TO BE PUBLISHED IN THE GAZETTE OF INDIA, EXTRAORDINARY,
PART III, SECTION 4
TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA
NOTIFICATION
New Delhi, the 02nd November, 2026

TELECOM CONSUMERS COMPLAINT REDRESSAL (FOURTH AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 2026
(07 of 2026)

No. C-23/1/(1)/2026-CA---- In exercise of the powers conferred by section 36, read with sub-clauses (i) and (v) of clause (b) of sub-section (1) of section 11, of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997 (24 of 1997), the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India hereby makes the following regulations further to amend the Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal Regulations, 2012 (1 of 2012), namely: -

1. **Short title and commencement. —**
   (1) These regulations may be called the Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal (Fourth Amendment) Regulations, 2026.
   (2) These regulations shall come into force after thirty days from the date of their publication in the Official Gazette, except –
      (i) regulation 12, regulation 16, regulation 17 and regulation 20, which shall come into force after sixty days; and
      (ii) sub-regulations (c), (f), (g) of regulation 4 and regulation 21, which shall come into force after ninety days,

   from the date of publication of these regulations in the Official Gazette.

2. In regulation 1 of the Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal Regulations, 2012 (1 of 2012) (hereinafter referred to as the "principal regulations"), for sub-regulation (3), the following sub-regulation shall be substituted, namely: -
   "(3) These regulations shall apply to all service providers providing
      (i) Access service; and
      (ii) Internet service:

   Provided that nothing contained in these regulations shall apply to an Internet Service Provider whose total number of subscribers on the last day of the preceding financial year does not exceed ten thousand:

   Provided further that an Internet Service Provider covered under the first proviso shall establish a suitable mechanism for redressal of consumer complaints and may voluntarily follow the provisions of these regulations:

   Provided also that where, after the publication of the Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal (Fourth Amendment) Regulations, 2026, the total number of subscribers of an Internet Service Provider exceeds ten thousand, such Internet Service Provider shall comply with the provisions of these regulations within thirty days from the last day of the month in which its subscriber base exceeds ten thousand, except --

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(i) regulation 11, regulation 14A, regulation 15 and regulation 18, which shall be complied with within sixty days; and

(ii) sub-regulations (3), (9), (10), (11) and (12) of regulation 3 and regulation 18A, which shall be complied with within ninety days,

after the date of publication of these regulations in the Official Gazette.

Explanation. — For the purposes of this proviso, the periods of thirty days, sixty days and ninety days shall be computed from the last day of the month in which the subscriber base of the Internet Service Provider crosses ten thousand.".

3. In regulation 2 of the principal regulations, --

(a) for clause (b), the following clause shall be substituted, namely: -

"(b) **"Access Services"** means the telecommunication services provided by a licensee or authorised entity to users for conveyance of voice or non-voice messages through wireline or wireless telecommunication network;";

(b) clause (e), clause (f) and clause (g) shall be deleted;

(c) after clause (h), the following clause shall be inserted, namely: -

"(ha) **"Complaint Monitoring System"** means any World Wide Web-based system using client server architecture or other similar architecture, established under sub-regulation (1) of regulation 6, to register, track or monitor and manage complaints, appeals, service requests and service queries of the consumer;";

(d) after clause (j), the following clause shall be inserted, namely: -

"(ja) **"Feedback Survey"** means online consumer feedback obtained after the resolution or closure of the complaint or appeal;";

(e) after clause (k), the following clauses shall be inserted, namely: -

"(ka) "Grievance Redressal Mechanism" means the mechanism established by a service provider for redressal of consumer grievances, comprising of Complaint Centre, Complaint Monitoring System and the Appellate Authority;";

(kb) **"Internet"** is a global system that —

(i) is logically linked together by a globally unique address, based on internet protocol or its subsequent enhancements or upgradations; and

(ii) is able to support communications using the transmission control protocol or internet protocol suite or its subsequent enhancements or upgradations, and all other protocols compatible with internet protocol;";

(f) for clause (l), the following clause shall be substituted, namely: -

"(l) **"Internet Services"** means the telecommunication services to access the internet;";

(g) for clause (m), the following clause shall be substituted, namely: -

"(m) **"Originating Access Provider"** or **"OAP"** means the Access Provider who has provided the telecom resources to a sender of commercial communication as defined in Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulation 2018;";

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(h) for clause (o), the following clause shall be substituted, namely: -
"(o) **"Service Provider"** means any entity having a license under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, or an authorization under the Telecommunications Act, 2023, for providing services covered under sub-regulation (3) of regulation 1;";

(i) after clause (p), the following clause shall be inserted, namely: -
"(pa) **"Service Query"** means any query made by the consumer regarding the services provided by the Service Provider;";

(j) for clause (r), the following clause shall be substituted with namely: -
"(r) **"Terminating Access Provider"** or **"TAP"** means the Access Provider of which a subscriber is the recipient of commercial communication as defined in Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulation 2018;";

(k) clause (s) shall be deleted.

4. In regulation 3 of the principal regulations, --

(a) for sub-regulation (1), the following sub-regulation shall be substituted, namely: -
"(1) Every service provider shall establish a Complaint Centre for redressal of complaints and for addressing service requests and service queries of its consumers:

Provided that the complaint centre established by the service providers before the commencement of the Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal (Fourth Amendment) Regulations, 2026 shall continue to be the Complaint Centre for the purpose of these regulations and shall be made compliant with these regulations within the stipulated timelines:

Provided further that a service provider, who is providing different services in a licensed service area, may, at its option, set up one or more Complaint Centres, being common or separate, for such services being provided by it:

Provided also that a Complaint Centre for a service area shall provide the service in at least one of the other official languages of the states in the licensed service area, where applicable, in addition to Hindi and English, as per the option exercised by the consumer:

Provided also that the Complaint Centre shall register appeal, if any, preferred by the consumer through Consumer Care Number or through a separate dedicated number.";

(b) sub-regulation (2) shall be deleted;

(c) for sub-regulation (3), the following sub-regulation shall be substituted, namely: -
"(3) Every Complaint Centre shall operate round the clock on all days of the week and shall provide efficient consumer assistance through human representatives or automated systems or AI agents or other customer-centric technological solutions, or a combination thereof, round the clock:

Provided that consumer assistance through a human representative shall be made available for a minimum of sixteen hours daily, on all days of the week:

Provided further that consumer shall get a notification that he is communicating with an AI Agent as and when such a situation occurs.

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Provided also that automated systems or AI agents or other consumer-centric technological solutions deployed at Complaint Centre shall operate with appropriate human oversight.

Provided also that the Complaint Centre shall register appeals round the clock and shall provide assistance through a human representative for registration of appeals during the hours when human representatives are available at the Complaint Centre.";

(d) for sub-regulation (7), the following sub-regulation shall be substituted, namely: -
"(7) The Consumer Care Number shall not be chargeable to consumers";

(e) in sub-regulation (8), the words "for Basic telephone services, Cellular mobile telephone service and Internet service," shall be deleted;

(f) for sub-regulation (9) the following sub-regulation shall be substituted, namely: -
"(9) Every service provider shall ensure that automated systems such as IVRS, conversational AI agents or any other consumer-centric technology, if installed on a Consumer Care Number, provides options for –

(a) Language selection
(b) selecting the nature of request from among the following;
    (i) 'Complaints',
    (ii) 'Appeals',
    (iii) 'Service Request/Query';
(c) accessing context-specific sub-menu for each category of complaint, appeal, service request or service queries;
(d) connecting with a human consumer care representative from within each category referred to in clause (b); and
(e) availing a call-back facility where the consumer is waiting in a queue to connect with a human consumer care representative.";

(g) after sub-regulation (9), the following sub-regulations shall be inserted, namely: -
"(10) Every service provider shall ensure that a consumer is able to register complaints or appeals and raise service request or service queries through their web portal/ website as well as mobile application, and each of these should provide options for -
(a) selecting the nature of request from among the following;
    (i) 'Complaint',
    (ii) 'Appeal',
    (iii)'Service Request or Query'
(b) accessing a context-specific sub-menu for each category under complaints, appeals, service requests or service queries through automated systems, chatbots, AI agents or other consumer centric technologies;
(c) entering text or voice note to allow the consumer to share the details of their issue, in case they wish to give additional information;
(d) receiving regular updates and information regarding the status, actions taken, and projected resolution timelines for their complaints through the application interface, until final resolution, including -

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(i) the initial update regarding the acknowledgement of service request/complaint with docket number;
(ii) the relevant information regarding expected time for resolution and information about allotment of technician/ service engineer, if required;
(iii) acknowledgement of delay in case a complaint resolution is likely to exceed the anticipated time, as informed to the consumer under sub-clause (ii), along with reasons for such delay and the estimated timeline for resolution;
(iv) a confirmation message, once the complaint is closed, with Feedback survey link.

(11) Service Provider may also enable a consumer to register complaints or appeals and raise requests or queries through any other consumer-centric technological solutions (including chatbots, AI agents, messaging platforms such as WhatsApp etc.).

Provided that all such solutions, either already deployed or that may be deployed in future, shall provide the same options provided under sub-regulation (9) and sub-regulation (10).

(12) Every service provider shall, for the purpose of making Information and Communication Technology accessible to Persons with Disabilities (PwD), -
(a) equip dedicated desks or helplines in their Complaint Centre or Consumer support centres, with personnel or assistive technology capable of receiving calls from PwDs;
(b) route the calls from PwD category subscribers to such dedicated desk or helpline and ensure that necessary step-by-step assistance is provided to them; and
(c) ensure that their mobile app and website and portal have accessibility features in accordance with the applicable guidelines or standards on accessibility for Persons with Disabilities issued by the Government of India as amended from time to time.".

5. In regulation 4 of the principal regulations the following changes shall be made, namely:
(a) In sub-regulation (1), the words "within forty-five days from the date of commencement of these regulations,", shall be deleted,

(b) After sub-regulation (1), following proviso shall be inserted

"Provided that the General Information number already established by the service providers shall continue to be operational for the purpose of these regulations."

(c) In second proviso, the words "*that*" shall be substituted with "*further that*" and the words "toll free" shall be substituted with "non-chargeable".

6. In regulation 5 of the principal regulations, -
(a) in sub-regulation (1), --
i. the words "within forty-five days from the date of commencement of these regulations,", shall be deleted,
ii. for clause (a), the following clause shall be substituted, namely: -
"(a) public notice in a leading newspaper each in Hindi, English and additionally at least one of the other official languages of the state, where applicable, in the licensed

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service area and such notice shall be given below the regular commercial advertisement of the service provider;";

iii. for clause (b), the following clause shall be substituted, namely: -
"display on the website of the service provider, as well as on the mobile application";

iv. for clause (c), the following clause shall be substituted, namely: -
"(c) disseminate the Consumer Care Number and other mandatory consumer information to all consumers through SMS broadcast at least once every six months;";

(b) after sub-regulation (3), the following sub-regulation shall be inserted, namely: -

"(4) Every service provider shall prominently display a dedicated section titled "Customer Care" on the home page of their website, containing statistics and details relating to -
(a) details of Complaint Centre;
(b) details of Appellate Authority;
(c) report of consumer feedback surveys as provided under regulation 14A;
(d) quarterly performance reports as provided under sub-regulation (2) of regulation 15;".

7. In regulation 6 of the principal regulations, -

(a) for sub-regulation (1), the following sub-regulation shall be substituted, namely:-
"(1) Every service provider shall –
(a) establish a Complaint Monitoring System to enable the consumers to monitor the status of their complaints; and
(b) ensure that consumers receive regular updates and information regarding the status, actions taken, and projected timelines for resolution of their complaints or appeal or service request or service query through the application interface, as well as email and SMS, until final resolution of the complaint, appeal, service request or service query, as the case may be:

Provided that the Complaint Monitoring System already established by the service providers shall continue to be the Complaint Monitoring System for the purpose of these regulations and shall be made compliant with these regulations within the stipulated timelines.";

(b) in sub-regulation (2), --
(i) for clause (a), the following clause shall be substituted, namely: -
"(a) immediately upon establishment of the Complaint Monitoring System under sub-regulation (1), ensure that the web address (Uniform Resource Locator) of the Complaint Monitoring System, along with information regarding the procedure for monitoring complaints, is made available to consumers through the channels of dissemination specified under sub-regulation (1) of regulation 5";
(ii) for clause (b), the following clause shall be substituted, namely: -
"(b) continue to make available such information, at least once in six months, through the dissemination channels of the service provider provided under sub-regulation (1) of regulation 5;";

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(c) for sub-regulation (3), the following sub-regulation shall be substituted, namely:-
"(3) Any changes in the web address (Uniform Resource Locator) of the Complaint Monitoring System or major overhaul or comprehensive reform of the mobile application shall be intimated to the consumers in the same manner as specified under sub–regulation (2) of this regulation.";

(d) in sub-regulation (4), for the words " 'Web Based Complaint Monitoring System' ", the words "Complaint Monitoring System" shall be substituted;.

