



भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी एवं उद्यमी विकास संस्थान
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY & ENTREPRENEUR DEVELOPMENT (IITED)
(AN INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH, ACTION FOR DEVELOPMENT)
ISO 9001: 2018 CERTIFIED ORGANISATION
वेबसाइट/Website - www.iited.in

Ref..D-217/TRAT/2026-27

Date..8/5/26.....

To,
Advisor (F&EA)
TRAI New Delhi

Subject: Counter Comments on COAI Submission regarding Draft Telecom Consumers Protection (Thirteenth Amendment) Regulations, 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are TRAI authorised CAG Member State and union territory of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Chandigarh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh. Jammu & Kashmir, Bihar. Assam, Jharkhand, Maharashtra.

The counter command on the said regulation is as follows.

Regarding “No Evidence of Market Failure”

The submission that there is no evidence of market failure is not fully justified. It is respectfully submitted that the role of TRAI is not only to act after complete market failure occurs, but also to proactively safeguard consumer interests and prevent situations that may adversely affect consumers.

As a consumer organisation/NGO, we have interacted with a large number of telecom consumers, particularly senior citizens, rural users, economically weaker sections, and feature phone users, who have consistently expressed that they do not require mobile data services but are still compelled to purchase bundled plans containing data in order to continue basic voice calling and SMS services.

Such a situation limits meaningful consumer choice and imposes unnecessary financial burden on consumers who only require basic telecom services. Therefore, the proposed regulation is a timely and necessary consumer protection measure and should be implemented strictly in the interest of affordability, inclusiveness, and consumer welfare.

Regarding “Data is No Longer Optional; it is Foundational to Daily Life”

There is no dispute that mobile data and internet connectivity have become important components of modern digital life. However, the practical realities of India’s socio-economic conditions also need equal consideration.

Head Office: IICR Campus, Near Mangla Traders, Shakti Chowk, Bijnor U.P. Pincode No.- 246701, India
मुख्यालय:- आई0आई0सी0आर0 कैम्पस निकट मंगला ट्रेडर्स शक्ति चौक, बिजनौर (उ0प्र0) पिन-246701 भारत

☎️ 📌 🐦 Mob. No. 9412118240, Phone & Fax No. 01342-265992, E-mail:- iited_mngo@rediffmail.com

A significant population in India still belongs to low-income and low-literacy segments and continues to use feature phones primarily for voice communication and SMS services. For such consumers, mandatory inclusion of data in every recharge plan does not necessarily create meaningful digital participation. Rather, it forces them to pay for services which they neither understand nor use.

The objective of digital inclusion cannot be achieved merely by forcing unwanted data packs upon consumers. True consumer-centric regulation requires availability of affordable and need-based choices. Therefore, Voice + SMS-only plans with adequate validity must remain available for consumers who do not require internet services.

Regarding “Risk of Increased Unsolicited Commercial Communications (UCC)”

The concern regarding increase in unsolicited commercial communications (UCC) appears misplaced in the context of Voice + SMS-only plans. UCC today is largely generated through robocalls, OTT platforms, internet-based applications, automated dialing systems, and bulk communication technologies, many of which are data-driven.

Therefore, linking the issue of UCC with availability of Voice + SMS-only plans does not appear to have sufficient merit. Consumers seeking basic telecom connectivity should not be deprived of affordable plans merely on the basis of speculative concerns unrelated to the actual source of UCC.

Instead of restricting consumer choice, efforts should continue towards stronger enforcement mechanisms, improved spam detection technologies, and strict action against entities responsible for UCC violations.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that TRAI’s proposal to ensure availability of Voice + SMS-only plans with proportionate pricing and validity comparable to existing bundled plans is fully justified, consumer-centric, and necessary in the larger public interest.

Overall, while the draft amendment is a progressive step, incorporating the above suggestions with clearer linkage to existing TRAI regulations and enforcement mechanisms will significantly enhance consumer protection and regulatory effectiveness.

Yours sincerely

(Dr. R.D. Usmani)
Director

