

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:609

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Call Drop Issue

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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken note of the reported increase in menace of call drops and call failures across the country and if so, the details thereof including the number of such cases reported, Telecom Service Provider (TSP)- wise and State/UT-wise along with the reasons therefor;

(b) the steps taken by the Government to address these issues in a time-bound manner;

(c) whether the non-maintenance of various telecommunication equipments and cables are resulting in the issue of call drops and network problems and if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard; and

(d) whether the cases of wrongfully hiding the issue of call drop by the TSPs have come to the notice of the Government and if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government against the erring TSPs?

Answer

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

(a) & (b) No, Madam. There have been consistent improvements in compliance to benchmarks notified by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) for call drop rate in case of 2G and 3G services.

The performance of Service Providers on call drop is accessed by TRAI for both 2G and 3G services through two parameters viz. "call drop rate (benchmark less than or equal to 2%)" on monthly average basis for the licensed Service Area and "worst affected cells having more than 3% Traffic Channel (TCH) drop/ Circuit Switched Voice drop rate (benchmark less than or equal to 3%)." Any Cell with TCH drop/Circuit Switched Voice drop rate more than 3% is treated as bad cell whose performance is to be improved.

All service providers for 2G (total 168 service providers) and 3G services (total 108 service providers) have been consistently complying to call drop rate benchmark of less than or equal to 2% for the last four quarters i.e. one year. Besides, the number of service providers not complying to Worst affected cells having more than 3% TCH drop/ Circuit Switched Voice drop rate (benchmark less than or equal to 3%) for 2G services has significantly decreased from 54 (for the quarter ending in September 2015) to 14 (for quarter ending in March 2017). Similarly, it has decreased from 20 to 10 in the corresponding period for 3G services.

In order to address call drop issue in effective and time-bound manner, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has taken many initiatives including (i) making available sufficient spectrum for mobile services- auction of 965 MHz in 2016, (ii) allowing Spectrum Sharing, Trading and liberalisation of administratively allocated spectrum as per the guidelines to facilitate efficient utilisation, (iii) permitting sharing of active as well as passive infrastructure by the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) for achieving higher efficiency, (iv) notification of Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016 for regulating underground infrastructure (optical fibre) and over-ground infrastructure (mobile towers), (v) periodic review of expansion of mobile networks and related improvements carried out by the service providers- leading to addition of around 4.22 lakh additional Base Transceiver Stations (BTSs) on aggregate basis for 2G/3G/4G services during the period-July 2015 to June 2017 as well as rectification/ optimisation of more than 4 lakh 2G/3G Cells on all-India basis and installation of over 13 thousand BTS-repeaters, (vi) facilitating use of Government estate for installation of mobile towers on multiple-sharing basis, and (vii) launching of Tarang Sanchar, a public web portal for information sharing on mobile towers and Electro Magnetic Field (EMF) emission compliances to clear misconceptions, myth and dispel fear.

In addition to the above, DoT has launched Interactive Voice Response Service (IVRS) using short code 1955 in five States on 23 December 2016 to get direct feedback from the subscribers on call drops. This service was extended to other States from 12 January, 2017 onwards. Over 47 lakh IVRS calls have been made till 31 May 2017, out of which 6.30 lakh subscribers participated in the survey and 3.74 lakh have reported call drops, mostly indoors. The feedback is shared with the TSPs who in turn contact each subscriber by phone/SMS (Short Messaging Service) to get further details for resolution of specific complaints. So far, 23727 individual complaints of call drop reported through IVRS system have been resolved and 14881 complaints related to issues other than call drop such as roaming, billing, MNP (Mobile Number Portability), mobile device etc. have also been resolved. 358 new BTS sites/Boosters have been added during the period. The feedback has proved very useful and resulted in a drop of 7% in IVRS complaints related to call drops since its launch.

(c) & (d) 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, non-maintenance of the equipments and cable, etc.

The cases of wrongfully hiding the issue of call drop have not come to the notice.

Both the Government and TRAI are taking all possible steps and pursuing with the TSPs to address the problem of call drop and bring it down within the permissible limit.

As a result, availability of 2G and 3G mobile networks have been consistently improving in terms of related TRAI benchmarks i.e. accumulated downtime (benchmark less than or equal to 2%). As per latest report published by TRAI for the quarter ending on March 2017, the non-compliance has reduced from 8 TSPs to 1 in case of 2G and from 7 TSPs to 1 in case of 3G services.