



**Response of
Tata Communications Internet Services Limited (TCISL)
to the Consultation Paper No.10/2010 by TRAI on
Review of measures to protect interest of consumers
in the telecom Sector**



Issues relating to Quality of Service

1 **What should be the benchmark for the parameter - Provision of a landline Telephone after registration of demand? (Reference Para 2.11)**

2 **Do you agree that parameter - Provision of a landline Telephone after registration of demand may be removed from the list of parameters requiring mandatory compliance to the Authority? (Reference Para 2.11)**

3 **Do you suggest any changes to the benchmark for the parameter for landline fault repair, including rent rebate for delay in rectification of fault? If so, please provide details. (Reference Para 2.16)**

4 **What framework do you suggest to ensure payment/adjustment of rebate for prolonged landline phone fault as per QoS regulations? (Reference Para 2.16)**

5 **How do you propose to ensure its effectiveness? (Reference Para 2.16)**

6 **Do you propose any changes to the existing provisions relating to shift of a landline telephone connection? (Reference Para 2.18)**

7 **Do you suggest any change in existing provisions to ensure timely termination of service/closure? If so, please provide details. (Reference Para 2.22)**

The existing time period for closure/termination (not more than 7 days from the date of request) can continue.

8 **Do you agree with the suggestions for seeking explicit consent of the customer, in writing or SMS or e-mail or FAX, to continue with the service, once a request has been made for termination of service? (Reference Para 2.22)**

Customers' services could be restored basis his verbal communication after the adequate authentication about his identity is done. This however should be followed with an email to the customer about the action taken.

9 **Do you agree with the time period of four weeks provided for resolution of billing/ charging complaints? If not, please suggest alternatives. (Reference Para 2.25)**

In order to carry out proper analysis, identify the reasons for the dispute at the Service Provider's end, the existing timeline of four weeks can be continued for providing resolution of billing complaints.



10 Do you agree with present provisions regarding period of one week for applying credit/waiver/adjustment to customer's account upon resolution of billing complaint?(Reference Para 2.28)

Applying credit/waiver/adjustments to the customer's account depends upon lot of feasibility factors for the Service Providers considering various processes already in place. Hence the existing period of one week for applying the credit/waiver/adjustment, has to be continued. However this may reflect in customer's statement of account only in the subsequent bill which may reach customer beyond a period of 7 days.

11 What should be the time period and terms and conditions for refund of deposits after closure/termination of service? (Reference Para 2.32)

The existing period of 60 days for refund of security deposit can be continued in order to carry out the adjustments towards the dues from the customer on account of his usage, rentals and other applicable charges.

12 What steps do you suggest for timely refund of deposits after closure/termination of service? (Reference Para 2.32)

In order to ensure the timely processing of refund of deposits, the customers should be advised to surrender the CPEs(Customer Premises Equipments), if any provided by the Service Providers and installed at the customer premises. This will result in considerable reduction of customer complaints of ISPs.

13 Do you suggest any changes to the present benchmark of 15 days for the parameter - Service provisioning/ Activation Time? (Reference Para 2.34)

The Quality of Services parameters applicable to broadband services provides that 100% cases of service provisioning should be done in =<15 working days, subject to technical feasibility. These provisions can continue. While computing the 15 days period, the delay attributed to readiness at the customer-end for the reasons like PC, site related issues, etc., should be excluded.

However, in all cases the cheques/drafts given by the applicants towards installation charge and/or security deposit should not be banked by the Service Providers till the time the connection is actually activated to rule out any financial gain by the Service Provider due to the extended waiting time beyond the said 15 days in exceptional cases.

14 How the present provisions can be effectively implemented? (Reference Para 2.34)

Included in Response 13



- 15 Do you suggest any changes to present benchmark for the parameter - Fault Repair/ Restoration Time and provision for rebates? (Reference Para 2.36)**

The existing system of timelines for Fault Repair/ Restoration Time and provision for rebates can continue. But as pointed out in several occasions earlier, the Authority is requested to consider a suitable Policy in place for unbundling the last mile for benefits of the standalone ISP Operators without access license.

