

Arpita Pal Agrawal, partner and leader, Telecom Industry Practice, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) India, has over 20 years of rich telecom experience behind her. “The first 10 years were spent learning and contributing to developing telecom as an essential infrastructure. In the next decade, I worked with industry stakeholders through the telecom sunrise phase,” she says. Now she is devising strategies for the transition of the sector from sunrise to ubiquitous.

Agrawal started her career with TCIL and later worked with companies like ICICI, Arthur Andersen and KPMG. She has worked in over 30 countries across emerging and developed markets. At PwC, she leads the telecom practice and helps clients address their complex business issues through solutions, pulling in multiple competencies in the firm. Commenting on the sector, Agrawal says she expects LTE roll-outs to pick up in late 2015. In addition, there will be greater adoption of unconventional data monetisation options by operators. “A regulatory roadmap that addresses pending issues will be crucial to achieve the vision of Digital India,” she says.

When asked about her most memorable assignment, Agrawal replies: “I am the kind of person who does every project with a lot of interest.” Still, a couple of them have been special. One was the time when she worked with a 100-member multinational team at a telecom operator in Europe on the design and development of network management systems. That was in the early days of her career and she gained significant exposure to a large multicultural team. Another memorable assignment was helping set up TRAI as part of an Asian Development Bank engagement. “It also marked a key milestone in India’s telecom development. From a single operator, we were moving to a multi-operator regime, tariffs were to be rebalanced, a model interconnect framework was designed, a sector regulator was to be formed,” she recalls. More recently, she worked with a large operator on its African operations in 15 plus countries, an insightful, exciting experience.

Agrawal is an electronics and communications engineer by training from the Delhi College of Engineering and has a management degree from IIM Ahmedabad. Timelines are sacrosanct for her. The little time she gets away from work is spent with her husband and their teenaged daughter in joint activities and exploring new places. “We are a close-knit family and are very supportive of each others’ aspirations and career,” she says.

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