

Summary of Issues for Consultation

Q1. Do you agree that flexibility available to broadcasters to give discount on sum of a-la-carte channels forming part of bouquets has been misused to push their channels to consumers? Please suggest remedial measures.

Ans : Yes, flexibility has been totally misused.

You should put ceiling of 25% discount of total price of sum of single A-La-Carte Channels that are included in the pack. Same channel cannot be included in other pack.

If any broadcaster is found violating this, they should be penalized R 10,000/- on per day per pack till they rectify it and consumer should not be charged or their balance should be added automatically for the price of bouquet from the day of this violation is reported till its rectified.

Q2. Do you feel that some broadcasters by indulging in heavy discounting of bouquets by taking advantage of nonimplementation of 15% cap on discount, have created a non-level field vis-a-vis other broadcasters?

Ans : Yes

Q3. Is there a need to reintroduce a cap on discount on sum of a-lacarte channels forming part of bouquets while forming bouquets by broadcasters? If so, what should be appropriate methodology to work out the permissible discount? What should be value of such discount?

Ans : You should put ceiling of 25% discount of total price of sum of single A-La-Carte Channels that are included in the pack. Same channel cannot be included in other pack.

Q4. Is there a need to review the cap on discount permissible to DPOs while forming the bouquet? If so, what should be appropriate methodology to work out the permissible discount? What should be value of such discount?

Ans : If you follow above remedy, no need to create any cap on DPO's.

Q5. What other measures may be taken to ensure that unwanted channels are not pushed to the consumers?

Ans : No restrictions as long as unwanted channels are free and not counted in 100 channels.

Q6. Do you think the number of bouquets being offered by broadcasters and DPOs to subscribers is too large? If so, should the limit on number of bouquets be prescribed on the basis of state, region, target market?

Ans : Yes, bouquets being offered currently are too large and should be trimmed. No limit should be prescribed based on State Region or Target Market.

Q7. What should be the methodology to limit number of bouquets which can be offered by broadcasters and DPOs?

Ans : Same channel should not be available in another bouquet. This will automatically reduce number of bouquets by 70%.

This along with 25% discount rule on bouquets will help in making A-La-Carte Channels more popular.

Q8. Do you agree that price of individual channels in a bouquet get hedged while opting for a bouquet by subscribers? If so, what corrective measures do you suggest?

Ans : No, price of individual channel does not get hedged, as purpose of bouquet is to give customer channel at lower price along with other channels. It should be made sure that discount of bouquet cannot be more than 25% of total price of individual channel's and no two bouquet should have same channel.

Q9. Does the ceiling of Rs. 19/- on MRP of a a-la-carte channel to be part of a bouquet need to be reviewed? If so, what should be the ceiling for the same and why?

Ans : Yes, price ceiling of R 19/- per channel should be reviewed.

Maximum cap should be Rs 10/- for SD channels and Rs 15/- for HD channels. Calculation of 1 HD=2SD should also be removed as this discourages customer to go for HD channel or pack. Broadcaster can differentiate price of HD and SD channels. There should be a cap on price of HD & SD channel.

If a broadcaster has both SD and HD channel, then price of HD channel cannot be more than double the price of SD keeping in view maximum price of Rs 15/-

Q10. How well the consumer interests have been served by the provisions in the new regime which allows the Broadcasters/Distributors to offer bouquets to the subscribers?

Ans : Consumer interest has not been taken into account.

Q11. How this provision has affected the ability and freedom of the subscribers to choose TV channels of their choice?

Ans : Broadcaster's have made so many bouquet's which has made almost impossible for customer's to select the right bouquet for them. Same channels have been added in many bouquet's. This has led to confusion and customer paying double or triple for the same channel if they select two or three bouquet's of same broadcaster.

Although positive side is consumer's now know what the tax structure and can select any channel they want to. Earlier, selection of own channel was not possible.

Q12. Do you feel the provision permitting the broadcasters/Distributors to offer bouquets to subscribers be reviewed and how will that impact subscriber choice?

Ans : Bouquet's should be allowed as long as 25% cap is fixed along with fine for violation. It will also help subscriber in making better choice and hence will promote A-La-Carte channels.

Q13. How whole process of selection of channels by consumers can be simplified to facilitate easy, informed choice?

Ans : Process can be simplified by removing compulsory DD Channels first or if they want to give then those, it should not be counted in 100 channels. Second, if distributor does want to give free channels and they don't get counted in 100 channels, it should be encouraged as more option will be available to customer and may be customer like those channels and decide not to buy paid channels. This will help in reducing cost as well increase number of channels.

As is written earlier, cap of 25% discount is required on sum of total A-la-carte channels included in pack. Same channel cannot be given again. Penalty of Rs 10,000/- per day should be put in place along with not charging customer if any complaint is received till its rectified.

Broadcaster's should have robust customer care where customer's can complain via call, e-mail or website regarding issues faced. It should be resolved within 2 hours. If not resolved within stipulated time, escalation should be made to TRAI customer care and also charge for that particular day should not be charge to customer till it's resolved.

