

**Government of India
Ministry of Communications
Department of Posts
New Delhi**

Dated: 01st December 2025

Inviting Comments on the proposed draft of the amendments to the Post Office Act, 2023

The Department of Posts (DoP), Ministry of Communications is proposing an initiative to establish an interoperable, standardized and user-centric addressing system as part of the national digital public infrastructure. Titled **Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address or DHRUVA**, it envisages simplified and seamless service delivery and efficient governance, thereby enabling “Address as a Service” (AaaS) in India.

A **Policy Document** on the above, titled “**Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address or DHRUVA – The Digital Address DPI**” was circulated on 30.05.2025 earlier, and the inputs received from various stakeholders and the public consultations were incorporated.

The Department has now prepared a draft of the amendments to the Post Office Act, 2023 (Act) to provide the legislative strength for the said DHRUVA framework and the associated ecosystem reforms through amendments to the Act.

The proposed amendments seek to operationalise a modern, secure, interoperable and user-centric digital addressing ecosystem for India, through:

- Digital Address Identifiers (DAI)
- Addresses and postcodes
- Generation and use of address identifiers.
- Validation of address information associated with an address identifier
- Registration of Address Service Providers (ASPs)
- Authorization of Address Validation Agencies (AVAs)
- Creation of a national Network Administrator
- Consent-based mechanisms for generation, exchange, validation, access & use of address information
- Establishing a governance architecture to support India's digital public infrastructure vision for address management,
- Grievance redressal, adjudication, and penalties

An **Explanatory Note** summarizing and explaining the provisions of the draft amendment has also been prepared for wider public understanding.

Stakeholders are invited to submit their comments on the proposed Draft amendments **within 30 days of publication of this notice.**

Comments may be sent to: *digipin@indiapost.gov.in*

PROPOSED DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO THE POST OFFICE ACT, 2023

1. Amendment of Section 2

In section 2 of the Post Office Act, 2023 the following definitions will have to be inserted.

- (a) “address identifier” means a unique identifier generated under section 6, that is linked to the corresponding address information;
- (b) “address information” means information in a prescribed format that is linked to an address identifier and is necessary to identify a geographic location;
- (c) “adjudicating officer” means an officer appointed under section ..;
- (d) “Appellate Authority” the authority notified by the Central Government under section ..;
- (e) “Authorized Address Validation Agency” means a person authorised under section .. to validate the address information linked to an address identifier;
- (f) “Address Service Provider” means a person registered with the Network Administrator under section 6 and authorised to generate an address identifier to a user, access or use the address information associated with an address identifier and perform such other functions as may be prescribed;
- (g) “notification” means a notification published in the Official Gazette, and the expression “notified” with its cognate meanings and grammatical variations shall be construed accordingly;
- (h) ‘Network Administrator’ means the entity, body or agency notified by the Central Government under section ..;
- (i) “person” includes:
 - (i) an individual;
 - (ii) a company;
 - (iii) a firm;
 - (iv) an association of persons or a body of individuals, whether incorporated or not;
 - (v) the State; and
 - (vi) every artificial juristic person, not falling within any of the preceding sub-clauses;

- (j) “postcode” means a series of digits, letters or digital code or a combination of digits, letters or digital code used to identify a geographic area or location, and ease the process of sorting, delivery of items and services and for other purposes;
- (k) “user” means any person for whom an address identifier has been generated under section 6;
- (l) “validate” or “validation” means the process by which an Authorized Address Validation Agency confirms whether the address information provided by the user accurately corresponds to the actual physical location and relevant attributes of the address in such form and manner as may be prescribed.

Chapter [...]: Address Identifiers

Addresses and Postcodes.

The Central Government may prescribe standards for addressing on items, address identifiers and usage of postcodes.

Generation and use of address identifiers.

- (1) No person shall operate as an Address Service Provider unless such person is registered with the Network Administrator in such form and manner and subject to such technical, governance, procedural, financial and other standards and conditions, as may be prescribed.
- (2) For registering any Address Service Provider under sub-section (1), the Network Administrator shall have regard to the adequacy of the technical and security infrastructure of the Provider, to generate an address identifier and securely access the address information.
- (3) The generation of an address identifier and the access and use of address information linked to such address identifier shall be undertaken by the Address Service Provider upon the consent of the user in such form and manner as may be prescribed.
- (4) The Central Government may prescribe different standards and conditions under sub-section (1) for different types of Address Service Providers depending on the type and functions of such providers.

