

Name of the Person providing response: Dr.Subramanian, Advocate, Chennai.

Mobile : 99625 44488

I. Questions for consultation

Question No. 1: Reserving Rs.10/- voucher or a voucher of any value for top up is not justified since anyone wanting a validity extension for a short period may use a voucher of lesser denomination, not necessarily for top up, but even for validity extension. So Rs.10/- or any other denomination can be allowed even for validity extension, say even for a few days- at the option of the subscriber.

Question No. 2: Yes, in the light of above answer.

Chapter 3: Issues for consultation

1. The current plans are not justified. They only maximise the profit of the service providers. Now the major 3 private operators (Jio, Airtel and Vodafone) charge a minimum of Rs.180/- for a validity period of 28 days. This is exorbitant. Now the Government wants everyone to have a mobile number for any purpose, be it Aadhar or PAN . They even need a mandatory alternative number. Paying Rs.180/- for 28 days for just keeping a number is unconscionable. This prejudicially affects lower income group, but they are not exempted from having a phone for Aadhar purposes which is mandatory even for social welfare schemes.

It is therefore strongly suggested that TRAI should make it mandatory for every service provider to offer a plan of Rs.30/- (Rupees Thirty only) which should be valid for a minimum period of 30 days and should have a talk time of about 60 minutes. No data needs to be given under this plan which may be called a Janata Plan!. Also, under this plan, there should be a top up plan denominations of Rs.10, 20 and 30 or any other value This will mitigate the sufferings of lower income group who are also mandated to have a phone number for Aadhar purposes.

2. Yes, there need to be separate voice, SMS and data plan subject to the above mandatory Janata Plan. Under the current bundled offers, even those who need only one element is forced to cough up more money for items which are not required by them.

3. The concept of maximum validity is altogether irrelevant from the point of view of regulating body like TRAI. The validity can be till the license period of the service provider as was the case earlier.

4. STVs and CVs are fancy items which are not used by the vast majority of population. This aspect may be left to the discretion of service providers subject to offering a Janata Plan as indicated above

5. Colour coding of physical recharge vouchers is not at all relevant now.

6. Since online rechargers are fairly knowledgeable, colour coding is not considered necessary for online recharges.

7. Reserving any denomination or specifying any denomination is not required since it does not serve the purpose of consumers. If the service provider wants, he can even offer a Re.1 recharge plan.

8. Yes, in the light of above.

To sum up, what all is needed to be done by TRAI is

1. Ensuring of a mandatory Janata Plan.

2. Ensuring call quality- now there no quality in contrast with the situation prevailing in early 2000s. Most of the calls are blurred.

3. The service providers' concept of return per consumer is horrible. They can charge more from high value customers who need more data and talk time. So, this aspect has to be banned completely.

4. The present complaint mechanism which is left wholly to the service provider is completely unsatisfactory. TRAI should have its own complaint redressal mechanism.

5. DND registry is completely useless. This aspect is not at all bothered by the service providers or tele callers.

Dr. R. Subramanian