

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5858
ANSWERED ON:29.04.2015
DEACTIVATION OF SIM CARDS
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there have been complaints about cell phone providers arbitrarily deactivating mobile SIM cards;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the total number of deactivated SIM cards by various cell phone operators and the amount outstanding therein, operator-wise;
- (c) the steps being taken to protect the customers and the amount outstanding in their respective accounts of such SIM cards;
- (d) whether TRAI has any policy guidelines regarding deactivating SIM cards while in usage; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

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

- (a)&(b) Telecom Service providers have intimated that are not arbitrarily deactivating mobile SIM cards.
- (c) Does not arise in view of above.
- (d) & (e) With a view to protect the interests of the consumers while seeking to ensure better utilization of scarce numbering resources, the TRAI, has put in place regulatory guidelines on deactivation of cellular mobile telephone connection due to non-usage through the Telecom Consumer Protection Regulation, 2012 (Sixth Amendment). The regulation which became effective on 22.03.2013, inter-alia, contains the following guidelines:
 - (i) There shall be no deactivation if the balance in prepaid consumer account is Rs.20/- or more;
 - (ii) The mobile connections of prepaid consumers shall not be deactivated for any period of non-usage less than 90 days;
 - (iii) For the purpose of usage, a voice call/ video call (incoming or outgoing) or an outgoing Short Message Service (SMS) or a data usage or usage of Value Added Services, or payment of rental (in case of post paid connection) etc. shall definitely fall in the scope of activity; the service provider may prescribe any other activity as well;
 - (iv) An 'Automatic Number Retention Scheme' shall be implemented for prepaid consumers on payment of reasonable charges upto Rs.20/- per 30 days;
 - (v) A consumer whose connection is deactivated shall be given a grace period of at-least 15 days within which he can reactivate the same number;
 - (vi) Consumers shall be transparently communicated the terms and conditions of deactivation of SIMs due to non-usage;
 - (vii) The service providers are required to implement a Safe Custody Scheme for postpaid consumers.