8. In regulation 7 of the principal regulations, --
(a) in sub-regulation (1), --
(i) the first proviso shall be deleted;
(ii) in the second proviso, the word "further" shall be deleted;

(b) in sub-regulation (2), for the word "three" appearing after the words "minimum period of" and before the word "months", the word "six" shall be substituted;

(c) in sub-regulation (3), --
(i) in clause (a), in sub-clause (i), after the words "through SMS", the words "and email, if available" shall be inserted;
(ii) in clause (b), in sub-clause (i), for the words "or email or post", the words "and email, if available" shall be substituted;.

9. For regulation 8 of the principal regulations, for sub-regulation (1) and sub-regulation (2), the following sub-regulations shall be substituted, namely: -
"(1) Every service provider shall, where a timeframe has been specified under the Standards of Quality of Service of Access (Wireline and Wireless) and Broadband (Wireline and Wireless) Service Regulations, 2024 (06 of 2024), the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations, 2018 (06 of 2018) and the Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 (02 of 2012) issued by the Authority, ensure redressal of complaints and provisioning of service requests in accordance with such timeframe.
(2) In case no timeframe has been specified under the The Standards of Quality of Service of Access (Wireline and Wireless) and Broadband (Wireline and Wireless) Service Regulations, 2024 (06 Of 2024), the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations, 2018 (06 of 2018) and the Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 (02 of 2012) issued by the Authority, the complaints and service requests shall be addressed within three days.".

10. In regulation 9 of the principal regulations, --
(a) for sub-regulation (2), the following sub-regulation shall be substituted, namely: -
"(2) A consumer may prefer an appeal under sub-regulation (1) either directly to the Appellate Authority, by email, mobile application, website or portal, or post or in person, or through the Consumer Care Number established by the service provider:
Provided that in case of the appeal preferred is in respect of a complaint regarding receipt of unsolicited commercial communications, -
(i) the consumer shall also be able to prefer such appeal through any of the modes specified for lodging a complaint under the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations, 2018;

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(ii) the access provider shall establish necessary mechanism for communicating the appeal received by the Terminating Access Provider through any of the modes, to the concerned Appellate Authority of the Originating Access Provider.

Explanation: For the purpose of this sub-regulation post includes courier.";

(b) in sub-regulation (3), for the words "thirty days" wherever they appear, the words "fifteen days" shall be substituted.

11. In regulation 10 of the principal regulations, --

(a) in sub-regulation (1), --

(i) the words "within forty-five days of the commencement of these regulations" shall be deleted;

(ii) in the first proviso, after the words "for such services being provided by it", the words "in each licensed service area" shall be inserted;

(iii) for the second proviso, the following proviso shall be substituted, namely: -

"*Provided further* that a service provider having all India license or authorization, may, for the purpose of these regulations, establish one or more Appellate Authorities for its service areas";

(b) for sub-regulation (2), the following sub-regulation shall be substituted, namely: -

"(2) The Appellate Authority shall consist of one or more persons who shall be regular employees in the management of the service provider, and shall have at least five years' experience";

(c) for sub-regulation (3), the following sub-regulation shall be substituted, namely: -

"(3) Every service provider shall, immediately on establishment of the Appellate Authority, ensure that the details of the Appellate Authority, including the names, designation, telephone number, address and email address, are made available to consumers through the dissemination channels specified under sub-regulation (1) of regulation 5 and also arrange to display the said details in each of its offices, Complaint Centres, sales outlets and at a prominent place on the home page of its website and mobile app.";

(d) after the sub-regulation (4), the following sub-regulation shall be inserted, namely:-

"(5) Every Service Provider shall place before its Chief Executive Officer or the Board of Directors, as the case may be, a quarterly report on the redressal of complaints, appeals and results of feedback survey, for review and appropriate oversight:

Provided that such report shall include the number of complaints and appeals received, disposed of, pending, time taken for disposal, and results of feedback survey, in such format as may be specified by the Authority from time to time."

12. For regulation 11 of the principal regulations, the following regulation shall be substituted, namely:-

"**11. Establishment, composition and functions of Consumer Grievance Redressal Oversight Committee.** — (1) Every Service Provider shall establish a Consumer Grievance

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Redressal Oversight Committee for overseeing the overall functioning of its grievance redressal mechanism.

(2) The Consumer Grievance Redressal Oversight Committee shall consist of representatives of the Service Provider and at least one representative from each of the consumer organisation registered with the Authority in the State or Union Territory of the licensed service area in which the subscriber base of the service provider is above ten thousand.

(3) The Committee shall meet at least once every financial year to review the overall functioning of the grievance redressal mechanism and for this purpose, the Service Provider shall place before the Committee a report containing details of the number, nature and disposal of complaints and appeals, performance trends of grievance redressal, and such other information relating to the grievance redressal mechanism as may be considered relevant.

(4) The Consumer Grievance Redressal Oversight Committee may provide its observations and recommendations to the service provider for improving the effectiveness, efficiency and consumer responsiveness of the grievance redressal mechanism.

(5) The Service Provider shall pay each representative of a Consumer Organisation an honorarium of rupees four thousand for every sitting of the Consumer Grievance Redressal Oversight Committee attended by such representative.".

13. In regulation 12 of the principal regulations, --

(a) for the existing heading, the following heading shall be substituted, namely: - "**Office of the Appellate Authority**";

(b) in sub-regulation (1), for the words "a Secretariat", the words "an office" shall be substituted;

(c) sub-regulation (2) shall be deleted.

14. Regulation 13 of the principal regulations shall be deleted.

15. For regulation 14 of the principal regulations, the following regulation shall be substituted, namely: -

"**14. Registration and disposal of appeals by the Appellate Authority.** — (1) The office of the Appellate Authority shall, immediately on receipt of an appeal, register it by assigning a unique appeal number and send the number so assigned to the consumer, through SMS and/or email, as an acknowledgement of such receipt.

(2) The Appellate Authority shall examine as well as seek necessary details and documents from the concerned divisions of the service provider and shall give the final decision and the service provider shall take action for resolution of the grievance within fifteen days of receipt of the appeal.

(3) The action taken under sub-regulation (2) shall be communicated to the appellant, by email and SMS and also be updated on the website and mobile app of the service provider, within three days of the disposal of the appeal, by the office of the Appellate Authority .".

16. After regulation 14 of the principal regulations, the following regulation shall be inserted, namely: -

"**14A. Feedback survey.** — (1) The Service Provider shall, immediately upon resolution or closure of any complaint or appeal, administer an online feedback survey to the consumer to obtain feedback regarding the resolution of the complaint or appeal.

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(2) The feedback survey shall be accessible to the complainant via a dedicated and secure electronic link transmitted through electronic means, such as email, if available, and SMS, and also on the service provider's mobile application and website.

(3) The feedback survey shall collect specific feedback from the consumer regarding the resolution of the complaint or appeal, as the case may be, on a five-point scale, as detailed hereunder: -

5: Fully Satisfied
4: Largely Satisfied
3: Satisfied
2: Largely Dissatisfied
1: Totally Dissatisfied

(4) The service provider shall share the data obtained from the consumer through the feedback survey in respect of complaints and appeals separately, on a quarterly basis, along with the Quarterly Performance Report (QPR) under sub-regulation (2) of regulation 15 of these regulations.".

17. In regulation 15 of the principal regulations, --

(i) for sub-regulation (1), the following sub-regulation shall be substituted, namely: - "(1) The Service Provider shall keep all the records of the complaints and appeals received by it, the decisions and the action taken for resolution of the grievance by the Complaint Centre and the Appellate Authority, for a minimum period of six months after disposal of such complaints and appeals.";

(ii) for sub-regulation (2), the following sub-regulation shall be substituted, namely:-

"(2) Every service provider shall, on a quarterly basis, submit to the Authority and publish on their website, portal and app, a comprehensive performance report, separately for complaints and appeals received by them, for each licensed service area or Service Area, within fifteen days from the end of each quarter and such report shall contain the Key Performance Indicators which shall include -

(a) the number of complaints/appeals pending and brought forward from last quarter;
(b) the number of complaints/appeals received during the quarter;
(c) the number of complaints/appeals disposed of during the quarter;
(d) the number of complaints/appeals pending at the end of the quarter;
(e) the details of the complaints/appeals redressed within the specified time limit;
(f) the details of the complaints/appeals redressed after the specified time limit;
(g) the average resolution time of the complaints/appeals resolved;
(h) the percentage of the total complaints/appeals resolved = [a / {b+c}] x 100
where –
a = total complaints/appeals resolved during the quarter
b = complaints/appeals received during the quarter
c = complaints/appeals brought forward from last quarter;

(i) the feedback survey results for complaints/appeals for -
(i) the total number of consumers who participated in the feedback survey;
(ii) the arithmetic mean of the ratings (upto two decimal places);

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(iii) a matrix showing the total count of consumers who gave each of the ratings of five, four, three, two and one.";

(iii)after sub-regulation (2), the following sub-regulations shall be inserted, namely:-

"(2A) Every Service Provider shall submit to the Authority, on a half-yearly basis, a compliance report certifying that the provisions relating to publicity of the Consumer Care Number, General Information Number and other information as specified under sub-regulation (1) and sub-regulation (2) of regulation 5, have been duly complied with:

Provided that such report shall be furnished within fifteen days from the end of each half-year, in such format and manner as may be specified by the Authority from time to time.

(2B) Every service provider shall create or upgrade their system for collection of primary data, its storage, processing, performance report generation and their online submission to the Authority, in respect of each parameter specified under sub-regulation (2) of regulation 15 in such manner and format, at such intervals and within such time limit as may be specified by the Authority, from time to time, by an order or direction.".

18. In regulation 16 of the principal regulations, --

(a) in sub-regulation (1), for clause (b), the following clause shall be substituted, namely: -
"(b) complaints of consumers that are not specific to a particular consumer but refer to a class or section of consumer and are generic in nature;";

(b) in sub-regulation (2), the words "of the result" appearing after the words "as well as the Authority" and before the words "within one month", shall be deleted.

(c) for sub-regulation (3), the following sub-regulation shall be substituted, namely: -
"(3) Every service provider shall resolve every complaint referred to under clause (d) of sub-regulation (1) and inform the result to the consumers as well as to the Authority within seven days of the reference of the complaint.".

19. In regulation 17 of the principal regulations, --

(a) in sub-regulation (1), --

(i) for clause (g), the following clause shall be substituted, namely:-
"(g) rights of consumers under the different regulations, orders and directions issued by the Authority; and in particular those relating to Tariff, Mobile Number Portability, Telcom Consumers Protection Regulation, 2012 (02 of 2012), Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations, 2018 (06 of 2018) (TCCCPR), and Standards of Quality of Service of Access (Wireline and Wireless) and Broadband (Wireline and Wireless) Service Regulations, 2024 (06 of 2024);";

(ii) in clause (h), for the words "VAS", the words "Value-Added Services (VAS)" shall be substituted;

(iii) after clause (h), the following clause shall be inserted, namely:-
"(ha) procedure for termination or disconnection of each service offered by the service provider;"

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(iv) in clause (l), at the beginning, the words "Name, designation" shall be inserted and the words "facsimile number" shall be deleted;
(v) clause (m) shall be deleted;

(b) in sub-regulation (2), for the words "local language of each service area", the words "at least one of other the official languages of the state, where applicable, in the licensed service area" shall be substituted;

(c) in sub-regulation (3), after the words "on the website of the service provider", the words "and also accessible via mobile app" shall be inserted;

(d) in sub-regulation (4), --
(i) after the words "salient features such as", the word "important" shall be inserted;
(ii) the words "procedure and time limit for redressal of complaints and disposal of appeals" shall be deleted;

(e) in sub-regulation (5), in the proviso, for the word "licence", the words "license or authorization" shall be substituted.

20. In regulation 18 of the principal regulations, --
(a) in sub-regulation (1), after the words "and the Appellate Authority", the words "for at least six months after disposal of the complaint/appeal as the case may be." shall be inserted;
(b) in sub-regulation (2), in clause (a), for the words "Complaint Centre and the Secretariat", the words "Complaint Centre, Complaint Monitoring System, and the Office of the Appellate Authority " shall be substituted.

