

Comments based on my five years usage & observation

Consultation Paper on “Certain Issues relating to Telecom Tariffs”

Consultation Paper No.12/2010

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Below are my comments as a mobile user since 2005.

These comments are written based on my & friends usage and experience with service providers/its agents. Contact me at: graghukontakt@yahoo.com

ISSUES FOR CONSULTATION

1. What, according to you, are the challenges which Indian telecom subscribers face while understanding and choosing the tariff offers?

Comments:

There is no standard tariff plans available for the consumers. Lot of plans with minor changes in each tariff plans within same service provider or other service providers. This leads confusion to consumers while comparing tariffs.

There is not standard measure for usage lot of terms like per 1/2 second, second, minute etc and 1/2 paisa, 1 paisa etc. Due to this consumers are in confusion to choose server provider and tariff plan, So consumers are just relaying on the agents or franchises/shops of service providers or others who are in business for service providers. Relaying on agents or others who are in business sells/provide us products/services of service providers who give more commission. This makes us/consumers are not in a position to choose wise plans according to his/her requirements.

Most of the tariff plans are not available in local languages for choosing the better plans. Tariff plans are not giving complete details of each and every service. There is a difficulty in changing the pre-paid to post-paid and vice versa in all private service providers, even they are willing to provide information to the user.

Most of the service provides did not provide any financial implications on websites of all service providers except few in Govt. Sector.

Service Providers are activating the VAS (Value Added Services) without user permission or involvement.

Certain service providers are not taking complaints as they advertised on websites/Ads.

2. What according to you are the required measures to further improve transparency in tariff offers and facilitate subscribers to choose a suitable tariff plan?

Comments:

The too many tariff plans makes consumers in confusion and difficult to compare and choose with many parameters usage in pricing or times.

-Only one standard measurement usage of service across all service providers , instead of many like 1/2 second, second, 1/2 paisa, paisa etc. Misleading advertisements

-we should have only one tariff plan in pre-paid and one tariff plan in post-paid for each service provider. Because consumers use same infrastructure of service provider irrespective of tariff plans. This tariff plans (One plan in pre-paid and One Plan in Post-paid) should be available in local language of Service Area and same to be available all shops or franchises or on websites with standard font including conditions applied. This makes clear and easy for consumers in choosing service provider and tariff plan

-Facilitate easy switching of pre-paid to post-paid vice-versa without any difficulty

-Provide better customer care service and online access to repaid users like post-paid with proper security measures.

TRAI or Independent Agencies should provide the quality of service report and index to the public

3. Do you think mandating “One Standard Plan for All Service Providers” particularly for the prepaid subscribers as suggested by some consumer organizations would be relevant in the present scenario of Indian telecom market?

Comments:

Yes. In present scenario we can mandate one standard plan for all service providers. But this should not be make monopoly of deciding price of plan by service providers. Thus consumers and Govt. should also involve in deciding in tariff plans.

Better if we should have only one tariff plan in pre-paid and one tariff plan in post-paid for each service provider with standard measurement of usage across all service providers. This makes clear and easy for consumers in choosing service provider and tariff plan

4. Do you think the existence of large number of tariff plans and offers in the market are beneficial for the subscribers?

Comments:

No. existence of large number of tariff plans & offers were not beneficial to consumers. This makes already confusion for consumers in choosing service provider and tariff plans. Switching to another plan is not an easy for user in current scenario (this happened mostly in private sector)

Most of the youth in India were wasting time in using this useless tariff plans especially SMS offers or plans or group plans. Just utilizing SMS plans for sending silly or unused messages instead of correct usage. We should restrict this SMS plans or group plans and reduce the number of tariff plans to one in pre-paid and post-paid for each service provider.

5. In your opinion is it necessary to revise or reduce the existing cap of 25 on the number of tariff plans on offer? If so, what would be the appropriate number?

Comments:

The number of plans should revise or reduce to be much lower. There should be only one pre-paid plan and one-post paid plans for each service provider.

Max. Number Pre-Paid plans in Service Area = Number of Service Providers in Service Area

Max. Number Post-Paid plans in Service Area = Number of Service Providers in Service Area

This total numbers further reduce, if same tariff plans for two or more service providers. This makes user can choose the service providers based on the quality of service.

6. Should there any limit be prescribed on the rates for premium rate SMS and calls? If so, what should be the norms for prescribing such limit?

Comments:

There should be limit for premium SMS and calls. This limit should be in the hands of consumers.

Price of this should be equal to tariff plan and display price in same font when advertising or asking to send SMS or calls.

Currently premium calls keep on waiting by automatic programs. This should be avoided. Premium calls should connect without any delay. Need to ban & fine providers these if guilty

It would better if we ban premium SMA and calls and bring them under tariff plan of consumer.

7. If not, what further measures do you suggest to improve transparency in provision of the premium rate services to prevent the instances of subscribers availing such services without understanding financial implications thereof?

Comments:

If is not possible to ban/limit, there is should be an independent govt. agency should regulate pricing and advertisement.

Display price in same font when advertising or asking to send SMS or calls. Premium calls should connect without any delay. Currently premium calls keep on waiting by automatic programs. This should be avoided.

Service Providers should not activate without involvement of user.

8. Do you think there is sufficient justification to allow the service providers to realign the ISD tariff in respect of existing lifetime subscribers in view of the grounds mentioned in their representations?

Comments:

There is no sufficient justification to users of existing lifetime users.

9. What measures do you think are necessary to improve transparency and to prevent instances of un-intended recharges by subscribers in situations of cross-restrictions of recharges?

Comments:

Yes, still transparency need to be improved to public to prevent all issues related to consumers.

Setup an independent body like CAG (Comptroller and Auditor General of India) to look after all the issues related to consumers.

10. Considering the nature and structure of the prevailing tariff offerings in the market and advertisements thereof, do you think there is a need for TRAI to issue fresh regulatory guidelines to prevent misleading tariff advertisements?

Comments:

Yes, TRAI should issue fresh regulatory guidelines to prevent misleading tariff advertisements. There should be one standard measurement for usage of service in industry and setup a regulatory commission like SEBI or IRDA or CAG.

11. Do you agree that the instances of 'misleading' tariff advertisements listed in this paper adequately capture the actual scenario in the market? If not, provide specific details.

Comments:

Yes, this consultation paper captures most of the instances of misleading tariffs.