

Mr. Wasi Ahmad,
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Dear Sir,

1. I refer to the consultation paper released by TRAI dated 4th June 2013 on draft amendments to the Telecommunication (Broadcasting and Cable) Services (Fourth) (Addressable Systems) Tariff Order, 2010 dated 21st July 2010, as amended from time to time, and as suggested given my comments - arrived at after going through in detail/depth the resources like FAQ's, regulations, tariff orders etc available in TRAI's website/ others and based on my understanding of the matter - only on the tariff that is to be paid by consumers with reasons there of for your consideration. However if there are mistakes/ misunderstandings on my part, I crave your pardon and will be thankful to you if you could point them out so that it will be a learning curve for me.

2. My language/comments are blunt, as I follow/believe strictly in what Gandhiji said – “It requires mental character and courage of conviction to call a spade a spade” and “Truth is seldom liked and it hurts”.

3. It is really sad that TRAI is wasting everybody's time including theirs (may be TRAI follows Peter Drucker's principle “ work expands to fill in the available time”) in unnecessarily debating with dubious/questionable reasons, motives and terminology like twin conditions, ascribed value etc to arrive at the price that consumers have to pay for channels under DAS. TRAI is simply trying to make a mountain out of a mole hill.

Under CAS which was in force in the four metros, TRAI had fixed MRP (Maximum Retail Price) for pay channels and had left the package price to the market forces. No MSO/LCO closed down in the CAS areas. Why? – because they were making enough money. MRP pricing under CAS was safeguarding the interest of the consumer with out much dent in his pocket and at the same time enabling enough profit for MSO/LCO. Why has this been given up in DAS ?. No where TRAI - including in their website- has explained the rationale for this highly suspicious and mala fide decision. The consumer is entitled to know the reason. Is there any logical/ commonsensical reason for it. In its absence, the consumer will be right in assuming that the TRAI has compromised its supposed/expected integrity and has been bought over by MSO/LCO lobby.

MSO/LCO lobby, which was making enough money under CAS would have lobbied to do away with MRP so as to make more money. Who does not want to?. But TRAI should have put its foot down and not agreed. After all it is the prime duty of TRAI to safe guard the interest of a billion strong consumer. Unfortunately, for reasons best known to themselves, in this matter TRAI has chosen to increase the profitability of a few thousand MSO/LCO at the expense of billion consumers.

TRAI should remember and be reminded that in a democracy, the interest t of the majority should prevail over that of the minority . Their action of not fixing MRP for channels under DAS is highly deplorable and I hope they will rectify their action and not wait till the courts intervene and pass stringent stricture..

By, allowing the MSO/LCO lobby to fix the price of channels and hoping that the non existent competition and the rubbish / idiotic twin condition, ascribed value etc will ensure competitive pricing, TRAI has given the green signal / tactic approval for the lobby to take the consumers for a ride and enrich themselves unduly.. For example, a consumer pays Rs 5.35 plus taxes as MRP for favorite sports channels like ESPN/Star Sports under CAS. For the same channels, under DAS without MRP they will pay anywhere between Rs 14.95 and 25.- an increase of 180 to 450%!!.

These channels were already digitized under CAS and hence there can be no expenditure what so ever for beaming it under DAS. Can TRAI explain/justify as to how this can be allowed with logical and commonsensical reason keeping in mind that their prime job is to protect the consumer and not the lobby at the expense of the consumer.

Hence I once again request the TRAI to reverse their quixotic and suspicious decision and fix MRP for channels under DAS. An ideal MRP should be between Rs5.35 and 6.35 excluding taxes, keeping in mind the inflation and the last revised price under CAS. .Hope TRAI will act on its own at the earliest with out wasting time all around asking for suggestions etc and with out the necessity of intervention by the court..

With regards,

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