21. After regulation 18 of the principal regulations, the following regulation shall be inserted, namely:-
"**18A. Regulatory review. –**
(1) The Authority may conduct periodic review of the of the functioning of the Grievance Redressal Mechanism of the service providers by: -
(a) audit and inspection of the records as provided under regulation 18;
(b) audit and analysis of Quarterly Performance Reports submitted by the service provider under sub-regulation (2) of regulation 15;
(c) review based on consumer feedback.
(2) The Authority may establish a mechanism to seek reports from the Service Providers on consumer feedback.
(3) The service provider shall provide the data required by the Authority for the purpose of periodic review through the mechanism specified by the Authority.".

22. After regulation 18A so inserted, the following regulation shall be inserted, namely: -
"**18B. Consequences for contravention of the provisions of the regulations.** — (1) If, during the audit, inspection, analysis or review undertaken under regulation 18 and regulation 18A, the Authority finds that a complaint or appeal was disposed of in contravention of the provisions of these regulations, the service provider shall be liable to pay, by way of financial disincentive, an amount as indicated in Schedule-I.

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(2) If a service provider fails to submit the Quarterly Performance Report, within the time specified under sub-regulation (2) of regulation 15, it shall be liable to pay an amount, by way of financial disincentive, as provided in Schedule-I.
(3) No order for payment of any amount by way of financial disincentive shall be made by the Authority unless the service provider has been given a reasonable opportunity of representing against the contravention of the regulations observed by the Authority.
(4) The Authority may decide not to impose any financial disincentive, or to impose as lower amount of financial disincentive, for reasons to be recorded in writing.

18C. Payment of financial disincentive. —

(1) The amount payable by way of financial disincentive under these regulations shall be remitted to such head of account as may be specified by the Authority.

(2) If a service provider fails to make payment of financial disincentive under regulation 18B, within the period specified in the order for payment of financial disincentive, it shall be liable to pay simple interest at a rate which shall be two percent (2%) above the one year Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rate (MCLR) of State Bank of India prevailing as on the beginning of the Financial Year in which last day of the stipulated period falls.

Explanation: For the purposes of this regulation, a part of month shall be reckoned as a full month for calculation of interest, and a month shall be reckoned as an English calendar month.".

23. After regulation 23 of the principal regulations, the following schedule shall be inserted namely :-

"SCHEDULE-I
[See regulation 18B]
FINANCIAL DISINCENTIVES

Sl. No.	Contravention under the regulation	Amount of financial disincentive
1	Disposal of complaint or appeal in contravention of the provisions of these regulations. [see sub-regulation (1) of regulation 18B]	(a) One thousand rupees for every such disposal of complaint; and (b) five thousand rupees for every such disposal of appeal: Provided that the amount of financial disincentive payable by a service provider under sub-regulation (1) of regulation 18B shall not exceed twenty lakh rupees per quarter for the licensed or authorized service area
2.	Failure to submit the Quarterly Performance Report, within the time specified under under sub-regulation (2) of regulation 15 [see sub-regulation (2) of regulation 18B]	Not exceeding five thousand rupees per report per day for first fifteen days and thereafter twenty thousand rupees per report per day, during which the default continues, subject to maximum amount of ten lakhs rupees per instance per Licensed Service Area, as the Authority may, by order, direct.".

30/10/2024

(Harinder Kumar)
Secretary

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Note.1. — The principal regulations were published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part III, Section 4 dated the 5th January, 2012 vide notification number No. 305-20/2009-QOS dated the 5th January, 2012.

Note.2. —The principal regulations were amended by issuing the Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal (Amendment) Regulations, 2012 (3 of 2012) dated the 11th January, 2012.

Note.3. -The principal regulations were further amended by issuing the Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal (Second Amendment) Regulations, 2013 (11 of 2013) dated the 11th September, 2013

Note.4. -The principal regulations were further amended by issuing the Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal (Third Amendment) Regulations, 2014 (7 of 2014) dated the 1st July, 2014

Note.5. -The Explanatory Memorandum explains the objects and reasons of the Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal (Fourth Amendment) Regulations, 2026 (07 of 2026).

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Explanatory Memorandum

Introduction and Background

1) The Government of India established the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) in the year 1997 under the provisions of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997 (TRAI Act, 1997) with the objective to regulate the telecommunication services and to protect the interests of service providers and consumers of the telecom sector, to promote and ensure orderly growth of the telecom sector.

2) India's telecommunications sector has witnessed unprecedented growth, emerging as one of the largest telecom markets in the world. As of June 2026, the total telecom subscriber base in India stands at approximately 1.34 billion, while Internet subscribers exceed 1.09 billion.

3) As telecommunications services increasingly underpin economic and social activities, reliance of consumers on telecom connectivity has deepened considerably. As such it is imperative that a robust feedback and grievance redressal mechanism is in place. Needless to say, an efficient, transparent and responsive grievance redressal mechanism is integral pillar to safeguarding consumer interests.

4) In exercise of the powers conferred by section 36, read with subclauses (i) and (v) of clause (b) of sub-section (1) of section 11, of the TRAI Act, 1997, TRAI is empowered to make regulations for protection of the interests of consumers of telecommunication services and for ensuring compliance of the terms and conditions of the Licence.

5) In 2007, TRAI notified the Telecom Consumers Protection and Redressal of Grievances Regulations, 2007, establishing a three-tier mechanism: Call Centre, Nodal Officer and Appellate Authority, with defined timelines and escalation processes.

6) On 5th January 2012, TRAI issued the Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal Regulations, 2012. After extensive consultative process, TRAI notified Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal Regulations, 2012 (TCCRR-2012), introducing a standardized two-tier framework:

- Complaint Centre: redressal of complaints and for addressing service requests of its consumers
- Appellate Authority: appeal to lie with the Appellate Authority if consumer is not satisfied with the redressal of his complaint by the Complaint Centre, or his complaint remains unaddressed or no intimation of redressal of the complaint is received within the period specified

7) The regulations mandated time-bound resolution, standardized procedures, consumer communication, and transparency, ensuring resolution within service provider systems before judicial recourse.

8) TRAI has refined the framework through amendments in the TCCRR-2012:

- 2012: Terminology updates; "Citizen's Charter" renamed to "Telecom Consumers Charter".
- 2013: Improved disclosures, tracking systems, and compliance requirements.
- 2014: Updated the definition of broadband.

9) The telecom ecosystem has evolved since the last amendment with rapid growth in broadband, digital platforms, and value-added services. At the same time, consumer interfaces have evolved from IVRS to mobile apps, portals, email, and chatbots.

10) Consumer experience in filing of complaints and the redressal thereof has not kept pace with the development of telecom ecosystem and the proliferation of consumer interfaces. There is a strong need to upgrade the consumer experience in filing of complaints and subsequent follow up in the form of escalation mechanisms and appeals. The existing complaint/ grievance redressal mechanism offered by the TSPs/ ISPs need improvement so that the consumer gets the best of experience in terms of clarity and ease in filing/ redressal of complaints.

11) The modes of consumer engagement have evolved significantly since 2012. While IVRS remains relevant, consumers today increasingly use mobile applications, web-based portals, chatbots, and emails to register and track complaints. The grievance appeal process also merits review from the perspective of accessibility, clarity, efficiency, effectiveness and consumer convenience, as well as avoiding fragmented handling of grievances across platforms.

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12) Although TRAI does not have mandate to handle individual complaints, the number of complaints received by TRAI from the telecom subscribers has shown an increasing trend over the years.

S. No.	Financial Year	Number of Complaints Received
1	2023–24	44,733
2	2024–25	55,978
3	2025–26	73,081
	Total	**173,792**

An analysis of these complaints received from consumers has revealed a fair amount of dissatisfaction with the existing grievance redressal mechanism, as established by the service providers, and pointed to a need for a review and refresh.

13) The Authority released the Draft Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal (Fourth Amendment) Regulation, 2026 for stakeholders' comments on 07th May 2026. Comments from stakeholders were invited, last date for submission of comments was 12th June 2026 and counter-comments were invited till 19th June 2026.
A total of 32 comments and 24 counter-comments were received from various stakeholders, as detailed below:

I. Associations: 1
II. Service Providers: 4
III. Companies: 2
IV. Individuals/Others: 3
V. Consumer Advocacy Groups: 22

The comments and counter-comments received from the stakeholders were uploaded on the TRAI website for information of all concerned stakeholders.

14) After the submission of comments and counter-comments, an Open House Discussion (OHD) was held on 17th July 2026, wherein various stakeholders participated and provided their views and inputs on the issues raised in the Consultation Paper. The comments, counter-comments and inputs including written comments received during the OHD were thereafter examined and analysed as follows.

Regulation 1 - Short title, commencement and application:
Sub-regulation (2)

15) **The timeline for applicability of regulation**

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. Some stakeholders supported timely implementation (i.e. within 30 days), stating that any extension should be proportionate, justified and limited to requirements necessitating additional preparation.

II. Some stakeholders stated that the proposed implementation period of 30 days from the date of publication in the Official Gazette would be insufficient to operationalize the proposed amendments. They suggested that an implementation period of 6–9 months would be more appropriate, given the significant changes required across customer service systems, network interfaces, IT infrastructure, reporting mechanisms, and associated business processes.

III. Some stakeholders acknowledged that several proposed amendments require substantial system changes, including CRM, IVRS, backend software, staff training and vendor integration, and therefore they suggested that a phased implementation approach based on the complexity of the proposed requirements would be advisable. They suggested phasing the 30-day timeline into three groups –

i. Phase I (30 days period to be given for): complaint acknowledgements, appeal disclosures, website/app disclosures, reporting formats, survey framework, record retention, compliance-officer designation;

ii. Phase II (90 days period to be given for): AI escalation rules, new complaint-tracking requirements, financial-disincentive framework;

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iii. Phase III (180 days period to be given for): IVRS redesign, human-escalation architecture, multilingual IVR, full state-language support, large-scale call-centre modifications.

b) **Analysis:**

I. Regarding the stakeholders' suggestions seeking a longer implementation period for implementation of the Regulations, the Authority considers the proposed implementation period to be adequate except for a few cases as given below, as the amendments largely require modifications to existing systems and processes, rather than the development or deployment of entirely new infrastructure.

II. Further, wherever justified, the Authority may consider extending implementation timelines for specific requirements such as multilingual support, 24x7 operations, and other operational enhancements.

III. These regulations shall come into force after thirty days from the date of their publication in the Official Gazette except-

- Regulations 11, 14A, 15 and 18 (dealing with Consumer Grievance Redressal Oversight Committee, Feedback survey, Reporting requirements, Inspection and Auditing, respectively) shall come into force after 60 days from the date of publication of these regulations; and
- Sub-regulations (3), (9), (10), (11), (12) of Regulations 3, and Regulation 18A, (dealing with Establishment of Complaint Centre, Consumer Care Number, Web portal/ website/ mobile App, future technical solutions, accessibility for PwDs and Regulatory review, respectively) shall come into force after 90 days from the date of publication of these regulations.

Sub-regulation (3)

16) Applicability of regulation on service providers

a) **Inputs of the Stakeholders:**

Some stakeholders suggested that the scope of applicability under Regulation 1(3) should be explicitly expanded to include Unified License (GMPCS authorization) holders who are permitted to provide telecommunication services directly to end consumers.

B) Analysis:

I. With respect to the stakeholders' suggestion regarding the expansion of scope of the Regulations to include Unified License holders, it is agreed that Global Mobile Personal Communication by Satellite (GMPCS) service providers be brought within the ambit of the Regulations, wherever applicable.

II. The Authority has decided to make these regulations applicable on all service providers providing access services, and internet services. In effect, these regulations will apply on the entities holding the following licenses/ authorisations:

(a) Unified access service license;
(b) Internet service license;
(c) GSPS license sui generis category license;
(d) Access service authorization under Unified License or Unified License (VNO);
(e) Internet service authorization under Unified License or Unified License (VNO);
(f) GMPCS service authorization under Unified License or Unified License (VNO);
(g) Access service authorisation as network service operator or virtual network operator under the Telecommunication (Authorisation for provision of Principal Telecommunication Services) Rules, 2026;
(h) Internet service authorisation as network service operator or virtual network operator under the Telecommunication (Authorisation for provision of Principal Telecommunication Services) Rules, 2026; and
(i) Unified service authorisation as network service operator or virtual network operator under the Telecommunication (Authorisation for provision of Principal Telecommunication Service) Rules 2026.

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17) **Applicability of regulation on Internet Service Providers**

a) **Inputs of the Stakeholders:**

I. A few stakeholders commented that the amended Regulation 1 makes compliance voluntary for Internet Service Providers below the subscriber threshold of 10,000. This creates a category of consumers — typically in Tier-2/3 towns and rural areas, who have no legally enforceable grievance redressal mechanism, often relying on these smaller ISPs as their sole means of internet access.

