

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3650

ANSWERED ON:07.12.2016

Call Drop

Ahamed Shri E.;Karunakaran Shri P.;Kundariya Shri Mohanbhai Kalyanjibhai;Maragatham Smt. K.;Misra Shri Ajay (Teni);Sahu Shri Chandu Lal;Singh Shri Uday Pratap;Vellaigounder Shri Elumalai;Venugopal Shri K. C.

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the problem of call drop is still persisting despite guidelines issued by the TRAI and the telecom operators fail to meet the benchmark of two percent call drops in the test drive conducted by TRAI;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government against erring telephone companies in this regard, operator-wise;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to introduce a new ombudsman mechanism to resolve consumer grievances and the TRAI plans to release a consultation paper on quality service benchmark, call drop calculating methodology and consumer grievance redressal framework;
- d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether the telecom operator have committed to make more investment and install additional mobile towers to arrest the call drop problem and if so, the details and the outcome thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE (IC) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS &
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI MANOJ SINHA)

(a) & (b) Madam, the dropping of calls in wireless network is a world-wide phenomenon and happens in every wireless network due to various reasons including poor radio coverage, radio interference, loading of available spectrum, change in pattern of traffic, shutdown of sites due to power failures etc.; however, the Government and Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) are taking all possible steps and pursuing with the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) to address the problem of call drop and bring it down within the permissible limit.

TRAI monitors the performance of service providers through quarterly performance monitoring reports and publishes the same on its website www.trai.gov.in. From analysis of the quarterly performance monitoring reports of September 2015, December 2015, March 2016 and June 2016 available on TRAI website, it has been noticed that there has been consistent improvement in the performance of service providers in meeting the benchmark for call drop parameters.

For addressing call drop issue, TRAI also regularly undertakes the drive tests of mobile networks in select cities; highways and railway routes to assess the Quality of Service and coverage around the areas covered in the drive test routes. The results of drive tests are shared with the service providers for improving Quality of Service and coverage in the areas identified in the Drive Tests. Detailed reports of these Independent Drive Tests are also published on TRAI's website www.trai.gov.in under Head - "Notification" Sub-Head - "RF Drive Test Portal – Reports". TRAI had recently undertaken independent drive tests of the network of mobile operators in the cities of Amritsar, Chennai, Coimbatore, Jaipur, Agra, Patna, Kolkata, Shimla, Solan, Nasik, Panaji Goa, Surat, 9 National Highways, & 2 Railway Routes. As per the drive test reports, most of the service providers are meeting the benchmark of = 2% for the parameter Call Drop rate/Circuit Switch Voice drop rate in Agra, Amritsar, Kolkata, Chennai & Coimbatore. Non-compliance is observed mostly in Panaji, Nasik, Surat. It is further seen that in Surat & Kolkata, where drive tests were repeated, there is improvement in performance.

TRAI imposes financial disincentives for non-compliance with the benchmarks for Quality of Service parameters including call drops. The details of financial disincentives imposed on the Cellular Service Telecom providers (2G & 3G) for non-compliance with the Quality of Service Benchmarks are given below:

<pre>

2G Services Total Rs. (in lakhs)

Aircel 302.50

Bharti Airtel 40.00

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) 227.00

Idea 25.50

Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd. 1.50

Reliance Com 132.50

Reliance Telecom 32.00

Sistema 3.00

Tata 89.00

Telewings 13.50

Vodafone 84.00

Total 950.50
3G Services
Aircel 156.50
BSNL 70.00
Vodafone 2.50
Total 229.00
</pre>

(c) & (d) In the year 2004, TRAI had recommended establishment of an office of Ombudsman in the telecommunication sector. However, the recommendation was not agreed to by the Government. Again in July 2016, TRAI has sought the views of stakeholders on revisiting the option of establishing an office of Telecom Ombudsman.

TRAI has already issued a Consultation Paper on Review of network related Quality of Service Standards for Cellular Mobile Telephone Service on 5th August 2016. This said consultation paper described the various parameters and respective benchmarks for assessment of Quality of Service of 2G & 3G networks and sought the comments of stakeholders on the appropriate way to calculate call drop rates through meta data analysis of CDRs (Call Detail Records). The mechanism of imposing financial disincentives in case of below the bench mark performance was also raised in the said consultation paper.

In the response submitted to TRAI against the said consultation paper, most of the service providers and their associations are not in favour of any change in the measurement methodology or benchmark for any parameter. They have neither supported financial disincentives for non-compliance of benchmarks nor supported any graded penalty beyond what is prescribed in the extant regulations. However, there are different views in the matter from other stakeholders.

TRAI is seized of the matter to address the same through appropriate regulations.

(e) The TSPs have reported that they have already installed more than 1,20,000 additional BTSs (Base Transceiver Stations) across the country during 3½ month period from 15th June 2016 to 30th September 2016 and further plan to install about 1,56,000 additional BTSs across the country up to 31st March 2017. The TSPs have also informed that about 4,97,000 BTSs have been optimized for improvement in Network Performance during June 2015 onwards and in addition, frequency re-planning done for more than 4,25,000 BTSs for handling interference issues. These initiatives have been taken by the TSPs to address the call drop problem also.
