

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4615

ANSWERED ON:22.04.2015

CUNSUMER COMPLAINTS AGAINST OPERATORS

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

- (a) whether Government has taken note of the complaints against telecom service providers regarding arbitrary activation of value-added services without consent, inflated bills, overcharging, unfair deductions, disconnection without notice, call drops problems;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the corrective steps taken by Government in this regard;
- (c) whether a large number of complaints have been registered regarding Mobile Number Portability (MNP) services;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and action taken by Government against the erring companies;
- (e) whether no improvement has been observed in the case of call drop in mobile despite complaints by consumers and network of all the telecom service providers the Government has asked the service provider to address the consumers concern of call drops by improving their network and signal; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the response received from the service providers in this regard?

Answer

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

(a)& (b) Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) does take note of complaints which are against the interest of consumers and complaints alleging practices adopted by service providers which are against the interest of consumers. TRAI is monitoring the performance of service providers against the 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) and (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). Further following steps are also taken by TRAI:

i) Wherever non-compliance with the benchmark is observed the matter is persuaded with the service providers for improving quality of service. Also financial disincentives are imposed for such non-compliance.

ii) The metering and billing systems of the service providers are also audited every year through auditors appointed by the service providers from the panel notified by TRAI to identify billing / charging deficiencies. The service providers have to take corrective action to address such deficiencies, including refund of overcharge amounts to affected customers.

iii) TRAI has also issued various directions to service providers 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 service providers is also audited by metering and billing auditors.

(c) & (d) A total of 17673 Mobile number portability (MNP) related complaints has been received with TRAI till February, 2015 since the implementation of the Mobile Number Portability Regulations, wherein the subscribers had reported that their porting requests were rejected by the donor operators on various grounds. It was noticed that in many cases rejection of porting requests of the subscribers done by the service providers was not in accordance with the provisions of the regulations. Accordingly following steps have been taken by TRAI:

i) Directions issued to concerned service providers to ensure compliance of Mobile Number Portability regulations, so that MNP process is smooth and convenient to the subscribers.

ii) Show cause notices issued against those service providers who had contravened the Mobile Number Portability regulations.

iii) TRAI issued "Telecommunication Mobile Number Portability (Fourth Amendment) Regulations, 2012" dated 19th September, 2012 providing financial disincentives for unjustified rejection of porting request and for violation of timelines specified in the regulations. Under these regulations Financial Disincentives of Rs. 94,623,000/- have been levied on various service providers so far.

(e) & (f) As regards Call Drop, the performance of service providers are assessed through two parameters viz "Call Drop Rate" and "Worst affected cells having more than 3% TCH drop". As per the performance monitoring report for the quarter ending December,

2014, while Aircel is not meeting the benchmark for the parameter Call Drop Rate in Haryana and North East service areas, BSNL is not meeting the benchmark for this parameter in Bihar, Assam and North East service areas. All other service providers are meeting the benchmark for this parameter. As regards the parameter "Worst affected cells having more than 3% TCH drop" (benchmark <3%, Aircel is not meeting the benchmarks in 18 service areas. BSNL is not meeting the benchmark for this parameter in Assam, Bihar, J&K, North East, Orissa and West Bengal service areas. Also, M/s Vodafone is not meeting the benchmark for this parameter in Delhi and UP (East) service areas. The reasons for call drop given by the service providers are power supply problems, spectrum issues, difficult terrain, accessibility issues due to climatic conditions, new sites, integration, re-homing of BTS etc.

For ensuring quality of service, TRAI is closely monitoring the performance of service providers against the quality of service benchmarks. TRAI has been pursuing with service providers for improving Quality of Service and in this regard regular interactions are held with the service providers. TRAI has also engaged independent agencies for auditing and assessing the quality of service and surveys are being done regularly through independent agencies to assess the customer perception of service. The results of the audit and assessment of quality of service and surveys are published for the information of stakeholders, which also force the service providers to improve the quality of service. Wherever the quality of service benchmarks are not met, TRAI has also been imposing financial disincentives on service providers for failure to comply with the benchmarks, in accordance with the provisions of the regulations.