II. A few stakeholders suggested to extend the scope of these regulations to include app-based like OTT-based voice, video and messaging service providers.

b) **Analysis & Conclusion:**

I. With regard to stakeholders' concern about Service Provider's compliance towards consumers in Tier 2/3 towns and rural areas, it is observed that many smaller ISPs operate in geographically remote, rural, semi-urban, Tier-2 and Tier-3 markets where they often provide last-mile connectivity and contribute significantly to broadband penetration and digital inclusion. Implementation of the mandatory framework would require such service providers to incur substantial operational, technological and administrative costs and may impose a compliance burden disproportionate to the scale of their operations. For smaller ISPs operating with a limited subscriber base and financial and human resources, such regulatory costs may adversely affect their commercial viability, discourage market participation and reduce competition, particularly in underserved and rural areas where smaller providers play an important role in extending broadband connectivity.

II. The proposed amendment also aligns with the provisions of "The Standards of Quality of Service of Access (Wireline and Wireless) and Broadband (Wireline and Wireless) Service Regulations, 2024" wherein similar compliance provisions have been mentioned for ISPs. The Authority is therefore of the view that a proportionate regulatory approach is warranted. While consumer interests remain paramount, regulatory obligations must be calibrated having regard to the scale of operations and the likely consumer impact.

III. With regards to suggestions for inclusion of app-based service providers, it is clarified that OTT services fall outside TRAI's regulatory jurisdiction.

Regulation 2 – Definitions:

18) **Definitions**

a) **Inputs of the Stakeholders:**

I. Certain stakeholders objected to the retention of proposed definitions of 'Access Service', 'Authorization', 'Survey'.

II. Some stakeholders argued for removal of the definition of 'Survey' while others suggested TRAI to prescribe standardised survey formats, language, audits etc.

III. A few stakeholders suggested to include "wireless media including Terrestrial and Satellite" in the definition of 'Broadband' and include 'services availed by consumers' in the definition of 'Service Query' if it means the third-party apps being used by consumers.

IV. Certain stakeholders suggested alignment of the definition of 'Authorisation' with Unified Licence regime.

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V. Some stakeholders suggested revisions to, and sought greater clarity in, specific definitions, including those relating to Access Service, Survey, Broadband, Service Query, Complaint Monitoring System (Requires Stronger Transparency Obligations), Grievance Redressal Mechanism (Should Include Accountability Principles) and Service Provider (Should Include Responsibility for Outsourced Agencies).

b) **Analysis:**

I. The Authority has examined the stakeholder comments pertaining to certain proposed definitions:

i. "Access Service": The definition is aligned with the relevant provisions of the Indian Telegraph Act,1885 and the Telecommunications Rules issued by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) dated 23.06.2026, thereby ensuring consistency with the prevailing statutory and regulatory framework.

ii. Regarding the stakeholders' comments for alignment of definition of "Authorization" with Unified License regime, the regulation is applicable for all service providers providing access services, and internet services. Further the definition of Service Provider is amended to include all entities having a license under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 or an authorization under the Telecommunications Act, 2023 for providing services covered under sub-regulation (3) of regulation 1

iii. "Internet" and "Internet Services": The definition is aligned with the relevant provisions of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and the Telecommunications Rules issued by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) dated 23.06.2026, thereby ensuring consistency with the prevailing statutory and regulatory framework.

iv. "Service Query" should encompass all services offered by service providers, not merely those currently availed by consumers.

II. With regards to stakeholders' suggestions on the definitions of 'Complaint Monitoring System', and 'Grievance Redressal mechanism', the Authority notes that as such the definitions are adequately clear.

III. With respect to stakeholders' suggestions for deletion of the definition of "Feedback Survey", the Authority is of the view that the Feedback Survey prescribed under regulation 14A is an integral component of the grievance redressal framework for capturing consumer satisfaction upon resolution of complaints and appeals. Accordingly, the definition of "Feedback Survey" has been retained.

Regulation 3 -Establishment of Complaint Centre:

Sub-regulation (1) –

19) **Complaint centres Service in official language/languages of the states in the licensed service area**

a) **Inputs of the Stakeholders:**

I. Certain stakeholders appreciated the amendments for strengthening consumers' right to grievance redressal.

II. Some stakeholders opposed the multilingual support requirement, citing increased compliance burden and operational complexity, and contended that regulatory frameworks such as those of the RBI and the Department of Consumer Affairs provide greater flexibility in this regard. Some also argued for deletion of this proposal.

III. Certain other stakeholders suggested that the language requirements for Complaint Centres and IVR systems may be reviewed to provide greater implementation flexibility, particularly with respect to the provision of services in the official language(s) of the licensed service area, in addition to Hindi and English.

b) **Analysis:**

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I. One of the primary objectives of the proposed amendments is to remove ambiguities in the existing framework and ensure uniform implementation across all service providers.

II. Under the extant regulation, the expression "local language" was susceptible to varying interpretations, resulting in inconsistent practices across service providers.

III. Accordingly, the amendment proposes a clear and objective requirement that complaint handling facilities be made available in the official language(s) of the State(s) within the Licensed Service Area, in addition to Hindi and English, based on the option exercised by the consumer.

IV. This approach seeks to ensure consistency, eliminate ambiguity, and improve accessibility of grievance redressal mechanisms across service providers.

V. Stakeholder comments regarding the requirement to provide consumer support services in the official language(s) of the State(s) within the Licensed Service Area, in addition to Hindi and English were examined. The Authority has noted the efforts are already being undertaken by service providers to facilitate consumer interactions in multiple languages.

VI. However, it is noted that a significant segment of the population, particularly consumers residing in remote and socio-economically disadvantaged areas, may not possess adequate proficiency in either Hindi or English in states where the official language is other than Hindi. For such consumers, access to grievance redressal mechanisms in the official language(s) of the concerned State is often essential for effective communication of service-related issues and for understanding the assistance being provided by the service provider.

VII. The Authority is of the view that language should not become a barrier to the exercise of consumer rights or access to grievance redressal mechanisms. The proposed amendment therefore seeks to strengthen inclusivity and accessibility by ensuring that consumers are able to interact with service providers in at least one of the other official language(s) of the State(s) within the Licensed Service Area, in addition to Hindi and English.

VIII. The proposed substitution of the term "local language" with "official language(s) of the State(s) in the Licensed Service Area" provides greater regulatory clarity, removes ambiguity and promotes uniform implementation across the sector.

IX. It is also noted that some of the states/Union Territories have more than one official language, therefore considering the operational complexity as expressed by certain stakeholders, the Authority is of the view that complaint centres of the Service providers shall provide services in at least one of the official languages of the State(s) in the licensed service area, in addition to Hindi and English, based on the option exercised by the consumer.

Sub-regulation (3)-

20) Round-the-clock operation of complaint centres

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. Certain stakeholders supported the proposed provision, noting that it is aligned with the essential and continuous nature of telecom services and the need for uninterrupted consumer grievance redressal and maintained that operational costs are an inherent responsibility of service providers and cannot justify denial or dilution of consumer services.

II. Some stakeholders opposed the 24x7 requirements citing disproportionate costs and limited benefit.

III. Some other stakeholders expressed the view that the proposed operational model should be assessed in light of implementation feasibility and the expected consumer benefits. They suggested extending the service support from 0600 hours onwards, at best, in a hybrid mode at the choice of TSPs.

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IV. Some stakeholders supported round-the-clock operations of Complaint Centres.

b) Analysis:

I. It is noted that telecommunications is now an essential service that facilitates access to a wide range of critical activities, including banking, digital payments, healthcare, education, emergency communications etc. Consequently, disruptions in telecommunication services may occur at any time and can significantly affect consumers, irrespective of the hour at which such disruptions arise. Such a requirement has also been acknowledged by certain service providers while stating that a reasonable number of calls start coming 6:00 am onwards.

II. The Authority is of the view that consumers should have continuous access to channels for reporting service-related issues and seeking assistance. Restricting the operational hours of Complaint Centres may result in situations where consumers experiencing service disruptions during late-night or early-morning hours are unable to register complaints or obtain support in a timely manner.

III. The availability of human assistance enhances consumers' perception that their grievances are being acknowledged and actively addressed, thereby improving consumer confidence, satisfaction, and trust in the service provider's grievance redressal mechanism. The amendment states that the complaint centre shall provide efficient consumer assistance through human representatives or automated systems or AI agents or other consumer-centric technological solutions, or a combination thereof, round the clock. However, human representative-assisted support shall be made available for a minimum of sixteen hours daily, on all days of the week.

IV. The proposed requirement therefore seeks to ensure that all consumers, irrespective of their work schedules, geographical location or personal circumstances, have access to grievance registration facilities whenever required.

V. The Authority further notes that the requirement for round-the-clock availability of Complaint Centres does not necessarily imply deployment of the same level of resources 24X7. Consumer interaction volumes during late-night hours are generally lower than those during peak business hours, and service providers may deploy resources in a manner commensurate with expected demand while ensuring continuous accessibility of complaint registration and support mechanisms. In practice, complaints received during such periods are often limited to urgent service-related issues, while detailed resolution activities may continue during normal operational hours.

VI. It is observed that a number of essential and consumer-facing services across sectors have increasingly adopted 24x7 support frameworks in recognition of evolving consumer expectations and the continuous nature of digital service delivery. Given the critical role of telecommunications as an enabling infrastructure for such services, it is appropriate that consumers are provided uninterrupted access to complaint registration and support facilities.

VII. The Authority is of the view that Complaint Centre should operate round the clock on all days of the week and shall provide efficient consumer assistance through human representatives or automated systems or AI agents or other customer-centric technological solutions, or a combination thereof, round the clock. Access to human representatives should be available for at least 16 hours daily. During the remaining hours, consumer support may be provided through automated and other consumer-centric technological solutions.

VIII. Amendment provides that the consumer shall get a notification that he is communicating with an AI Agent as and when such a situation occurs. Automated systems or AI agents or other consumer-centric technological solutions deployed at Complaint Centre shall operate with appropriate human oversight.

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Sub regulation (9), (10) and (11) -

21) Operation of IVRS, Web portal/websites, Mobile application & new age consumer centric solutions (Chatbots, AI Agents etc).

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. Certain stakeholders supported a common complaint framework, observing that service providers retain flexibility in interface design while ensuring consistent grievance procedures. They endorse modernisation of the grievance mechanism through web-portal and mobile-application channels for complaint/appeal registration.

II. Some stakeholders opposed any modification to the existing IVRS structure, contending that the current framework adequately facilitates consumer grievance redressal. It argued that introducing an 'Appeals' option at level 2 will increase confusion among the consumers, creating unnecessary complexity and procedural overlaps.

III. Some stakeholders suggested that 'Acknowledgement' should also include recording of conversations for consumer protection.

IV. Some suggested that complaints be closed only after consumer confirmation through OTP, SMS, email or mobile application; otherwise, they should be automatically escalated for review.

V. Some other stakeholders advocated mandatory access to human assistance at every IVRS level instead of only the third level.

VI. Some further suggested a dedicated 'Appeals' option at second/third options for increased accessibility.

VII. One stakeholder proposed two modifications to the IVR flow: (1) at the second level add an option "(iv) Not Sure/Others" that auto-routes to a call-back or human contact; (2) enumerate and standardise the third-level categories across the industry.

VIII. Another stakeholder has recommended mandatory human fallback under sub-regulation 11.

IX. Some stakeholders sought dispensing with of the mandatory toll-free Consumer Care Number under regulation 3(7), arguing that with unlimited voice bundled into data plans, calls are effectively free (making the original rationale redundant), and thus, toll-free infrastructure imposes disproportionate cost/duplication on lean-infrastructure ISPs — seeking parity with TRAI's similar rationalization for Cable TV/DPOs.

b) Analysis:

I. The Authority has examined the stakeholders' suggestions for retention of the existing IVRS structure and notes that a key shortcoming in the existing grievance redressal framework was the lack of uniformity in the structure and operation of Interactive Voice Response Systems (IVRS) deployed by different service providers. In many instances, consumers were required to navigate multiple layers of menus before reaching the appropriate grievance category. Further, options relating to appeals were often not distinctly identified and, in certain cases, were embedded within broader categories such as service requests or general queries, resulting in confusion and inconvenience to consumers.

II. To address these concerns, the proposed amendment introduces a standardized architecture throughout all modes [as per sub-regulation 9 (IVRS, AI agents), sub-regulation10 (web portal or mobile application, chatbots, AI agents) and sub-regulation11 (new-age solutions including messaging platforms such as WhatsApp) of regulation 3] applicable across service providers. Under the revised framework, the first stage is concerned with language selection.

III. The second stage is required to clearly present three distinct categories:

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a. Complaints;
b. Appeals; and
c. Service Requests/Queries.

IV. The third stage is concerned with accessing context-specific sub-menu for each category of complaint, appeal, service request or service queries.