- 16 Do you propose any change in the existing system of selection of tariff plans for the audit of metering and billing system of service providers to make whole exercise more effective? (Reference Para 2.40)**

- 17 What method of alert do you prefer for premium service calls (Call rates higher than normal local call charges rates) before such calls are put through? (Reference Para 2.42)**

- 18 What information in your view should be provided to prepaid subscribers immediately on completion of every call to facilitate him understand his usages and verify correctness of the deductions? (Reference Para 2.44)**

- 19 What information do you feel is necessary after recharging a prepaid connection to ensure complete value for money immediately after recharging/top up? (Reference Para 2.46)**

Consumers Protection and Redressal of Grievances

- 20 In your opinion, what should be done to increase the awareness about the call centre? (Reference Para 3.46)**

The following additional measures by the Service Providers may be helpful in increased awareness about the call centre :

- Periodic communication mailers/SMSes to the customers about the availability of Call Centers, their contact details
- All the communications sent to customers to include the call center contact details
- Printing of availability of Call Centers, contact details in the customer bills
- Placing the details of call centers at the homepage of the service provider website



- 21 How can we enhance accessibility of call centres for booking the complaints? (Reference Para 3.53)**

As above

- 22 What are your suggestions about the location of the menu option for talking to a customer care agent/executive in the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system of the Call Centre/ customer care number, for facilitating easy access to the call centre agent/executive? Should it be the first sub-menu at the third layer, the first layer being the choice of language and the second layer being service menu? (Reference Para 3.53)**

It should be the last sub menu at the third layer to enable service provider to educate customers on self help options.

- 23 Should TRAI mandate all service providers to provide complaint booking number accessible from other telecom networks also for complaint booking in case of service disruption? Should such call centre numbers also be toll free? (Reference Para 3.53)**

This is not applicable for ISPs as the complainant can choose to call up from any service providers' telecom network to access a universal toll free no.

- 24 Do you agree that docket numbers should also be sent to subscribers' through SMS who is booking complaint? (Reference Para 3.56)**

The existing system of communicating the docket numbers to the customers at the time of lodging complaints can only continue and repeating the same by way of SMS may not have any value addition to the customers in resolving their complaints.

- 25 Will sending of docket number of complaints to subscribers through SMS help them to pursue their complaints and increase effectiveness of consumer grievance redressal system? (Reference Para 3.56)**

- 26 Do you feel that unique format for docket numbers across the service providers will increase monitoring and speedy redressal of subscriber complaints? (Reference Para 3.56)**

Docket no. given by an operator should be consistent for all the complaints for its own customer. Keeping the same across all other operators would be too tricky to manage and doesn't really have any perceptible benefit.



- 27 Do you agree that customers need to be informed about redressal of their complaints before closure of the docket? If so, will it be desirable to inform the subscriber about status of the complaints through SMS before closure of the docket number? (Reference Para 3.61)**

Intimation prior to closure will impact the effectiveness of the redressal process. After closure of complaints, in addition to sending the grievance resolution intimation through emails, sending the gist of the same through SMS, for whom the ISP has the contact details, would serve as an update on closure of resolution to the customer. The intimations through SMS to the customer will be instant in knowing about the resolution of his grievance. ISPs may run 'Know Your Customer Better' Campaigns, whereby additional contact details of the customer can be collected to serve them promptly and to aid them in customer betterment initiatives.

- 28 What parameters should be considered to determine the effectiveness of complaint redressal at call centre level? How could effectiveness of complaint redressal at call centre level be measured? (Reference Para 3.66)**

Substantial measures are already in place for protection of telecom consumers. The existing practice of audits through independent agencies can be continued to evaluate through random sampling audit of grievances redressal system. The resolution time at the call center level for the grievances of the customers are already getting continuously monitored at the Service Providers level.

- 29 In your views, will it be feasible to indicate tentative time frame for redressal of consumer grievance? Will it increase subscriber satisfaction level? (Reference Para 3.69)**

Tentative time frame within which a type of grievance is handled is communicated to the customers even now also. This should continue.

