



**Views on the proposed deletion of the Advisory Committee under Draft Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal (Fourth Amendment) Regulation, 2026 –**

Right from its inception, the proactive efforts taken by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) to protect the interests of telecom consumers have been truly commendable. It is also a well-recognised fact that no other regulator engages with consumer organisations in the manner that TRAI does. Several consumer concerns brought to the attention of TRAI by the consumer organisations, have, in the past, resulted in consumer-friendly regulations and policy measures. It is heartening to note that several provisions in the proposed amendments are also pro-consumer. However, this note is to specifically discuss the “Advisory Committee” in the appeal process.

**Deletion of Advisory Committee**

The proposed amendment suggests the deletion of the Advisory Committee from the appeal process. The explanatory note under Regulation 2 appears to rather casually dismiss the role of the Advisory Committee with the following observation: *“It has been observed that the elaborate process of routing appeals to Advisory committee was rendering the appellate process inefficient and ineffective in the redressal of the appeals preferred by the telecom consumers and needed to be simplified with clear accountability of the service provider”*.

In this regard, we would like to highlight a few points for your kind consideration:

**1.** We are not aware of the basis on which the above observation has been made by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). We would like to place on record that the Consumer Advocacy Groups (CAGs), who form an important part of the Advisory Committee, were not consulted in this regard.

Further, we would like to share our experience of being part of various Advisory Committees over the years. Firstly, it must be noted that the existing Regulations have rarely been followed in letter and spirit by the service providers. In practice, appeals are not routed to the Advisory Committee for inputs from the CAGs before finalisation of complaints. Instead, the complaints are already dealt with

by the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) and subsequently presented to us merely as a list for approval and sign-off, often after a considerable delay of one to three months. At best, we are able to raise a few questions or doubts before the matter is formally closed.

This procedural lapse has been brought to the notice of TRAI several times during meetings held in the past. This includes the BSNL, which only forms the Advisory Committee, but follows its own process for complaints handling, with little regard for the prescribed framework.

In light of the above, the observation that routing appeals through the Advisory Committee renders the appellate process “inefficient and ineffective” is factually incorrect. If there were delays in the appellate process, they were/are attributable only to the service providers and not to the functioning of the Advisory Committees.

2. Besides, we would like to draw your attention to the important role played by consumer organisations in telecom consumer grievance redressal.:

It may kindly be noted that almost all consumer organisations, irrespective of whether they are part of the Advisory Committee or not, operate support/help desks that assist consumers with various types of grievances, including telecom-related complaints.

Till around 2011, the Delhi office of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) used to organise pan-India meetings involving consumer organisations and telecom service providers. These were serious and meaningful consultations, chaired by the Chairperson and attended by senior TRAI officials. Several issues concerning telecom consumers were discussed during these meetings and were subsequently acted upon by TRAI. As a result of this continuous engagement, the service providers became familiar with the consumer organisations registered with TRAI and accorded due respect to their representations. Consequently, whenever consumer organisations took up telecom consumer complaints with service providers, the issues were addressed promptly. Telecom consumers were highly benefited.

After 2011, the Regional Offices of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) were established and the Telecom Consumer Grievance Redressal Regulations were notified. Consequently, the TRAI Headquarters discontinued the practice of organising pan-India meetings, as the Regional Offices began engaging with consumer organisations at the regional level.

The officials in the Regional Offices have generally been approachable and supportive. However, they do not necessarily exercise the authority of the

Headquarters and often function more as intermediaries or messengers between stakeholders and the central office.

Nevertheless, the establishment of Advisory Committees by the Telecom Service Providers (TSPs), as mandated under the Regulations, helped bridge the gap created by the absence of direct engagement from the Headquarters. We, being registered CAGs of TRAI and also represented on the Advisory Committees of the TSPs, continue/d to receive due respect from the service providers, and most complaints forwarded to them were/are addressed promptly. Consequently, several consumers continue to benefit from this mechanism.

In addition, since the contact details of consumer organisation representatives serving on the Advisory Committees are required to be displayed on the websites of the TSPs, more consumers approach the CAGs for assistance, especially when their grievances are not adequately addressed by the service providers. We, in turn, take up such complaints with the concerned service providers, and in many cases, there is prompt action.

To cite one example, during the last three months alone, we have received and forwarded nearly 100 complaints against a broadband service provider seeking redress. We have also written to their senior executives requesting them to examine the larger systemic issues involved and take corrective action. As a next step, if the need arises, we will bring the issue to TRAI's attention.

**In light of the above, we would like to understand how TRAI proposes to preserve and sustain this crucial relationship between the registered consumer organisations and the TSPs—which has/is largely benefited/ing consumers—when the proposed amendments are set to abolish the “Advisory Committee” mechanism.**

**In our view, we should look at reducing the time frame for redressal (consumers do not have the patience to wait for long; many work from home and work gets affected if connectivity is the issue.) and refund, strengthening the existing framework and ensuring strong M & E mechanisms are in place.**

**Please note that this is an important topic that deserves due consideration, region-wise open house discussions and consultations, before the amendments are finalised.**

**Hence, we request you to extend the last date for the comments and organise adequate open house discussions on the subject, before finalising.**

**Thank you.**