V. The Authority is of the view that this clear categorisation will significantly improve consumer awareness regarding available grievance redressal channels and ensure that appeals are explicitly identifiable rather than being subsumed within generic query or consumer service options.

VI. The proposed amendment also mandates that the consumers shall be provided with:
a. an option to connect with a human consumer care representative; and
b. an option to avail a call back facility while waiting in the queue to connect with a human representative.

VII. These provisions have been specifically incorporated to ensure that consumers are not compelled to remain within automated workflows and can seek human intervention whenever required.

VIII. Regarding the stakeholders' suggestions seeking mandatory human fallback at every level, the Authority notes that the availability of a human-assisted channel at the third stage strikes an appropriate balance between operational efficiency achieved through automation and the need for effective consumer support.

IX. It is observed that consumers often experience inconvenience and loss of time due to the placement of information relating to existing plans, offers, and promotional services at the commencement of customer care interactions. Accordingly, the proposed framework seeks to streamline the grievance redressal process by requiring service providers to present consumers with clearly identifiable grievance-related options at the initial stages of the IVRS while information relating to plans, products, and services may continue to be made available under a dedicated category without impeding access to complaint registration, appeals, or service request mechanisms. This is expected to reduce call handling complexity and enable consumers to access the desired grievance redressal channel more efficiently.

X. The Authority has also examined concerns expressed by certain Service Providers regarding the possibility of consumers inadvertently selecting the "Appeals" option at the second stage of the IVRS without having first registered a complaint. In this regard, the Authority is of the view that there should be no presumption against the wisdom of consumers in distinguishing among complaints, appeals and service requests/queries, particularly when these are clearly delineated within the grievance redressal framework.

XI. The amendment provides that the Complaint Centre shall register appeals round the clock and shall provide assistance through a human representative for registration of appeals during the hours when human representatives are available at the Complaint Centre. Such a mechanism would ensure that consumers are guided to the correct grievance redressal channel while preventing procedural confusion and maintaining the integrity of the complaint and appeal handling process. Appeals can also be registered round-the-clock through app or web portal.

XII. With regard to concerns relating to digitally excluded consumers, while the amendments recognize evolving consumer preferences by enabling complaint registration through websites, mobile applications, chatbots and AI-enabled platforms, the conventional communication channels including helpline numbers and other complaint registration mechanism through IVRS, Complaint Centres and Consumer Care Numbers continue to remain available. The proposed digital channels are intended to supplement, and not replace, existing consumer support arrangements.

XIII. Some stakeholders suggested mandating OTP/ SMS-based consumer confirmation prior to closure of complaints. The Authority is of the view that the Feedback Survey prescribed under regulation 14A adequately captures consumer satisfaction following complaint resolution.

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XIV. With regard to stakeholders' suggestions for setting up of National Consumer Helpline (NCH), the Authority notes that this issue is outside the scope of the present regulation. Notably, consumers already have access to the National Consumer Helpline (NCH), which functions as a centralized platform for consumer grievance assistance across sectors, including telecommunications. Furthermore, the primary responsibility for addressing and resolving consumer complaints rests with the concerned service provider. The grievance redressal framework prescribed under these regulations is designed to strengthen the accountability of service providers.

XV. The Authority has reviewed the comments seeking dispensation of the mandatory toll-free Consumer Care Number under regulation 3(7) and has decided that regulation to be modified as "The "Consumer Care Number" shall not be chargeable to consumers.

Sub-regulation (12) -

22) Accessibility for Persons with disability (PwD)

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. Introduction of provision for Persons with disability (PwDs) has been well received by stakeholders.

II. Certain stakeholders have proposed that they have already deployed appropriate processes, in line with the DoT instructions dated 31.07.2025, and addition of this provision is mere duplication of existing practices already implemented by service providers.

III. One of the stakeholders suggested to use word 'shall' in place of 'should'.

IV. Some stakeholders recommended extending similar safeguards to all vulnerable consumers and mandating non-digital complaint channels.

b) Analysis:

I. The Authority has noted the stakeholder comments indicating that dedicated support mechanisms for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) are already being provided by service providers pursuant to the instructions issued by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) dated 31.07.2025.

II. However, the Authority notes that the proposed provisions under regulation 3 are not intended to duplicate existing requirements but rather to ensure that such accessibility measures continue to remain an integral part of the consumer grievance redressal framework and are uniformly available across all service providers. Existing systems, processes and dedicated facilities established pursuant to the DoT instructions may continue to be utilised, with such modifications and enhancements as may be necessary to comply with the requirements of these regulations.

III. It is also noted that the DoT instructions dated 31.07.2025 were issued in the context of provisioning of telecommunication services to PwDs, including accessibility of Know Your Customer (KYC) processes, onboarding procedures and related support mechanisms. The instructions also provide for accessibility-related grievance handling and dedicated assistance facilities. In pursuance to the DoT direction, this provision will ensure that the direction becomes a regulatory binding upon all service providers, while providing more accessibility and dedicated assistance facilities for PwDs.

IV. To focus upon a comprehensive framework for registration, handling and resolution of telecom consumer complaints and appeals, the proposed provisions relating to special desks, dedicated helplines, routing of calls from PwD consumers, and accessibility features in consumer-facing grievance redressal channels seek to strengthen and integrate accessibility requirements within the broader consumer protection and complaint handling framework established under these regulations.

V. The Authority is of the view that such provisions complement the existing DoT directions and ensure that PwD consumers receive appropriate assistance not only during service acquisition but also throughout the lifecycle of their interaction with the service provider. Moreover, while the DoT

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instructions are intended for implementation by service providers, these regulations remain publicly accessible to all consumers.

VI. Some stakeholders have highlighted that regulation 3(12) introduces ICT accessibility provisions for Persons with Disabilities; however, the regulation uses the word "should" in several PwD-related provisions, while identical provisions for general consumers use "shall". Accordingly, it has been decided to replace the word with " shall".

Regulation 5 - Publication of Information:
Sub-regulation (1) and (4)

23) Publication of Information on newspapers, Provision of consumer corner on their websites.

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. Some stakeholders welcomed this amendment of mandatory consumer corner. They stated that consumers often face difficulties even in filing complaints, and at present consumers are often expected to resolve technical issues on their own before their complaints are entertained by Service Providers. Therefore, Service Providers should provide proper training and guidance to consumers at the time of giving telecom connections.

II. Some stakeholders stated that a separate 'Consumer Corner' would overlap with TRAI's earlier direction dated 12.03.2026 and lead to duplication

III. Some other stakeholders opposed the requirement for newspaper publications every six months, contending that print media has largely become obsolete, consumers increasingly rely on digital platforms for information, and the proposed requirement would impose avoidable compliance and publication costs on service providers.

IV. Certain stakeholders highlighted that the Authority had already set a precedent by removing the mandate for newspaper publication of tariff information vide Direction dated 03.04.2019, recognising that TSPs provide all information on their websites and mobile applications.

V. Some stakeholders proposed a half-yearly or monthly SMS broadcast as an alternative to publication in newspapers.

VI. Some suggested that the Consumer Corner should include a 'Know Your Rights' section containing complaint filing rights, appeal rights, tariff rights, VAS deactivation rights, refund rules, network outage rights, spam complaint rights, compensation provisions, and QoS benchmarks. Consumer protection becomes ineffective if rights are unknown. The Consumer Corner should function not merely as a complaint page, but as a digital consumer rights charter.

b) Analysis:

I. The Authority has examined the stakeholder suggestions seeking discontinuation of newspaper-based publication requirements on the ground that newspapers have become obsolete and that information dissemination may be undertaken exclusively through digital platforms.

II. In this regard, the Authority recognizes that an effective grievance redressal framework depends not only upon the existence of complaint handling mechanisms but also upon consumers being adequately informed about their rights, available remedies, escalation channels, and the procedures to be followed for seeking redressal. The proposed amendments to regulation 5 seek to address these concerns by strengthening transparency, accessibility and consumer awareness through enhanced disclosure requirements.

III. The amendment requiring publication of prescribed consumer information in Hindi, English and at least one of the official language(s) of the State(s) within the Licensed Service Area is intended to ensure that consumers can easily access and understand information relating to grievance redressal irrespective of linguistic preferences.

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IV. It is recognized that consumer information dissemination practices have evolved significantly with the increasing adoption of digital communication channels. However, it is also true that a substantial section of the population continues to rely upon newspapers, whether in printed or digital form, as an important and credible source of information. This is particularly relevant for consumers residing in rural and semi-urban areas, senior citizens, and consumers who may not regularly access service providers' digital platforms.

V. Thus, the Authority is of the view that Service Providers need not publish a separate standalone advertisement for this purpose. Instead, the prescribed information may be carried below their regular commercial newspaper advertisements at least once every six months.

VI. The suggestion that Service Providers may disseminate Customer Care numbers and other mandatory consumer information through SMS broadcasts to all subscribers at least once every six months, in addition to the prescribed publication requirements is also agreed to.

VII. The Authority has further reviewed the comments regarding removal of such mandate of newspaper publication under the direction issued on 03.04.2019 concerning tariff information. It is noted that the direction was issued in a distinct regulatory context. Tariff-related information is dynamic in nature and subject to frequent revisions, making newspaper publication an inefficient mode for routine dissemination. The present provision, however, pertains to consumer awareness and grievance redressal information, which is relatively static in nature and required to be published only at periodic intervals.

VIII. The Authority is therefore of the view that the requirement for publication of such information through newspapers continues to serve an important consumer awareness objective by ensuring wider outreach across diverse consumer segments. Further, the prescribed publication frequency is limited and does not impose a recurring compliance burden comparable to information that undergoes frequent changes. Accordingly, the Authority considers that retaining newspaper publication requirements alongside digital dissemination channels is appropriate for ensuring maximum consumer awareness and inclusivity. It is suggested that all requisite publications be consolidated and issued simultaneously to optimize costs.

IX. With respect to comments highlighting overlap of proposed 'Consumer Corner' with TRAI's earlier direction dated 12.03.2026, the amendment mandates that every service provider shall prominently display a dedicated section titled "Customer Care" on the home page of their website, containing statistics and details relating to -

a) details of Complaint Centre;
b) details of Appellate Authority;
c) report of consumer feedback surveys;
d) quarterly performance reports of redressal of complaints and appeals.

X. The Authority notes that service providers have already undertaken implementation measures pursuant to the Direction dated 12.03.2026.

XI. The proposed amendment seeks to reinforce the existing direction and not replace it. Accordingly, the title of the dedicated tab or link on the homepage may continue to be displayed as "Customer Care" in accordance with the Direction dated 12.03.2026.

XII. However, while retaining the existing nomenclature for the sake of continuity and consumer familiarity, service providers shall incorporate the additional requirements prescribed under the amended regulations, including enhanced disclosure obligations, complaint and appeal facilitation mechanisms, consumer information requirements and other measures intended to improve consumer awareness, accessibility and overall grievance redressal experience.

XIII. Further, the stakeholders have suggested a 'Know Your Rights' section under ' 'Customer Care'. The information gap, if any, is addressed through the Telecom Consumers Charter prescribed under regulation 17, which is required to be prominently made available at the offices of the service provider, Complaint Centres, sales outlets, websites, and mobile applications and a copy of the Telecom Consumer charter or its abridged version shall be provided to each consumer at the time of subscription

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for service, thereby ensuring easy access to consumer-related information and grievance redressal procedures.

XIV. The amendments are expected to improve transparency and enable consumers to more effectively avail themselves of the grievance redressal mechanisms established under these regulations as public disclosure of such information will facilitate informed decision-making and strengthen accountability of service providers through greater transparency.

Regulation 6 - Establishment of Complaint Monitoring System:
Sub-regulation (1), (2), (3) and (4)

24) Dissemination of information regarding complaint monitoring system.

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. Some stakeholders requested that this sub-regulation ensuring, that consumers receive regular updates regarding complaint status, actions taken, and projected resolution timelines through the application interface, as well as email and SMS, requires to be deleted as most service providers are already practising this mechanism. Therefore, there is no need for regulatory intervention on this aspect, as it will create unnecessary compliance burden.

II. One Industry Association opposed the requirement for newspaper publications every 6 months, contending that print media has largely become obsolete, consumers increasingly rely on digital platforms for information, and the proposed requirement would impose avoidable compliance and publication costs on service providers. Some other stakeholders also hold a similar opinion and propose a sunset clause of one year on newspaper publications.

III. One stakeholder commented that TRAI should launch an app for automatic forward of queries and help consumers track real time progress. The proposed application should automatically capture and transmit the details like Complainant Name, Mobile Number, geo coordinates, timestamp, signal parameters and coverage status, while lodging a complaint.

b) Analysis:

I. The proposed amendments seek to strengthen the Complaint Monitoring System by broadening its scope to accommodate contemporary digital architectures and communication channels, while enhancing transparency, accessibility, and consumer participation throughout the complaint resolution process.