- 30 What are your suggestions for using complaints received at call centre for improvement in QoS and processes adopted by a service provider? Do you perceive any need for TRAI to oversee such analysis and monitor corrective actions? (Reference Para 3.74)**

In-depth analysis of the faults booked at the call center will lead to their root cause and help in effective redressal of customer grievances as well as reduction in fault incidences at the Service Provider end. Service Providers as such are carrying out the said exercise in order to maintain the service level parameters and for better customer satisfaction levels. Hence there is no need for TRAI to monitor the same.



31 In your opinion, what should be done to create awareness about the Nodal Officer? (Reference Para 3.77)

- Periodic communication mailers/SMSes containing Nodal Officer contact information to the customers
- Printing of availability of Nodal Officers in the customer bills
- Placing the details of Nodal Officer/Redressal Mechanism at the homepage of the service provider website

The above would result in lesser number of grievances and the 'three stage redressal mechanism' will serve as a tool in resolving the unique grievances rather being used as an escalation matrix even for regular complaints.

The present regulation of issue of Public Notices once in a period of twelve months should be discontinued since it is highly unlikely that customers would retain such newspapers for reference throughout the year and such details are however regularly updated in the website of the service providers.

32 What should be the maximum permissible time in which nodal officer must acknowledge the receipt of the grievance and indicate a unique number for future reference? (Reference Para 3.80)

The time limit for redressal of grievances of consumers by the Nodal Officer prescribed by TRAI in the regulations is based on the various parameters prescribed in the QoS Regulations. Hence the existing timeline with respect to acknowledgement the receipt of the grievance can continue.

33 Do you suggest that the nodal officer give an indicative time for redressal of grievance while communicating receipt of grievance? Will it boost the confidence of the subscriber? (Reference Para 3.80)

Substantial measures are already in place defining the timelines for the redressal of grievances. Besides it will be difficult and not practical to communicate the exact timeline for resolutions since the consumer complaints are different in nature. In view of the same, the existing timelines can continue.

34 Will it be feasible to communicate the tentative time for redressal of the grievances and ensure redressal within prescribed timeframe? (Reference Para 3.80)

As above.



35 What framework do you propose for timely disposal of consumer grievances and feedback on status of grievance redressal before disposal? (Reference Para 3.82)

The present regulations for acknowledgement and timelines for redressal of customer complaints can continue.

36 In your opinion, what should be done to improve the accessibility of nodal officers? (Reference Para 3.87)

As per our response to question no. 31

37 How would effectiveness of Nodal Officer be monitored? (Reference Para 3.87)

The complaints received and redressed by the Nodal Officer can be included in the existing practice of audits through independent agencies by random sampling audit of grievances. The resolution time at the Nodal Officer level for the grievances can be left to the Service Providers level for monitoring purposes.

38 What should be the parameters and framework to judge the effectiveness of the nodal officers? (Reference Para 3.87)

As per response at 37

39 In your opinion, what should be the time frame for redressal of grievances by the Nodal Officer? (Reference Para 3.89)

The present regulations for acknowledgement and timelines for redressal by Nodal Officer can continue.

40 What should be done to ensure redressal of consumer grievances within prescribed timeframe?(Reference Para 3.89)

Audits through the independent agencies and monitoring at Service Provider level will help in evaluating the effectiveness of Nodal Officers which will serve as a tool in ensuring the redressal of consumer grievances within the timelines as per existing regulations.

41 What framework do you perceive for regular analysis of consumer grievances at Nodal officer level to identify systemic failures and to initiate necessary actions? Do you perceive the need to mandate such provisions?(Reference Para 3.91)

Existing process of audits through independent agencies and monitoring the Service Providers level will help to assess the robustness of the effectiveness of Nodal Officers. We recommend that the service providers need not be mandated with respect to the regular analysis of consumer grievances at Nodal Officer level. This will facilitate in improving the



effectiveness of grievance redressal leading to increased customer satisfaction levels.

