

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:116

ANSWERED ON:08.12.2004

DETERIORATION OF PHONE SERVICE

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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether according to a survey conducted by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, the quality of phone service has deteriorated as reported in 'The Hindu' dated October 13, 2004.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the MTNL and the BSNL have failed to meet the quality of service norms;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to improve the functioning of the MTNL and the BSNL?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 116 FOR 8TH DECEMBER, 2004 REGARDING DETERIORATION OF PHONE SERVICE.

(a) & (b) Sir, as per the survey conducted by Telecom Regulatory authority of India (TRAI), during the quarter April to June, 2004, in general, the compliance of Mobile operators to TRAI stipulated benchmark is continuously increasing. In the case of basic service, the performance has deteriorated when compared with that of the previous quarter. Salient features of the report are annexed.

(c) In the case of cellular service, MTNL is meeting all the benchmarks except for one parameter in Delhi circle (billing complaints per 100 bills issued). In the case of BSNL, it is meeting the benchmarks for various parameters in a number of circles. In the case of basic service, though MTNL and BSNL have not fully met the Quality of Service benchmarks prescribed by TRAI, their performance has improved compared to the previous year.

(d) MTNL and BSNL have legacy network based on copper which is difficult to maintain and is old and fault prone. Almost one-third of the telecom lines and about 79% of telephone exchanges of BSNL are working in rural, far-flung and difficult to access areas where there is either no power or reliable electric supply.

(e) Both MTNL and BSNL are continuously taking measures to further improve telecom services. Some of the measures being taken are as follows:-

(i) Opening of more telephone exchanges thereby reducing exchange area size.

(ii) Replacement of underground paper core cables by Jelly filled and optical fibre cables, cordec system etc. in a phased manner.

(iii) Creation of pole less network.

(iv) Introduction of wireless in Local Loop system.

(v) Pagers to line staff/field staff wherever feasible.

(vi) Conversion of SBM (Single Base Module) exchanges into RSUs (Remote Switching Units).

(vii) Conversion of C-DOT 256 Port exchanges into AN-RAXs (Access Network Rural Automatic Exchanges).

(viii) Provision of maintenance free battery sets and Engine Alternators in the exchanges.

(ix) Providing reliable transmission media.

(x) Computerization of commercial activities.

(xi) Continuous optimisation and expansion of mobile network.

ANNEXURE

Salient features of the TRAI report for the period April-June, 2004

1. Quality of Fixed Services:

1.1 Objective Audit

(i) In the objective audit of the operators, parameter on which none of the operators are achieving the TRAI stipulated norms is "new connection within 7 days after registration".

(ii) Similarly, on the parameters "Fault incidences per 100 subs/month" and "shift request", only four operators (Tata-Gujarat, Bharti-Tamilnadu, Bharti-Karnataka and Tata-Karnataka) and two operators (Shyam-Tele-Raj. and BSNL-NE) respectively have met the benchmarks.

(iii) In all other key parameters like Fault repair by next working day, Mean Time to Repair etc., about less than half operators complied with the QoS norms stipulated by TRAI.

(iv) Compared to the previous quarter, i.e. Jan-Mar, 2004, the improvement was observed in terms of the number of operators meeting the benchmark, in case of the parameters:

- Fault repair by next working day
- Mean time to repair
- Billing disputes

1.2 Subjective Survey

(i) As regards the subjective survey, the Customers satisfaction rating in most of the circles across the country has deteriorated as compared to the last quarter except in southern region, which has not registered any change in the satisfaction score. The maximum decrease is registered in the western (from 90% to 85%) and northern (from 85% to 80%) regions. The eastern region has the highest number of dissatisfied subscribers (72%). The satisfaction levels of the Metro and B circle operators have decreased (from 84% to 76%) and (from 83% to 79%) respectively as compared to the last quarters. However, Circle C is showing some improvement (from 74% to 77%) in satisfaction level.

(ii) The key parameters, on which the deterioration is highest, are

- Network Performance
- Maintainability
- Help Services
- Billing

2. Quality of GSM Mobile Services:

1.1 Objective Audit

(i) For all the parameters, more than 50% of the operators are achieving the objective QoS benchmarks stipulated by TRAI. Moreover, comparing the figures with that of Jan-Mar, 2004 quarter, there has been a slight improvement in this quarter.

(ii) However, "Billing" related parameter is an area of concern, as only 37 out of 70 service providers have met the benchmark i.e. less than 0.1% complaints per 100 bills issued.

2.2 Subjective Survey

(i) At an overall level, the satisfaction level amongst the GSM subscribers has significantly deteriorated over the period April-June, 2004. The maximum drop in performance is in case of Metros (from 86.8 to 78.1%), indicating a need for telecom operators to increase resource deployments i.e. greater number of call center executives, better network coverage, billing system upgrades etc. Further a need exists to increase the transparency levels in the tariffs and schemes of the GSM service providers.

(ii) Region-wise, the performance is seen to have deteriorated in all the regions except in the Southern region, where no significant change from the previous quarter is observed.

(iii) A quarter wise comparison of the data reveals that subscribers in metro and B circles are increasingly getting dissatisfied with the services. However, a marginal improvement in satisfaction levels of A and C circle subscribers is observed.

3. Quality of CDMA based Services

3.1 Objective Audits

On most of the parameters, the performance of CDMA operators improved when compared with last quarter.

3.2 Subjective Survey

In the subjective QoS assessment, A (85.5%) and B (77.7%) circle subscribers are relatively more satisfied with the quality of services delivered to them, as compared with Metro (68.6%) and C (72.6%) circle subscribers.