II. Complaint Monitoring System, as defined in regulation 2(ha), means any World Wide Web-based system using client server architecture or other similar architecture, established under sub-regulation (1) of regulation 6, to register, track or monitor and manage complaints, appeals, service requests and service queries of the consumer. The amendment replacing the expression "Web based Complaint Monitoring System" with "Complaint Monitoring System" is intended to provide technological flexibility and ensure that the regulatory framework remains adaptable to future developments in digital service delivery. This approach enables service providers to adopt modern platforms and architectures, including mobile application-based interfaces, without requiring frequent regulatory modifications.

III. The Authority has also proposed enhanced disclosure requirements to improve consumer awareness regarding the availability and use of the Complaint Monitoring System.

IV. The Authority has reviewed the requirement of newspaper publication and has decided that henceforth Service Providers need not publish a separate standalone advertisement for this purpose. Instead, the prescribed information shall be carried below their regular commercial newspaper advertisements at least once every six months.

V. The Authority also agreed with the suggestion that Service Providers shall disseminate Consumer Care numbers and other mandatory consumer information through SMS broadcasts to all subscribers at least once every six months, in addition to the prescribed publication requirements.

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VI. The Authority notes that service providers may employ different technological platforms and operational processes for communicating with consumers. However, the lack of periodic updates often results in consumer uncertainty, repeated follow-up requests and dissatisfaction with the grievance handling process, even where the underlying complaint is being actively addressed.

VII. The Authority further notes that one of its statutory objectives is to protect the interests of consumers of telecommunication services and to ensure that telecommunication services are provided in a manner that promotes consumer welfare and satisfaction. In furtherance of this mandate, it is necessary to ensure that consumers remain adequately informed regarding the progress, expected resolution timelines and final outcome of their complaints and appeals.

VIII. The proposed amendment therefore seeks to establish a minimum and uniform standard of consumer communication across all service providers. Such a framework enhances transparency, reduces information asymmetry and enables consumers to track the status of their grievances without the need for repeated interactions with customer support channels.

IX. The Authority therefore considers it appropriate to retain the proposed amendment in the interest of consumer convenience, confidence and satisfaction.

X. With regard to stakeholder suggestions regarding development of a standardised mobile application framework, regulation 3(10) already prescribes a structured framework for complaint registration, tracking and status monitoring, thereby addressing the essential consumer-facing requirements at this stage. Further, the Authority has developed consumer-centric digital platforms such as TRAI MySpeed and TRAI DND, which facilitate network quality monitoring and reporting of unsolicited commercial communications, respectively. Accordingly, the Authority does not consider additional standardisation requirements necessary at present.

Regulation 7 - Handling of complaints by Complaint Centre:
Sub-regulation (1), (2) and (3)

25) Communication of complaints registration, details of action taken and retention of records for complaints.

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. Some stakeholders stated the fact that sometimes service providers administratively close the complaint without consumer confirmation, which undermines trust in grievance systems. Therefore, the amendment in sub-regulation (3) is required to improve communication regarding actions taken on complaints.

II. A few stakeholders agreed with the proposed six-month retention period for complaint records but argued that a three-month period would be adequate.

III. One stakeholder urged TRAI to establish a transparent grievance redressal system with complete record of consumer communication.

IV. Another stakeholder suggested that 'Acknowledgement' should also include a recording of conversations for consumer protection. The stakeholder also supported requirement of six-month period.

V. Some other stakeholders opposed the TRAI's provision of increasing the retention limit of storage of the complaints data from three months to six months. They are of the view that additional data retention burden will impose unnecessary operational and infrastructure costs on service providers.

VI. A few stakeholders proposed OTP- based/any other confirmation before closure of complaints and recommended that service providers mandatorily provide written reasons in cases involving external factors. Consumers shall be permitted to reopen complaints within seven days where the issue persists or reoccurs.

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VII. Some stakeholders have highlighted that presently, many consumers face difficulties due to lengthy and confusing complaint registration procedures, especially on automated chatbot systems, which often discourage effective grievance reporting. They also pointed out that consumers frequently receive automated "issue resolved" messages despite unresolved grievances. Administrative closure without consumer confirmation undermines trust in grievance systems.

VIII. Several stakeholders also stated that consumers should be provided with immediate docket or reference numbers at the time of registration of complaints through all channels, including apps, websites, call centres, and chatbot platforms.

b) Analysis:

I. The Authority notes the stakeholders' suggestions for reducing the record retention period for complaints to three months to minimise the retention burden and operational costs. A minimum retention period of six months is necessary to facilitate audits and inspections. Accordingly, to strike a balance between data adequacy and compliance burden, the Authority is of the view that the six-month period is appropriate and proportional.

II. There have been concerns regarding delays in receipt of complaint reference numbers, inadequate communication regarding actions taken on complaints, and instances where complaints were perceived to have been closed without satisfactory resolution from the consumer's perspective.

III. The existing and proposed framework already envisages generation and communication of a unique docket number for every complaint registered by a consumer. The proposed amendments further strengthen this framework by mandating communication of complaint-related information and actions taken through multiple digital channels, including SMS and email under regulation 7(3), thereby ensuring that consumers receive timely and documented updates regarding the status of their complaints.

IV. With regard to stakeholders' comments highlighting lengthy and confusing complaint registration procedures, under the proposed amendments, service providers shall be required to communicate, through SMS as well as email the details of the action taken on the complaint along with the procedure for preferring an appeal before the Appellate Authority.

V. Further, with respect to the stakeholders' concerns on the issue of automated "issue resolved" messages despite unresolved grievances, the Authority has proposed amendments to strengthen the appellate mechanism by streamlining appeal procedures and reducing delays in escalation and resolution. These measures are intended to provide consumers with an effective remedy in cases where they are not satisfied with the redressal provided at the complaint handling stage.

VI. With respect to stakeholders' suggestions for seeking confirmation before complaint closures, it is observed that the amendments introduce a structured mechanism for conducting online consumer surveys, under regulation 14A, upon closure or resolution of complaints and appeals. Such survey-based feedback mechanism is expected to provide valuable regulatory insights regarding consumer experience, facilitate identification of systemic issues, and support evidence-based regulatory interventions aimed at improving grievance redressal outcomes.

VII. Regarding the comments seeking that consumers shall be permitted to reopen complaints within seven days where the issue persists or re-occurs, it is clarified that the option for filing an Appeal has been provided for such cases.

<u>Regulation 8 - Time limit for redressal of complaints or addressing service requests of consumers: Sub-regulation (1) and (2)</u>

26) <u>Time limits.</u>

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

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I. Certain stakeholders supported the proposed timelines and escalation mechanisms, noting that they would enhance consumer protection, improve service responsiveness, and strengthen accountability in grievance redressal.

II. Some stakeholders supported the provision of maximum three days for complaints and service requests where no specific timelines are prescribed.

III. Some stakeholders pointed out that the three-day time period for complaints where no specific period is mentioned is unduly restrictive and operationally impractical.

IV. Some stakeholders have recommended harmonisation of the proposed complaint resolution timelines and procedures with existing regulatory frameworks to ensure consistency and avoid overlapping compliance requirements.

V. One stakeholder has stated that the current residual timeline of three days for complaints where no specific period is prescribed is unduly restrictive and operationally impractical.

VI. Certain stakeholders suggested prescribing differentiated and expedited resolution timelines for critical or high-impact complaints (such as network outages, SIM-related fraud, financial fraud, and essential broadband disruptions), along with appropriate consumer safeguards in case of delays.

VII. Several stakeholders have also suggested that the complaint timelines and procedures under the Draft Amendment should be harmonized with the Quality-of-Service Regulations, the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations, 2018 and the Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012 to avoid overlapping, inconsistent or conflicting obligations.

VIII. Some stakeholders suggested that TRAI may consider prescribing strict timelines for processing refunds along with automatic compensation or interest for delays beyond the prescribed period and that the refund should be processed within 3 days.

b) Analysis:

I. With regard to stakeholders' comments to ensure consistency among existing regulatory frameworks, the Authority notes that timely redressal of consumer grievances is one of the fundamental objectives of an effective consumer protection framework. In the absence of clearly defined timelines, consumers may face uncertainty regarding the status of their complaints and service requests, while service providers may adopt varying practices in handling grievances, resulting in inconsistency in consumer experience and difficulties in regulatory oversight.

II. The proposed amendment seeks to establish a harmonized and consistent framework by requiring service providers to comply with the timelines already prescribed under various regulations issued by the Authority, including the Standards of Quality of Service of Access (Wireline and Wireless) and Broadband (Wireline and Wireless) Services Regulations, 2024, the Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulations, 2018, and the Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2012.

III. The Authority is of the view that cross-referencing the timelines prescribed under these regulations serves multiple regulatory objectives.

a. Firstly, it ensures consistency and uniformity across the regulatory framework.
b. Secondly, it avoids duplication of provisions and potential interpretational conflicts arising from different timelines for similar categories of complaints.
c. Thirdly, it provides greater clarity and certainty to both consumers and service providers regarding applicable obligations.

IV. Some stakeholders have also stated that the 3-day time period would be operationally impractical for certain kinds of complaints. The Authority notes that a period of three days has been prescribed keeping in view the need to balance consumer interests with operational feasibility for service providers. Regulation 8(2) requires that complaints for which no specific timeline has been prescribed be appropriately "addressed" within three

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days. In case resolution is not possible within that period; the consumers should receive a timely response indicating the anticipated resolution timeline, reasons for delay, and the parties involved, thereby promoting transparency and consumer-centric grievance handling.

V. The Authority notes that suggestions relating to SIM deactivation, OTP delivery failures and digital payment disruptions shall be handled through the framework prescribed under these regulations. However, fraud-related issues lie beyond the scope of these regulations.

VI. With regard to suggestions for prescribing refund timelines, the Authority notes that timelines relating to refund of deposits are governed under The Standards of Quality of Service of Access (Wireline and Wireless) and Broadband (Wireline and Wireless) Service Regulations 2024 (06 of 2024). The proposed amendments do not alter the timelines prescribed under The Standards of Quality of Service of Access (Wireline and Wireless) and Broadband (Wireline and Wireless) Service Regulations 2024 (06 of 2024) Regulations, the Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulations, 2018 (06 of 2018), Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations 2012 (02 of 2012).

VII. With regard to suggestions for provision of consumer compensation, the Authority highlights that such matters amount to dealing with individual complaint issues which is not covered in its regulatory mandate.

Regulation 9 - Appeal to Appellate Authority:
Sub-regulation (2) and (3)

27) Time limit for filing of appeals.

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. Certain stakeholders supported the proposed amendment to expedite the process, ensure quicker escalation, and promote timely resolution. They supported a structured, tiered grievance redressal mechanism that resolves consumer disputes internally before they reach the courts.

II. Some stakeholders recommended retaining the existing 30-day timeline for filing an appeal instead of the proposed 15-day period, stating that it provides consumers with adequate time to assess the resolution of their complaints before preferring an appeal.

III. Some stakeholders suggested discontinuing the provision for filing appeals through post, recommending that the appeal mechanism be aligned with the objective of promoting digital modes of consumer grievance redressal.

IV. One stakeholder stated that 'Complaint through' may be replaced by 'IN-PERSON'. Some suggested a longer appeal filing period of three months.

V. Some stakeholders supported reduction of appeal timeline but recommended further reduction to 10 days and mandatory proactive communication to consumer within 5 days if delay is anticipated while others suggested permitting delayed appeals up to 45 days, subject to sufficient cause.

VI. Some stakeholders also recommended a TRAI portal-based appeal registration mechanism to prevent service providers from suppressing or ignoring consumer appeals and suggested that TRAI receive and forward such appeals to service providers to ensure greater neutrality.

VII. Some stakeholders suggested that every complaint closure communication should clearly inform consumers of their right to appeal, the appeal process, and the applicable timeline for filing an appeal, to improve consumer awareness and facilitate informed exercise of appellate rights. One of them recommended limiting the modes of filing appeals to digital and in-person channels by removing the option of filing appeals through post/courier, with the objective of aligning the appeal mechanism with a digitally enabled grievance redressal framework.

b) Analysis:

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I. With respect to stakeholders' comments regarding extension/ reduction of timelines, the Authority notes that the appellate process is intended to provide an expeditious review of complaints that have either not been resolved within the prescribed timelines or where the consumer is dissatisfied with the redressal provided by the Complaint Centre.

II. In such cases, a prolonged interval between disposal of the complaint and initiation of the appeal may unnecessarily delay the commencement of appellate proceedings and the eventual resolution of the grievance.

