

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2496
ANSWERED ON:11.03.2015
CHEATING OF CUSTOMERS
Singh Shri Rama Kishore

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

- (a) whether the Government has reviewed the performance of the various mobile operators and the issues like overcharging/cheating consumers through Value Added Service (VAS), etc.;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has recently issued show cause notice to prominent mobile operators of the country regarding the issue of international calling card as they have not signed agreement with ILD;
- (d) if so, the reactions of the companies in this regard; and
- (e) the action taken by the Government against the erring companies?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD)

(a)&(b) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) monitors the performance of Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) against the Quality of Service benchmarks laid down by TRAI through regulations, from time to time, through quarterly performance monitoring reports received from TSPs.

For addressing issues relating to billing/ charging complaints, TRAI is monitoring the performance of TSPs against the following parameters:

- (i) metering and billing creditability – postpaid (benchmark <0.1%)
- (ii) metering and billing creditability – prepaid (benchmark <0.1%)
- (iii) resolution of billing /charging/validity complaints (benchmark (98% within 4 weeks and 100% within 6 weeks)
- (iv) period of credit/wavier / adjustment to customers account from the date of resolution of complaints (benchmark within 1 week of the resolution of complaint).

Wherever non-compliance with the prescribed benchmarks is observed the matter is persuaded with the TSPs for improving quality of service. Also financial disincentives are imposed for such non-compliance. The metering and billing systems of the TSPs are also audited every year through auditors appointed by the TSPs from the panel notified by TRAI to identify billing / charging deficiencies. The TSPs have to take corrective action to address such deficiencies, including refund of overcharge amounts to affected customers. Some of the billing complaints are also verified through these auditors.

As regards Value Added services, TRAI has been monitoring the provision of value added services by the TSPs through monthly reports submitted by them. Based on concerns expressed by consumers, TRAI has also issued various directions to TSPs prescribing the manner in which the explicit consent of the consumer is to be obtained before activating Value Added Services. The provision of value added services by TSPs is also audited by metering and billing auditors.

A consolidated report on comparison of Value Added Service activations and complaints during the year 2014 against different TSPs is enclosed as Annexure-I.

(c) to (e) Show Cause Notices have been issued by TRAI to M/s Bharti Airtel Ltd, M/s Vodafone India Ltd. and M/s Idea Cellular Ltd. on 17.2.2015 for violation of the 'International Calling Card Services (Access Charges) Regulations, 2014 (11 of 2014) dated 19.8.2014'. Replies from the three Telecom Service Providers have been received and the same are being examined by TRAI.