

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA

22nd November, 2005

PRESS RELEASE No. 89 /2005

Study on Quality of Service of Cellular Mobile Service in Mumbai Metro Circle

TRAI has been receiving a number of complaints from consumers regarding call drops, poor coverage etc. in various cities across the country Delhi, especially in the metro cities, where the number of subscribers have increased many folds during the last five years. Besides the serious problems arising out of lack of adequate interconnections, on which a study paper has been issued recently, the problems are regarding inability of operators to provide sufficient towers/cells. TRAI has been discussing these issues with the service providers very frequently. TRAI recently conducted drive tests in Mumbai Metro City to assess the quality of service of the networks of M/s Bharti Tele-Ventures Ltd. (Airtel), Hutch and BPL. Based on the findings of these drive tests and discussions with the service providers, TRAI today released a Study Paper on Quality of Service of Cellular Mobile Service in Mumbai Metro Circles. The key results emerging out of this study are given below:

- The subscriber base of cellular mobile services has shown an exponential growth and has grown from about 9.7 lakhs in March, 2002 to 50.95 lakhs by March, 2005.
- The Quality of service of the networks of Airtel, Hutch and BPL are not as per the prescribed standards in respect of the coverage, interference and call drops at several locations.
- All the service providers, in common, have coverage problems in (1) Navy Nagar/ Army Cantonment, Colaba; (2) HPCL Refiner, Mahul; (3) Aarey Milk Colony, Goregaon; (4) Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Deonar; (5) Air India Colony, Kalina; (6) Vashi Check Naka; and (7) Mantralaya (Secretariat). These areas are currently covered remotely by sites from the neighboring locations. Due to the coverage from remote Base Stations (BTSs), the signal strength in these areas is barely sufficient to mature a call.
- The signal strength in the Navy Nagar area drops to -105 dBm due to thick vegetation. The interference due to reflections from the sea water is also resulting in poor voice quality. To provide coverage in this area cell sites have to be put inside the defence land.
- The Operators are not able to cover the road in the Aarey colony which connects Western Express highway to Powai lake and to the Eastern highway due to the national reserve forest for which permission is required from Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries Department.
- The operators need to have a dominant server right on the Vashi Bridge to avoid interference.
- Attempts made by the service providers to put cell sites in these areas by approaching the concerned Government Departments, Defence and civic authorities have not been fruitful.
- GSM service providers have already crossed the benchmark for allocation of additional spectrum and the allocation of additional spectrum may have to be considered.

TRAI is taking up the issues raised above with concerned authorities for effecting improvements in networks.

(Rakesh Kacker)
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