Explanation: For the purposes of this section, consent for users that qualify as ‘data principals’ under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (22 of 2023) shall have the meaning assigned to it in that Act.

Network Administrator

- (1) The Central Government, may by notification, authorise a company, agency or any other body, as it may deem fit, to act as the Network Administrator for the purposes of this Chapter.

- (2) For the purposes of this Chapter, the Network Administrator shall exercise the following powers and perform the following functions, in such form and manner and subject to such standards, as may be prescribed:
- (a) establishment and administration of a common system for enabling secure and reliable interaction between Address Service Providers in relation to the generation of address identifiers and use and access of address information;
 - (b) registration and supervision of Address Service Providers;
 - (c) issuance of technical and operational standards for the functioning of the common system referred to in sub-clause (a), access to, and use of, such system by any participant, and ensuring compliance with such standards;
 - (d) suspension and cancellation of registration of Address Service Providers;
 - (e) management and redressal of complaints arising from the exercise of its powers and functions under this section; and
 - (f) such other powers and functions as may be prescribed.
- (3) Without prejudice to the foregoing provisions, the Central Government shall have the power to issue directions to the Network Administrator, as it may think necessary, in relation to matters specified under sub-section (2).

Validation of address information associated with an address identifier

- (1) The Central Government may authorise any person under sub-section (2) to operate as an Authorized Address Validation Agency in such form and manner, and subject to such technical, governance, procedural, financial and other standards and conditions as may be prescribed.
- (2) The following persons may apply for authorisation as an Authorized Address Validation Agency under sub-section (1):
- (a) Ministry or Department of the Central or State Government;
 - (b) body or authority established under the Constitution of India, or any Central or State Act;
 - (c) a company incorporated in India, or

- (d) such other person as may be notified by the Central Government from time to time.
- (3) The validation of address information associated with an address identifier shall be upon the consent of the user and in such form and manner as may be prescribed.
- (4) The Central Government may prescribe different standards and conditions under sub-section (1) for different types of Authorised Address Validation Agency depending on the type and functions of such agencies.
- (5) The validation of address information under this section shall not be construed as a proof of identity or as proof of ownership, or lawful possession of the address by the user, except as specified in this Act or any other law.

Explanation: For the purposes of this section, consent for users that qualify as ‘data principals’ under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (22 of 2023) shall have the meaning assigned to it in that Act.

Chapter [...]: Penalties and Adjudication

Penalties

- (1) If any person, who is required under this Chapter, to furnish any report, or other information, fails to submit the same or submits such information which is false, such person will be liable to a penalty which may extend to rupees Ten lakhs and where the failure to comply is a continuing one, a further penalty which may extend to rupees Twenty Five thousand for every day during which the failure to comply continues.
- (2) If any person generates an address identifier, uses or accesses address information or validates address information without registration or authorisation as an Address Service Provider or Authorised Address Validation Agency, as the case may be, such person will be liable to a penalty which may extend to rupees One crore, and where the failure to comply is a continuing one, a further penalty which may extend to rupees Ten lakh for every day during which the failure to comply continues.
- (3) Where any person fails to comply with any provision of this Act, including any rules, or directions or orders issued under this Act, as applicable to such person, for which no separate penalty has been provided, then such person shall be liable to a penalty which may extend to rupees Ten lakh, and where the failure to comply is a continuing one, a further fine which may extend to rupees Twenty Five thousand for every day during which the failure to comply continues.

Power to adjudicate

- (1) For the purposes of adjudicating penalties under section ..., the Central Government shall appoint adjudicating officers possessing such qualifications and experience as may be prescribed, for holding an enquiry and imposing penalties in such form and manner as may be prescribed.
- (2) No penalty shall be imposed under this Act, unless the person on whom such penalty is imposed has been given a reasonable opportunity of being heard.
- (3) While determining the amount of monetary penalty to be imposed or issuing directions under this section, the adjudicating officer will have regard to such factors as may be prescribed, including:
 - (a) the nature, gravity and duration of contravention;
 - (b) repetitive nature of the contravention;
 - (c) any wrongful gain or unfair advantage, wherever, quantifiable, made as a result of the contravention; and
 - (d) loss caused, or likely to be caused, to consumers or other persons as a result of the violation.
- (4) Without prejudice to anything in sub-section (1), the adjudicating officer shall have the following powers to discharge its functions under this section:
 - (a) call for records of any information that is required to be furnished under this Chapter;
 - (b) recommend cancellation of authorisation of an Authorized Address Validation Agency; and
 - (c) issue directions to the Network Administrator for the cancellation of registration of an Address Service Provider.
- (5) The amount of any penalty imposed under this section, if not paid, may be recovered in such form and manner as may be prescribed.
- (6) All sums realised by way of penalties imposed under this Act shall be credited to the Consolidated Fund of India

Appellate Authority.