Right now, TRAI customer care does very little. Their Customer care is very poor. No resolution is done by them. Responsibility is not taken by them.

Q14. Should regulatory provisions enable discount in NCF and DRP for multiple TV in a home?

Ans : Yes

Q15. Is there a need to fix the cap on NCF for 2nd and subsequent TV connections in a home in multi-TV scenario? If yes, what should be the cap? Please provide your suggestions with justification.

Ans : Yes, cap should be fixed. This will help multi-tv customer's in reducing cost and hence they can take more channels as budget of almost every customer is fixed. In longer run broadcaster will benefit from this as well as distributor's as they don't need to do extra work as one DTH is able to accommodate 4 connections. No extra cost is put on the distributor. NCF for single connection should be maximum R 100. Second connection cap should be maximum R 70/- and for more than 2 connection's maximum cap should be R 50/- Although option to charge lower should be left to DPO's.

Corporate connections for Hotels/Guesthouses/B&B/Inn's/PG etc should be considered if more than 4 connection's are been taken. For corporate connection's minimum 20% discount on maximum cap should be allowed.

Q16. Whether broadcasters may also be allowed to offer different MRP for a multi-home TV connection? If yes, is it technically feasible for broadcaster to identify multi TV connection home?

Ans : Yes broadcaster can identify multi TV connections. Yes, its feasible because broadcaster's know how many connection are being used at a single place via mobile number.

Q17. Whether Distributors should be mandated to provide choice of channels for each TV separately in Multi TV connection home?

Ans : Yes

Q18. How should a long term subscription be defined?

Ans : 3 months subscription at a time.

Q19. Is there a need to allow DPO to offer discounts on Long term subscriptions? If yes, should it be limited to NCF only or it could be on DRP also? Should any cap be prescribed while giving discount on long term subscriptions?

Ans : No discounts as this will be misused.

Q20. Whether Broadcasters also be allowed to offer discount on MRP for long term subscriptions?

Ans : No

Q21. Is the freedom of placement of channels on EPG available to DPOs being misused to ask for placement fees? If so, how this problem can be addressed particularly by regulating placement of channels on EPG?

Ans : Placement fees should not be asked. As per TRAI guidelines, its responsibility of DPO's to show all channels which none of them are following. There are many channels missing.

Channels should be listed as per Genre and language because people who watch News channels, want all news channels to be in one place. Else, it will become very difficult to remember which channel is where.

Q22. How the channels should be listed in the Electronic Program Guide (EPG)?

Ans : Channels should be listed as per Genre and language because people who watch News channels, want all news channels to be in one place. Else, it will become very difficult to remember which channel is where.

Q23. Whether distributors should also be permitted to offer promotional schemes on NCF, DRP of the channels and bouquet of the channels?

Ans : No.

Q24. In case distributors are to be permitted, what should be the maximum time period of such schemes? How much frequency should be allowed in a calendar year?

Ans : Not allowed.

Q25. What safeguards should be provided so that consumers are not trapped under such schemes and their interests are protected?

Ans : Not allowed.

Q26. Whether DPOs should be allowed to have variable NCF for different regions? How the regions should be categorized for the purpose of NCF?

Ans : Should not be allowed.

Q27. In view of the fact that DPOs are offering more FTA channels without any additional NCF, should the limit of one hundred channels in the prescribed NCF of Rs. 130/- to be increased? If so, how many channels should be permitted in the NCF cap of Rs 130/-?

Ans : I believe NCF should be reduced to R 100 and 100 Channels is fine as long as DPO's don't compulsory start counting channels which they show.

Q28. Whether 25 DD mandatory channels be over and above the One hundred channels permitted in the NCF of Rs. 130/-?

Ans : Yes 25 DD channels should be extra as we have not opted for it.

Q29. In case of Recommendation to be made to the MIB in this regard, what recommendations should be made for mandatory 25 channels so that purpose of the Government to ensure reachability of these channels to masses is also served without any additional burden on the consumers?

Ans : These 25 DD channels can be shown for free without counting them in the list of 100 channels. This will solve the purpose MIB in terms of reachability as well as consumer's will also not be effected by this.

Q30. Stakeholders may also provide their comments on any other issue relevant to the present consultation.

Ans : DPO's should provide Bill with GST for total number of channels. Right now, Airtel/Cable Operator's they don't provide bill even though they are charging taxes. Cable operator's say our turnover is less than R 40 lacs/annum, so they have not registered under GST. Airtel says, we don't provide bill. My view is if you are not providing bill, then how are you charging taxes. This means they are profiteering at customer's expense. Proper Bill should be made compulsory if they are charging tax.

Second, there should be option of pausing. For example, if some customer is going out of town for few days or months, they should have the option of opting out or pausing. Currently, customer's pay for days they are not watching TV. There should not be any validity for this. It can be for whole year or for one day as well.

All DPO's should compile and provide "Monthly A-La-Carte Channel Programme List" on their websites so that it will help customer's to see which show will be available on which channel and at what time. If customer's want they can download it as well. For example if someone using Airtel DTH, then Airtel should provide list of all programme's of atleast Hindi & English Channels for customer's convenience.