

To,
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TRAI Consultation Paper on Issues related to The Telecommunication (Broadcasting And Cable) Services (_____) (THE DIRECT TO HOME BROADCASTING SERVICES) TARIFF ORDER, 2013 (No. ___ of 2013) dated 11th April, 2013

We at VOICE as part of our advocacy initiative in Telecommunications & Broadcasting continuously raise different issues with Policy makers impacting consumers based on the knowledge through Consumer feedbacks.

As registered CAG with TRAI we are in forefront of providing inputs to TRAI related to consumer concerns and interests.

In continuation of this effort on behalf of Broadcasting consumers we at VOICE have following response to the questions posed in the consultation paper:

VOICE comments are as under:-

Issues for Consultation:

Tariff for supply of customer premises equipment (CPE) for Direct to Home (DTH) and Set Top Box (STB) for Digital Addressable Cable TV Systems (DAS).

At the outset we foresee following un-addressed consumer issues in the various options proposed-

1. DAS is not a option for the consumer
2. All compensations and performance of the contract is only one way i.e. for delay in payment-the only performance required on the part of consumer is penalized (wonder if TRAI has prescribed penalties for delay in payments) whereas for non-receipt of signal, delay in repair/maintenance calls, commercial issues no liabilities are imposed on the service provider.
3. There is no portability provision though at least now equipment standards have been prescribed.
4. So even if a consumer wants to change the service provider for bad-service he still has to compensate for this bad service by paying penalties for leaving before 5 years.
5. What happens if technology changes/upgraded requiring the CPE/STB to be changed before 5 years?
6. If a service provider closes shop, what happens to the deposits?
7. What happens after 5 years to maintenance/upgrade etc.

8. Whether the same charts (Schedules) will be applicable to DTH as well as DAS since cost of CPE in case of DTH is quite different from DAS.
9. Why a return of 15% should be provided for CPE/STB- it should be at cost as it is an essential requirement and the cost+margins should be built into the monthly subscription or is it that TRAI wants to provide them with a cost+ revenue structure leaving no incentive for efficiencies.
10. Is the cost of CPE/STB considered for this consultation retail market price or bulk purchase cost of the service providers?
- 11.

VOICE SUGGESTIONS:

1. ALL CPE/STB should be part of the set up to be provided without any set-up fee/ activation fee etc. There can be a deposit of say Rs.500 for DAS / Rs.1500 for DTH which should be adjusted (defrayed) in consolidated monthly charges over a period of say 3 years.
2. Any disconnection request from the consumer before 3 years will entail proportionate deduction from the security deposit.
3. There should be only one consolidated charge for the minimum pack (like signal+FTAs). Additional charges should be allowed for additional channels as per tariff rules in force.
4. No other rental/installation/activation charge should be allowed.
5. All maintenance/replacement/upgradation will be done by the service provider without any charge to the consumer.
6. This will take care of the portability issue as well, as consumer will know the cost of changing service provider.

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