- (1) The Central Government may by notification appoint an Appellate Authority to decide appeals against the order of an adjudicating officer under section
- (2) Any person aggrieved by an order of an adjudicating officer under section .. may prefer an appeal against such order to the Appellate Authority within such time and in such form and manner as may be prescribed.
- (3) On receipt of an appeal under sub-section (1), the Appellate Authority may, after giving the parties to the appeal an opportunity of being heard, pass such orders as it thinks fit, confirming, modifying or setting aside the order appealed against.
- (4) Subject to sub-section (3), the Appellate Authority will admit, hear and dispose appeals under this section in such form and manner as may be prescribed.

CHAPTER [...] – MISCELLANEOUS**Consistency with other laws.**

The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of any other law for the time being in force.

Protection of action taken in good faith

No suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against the Central Government or any of its officers for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act or the rules or regulations made thereunder.

**EXPLANATORY NOTE TO THE DRAFT OF THE AMENDMENTS TO THE POST
OFFICE ACT,2023**

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EXPLANATORY NOTE TO THE DRAFT OF THE AMENDMENTS TO THE POST OFFICE ACT, 2023

A. Introduction

1. Addresses as critical public infrastructure.

Addresses are a foundational layer for communication, navigation, service delivery and governance. Over time, address formats have evolved from informal landmark-based descriptions to more structured street names, door numbers and PIN codes. Today, address information underpins doorstep delivery of public benefits, commercial services and civic amenities, and is increasingly central to social and economic inclusion.

2. Problems in India's addressing system.

Despite this centrality, India's addressing system faces significant frictions leading in inconsistency-related inefficiencies:

- Diversity of languages and scripts;
- Inconsistent and non-standardized address formats; and
- Fragmentation of address data across multiple siloed systems – for instance, PIN code boundaries and district boundaries which do not coincide.

These factors create errors, delays and exclusion in postal operations, e-commerce logistics, emergency response, financial inclusion and welfare delivery, especially for vulnerable and remote communities.

3. Need for a DPI approach to address information.

The Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications is proposing a novel initiative titled “**Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address (DHRUVA)**” as part of the nation's *Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)* focusing on user-centric address information management. DHRUVA is conceived as a standardized, geocoded and interoperable system that:

- allows users to depict and share their addresses in a standardized, geocoded format;
- enhances address precision and reduces errors;
- is user-centric, consent-based and privacy by-design; and
- fosters innovation across both public and private sectors by building an ecosystem around an address.

4. Role of the Post Office Act, 2023.

The Post Office Act, 2023 is the primary legislation governing all matters connected with the Department of Posts (“Post Office”) and related postal services. It already recognises the Central Government’s power to prescribe standards for addressing on items, address identifiers and postcodes. However, key concepts such as *address identifier*, *Digital Address* and the institutional and functional roles required for the DHRUVA ecosystem are not, at present, clearly articulated in the statute.

5. Objective of the draft Amendment.

The **Proposed Draft Amendments to the Post Office Act, 2023** seek to provide a clear legal foundation for:

- defining *address identifier*, *address information*, *postcode* and other associated terms;
- enabling the generation and use of address identifiers (including Digital Addresses and DIGIPIN-based codes) through regulated Address Service Providers;
- recognising and empowering a Network Administrator to operate the digital infrastructure in DHRUVA along with management, supervision and standard-setting for the various entities which will engage in this ecosystem;
- authorising Authorized Address Validation Agencies to validate address information; and
- establishing proportionate civil penalties along with an adjudication framework for the same

6. Alignment with DHRUVA Policy.

These amendments are designed to align the statutory framework with the vision behind DHRUVA, towards a secure, interoperable, consent-based and innovation-friendly address ecosystem, while upholding user rights, privacy and data protection obligations under laws such as the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDPA).

B. Consultations

7. Policy-level consultation through DHRUVA Policy document.

The DHRUVA Policy Document has been released for public consultation, inviting feedback from citizens, industry, civil society and subject-matter experts. Its objective is to ensure that DHRUVA reflects diverse needs, fosters inclusive adoption and upholds constitutional and legal safeguards.

