

Mathur, Subodh

From: Vivek Khare <adv.ca@traf.gov.in>
Sent: 01 June 2026 09:44
To: Shailesh Rajpoot
Cc: Mathur, Subodh
Subject: [EXT] Fwd: Comments on Consultation Paper regarding Consumer Complaint Redressal Mechanism

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Advisor (CA)
Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
New Delhi
Phone - 011-20907772

From: Dr. Arun Kumar

Subject: Comments on Consultation Paper regarding Consumer Complaint Redressal Mechanism

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is with reference to the consultation paper issued by TRAI regarding changes in the consumer complaint redressal mechanism in the telecom sector.

At present, the role of TRAI is mainly confined to framing regulations and creating awareness among consumers for filing complaints. However, in reality, filing and pursuing complaints is itself a very difficult task for consumers. Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) often make every possible effort to ensure that complaints do not reach the Appellate Authority level.

In such circumstances, the proposal to make TSPs solely responsible for handling complaints and simultaneously abolishing the role of Consumer Advocacy Groups (CAGs) as members of the Appellate Authority may adversely affect consumer interests. This would virtually provide a free hand to TSPs in handling consumer grievances without adequate independent oversight.

The existing role of CAGs in the complaint redressal process acts as an important safeguard for consumers. Their presence brings transparency, accountability, and confidence among telecom consumers. Removing CAG representation from the Appellate mechanism may weaken the trust of consumers in the fairness of the system.

If TRAI still intends to move towards a TSP-driven complaint handling system, then certain safeguards are absolutely necessary:

1. A Consumer Helpline similar to the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) should be independently monitored and not solely controlled by TSPs.
2. A dedicated team comprising TRAI officials and representatives of CAGs should regularly monitor and review the functioning of complaint handling systems.
3. TRAI should conduct regular Open House Sessions where the nature, volume, and quality of complaints against TSPs are openly discussed for the benefit of consumers.
4. Since many consumers already face difficulties even in filing complaints, consumer-friendly mechanisms should be developed. At present, consumers are often expected to resolve technical issues on their own before their complaints are entertained by TSPs. If this approach continues, then TSPs should also provide proper training and guidance to consumers at the time of giving telecom connections.
5. Digital complaint systems should be simplified, multilingual, and accessible to senior citizens, rural consumers, and persons who are not technologically skilled.

It appears that under the proposed framework, the role of CAGs may gradually be reduced only to consumer awareness activities, and even that process is being made increasingly difficult. This creates an apprehension that TRAI may eventually abolish the role of CAGs altogether in the long run.

Consumer participation and independent representation are essential components of any effective grievance redressal system. Therefore, the role of CAGs should be strengthened rather than diluted.

It is requested that TRAI reconsider the proposal and ensure that consumer interests remain protected through independent oversight, transparency, and meaningful participation of consumer organizations.

Thank you