

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1126

ANSWERED ON:15.11.2010

TELECOM TARIFFS

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

- (a) whether the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) propose to frame new guidelines to make cellphone tariffs more transparent in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether certain mobile service providers are charging more than the specified call rate from their subscribes and resourting to various fraudulent practices in this regard in the country;
- (d) if so, whether any grievance redressal mechanism has been set up by the Government for registration of complaints and taking action against such companies;
- (e) if so, the details thereof;
- (f) whether the Government has received any complaints against the said deceitful service providers; and
- (g) if so, the details thereof during the last three years and the current year alongwith the effective steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SACHIN PILOT)

(a) & (b) Regulation of Tariff has been mandated to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) vide the TRAI Act of 1997. TRAI has in the past issued several regulatory guidelines to enhance transparency in the provision of telecommunication services. In addition, TRAI has recently issued a consultation paper titled 'Certain Issues relating to Telecom Tariff' for seeking views of stakeholders, inter-alia, on further measures to improve transparency in tariff offers.

(c) TRAI has mandated service providers through the Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulations 2006, which provides for Audit of Metering and Billing System of service providers through any one of the auditors appointed by the service providers from the panel of auditors notified by TRAI. The service providers are also required to submit the audit report by 30th June of every year and the action taken report on deficiencies if any pointed out by the auditor in the audit report by the 30th Sept of every year. The Audit of the metering and billing system of service providers undertaken in pursuance of these regulations have revealed over charging of calls in certain cases and such audit has resulted in refunds of overcharged amounts to customers and initiation of steps for preventing such incidences of overcharging.

(d) & (e) TRAI has mandated service providers to adopt well defined systems and procedures for redressal of grievances of consumers. The 'Telecom Consumers Protection and Redressal of Grievances Regulations, 2007' provides for a three stage grievance redressal mechanism for implementation by service providers viz. Call Centre, Nodal Officer and Appellate authority in each service area. These regulations mandate provision of toll free telephone facility to the consumers for lodging their grievances at the Call Centre, which has to redress the grievance within the prescribed time limit for various types of complaints. In case the customer is not satisfied, he can approach the Nodal Officer, who has to redress the grievance within three days in respect of complaints relating to fault or disruption or disconnection of service and within ten days in respect of other complaints. In case the customer is not satisfied with the response of the Nodal Officer he can file an appeal with the Appellate authority, who has to decide on the appeal within a prescribed timeframe.

(f) & (g) TRAI and Public Grievance(PG) Cell of Department of Telecom(DoT) have been receiving complaints against the telecommunication service providers alleging various problems which include billing, metering and tariff related issues and activation of chargeable value added services without explicit consent of the customer. Details of complaints received against various operators during the last three years from April, 2008 to September, 2010 is as below. These complaints are forwarded to the concerned service providers for redressal.

Year	No. of complaints received by PG cell of DoT	No. of complaints received by TRAI
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2007-08	1,47,369	2697
2008-09	1,55,723	2766
2009-10	1,10,147	6258
2010-11	45,333	#2645

(upto
31/10/2010)

Note-Figures for period upto 30/09/2010.

TRAI has mandated the service providers to have 3-tier grievance redressal mechanism consisting of (i) Call Centre level (ii) Nodal Officer level and (iii) Appellate Authority level within their own organizations.