8. Use of DHRUVA Policy as substantive background.

The present draft amendments draw extensively on the analysis, principles and institutional design outlined in the DHRUVA Policy Document, especially:

- the case for treating address information as a core layer of public infrastructure;
- the proposed DPI architecture with roles such as a Governance Entity, Address Information Providers (AIPs), Address Information Users (AIUs), Address Information Agents (AIAs) and Authorized Address Validation Agencies (AAVAs);
- the need for a clear legal foundation for DIGIPIN and Digital Address; and
- the privacy, consent and data-protection safeguards.

9. Inter-linkages with other legal frameworks.

Additionally, the legal framework proposed in the DHRUVA Policy document explicitly contemplates alignment with the **Post Office Act, 2023** and the **DPDPA, 2023**, ensuring that the statutory amendments sit coherently within the broader digital governance and data protection ecosystem.

C. Drafting practices

10. Plain and simple language.

The draft amendments have been framed in a manner similar to modern legislative drafting standards:

- use of **plain and accessible language**;
- use of **explicit definitions** rather than open-ended references for heightened clarity; and
- avoidance of excessive provisos, with special situations handled through separate clauses.
- Technology-Neutral Wording
- Consent-Centric Design
 - ❖ Aligned with DPDPA:
 - ❖ generation,
 - ❖ use,
 - ❖ validation
 - all require informed consent.
- Separation of Roles with clear differentiation between:
 - ❖ Address Service Providers (management),
 - ❖ Validation Agencies (verification),

- ❖ Network Administrator (governance),
- ❖ Users (ownership and consent).

11. Conceptual consistency with DHRUVA.

The terminology (such as *address identifier*, *Network Administrator*, *Authorized Address Validation Agency*, *user* and *validation*) mirrors the conceptual roles envisaged with the DHRUVA Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). This ensures that the law, the technical architecture and the governance framework speak the same language, reducing ambiguity for all ecosystem participants.

12. Rule-based operational detail.

Consistent with the approach suggested in the DHRUVA Policy document, operational details—such as standards, processes, consent mechanisms, technical protocols and compliance requirements—are to be set out through rules and standards notified by the Central Government or specified by the Network Administrator, rather than increasing the burden of the primary legislation.

D. Disclaimer

13. This Explanatory Note is intended **only for information and guidance** of stakeholders. It is *not* part of the Bill and shall not be relied upon for purposes of legal interpretation.
14. The rights and obligations of all persons shall be determined solely on the basis of the provisions of the Post Office Act, 2023 as amended by the Post Office (Amendment) Bill, and rules made thereunder.

E. Section-wise summary of the proposed Amendments

Section 1: Short title, extent and commencement

15. This Section would ordinarily provide the short title of the amendment (e.g., “Post Office (Amendment) Act, 2025”) and extends the Act to the whole of India.

Section 2: Definitions (Amendment of Section 2)

16. Section 2 of the Post Office Act, 2023 is proposed to be amended to insert a set of specific definitions that are essential for the DHRUVA-based Digital Address Identifier framework and includes the following:

17. “Address identifier”.

- Defined as a unique identifier generated under section 6 and linked to corresponding address information.
- This definition is broad enough to cover a Digital Address which may include different address attributes such as a DIGIPIN (geo-coded based on

latitude-longitude) or other attributes of a descriptive address, as envisaged by DHRUVA.

- It provides legal clarity that what users perceive as their *Digital Address* is an address identifier recognised under the Act.

18. “Address information”.

- Defined as information in a prescribed format linked to an address identifier and necessary to identify a geographic location.
- This enables the Central Government to prescribe flexible but standardised formats for address information, consistent with DHRUVA’s requirement of interoperable representations of addresses.

19. “Adjudicating officer” and “Appellate Authority”.

- These definitions support the penalty and adjudication framework under later chapters, by clearly identifying the civil penalties arising under the DHRUVA environment and the authorities competent to conduct enquiries and hear appeals in relation to such penalties.

20. “Authorized Address Validation Agency”.

- Defined as a person authorised under section 8 to validate address information linked to an address identifier.
- This directly references the entities known as **AAVAs** envisaged under DHRUVA, which will be authorised to perform the crucial task of validation of addresses.

21. “Address Service Provider”.

- Defined as a person registered with the Network Administrator under section 6, authorised to generate address identifiers, access and use associated address information, and perform prescribed functions.
- This corresponds to roles given to entities envisaged within the DHRUVA ecosystem, who interact with users to create and manage Digital Addresses.

22. “Network Administrator”.

