

Information note to the Press

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TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

For Immediate release

TRAI issues Consultation Paper on

“Review of measures to protect the interest of consumers in telecom sector”

New Delhi, 2nd August, 2010 – The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) today issued a consultation paper on ‘Review of measures to protect the interest of consumers’.

Telecom sector, especially mobile services, is witnessing exponential growth. Presently, about 18 million consumers are being added to the telecom network every month. Higher telecom penetration is being witnessed in rural and remote areas too. While increasing telecom service penetration is bringing in more people in its fold, value added services are gaining increasing share of the sector. Effective protection of consumer interest continues to be of paramount importance.

TRAI has issued various regulations from time to time:

- Standards of Quality of Service of Basic Telephone Service (wireline) and Cellular Mobile Telephone Service Regulations, 2009.
- Telecom Consumers Protection and Redressal of Grievances Regulations, 2007.
- Quality of Service (Code of Practice for Metering and Billing Accuracy) Regulations 2006.

The focus of these regulations has been to ensure provision of all the tariff related information to the subscriber before a customer is enrolled, details of the services provided and subsequent charges once service has been activated, ensuring reliability of billing and metering, maintaining standard of QoS, and effective redressal of consumer grievances in case of any service disruption or other complaints. While these regulations have helped address consumer grievances, nevertheless, it is endeavour of TRAI to continually evolve the grievance redressal mechanism to further benefit the consumers.

In order to address these issues, TRAI had issued a Pre-Consultation Paper on 'Telecom consumer protection and redressal of consumer grievances' on 11.5.2010 seeking the comments of the stakeholders on various areas relating to protection of consumer interests and to identifying various fields where specific focus is required for consumer protection. TRAI also convened a meeting of Chief Executives of different telecom service providers and Consumer Advocacy Groups on 12.5.10 at Delhi to discuss measures to increase the effectiveness of Consumer grievance redressal mechanism being adopted by different telecom service providers. Issues related to inaccessibility of Call Centres, Nodal Officers and Appellate Authorities, low effectiveness of grievance redressal at the Call Centre, provision of value added services without explicit consent and delays in termination of the service after subscriber's request were among the issues identified.

In order to initiate focused discussion on all the pertinent issues, the Authority has issued this consultation paper. Stakeholders are requested to send their comments on the consultation paper by 1st September 2010. Comments will be posted on TRAI's website as and when they are received. Counter comments, if any, to the comments

received may be sent to TRAI by 10th September, 2010. This consultation paper is available on TRAI's website www.trai.gov.in .

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Authorised to issue

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