

**Information note to the Press (Press Release No. 39/2011)**

For Immediate Release

**Telecom Regulatory Authority Of India**

**TRAI seeks comments on two draft regulations -- (i) “Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2011” and (ii) “The Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal Regulations, 2011”**

**New Delhi, 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2011:** The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) today issued two draft Regulations on **Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2011”** and **“The Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal Regulations, 2011”**, prescribing measures for protecting the interest of telecom consumers and improvised framework for redressal of complaints of Telecom consumers.

2. It may be recalled that TRAI has issued consultation papers on “Review of measures to protect interest of consumers in the telecom sector” dated 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2010 and on “Certain issues relating to Telecom Tariff” dated 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2010. The objective was to further improve the consumer protection measures and to make complaint redressal system more effective. Consultation papers primarily focused on issues such as effective grievance redressal system, review of consumer centric quality of service parameters, review of metering and billing audit, provision of Value Added Services, transparency in billing and metering, premium rate services and providing information to prepaid consumers.
3. Exhaustive consultation was done with stakeholders on various issues. Based on the feedback of the stakeholders including Consumer Advocacy Groups, various issues have been analysed in depth. Accordingly, a modified framework is being prescribed to address various issues of the consumers. The draft regulation on **“Telecom**

**Consumers Protection Regulations, 2011**” is focused to provide better information to the consumer such as information regarding talk time on recharge of top up vouchers, usage details at the end of each call/ SMS, transparency in tariff, provision of information related to premium rate service etc. The draft regulation on **“The Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal Regulations, 2011”** provides single window system for effective redressal of consumer grievances. A three member Appellate authority having members from service provider, consumer groups and judicial/ government officers has been prescribed to ensure fair mechanism for redressal of consumer grievances.

4. The salient features of **“Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2011”** are as follows:
- (i) In order to ensure transparency in offer of tariff, there shall be only three categories of vouchers i.e. “Plan Voucher”, “Top Up Voucher” and “Special Tariff Voucher”. The “Plan Vouchers” shall be used for selection of plan. The “Top up Voucher” shall be used to add talk time in consumer account and its validity will be coterminous with that of the plan. The “Special Tariff Voucher” shall be used to provide special tariff options.
  - (ii) All the vouchers will have colour bands for easy identification - “Plan Voucher” (red), “Top Up Voucher” (green) and “Special Tariff Voucher” (yellow).
  - (iii) Every service provider shall ensure that the information printed on the paper vouchers meant for the pre-paid subscribers including Top Up Vouchers, Special Tariff Vouchers and Plan Vouchers, shall be legible and printed in font size of not less than 8 (eight) points.
  - (iv) At the end of each call, all service providers have been mandated to provide information to the consumer - such as Call duration, Call charges, and balance in consumer account or SMS.

- (v) All service providers have been mandated to provide information to consumers at the end of recharge through “Plan Voucher” the details of the plan through SMS.
  - (vi) On request, all service providers have been mandated to provide, within fifteen days, information relating to the itemised usage charges for pre-paid consumers limited to preceding six months.
  - (vii) Service providers providing premium rate service shall have to ensure that all the terms and conditions of such service are conveyed to the consumer opting for such service.
5. The salient feature of **“The Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal Regulations, 2011”** are as follows:
- (i) The customers can lodge their complaints on a toll free “Customer Care Number”.
  - (ii) All service providers have been mandated to provide details of docket number, date and time of registration of the complaint and the tentative time limit for resolution of the complaint to consumer at the time of booking as well as through SMS.
  - (iii) All service providers have been mandated to establish web Based Complaint Monitoring System for enabling the customers to monitor the status of their complaints.
  - (iv) The consumers, who are not satisfied with the redressal of the complaint, can approach the Appellate Authority through e-mail or facsimile or post or in person and the appellate authority shall decide on every appeal within one month.
  - (v) Every Service provider has been mandated to constitute an Appellate Authority which would be a three-member body, of which one member will be a retired District Judge or a retired officer of the Central or State Government of the rank not below Joint Secretary to the Govt. of India, one member will be from the consumer organisations registered with TRAI and one member will be nominated by the service provider.

- (vi) The appellate authority will meet at least once in a month to decide the appeals. The decision of the appellate body will be binding on the service provider.
  - (vii) Every Service provider shall publish a “Manual of Practice for handling consumer complaints” containing following information relating to Basic Telephone Service, Cellular Mobile Telephone Service and Broadband Service.
  - (viii) The provisions of these regulations shall be in addition to, and not in derogation of, any other law for the time being in force.
6. The draft regulations on “**The Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal Regulations, 2011**” and “**Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2011**” have already been placed on TRAI’s website ([www.trai.gov.in](http://www.trai.gov.in)). All the stakeholders are requested to send their written comments through email/ fax/letter by 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2011.

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