42 What are your views regarding charging of nodal officer Number especially in view of the fact that nodal officer is part of consumer grievance redressal mechanism? Elaborate your response. (Reference Para 3.94)

The Telecom Consumers Protection and Redressal of Grievances Regulations, 2007 mandates the provision of toll free facility for approaching the Call Centre by consumers through telephone. Making Nodal Officer's telephone number also toll free will result his Office as the alternative call center and whole purpose of higher level for grievance redressal will get defeated. Besides, the additional cost to be incurred by the service providers on such instances will ultimately impact on the cost of their operations. In view of the above, lighter regulatory approach is recommended and hence there no need for the toll free number for nodal officer.

43 What should be done to enhance awareness about Appellate Authority to ensure effective redressal of consumer grievances? (Reference Para 3.97)

- Periodic communication mailers/SMSes containing the contact information of Appellate Authority to the customers
- Printing of availability of Appellate Authority in the customer bills
- Placing the details of Appellate Authority/Redressal Mechanism at the homepage of the service provider website

The above would result in lesser number of grievances and the 'three stage redressal mechanism' will serve as a tool in resolving the unique grievances rather being used as an escalation matrix even for regular complaints.

The present regulation of issue of Public Notices once in a period of twelve months should be discontinued since it is highly unlikely that customers would retain such newspapers for reference throughout the year and such details are however regularly updated in the website of the service providers.

44 What framework to you suggest for filing of the appeal to Appellate Authority for redressal of consumer grievances by subscribers? How can it be made easy and user friendly? (Reference Para 3.99)

Substantial measures are already in place in the regulations to effectively address the consumer grievances and there is no need for additional framework for filing appeals to Appellate Authority.



45 In your view, what should be the time frame for acknowledgement of the appeal by Appellate Authority? (Reference Para 3.103)

The existing Telecom Consumers Protection and Redressal of Grievances Regulations, 2007 provide for acknowledgement of appeal within three days of receipt of appeal alongwith the unique appeal number. The existing timeline of three days can continue.

46 Would it be feasible and desirable to convey the tentative time for disposal of the appeal by Appellate Authority to improve subscriber confidence? (Reference Para 3.103)

As the escalated complaints to the Appellate Authority are different in nature and require in-depth analysis by the appellate authority for disposal, it will be difficult and not practical to communicate the exact timeline for disposal by the Appellate Authority.

47 How feedback at the time of disposal of appeal can be made more transparent, self speaking and impartial? Is there a need to institutionalise feedback mechanism at appellate authority level of service provider to improve effectiveness of the processes? (Reference Para 3.105)

The detailed framework for the Appellate Authority is already in place and the same continue.

48 What should be the framework to improve the effectiveness and acceptability of the Appellate authority as an independent and impartial body? Provide details of the proposed framework. (Reference Para 3.107)

49 In your opinion, what should be the maximum time period for deciding an appeal by the Appellate Authority? (Reference Para 3.109)

The existing regulations provide that every appeal should be decided by the Appellate Authority within three months and in order to retain the customers in the intense competitive scenario, the appeals are generally disposed in the shorter time than prescribed. In view of the above, the existing timeline for disposal can continue.

50 What should be the time limit within which the information about itemized usage charges should be provided on request from a pre-paid customer? (Reference Para 3.112)



Other Issues

- 51 Can you suggest further measures to effectively control provision of value added services without explicit consent of the subscriber? Kindly provide details of proposed framework. (Reference Para 4.7)**

There are substantial directions and guidelines are in place to effectively control the provisions governing value added services.

- 52 In your opinion, what more should be done to increase effectiveness of consumer education? (Reference Para 4.9)**

The Authority can consider with a detailed process for conducting Open Houses for resolutions to customer grievances. The Open House should also serve the purpose similar to Lok Adalats in respect of collection of dues to the Service Providers from the customers.

- 53 How effectiveness of web based Consumer grievance redressal mechanism can be increased? (Reference Para 4.12)**

The process of web based online Grievance Monitoring System has already been initiated by the Authority. Many a times, it is observed that the customers are making/escalating complaints at different levels/ authorities at the same time and repeated complaints are lodged within the permitted resolution timeline prescribed by the Authority. The web based application would benefit the customers as well as Service Providers and act as a tool in finding out the status of grievances and resolutions and serve as a data bank. However this should not be mandated as a necessary requirement on the part of service provider as it is witnessed in the past that the cost to set up such facility is high but the exploitation is very low.