III. The time limit for filing an appeal following disposal of a complaint has been reduced from 30 days to 15 days as consumers would normally prefer appeal as soon as possible whereas a longer time allowed unduly increases compliance requirements. The proposed amendment of reducing the appeal filing period from thirty (30) days to fifteen (15) days is aimed at expediting the overall grievance redressal cycle and ensuring that appeals are examined while the facts, records, and circumstances of the complaint remain current and readily available.

IV. Some stakeholders have suggested the extension of appeal filing timeline. The Authority is of the view that extending the appeal filing period would proportionately increase the overall time required for completion of the grievance redressal process and may adversely impact timely resolution of complaints across the sector.

V. Further, stakeholders have expressed their concerns to improve consumer awareness and facilitate informed exercise of appellate rights. The proposed amendments to Regulation 7 require service providers to communicate to consumers, through SMS as well as email the details of the action taken on the complaint together with the procedure for preferring an appeal before the Appellate Authority, their appellate rights and the applicable timelines.

VI. With respect to stakeholders' suggestions regarding complaint registration through various channels, including 'in-person', it is noted that the proposed amendments to regulation 9 additionally expand the modes through which appeals may be filed, including email, mobile application, website/portal, Complaint Centre, post, and in-person submission, thereby enhancing accessibility and convenience for consumers. Complaints and appeals may also be lodged in person, as already provided under regulation 3(5), and regulation 9(2).

VII. With respect to stakeholders' concerns regarding consumers who may be unable to file an appeal within the prescribed period of fifteen days and the consequent suggestions for extending the appeal filing period, the Authority clarifies that, while an appeal is ordinarily required to be filed within fifteen (15) days, as per sub-regulation (3), the Appellate Authority may entertain an appeal filed after the expiry of the prescribed period but before the lapse of three (3) months from the expiry of the time limit specified in regulation 8, provided it is satisfied that sufficient cause existed for the delay, thereby ensuring that consumers are not deprived of their right to appeal on account of unforeseen circumstances or genuine difficulties in filing the appeal within the stipulated period.

VIII. The amendment is designed to facilitate timely escalation of unresolved grievances and to support a more streamlined and efficient appeal resolution framework.

IX. In order to strengthen the regulatory framework, it is imperative that the Appellate Authority established by the Service Providers in pursuance of this regulation shall also register and resolve the appeals made for complaints regarding receipt of unsolicited commercial communications (UCC). Therefore, the regulation has been amended to mandate that the Appellate Authority shall resolve and reply to such appeals in a manner and within a period as prescribed under this regulation.

Regulation 10 - Appellate Authority - Establishment and Composition:
Sub-regulation (1), (2), (3) and (5)

28) Composition of appellate authority, dissemination of information and placement of quarterly report before Board/CEO of the company.

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

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I. Some stakeholders supported requiring senior management officials as Appellate Authorities.

II. Some stakeholders opposed prescribing the composition of the Appellate Authority, including seniority, experience and organisational structure, contending that such matters should remain within the operational discretion of service providers and that the proposed requirements amount to micro-regulation without demonstrable consumer benefit. It was argued that the five-year experience requirement for appointment to Appellate Authority is unduly restrictive and should be left to operational discretion of the Service Providers.

III. Some stakeholders opposed the requirement of establishing a separate Appellate Authority for each Licensed Service Area (LSA), contending that centralised appellate mechanisms already function effectively and that LSA-wise authorities would create unnecessary administrative burden and duplication.

IV. Some stakeholders opposed the requirement to publish Appellate Authority details in newspapers on the ground that digital platforms provide real-time, updated and more effective dissemination of information.

V. Some stakeholders also described the mandatory Board/CEO reporting requirement as micro-regulation of corporate governance.

VI. One stakeholder advocated an independent authority with participation of recognised Voluntary Consumer Organisations/ Consumer Advocacy Groups. It was contended that the existing three-tier grievance redressal mechanism lacks independence and advocated an external adjudicatory authority empowered to award compensation. They expressed concerns regarding potential institutional bias arising from appointing senior management employees as Appellate Authorities and proposed prescribing fit-and-proper criteria, conflict-of-interest safeguards, recusal provisions and reasoned written orders.

VII. Some stakeholders highlighted the requirement of an Appellate Authority in every LSA and suggested expanding the Appellate Authority to a 2-member body with one senior member from the Service Provider with 5 years of experience and the other from Consumer Advocacy Group while some others recommended an odd-numbered or multi-membered body so decisions can be reached by majority.

VIII. Some stakeholders asked to retain external consumer participation through the Advisory Committee to ensure balanced decision-making. They also contended that complaints should be taken as feedback.

IX. Some stakeholders recommended establishing an independent Telecom Consumer Ombudsman as a second-level external review mechanism to complement the existing grievance redressal framework and strengthen transparency, accountability and consumer confidence.

b) Analysis:

I. The Authority has examined the stakeholder comments regarding the establishment and composition of the Appellate Authority, demanding operational discretion of service providers in determining the organisational structure and highlighting that reporting to CEO/Board of Directors amounts to micro-regulation of corporate governance.

II. The proposed provisions are not prescriptive in nature and do not amount to micro-regulation of the internal organizational structures of service providers. Rather, the proposed framework seeks to lay down broad principles and minimum governance standards necessary for ensuring an effective, fair and consumer-centric appellate mechanism.

III. No requirement has been introduced for submission of signed or authorised proofs, records evidencing steps taken, or action taken reports from the Chief Executive Officer. The requirement is intended solely to ensure that periodic reports relating to complaints, appeals and the results of online consumer surveys are placed before the Chief Executive Officer or the Board of Directors, as the case may be, for their perusal and review, thereby enabling timely identification of systemic bottlenecks and appropriate managerial oversight at a senior level.

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IV. The Authority is of the view that an individual possessing adequate seniority, competence and relevant experience is better placed to independently assess grievances and render informed decisions on appeals. At the same time, the proposed framework provides sufficient flexibility to service providers in determining the precise organizational arrangements for implementation.

V. Further, the Authority has not proposed any requirement for prior approval, nomination or vetting of such personnel by the Authority. The amendments merely establish broad parameters intended to strengthen accountability, independence and consumer confidence in the appellate grievance redressal process while allowing service providers adequate operational flexibility.

VI. Some stakeholders have stated that establishing a separate Appellate Authority for each Licensed Service Area (LSA) would amount to an unnecessary administrative burden. The Authority notes that this is not a change from the existing regulation and continuing with a separate Appellate Authority at each LSA will benefit both the consumers and service providers as the redressal of the appeals would be more efficient. Amendment also provides that a service provider having all India license or authorization, may, for the purpose of these regulations, establish one or more Appellate Authorities for its service areas.

VII. Some stakeholders suggested expanding the Appellate Authority to a two-member body with one senior member from the Service Provider with five years of experience and the other from Consumer Advocacy Group while some others recommended an odd-numbered or multi-membered body so decisions can be reached by majority. Authority has considered the matter and notes that the primary responsibility of the redressal of the complaint and appeals lies with the service providers, and inclusion of the other members may lead to dilution of responsibility and will delay the process, hence the amendment will make the process of redressal of appeals faster.

VIII. With respect to stakeholders' comments regarding the requirement for newspaper publication, the Authority reiterates its position as set out under regulation 5(1)(a).

IX. With respect to suggestions for appointment of an adjudicatory or an independent authority with participation of recognised Voluntary Consumer Organisations/Consumer Advocacy Groups, the following is relevant:

i. To establish an effective mechanism for consumer redressal, TRAI had sent its "Recommendations on Complaint/ Grievance Redressal in the Telecom Sector", inter-alia, recommending setting up of office of Telecom Ombudsman to Department of Telecommunication (DoT) on 10.03.2017.

ii. However, taking into account the availability of a quasi-judicial mechanism for handling of consumer complaints and national-wide infrastructure to provide comprehensive redressal under a law in the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the DoT, informed to TRAI that another independent structure for the resolution of grievances of telecom consumers which inter-alia includes Telecom Ombudsman is not required.

X. There have been concerns regarding potential institutional bias arising from appointing senior management employees as Appellate Authorities. The Authority has proposed a Consumer Grievance Redressal Oversight Committee under regulation 11 to periodically participate and suggest recommendations in consumers' interest.

Regulation 11 Consumer Grievance Redressal Oversight Committee Establishment, Composition and Function:

29) Removal of Advisory committee to the Appellate Authority.

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. Some stakeholders supported requiring senior management officials as Appellate Authorities. Certain Service Providers have also commended the proposed amendment.

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II. Several stakeholders opposed the proposed removal of the Advisory Committee and Consumer Advocacy Groups (CAGs), contending that the existing mechanism provides independent oversight, transparency, accountability and consumer confidence, and that its removal would leave grievance redressal entirely under the control of Telecom Service Providers (TSPs), resulting in institutional bias and weakening procedural fairness. They further disputed the Authority's observation that the Advisory Committee caused delays, asserting that delays primarily resulted from Telecom Service Providers implementation practices rather than the Advisory Committee itself. They raised concerns regarding institutional neutrality and advocated for reformation rather than removal such as through stricter 5-7 days turnaround timelines.

III. Some stakeholders submitted that, instead of abolishing the Advisory Committee, its functioning should be strengthened through clearly defined SOPs, virtual meetings, fixed timelines, digital monitoring, periodic audits and enhanced accountability. They recommended mandating Advisory Committee review to be conducted via digital/virtual hearings within 7-10 days window; otherwise the Appellate Authority may proceed and make it legally binding for Advisory Committee to meet on every 4th, 12th, 20th and 28th of every month and imposition of Financial Disincentives upon non-compliance.

IV. It was suggested that at the TRAI level, provision should be made for a Lokpal arrangement for resolution of consumer problems. Stakeholders also suggested TRAI to mandate an independent audit of a random sample of dismissed appeals by panel of TRAI registered Consumer Advocacy Group members.

V. Some suggested the establishment of an independent Telecom Ombudsman, external appellate mechanism, regional appellate benches or independent review mechanism to ensure impartiality in grievance redressal.

VI. Other stakeholders recommended additional safeguards such as independent monitoring of complaint handling systems, regular Open House discussions, publication of appellate orders and grievance statistics, trackable acknowledgements, multilingual complaint systems and improved accessibility for consumers.

VII. Some stakeholders suggested that a Consumer Helpline similar to the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) should be independently monitored and not solely controlled by TSPs. Some recommend inclusion of Consumer Advocacy Group within the Appellate Authority, headed by an independent nominee instead of a representative of the concerned company.

VIII. Another stakeholder stated that the appeal system becomes operator reviewing operator" and is against the principle of natural justice. When we compare with the situation in other jurisdictions across the world, we find that the consumers in India are disadvantaged. UK uses independent Alternate Dispute Resolution bodies, Australia has an independent Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman and EU has independent dispute resolution mechanisms. India currently lacks a truly independent telecom ombudsman. Hence, it is imperative that the Appellate Advisory Committee be retained with modifications.

b) Analysis:

I. The Authority noted the concerns expressed by stakeholders regarding the role historically envisaged for Advisory Committees as an additional layer of consumer representation in the grievance redressal framework. However, a review of the implementation of the existing framework indicates that the Advisory Committee mechanism has not functioned uniformly across Licensed Service Areas (LSAs) and has not consistently achieved the intended objective of providing timely and effective consumer participation in the appellate process.

II. It is noted that meetings of Advisory Committees were often conducted irregularly and their functioning was largely dependent upon the availability of external members. In several cases, scheduling constraints, logistical challenges and non-availability of members resulted in delays in the disposal of appeals.

III. These challenges were particularly pronounced in LSAs where participation of Consumer Advocacy Group representatives frequently required substantial travel and coordination efforts, making regular meetings difficult to organise. Consequently, the Advisory Committee mechanism often contributed to procedural delays rather than facilitating expeditious grievance resolution.

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IV. With respect to concerns regarding institutional neutrality and weakening of procedural fairness, the Authority is of the view that consumer grievance redressal mechanisms should be guided by the principles of accountability, transparency and timeliness. Under the existing framework, responsibility for delays in appeal disposal could become diffused between the service provider, the Appellate Authority and the Advisory Committee process. The proposed amendment seeks to establish clear institutional accountability by placing the responsibility for appeal handling and timely disposal squarely upon the service provider and its designated Appellate Authority.

V. Further, addressing the concerns regarding conflict of interest, the Authority notes that while complaint resolution is a responsibility of the Service Providers, their grievance redressal systems are subject to consistent regulatory oversight, thereby preventing unilateral or arbitrary decision-making by Service Providers. The proposed amendment cites various mechanisms to highlight any inadequacies in complaint handling and hence, further boost public confidence. The original framework itself envisaged representation from the service provider. Further, the advice rendered by the Advisory Committee was recommendatory in nature and not binding upon the Appellate Authority, which retained the final decision-making responsibility.

