

Subject: **TRAI Consultation paper dtd. 16/08/2019 on Tariff related matters of broadcasting cable Services**

Date: 09/17/19 06:42 PM

To: arvind@traigov.in, vk.agarwal@traigov.in

From: Girija Madhira <girija.madhira@gmail.com>

Subject: TRAI Consultation paper dtd. 16/08/2019 on Tariff related matters of broadcasting cable Services
Respected Sir/ Madam

I am a senior citizen living on a very small income. I have come to know about your consultation paper from some website news and that common people can also convey their feedback, suggestion or grievance. I don't have much knowledge to answer or suggest on detailed thirty questions made in the paper. So under question 30 I thought I can convey about the highly enhanced cost to watch basic entertainment of my language and general news after implementation of new tariff this year.

Please see attached two news clips (with links) appeared on internet one about Tamil Nadu Arasu cable which understood the problem of newly added NCF cost of Rs. 153 which is very high as many like me watch only total 10-15 channels overall and on top of that also pay for some channel rates which are also very high. As it used to be provided earlier by all cable operators, Arasu cable is now recently providing all inclusive basic entertainment cable at an affordable rate for people like me., though I am not having the same. They reduced NCF rate to Rs. 35 and added sufficient no. basic entertainment pay channels and also some similar type pay and free channels at almost the same total price of Rs. 154., on all inclusive price, which is bearable for common people.

Second news item is on something similar from Tata Sky but the included channels are very high range priced channels though they also reduced NCF to minimum level., but still monthly bill very high for common people., and they are providing only if we buy some special packs or channels, which is not fair to low paying customers, so not suitable for us.

Suggestion ** Please change this formula of NCF which itself is very high ,(and also not getting any pay channels and have to pay almost Rs.70-Rs.80 extra with taxes also), so that we can pay something similar to Rs. 150 as we used to pay earlier and get atleast basic language channels as all inclusive common starting package, or we can also select that package in similar price range adding a few pay channels of our choice without anymore extras. I am not so much worried about other bouquet prices as anyway I will not add them at such high price and moreover I watch just 1-2 channels in them.

I request you to consider the above suggestion for affordability reasons to get minimum no. of basic entertainment channels both free & pay for a minimum basic amount of around Rs. 150 as earlier, while making further changes in guideline and rules.

Thanking You

Smt. M. Girija Kumari

News Item 1:

<https://ultra.news/t-t/48225/arasu-cable-cuts-ncf-to-35-month-vs-130-by-tata-sky-airtel-digital-etc>

Arasu Cable, the government-owned cable feed provider in Tamil Nadu, has become the first big player to drastically reduce the monthly network charge under TRAI's new tariff order, throwing a challenge to the likes of Tata Sky, Dish TV, Hathway and Sun Direct.

Arasu Cable's new base plan of Rs 130 contains six broadcaster packs that together cost Rs 95 per month, thus reducing its network charge to just Rs 35.

In comparison, the 130-rupee plans of competitors like Tata Sky, Airtel Digital, Dish TV, D2h and Sun Direct typically contain no pay channels, with the entire amount being collected by the cable/DTH operator as the network fee.

The six broadcaster plans included in Arasu Cable's base pack are Star Value Pack Tamil, priced at Rs 25 per month, Zee's Prime Pack for Tamil, priced at Rs 10 per month, Discovery Kids Infotainment (Rs 6), Sun TV Tamil Basic pack (Rs 40), Colors Tamil Budget (Rs 6) and Jaya HD pack, priced at Rs 6 per month.

The total cost of these pay channel packs comes to Rs 95 per month.

Given that Arasu Cable's new plan offers these packs under the Rs 130-per-month plan, it has reduced its NCF to just Rs 35 per month.

The new plan was rolled out last week, and cable operators in the state will start offering the same in coming days.

Till now, Arasu was charging Rs 220 for a similar pack, including a network charge of Rs 130 and pay channel charges of Rs 90. Including taxes, the total price of this pack used to come to around Rs 260 per month. The total price of the new pack, including tax, will be only Rs 154.

News Item 2

<https://ultra.news/s-e/48398/tata-sky-slashes-monthly-charge-under-trai-tariff-scheme>

Tata Sky, a premium satellite TV provider in India, has unveiled a scheme by which heavy customers can bring down their monthly network fee by up to Rs 300.

However, to get the lower network charge — also known as network capacity fee or NCF — a subscriber must buy some television channels picked by Tata Sky in addition to the channels and packs he or she wants.

For example, under the current scheme, a subscriber who has purchased 40 HD channels and 100 SD channels pays Rs 245 per month as monthly network charges (Rs 153 plus Rs 23×4).

However, if he or she also purchases the 'Hindi HD Lite' pack, his monthly network charge will be capped at just Rs 99, no matter how many channels he activates. That person can subscribe to 500 channels and still pay only Rs 99 as the monthly network charge (see image on top).

These special packs — which allow customers to have a fixed monthly charge — are called 'Lite' packs. By using them, heavy consumers can reduce their monthly Tata Sky bill by up to Rs 300 per month.

Such packs have been unveiled for most language markets.

For example, those interested in Bengali channels can have their monthly network fee capped at Rs 131.50, including tax, if they activate Tata Sky's Bengali Lite pack in addition to all the other channels and packs that they want.

Similarly, those interested in Tamil channels can bring down their monthly network charge to Rs 114 if they activate the Tamil Lite pack in addition to their regular channels.

However, it should be kept in mind that even as the monthly network charge is brought down by activating these Lite packs, the consumer will also see an increase in the pay channel cost, as the Lite packs come with pay channel charges.

For example, the Tamil Lite pack will increase the monthly pay channel charges by Rs 85 per month, while the Telugu Lite pack will increase it by Rs 74 per month.

However, this increase can be offset by not subscribing separately to the pay channels contained in these Lite packs. For example, the Tamil Lite pack already comes with channels such as Sun TV, KTV, Vijay Super, Colors Tamil and so on.

So, if a subscriber activates the Tata Sky Tamil Lite pack, he or she can avoid buying the above channels separately — thus saving on pay channel costs and helping to recoup some of the money spent for activating the Lite pack.

NETWORK NEUTRALITY ISSUES

Even as Tata Sky has launched the new scheme of giving discounts to customers who opt for its own packs — instead of broadcaster packs or a la carte — it remains to be seen if the move will pass TRAI's smell test due to 'network neutrality' issues.

This is because, under TRAI's new tariff order, the network charge has to be the same for all channels, and cannot be made different for any channel or set of channels.

For example, paragraph 81 of the explanatory memorandum in TRAI's tariff order notes:

“Distributors of television channels are free to fix Network Capacity Fee below this ceiling. However, the Network Capacity Fee will be agnostic to the type of the channel carried over the network. It cannot vary based on the channels subscribed by a subscriber.”

As such, it remains to be seen if TRAI will raise a stink over Tata Sky's move to have a separate, lower network capacity fee exclusively for those who activate channels handpicked by it, while denying the same to those who make their own packs instead of activating Tata Sky packs.