Other challenges included the high cost of cloud services and infrastructure (61%), talent availability (61%), limited funding (56%) and 83% of respondents stated they relied on self-financing. Due to these challenges, it concluded that smaller firms may find it increasingly difficult to compete on innovation alone, leading to lower overall market dynamism;

- foreclosure via killer acquisitions: it noted that large players can acquire smaller rivals to reduce future threats, foreclose competition and lock up essential resources. Particularly in the case of computing or data infrastructure firms, mergers may worsen the existing high market concentration;
- higher switching costs and locks-ins: the study also noted a potential risk of a few major ecosystems emerging, each with its own standards, strategic partnerships. including (near-) exclusive tie-ups, resulting in costly switching, ultimately reducing competition and lowering incentives to innovative; and
- self-preferencing and tying: it noted that dominant firms may leverage their market power to promote their own products, or require consumers to purchase unbundled/tied products to access essential AI infrastructure. Self-preferencing might also arrive as a learned outcome of an AI algorithm, all of which makes it harder for smaller firms to compete.

The study concluded by noting that the Competition Act remains the primary tool for enforcement, supported by the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's AI Governance Guidelines (2025). It proposes a light-touch, evidence-based approach rather than immediate *ex-ante* regulation. The CCI's recommendations include:

- self-audits of AI systems for competition compliance including documenting how AI decisions are made, designing and testing algorithms for built-in competition safeguards, conducting regular audits and reviews of AI outputs, checking pricing strategies for price alignment or discriminatory pricing, and not sharing commercially sensitive data with competitors;
- increased transparency including communicating to stakeholders when and how AI is used in decision making and the key parameters influencing AI-based decisions;
- focused advocacy including conferences and workshops on AI, regulatory issues and competition compliance;
- reducing entry barriers through access to data and infrastructure and talent development; and
- regulatory efforts including strengthening the CCI's technical capacity and enhancing inter-regulatory and international coordination.

Since publishing the study, the CCI held a workshop on 'Artificial Intelligence, Competition & Governance' on 19 December 2025.²² The workshop brought together senior policymakers, regulators, industry representatives and experts. Discussions focused on emerging challenges posed by AI deployment, the need for coordinated regulatory responses, and the importance of preserving competitive markets while enabling innovation. Anil Agrawal, a member of the CCI and

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See CCI. *CCI and Nasscom Organise Workshop on Artificial Intelligence, Competition & Governance*. <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2206764®=3&lang=2>.

workshop attendee, stated that AI risks may not be reflected in market shares or price signals, but in access terms and design choices which shape contestability.²³

²³

See https://www.linkedin.com/posts/anilagrawal_aiimpactsummit2026-ai-competitionpolicy-activity-7407782020099080192-Ck5Q.