- Defined as the entity, body or agency notified by the Central Government under section 7 to manage the common system supporting address identifiers and related services.
- This is aligned with DHRUVA’s concept of a Governance Entity, which will have the overarching responsibility for setting various operational, technical

and governance standards for the other entities operating within DHRUVA, along with system integrity, oversight and ecosystem coordination.

23. “Person”, “postcode”, “user”, “validate/validation”.

- *Person* is defined inclusively to cover individuals, companies, firms, associations, the State and other juristic persons—ensuring that a wide range of entities can participate in the DHRUVA ecosystem.
- *Postcode* is defined as a series of digits, letters, or digital code (or a combination) used to identify a geographic area or location and facilitate sorting and delivery. This allows DIGIPIN to be treated as a valid postcode under the Act.
- *User* is defined as any person for whom an address identifier has been generated.
- *Validate / validation* is defined as confirmation by an Authorized Address Validation Agency that address information corresponds to the actual physical location and relevant attributes, in the prescribed form and manner.

24. Collectively, these definitions:

- give statutory form to concepts that are otherwise only described in policy;
- enable clear allocation of roles and responsibilities among DHRUVA ecosystem participants; and
- provide a stable legal foundation for developing standards, consent frameworks, technical interfaces and accountability mechanisms as envisaged in the DHRUVA Policy.

Chapter Address Identifiers

A new Chapter on address identifiers will encapsulate the specific nature of the clauses pertaining to the DHRUVA ecosystem and allied infrastructure, within the broader scope of the Post Office Act, 2023. The following clauses will be included in this Chapter:

Section 5: Addresses and Postcodes

25. This clause authorises the Central Government to prescribe standards for addressing on postal items, address identifiers; and usage of postcodes – it includes minor modifications for the sake of clarity added to the clause already in existence for the same purpose as Section 5 of the Post Office Act, 2023.
26. DHRUVA requires that all address identifiers and postcodes (such as DIGIPIN) are generated, displayed and consumed according to uniform, interoperable standards. The modification to Section 5 of the Post Office Act, 2023 is to the effect that the explanation of ‘postcode’ for the purpose of this clause, which was included in sub-Section (2) has been included in the definitions as an amendment to Section

2 of the Act. Further, for clarity, the addition of ‘postal’ along with the word ‘items’ in Section 5 of the Act has been made for clarity within the context of the Act.

27. The DHRUVA Policy expressly notes that Section 5 of the Post Office Act is the key provision through which DIGIPIN and Digital Address can be recognised and standardised as postcodes and address identifiers respectively. The proposed amendments thus operationalise this policy intent.

Section: Generation and Use of Address Identifiers

30. This Bill requires that no person shall operate as an **Address Service Provider (ASP)** unless registered with the Network Administrator, subject to prescribed technical, governance, procedural, financial and other standards and conditions.

31. In registering an ASP, the Network Administrator must have regard to the adequacy of its technical and security infrastructure to:

- generate address identifiers; and
- securely access and use address information.

32. The generation of address identifiers, and the access and use of associated address information, must be undertaken upon the consent of the user in the prescribed form and manner. For users who qualify as “data principals” under the DPDPA, consent has the meaning assigned in that Act.

33. The Central Government may prescribe different standards and conditions for different types of ASPs, depending on their functions—for example, full-service providers, sector-specific providers, or community-level facilitators.

34. This clause:

- ensures that only registered and technically capable entities can issue address identifiers and interact with the core DHRUVA infrastructure;
- embeds privacy and DPDPA-compliant consent mechanisms at the point of creation and use of Digital Addresses; and
- allows for flexible ecosystem design, where different categories of ASPs can be recognised and governed as the ecosystem matures.

Section.....: Network Administrator

35. The proposed Section enables the Central Government, by notification, to authorise a company, agency or any other body as the Network Administrator for the purposes of the Chapter.

36. The Network Administrator is responsible, in the prescribed form and manner, for functions such as establishing and administering a common system for secure and reliable interaction between ASPs (for generation of address identifiers and use of

address information); registration and supervision of ASPs; issuance of technical and operational standards governing the common system and its participants, and ensuring compliance; suspension and cancellation of ASP registrations; management and redressal of complaints arising from exercise of its powers and functions; and any other prescribed powers and functions.

37. Further, the Central Government retains the power to issue directions to the Network Administrator in relation to its powers and functions, ensuring that public interest, security and compliance concerns can be addressed promptly.

38. The provisions pertaining to the Network Administrator:

- gives statutory recognition to a Governance Entity envisaged in DHRUVA in the form of the Network Administrator;
- creates a clear locus for standard-setting, certification, supervision and grievance redressal; and
- ensures that the core DHRUVA system functions with reliability, accountability and user-centricity.

