

Sardendu Kumar Pandey (dagnagpur@indiapost.gov.in)

Answers by Asha Sajiv

Question 1: Whether TRAI should prescribe any format for publishing tariff? Please support your answer with rationale.

Yes, TRAI should prescribe the format for publishing tariff. The consumer will benefit from a consistent format so that they are not misled by different formats at different times by various TSPs. Also, different formats lead to consumer fatigue and poor decision making.

Question 2: If the answer to the Question 1 is yes, then please give your views regarding desirability of publishing tariffs on various modes of communication viz., TSP website/Portal, App, SMS, USSD message, Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Customer care centers, Sales outlets etc. If the answer to the question is that tariffs should be published on multiple channels as above, please state whether TRAI should prescribe a separate format for each channel. Please also suggest the essentials of the format for each channel.

The popular modes of access to information are TSP websites, flyers at POS/Customer care centers, newspaper / TV ads. In addition with Whatsapp being popular these days with the common man and many companies set to exploit this medium, it may be a good consideration. It is good to take the help of a design agency to design in the company's website, the tariff display format that is high on User Experience (UX). The decision on display format should weigh in the type of customer segments accessing the platform and suitably customized. For example - prepaid connections are mostly used by poor people and so measures should be there in displaying any changes to the tariffs with color codes, as the companies are dealing with semiliterate / migrant folks whose mother tongue may be alien to their place of residence.

Question 3: Whether the extant format prescribed for publishing tariff at TSP's website conveys the relevant information to consumers in a simple yet effective manner? If no, please provide the possible ways in which the same can be made more effective? This needs serious review and expert help. It will be advisable to hire a professional design agency for suggestions for user experience design in different formats/medium.

Question 4: Whether the service providers be required to publish all the tariff offerings and vouchers in addition to the publishing of

tariff plans, in the prescribed format? Please provide rationale for your response.

A customer (segmented) survey may be required time to time, to ascertain the factors that consumers weigh-in the most. Suitably, those vital things need to be published. The others can be stored separately with a different degree of access. Simply providing all information at all places makes it very overwhelming for the consumer as well as carries a huge cost for the TSPs.

Question 5: Whether there is a need to mandate TSPs to introduce a tariff calculator tool to convey the effective cost of enrolment and continued subscription? If yes, what can be the essential features of such a tool? If the answer is in negative, then please give reasons for not mandating such a tool.

It is always good to have tariff calculation tools available online/thro' apps, as it gives the customer to customize the packs as per their need and consumption patterns. They get a choice of paths to be taken, than just go with their experience, TV ads or referrals.

Question 13: Any other issue relevant to the subject discussed in the consultation paper may be highlighted.

There needs to be special protection available for the low cost tariff plans that are used by the majority, as well as the migrant/semiliterate consumers. Changes to existing plans should have long gestation times, allowing the consumers to get adequate signals on the changing times. In addition, frequent and random auditing by TRAI on behalf of consumers on the bandwidth and feature availability as promised by TSPs will help the QoS.