Section... : Validation of Address Information

39. The Proposed Section enables the Central Government to authorise specified persons to operate as Authorized Address Validation Agencies (AAVAs), subject to prescribed standards and conditions. Eligible entities include Ministries or Departments of the Central or State Government; bodies or authorities established under the Constitution or any Central/State Act; companies incorporated in India; and any other notified persons.

40. Validation of address information associated with an address identifier must be undertaken upon the consent of the user, and in the prescribed form and manner. For data principals under DPDPA, consent is as defined in that Act.

41. The provision clarifies that validation of address information does not amount to proof of identity; and does not by itself constitute proof of ownership or lawful possession of the address by the user, except as specified in this or any other law.

42. This clause highlights that:

- Validation is central to DHRUVA's trust model, enabling ecosystem participants to rely on the accuracy of Digital Addresses without conflating them with ownership or identity.
- The limited legal effect prevents misuse of validation (e.g., as an ownership claim), while enabling other sectoral laws or schemes in the country to ascribe specific evidentiary weight where appropriate.

- Consent-driven validation, along with DPDPA-aligned safeguards, ensures that address data flows are lawful, proportionate and user-centric.

Chapter Penalties and Adjudication

A new Chapter on penalties and adjudication will incorporate precise civil penalties with respect to contraventions limited to the DHRUVA ecosystem, with a focus on decriminalisation of legislation and a narrow range of penalties to ensure the ease of doing business within the DHRUVA framework. The following clauses will be included in this Chapter:

Section Penalties

43. A penalty may be imposed where a person required to furnish any report or information under the Chapter fails to submit the same; or submits information that is false.
44. A penalty will also apply where a person under the Act generates an address identifier; or uses or accesses address information; or validates address information, without being duly registered or authorised as an ASP or AAVA, as applicable.
45. A general penalty covers contraventions of the Act, rules, directions or orders under the Act, where no specific penalty is provided. Continuing contraventions may attract additional penalties per day of default.
46. The civil penalty framework is designed to be proportionate and deterrent, focusing on compliance and systemic integrity rather than criminalisation. It targets a limited range of behavioural contraventions that could undermine user trust (false information, unregulated operations) or the stability of the DHRUVA ecosystem.

Section Power to Adjudicate

47. The Central Government shall appoint adjudicating officers with prescribed qualifications and experience to conduct enquiries and impose penalties, following prescribed procedures.
48. In line with the principles of natural justice and proportionality, no penalty may be imposed without giving the concerned person a reasonable opportunity of being heard. Moreover, in determining the penalty, the adjudicating officer must consider factors such as:
 - nature, gravity and duration of contravention;
 - repetitive nature;
 - wrongful gain or unfair advantage; and
 - loss caused or likely to be caused to consumers or others.

49. The adjudicating officer may:

- call for records or information;
- recommend cancellation of AAVA authorisation; and
- issue directions to the Network Administrator to cancel ASP registration. Penalties may be recovered in the prescribed manner, and all sums realised are credited to the Consolidated Fund of India.

50. This creates a specialised, quasi-judicial mechanism for specific contraventions which affect the DHRUVA ecosystem, and reducing the burden on ordinary courts while ensuring fairness. The factor-based approach to penalties aligns with modern principles of regulatory adjudication, focusing on systemic impact.

Section ... Appellate Authority

51. Any person aggrieved by an order of the adjudicating officer may appeal to an Appellate Authority notified by the Central Government, within prescribed time and in the prescribed form and manner.

52. The Appellate Authority, after giving parties an opportunity of being heard, may confirm, modify or set aside the order, and shall admit, hear and dispose of appeals in the prescribed manner.

53. The appellate mechanism ensures due process, transparency and accountability in enforcement decisions, giving regulated entities confidence that they can seek review of administrative orders affecting their rights and obligations.

Miscellaneous Provisions (Rule-making, Consistency with Other Laws, Protection of Action Taken in Good Faith)

54. Consistency with other laws.

A clause clarifies that the provisions of the Act are in addition to, and not in derogation of, other laws in force, ensuring harmonious operation with frameworks such as the DPDPA, sectoral regulations, and other applicable statutes.

55. Protection of action taken in good faith.

The Act extends protection to the Central Government and its officers for actions taken in good faith under the Act or rules. This encourages bona fide regulatory and operational decision-making in support of the public interest objectives of DHRUVA and the Digital Address Code.

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