VI. With respect to suggestions for independent audits to be conducted by the Authority and reports being given to registered Consumer Advocacy Groups for review, the Authority notes that the proposed amendments already prescribe mechanisms of Audit and Inspection (regulation 18) and Regulatory review (regulation 18A). Further, Service Providers are required to publish performance reports in public domain under regulation 15.

VII. The Authority has carefully considered the stakeholder suggestions aimed at strengthening the Advisory Committee framework and imposition of financial disincentives upon non-compliance. It is prescribing detailed procedures governing the constitution and functioning of such committees would encroach upon the operational autonomy of service providers and render the framework unduly prescriptive. Further, imposition of financial disincentives for irregular conduct of meetings may not be appropriate, as such matters relate to the internal governance mechanisms of service providers.

VIII. Moreover, the Authority decided that the Advisory Committee shall be replaced by a Consumer Grievance Redressal Oversight Committee (serving as an oversight and review mechanism). The Consumer Grievance Redressal Oversight Committee shall consist of at least one representative from each of the consumer organisation registered with the Authority in the State or Union Territory of the licensed service area in which the subscriber base of the service provider is above ten thousand and representatives of the Service Provider.

IX. The Consumer Grievance Redressal Oversight Committee shall not examine or advise on individual appeal cases. Instead, it shall be apprised, at least once in a financial year, of the overall functioning of the appellate mechanism to facilitate institutional oversight without exercising adjudicatory or decision-making functions.

X. Following the reorganization of the Advisory Committee, service providers would no longer be able to attribute delays in appeal disposal to difficulties associated with convening meetings, obtaining quorum, or securing participation of external members. Consequently, service providers can be held directly accountable for compliance with prescribed timelines and grievance redressal obligations under the regulations.

XI. With regard to stakeholders' concerns about diminished consumer representation, the Authority notes that the proposed amendment does not diminish the importance of consumer feedback or participation in the regulatory process. The amended framework introduces and strengthens alternative mechanisms through which consumer experiences and concerns may be captured and analysed. These include online consumer satisfaction surveys (regulation 14A), enhanced complaint monitoring systems, periodic reporting requirements, regulatory review under regulation 18A, performance reviews and direct complaint channels available to consumers.

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XII. Therefore, the proposed restructuring of the Advisory Committee framework constitutes a rationalisation of the grievance redressal mechanism aimed at reducing procedural delays, enhancing service provider accountability and improving the efficiency of appeal resolution. The proposal should accordingly be viewed in conjunction with the broader set of measures introduced under these regulations to strengthen the overall consumer grievance redressal framework.

XIII. The Authority has also examined stakeholder proposals for creation of an Ombudsman-like mechanism or Lokpal or independent consumer grievance adjudication framework within the regulatory architecture at TRAI's level. In this regard, the Authority notes that the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997, as amended by the TRAI (Amendment) Act, 2000, established a clear institutional separation between regulatory functions and adjudicatory functions in the telecommunications sector. Following the amendment, TRAI was entrusted with recommendatory, regulatory, supervisory and monitoring functions, including framing regulations, prescribing quality of service standards, protecting consumer interests and ensuring compliance by service providers. Simultaneously, the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) was established as the specialised adjudicatory body for resolution of disputes and appeals arising within the telecommunications sector.

XIV. Accordingly, the grievance redressal mechanism established under these regulations is intended to function as an internal consumer complaint resolution framework of the service provider and not as an adjudicatory forum.

XV. The Authority has reviewed the suggestions for additional safeguards and observes that adequate measures have been proposed for strengthening the grievance redressal system.

XVI. With respect to suggestion for a separate helpline by TRAI like NCH, the Authority is of the view that NCH already deals with various kinds of consumer complaints, including telecom related complaints. Also, a robust system of grievance redressal is most important for consumers as they will get directly benefitted by such system.

XVII. Regarding suggestions for TRAI to establish or function as an Ombudsman, the Authority refers to earlier paragraph number 28 (b) (IX).

Regulation 12 - Office of Appellate Authority:
Sub-regulation (1) and (2)
30) Replacing 'Secretariat' with 'Office' for Appellate Authority

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. Stakeholders stated that the existing appellate framework is functioning effectively and there is no demonstrated need to mandate a separate office, secretariat, supporting staff or office accommodation for the Appellate Authority.

II. They contended that consumer interests are adequately safeguarded as long as appeals remain accessible, are duly examined and resolved within the prescribed timelines.

III. They further argued that the proposal amounts to unnecessary structural prescription and micro-regulation without delivering commensurate consumer benefit.

b) Analysis:

I. With respect to stakeholders' comments about no demonstrated need for such provisions and highlighting such proposals as micro-regulation, the Authority clarifies that the prescribed requirements are minimal in nature and cannot be construed as micro-regulation.

II. The proposed office along with accommodation and supporting staff is necessary for maintaining efficiency and ensuring smooth functioning of the Appellate Authority.

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III. Further, the Authority has not prescribed the number of supporting staff members and thus the proposed amendments do not amount to structural prescription.

Regulation 13 - Registration of Appeals and scrutiny by Advisory Committee:

31) Removal of Advisory Committee.

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. No specific comments related to regulation 13 have been received.

b) Analysis:

I. The comments/suggestions relating to Advisory Committee have been dealt with under regulation 11.

Regulation 14 – Registration and Disposal of appeals by Appellate Authority:
Sub-regulation (1), (2) and (3)

32) Timeline of Registration and Disposal of appeal by Appellate Authority

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. Some stakeholders opposed the reduction to 15 days and requested retention of the 30-day timeline, citing the need for detailed examination of appeals, verification of records, consultations across multiple divisions, and, in some cases, coordination with external agencies and statutory authorities while some stakeholders supported the amendment.

II. Some stakeholders suggested that the proposed 15-day timeline for disposal of appeals be increased to 20 days or that Appellate Committee meetings be conducted offline, as committee-based decision-making may not be feasible within the shortened timeframe.

III. Some supported retaining the existing 30-day timeline, stating that many appeals require deep investigation and retrieval of old records, while others recommended further reducing the timeline to 10 days, with mandatory communication to consumers within five days in case of delay and faster processing of refunds.

IV. One stakeholder proposed introducing automatic financial disincentives for delays beyond 15 days and escalation to TRAI for unresolved appeals.

V. Another stakeholder emphasised that the regulation should explicitly preserve consumers' procedural rights, including submission of evidence, acknowledgment, hearings, status updates, and reasoned written orders, and ensure that appeals are not rejected on mere technical or procedural grounds.

VI. Some stakeholders urged TRAI to establish a transparent grievance redressal system with complete consumer communication and record-keeping. They recommend a reasoned written order to every complaint and a transparent, documented appellate process with written, reasoned and signed decisions communicated to the consumer.

b) Analysis:

I. With regard to stakeholders' suggestions for increasing the timeline to 20 or 30 days, the Authority notes that the primary objective of the proposed amendment is to strengthen the effectiveness of the appellate grievance redressal mechanism by ensuring expeditious disposal of consumer appeals. Further, the existing regulatory framework was formulated when the appellate process involved participation of the Advisory Committee and relied substantially on physical meetings and manual processes.

II. Under such circumstances, longer timelines were considered necessary to accommodate scheduling and coordination requirements. However, technological advancements and widespread adoption of digital communication platforms have significantly transformed grievance handling processes.

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III. With respect to suggestions for reasoned written orders, the Authority observed that appeals can now be received, processed, examined and disposed of through electronic means, including websites, mobile applications, e-mail and other digital interfaces. Service providers are required to communicate the action taken within three days of the disposal to the appellant through email and SMS and also update the same on the website and mobile app.

IV. It is also noted that under the proposed amendments, the Advisory Committee mechanism has been discontinued. Consequently, the Appellate Authority is no longer required to convene meetings, coordinate with external members, or await recommendations from the Advisory Committee before taking a final decision. The removal of these procedural layers is expected to substantially reduce processing time and enable faster disposal of appeals.

V. In view of the simplified appellate framework and the increased use of digital processes, the Authority is of the opinion that a 15-day timeline for disposal of appeals is both reasonable and achievable. Extending the timeline would dilute the objective of ensuring prompt redressal of consumer grievances without any corresponding operational necessity.

VI. With regard to suggestions for offline meetings of Appellate Authority, the Authority observes that such matters should be left to Appellate Authority's discretion.

VII. Regarding suggestions seeking automatic financial disincentives for every instance of delay, the Authority notes that the failure to comply with prescribed timelines, or systemic deficiencies in grievance handling can be identified through regulatory oversight mechanisms and addressed through appropriate regulatory interventions, including financial disincentives wherever warranted under the applicable provisions of the regulations. Moreover, financial disincentives are not imposed automatically, and appropriate opportunity is provided to Service Providers to explain their case.

VIII. Regarding suggestions for automatic escalation of unresolved appeals to the Authority, the TRAI Act, 1997 establishes a clear distinction between regulatory functions and adjudicatory functions. The Authority's role is to regulate, monitor compliance and protect consumer interests through systemic oversight.

IX. The Authority is not empowered to adjudicate individual consumer disputes or function as an appellate forum for individual grievances. Accordingly, automatic escalation of unresolved appeals to the Authority would not be consistent with the statutory framework governing telecommunications regulation.

X. With respect to concerns highlighting preservation of consumers' procedural rights, the proposed amendments introduce a broader compliance monitoring framework through periodic reporting, consumer satisfaction surveys, complaint monitoring systems, audits and regulatory reviews.

Regulation 14A - Online Consumer Feedback Survey:

33) Online Consumer Feedback Survey after resolution of complaints and appeals.

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. Some stakeholders supported the proposal, stating that it would shift complaint handling from a perfunctory approach to actual consumer satisfaction, improve TSP accountability, and enable outcome-based evaluation.

II. Some stakeholders opposed Regulation 14.A and requested deletion of the requirement to administer Online Consumer Feedback Surveys and share detailed consumer satisfaction data with the QPR (Quarterly Performance Report), contending that consumer feedback is already an integral and well-established part of the existing complaint handling mechanism, while the proposal would introduce significant procedural duplication and compliance overhead. They argued that survey data is primarily an internal tool for service enhancement, and publication of granular survey data without adequate operational context could lead to misinterpretation. Section 11.1(b)(v) of the TRAI Act, 1997 requires TRAI to carry out periodic surveys of services provided by service providers but does not empower TRAI to mandate TSPs to carry out surveys of their own services and publish the results.

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III. The stakeholders stated that in many cases, complaints relate to non-telecom matters (tower rent, radiation concerns, tower fraud, CDR requests, numbers suspended by law enforcement agencies, etc.) where Telecom Service Provider closure leads to negative feedback that is not reflective of actual service quality. They submit that there are many categories of complaints that are received at various touchpoints that are not exactly pertaining to telecom service on offer such as:

a. Retailor related complaints
b. Site Removal and Tower Rent related issue
c. Radiation related health concerns
d. Tower Fraud related complaints
e. Tower Installation requests
f. Requests for continuation of 2G/3G services
g. Request for CDRs
h. Network coverage/speed related complaints
i. Customers re-raising complaints for the same issue

IV. Some stakeholders stated that survey links be transmitted through a TRAI-operated or independently verified platform, disclosure of survey response rates in the Quarterly Performance Reports (QPR), establishment of minimum acceptable satisfaction thresholds to trigger regulatory scrutiny, and exploration of lightweight incentives to improve participation.

V. Some stakeholders also stated that surveys be conducted in Hindi, English, and official languages and be accessible through SMS, mobile apps, websites, IVR, and email for maximum inclusivity; participation remain entirely voluntary without influence or manipulation; publication of total complaints closed, surveys issued, surveys responded, and response rate; and regulatory action where more than 25% of respondents rate 1 or 2 for two consecutive quarters.

VI. Other stakeholders said that independent audit of survey processes and prohibition of coercive or misleading survey practices. It was suggested that the survey template, methodology, questions, and implementation framework be developed in consultation with consumer organisations and CAG representatives to ensure fairness, transparency, and reliability.

VII. Some stakeholders suggested that, if surveys are required, they should instead be conducted by an independent third-party agency appointed by TRAI based on a well-defined and pre-published methodology. One of the suggestions was for publication of survey reports in public domain. Concerns were expressed that online surveys may underrepresent vulnerable consumers and recommended independent oversight.

b) Analysis:

I. Regarding concerns relating to procedural duplication and compliance burden, it is noted that certain service providers agree that they already conduct consumer Feedback surveys. The proposed requirement only seeks publication of such Feedback survey outcomes to enhance transparency and strengthen consumer awareness. Furthermore, consumer satisfaction surveys are a well-established practice across various service sectors.

II. With regard to comments on a need to establish adequate operational context, it is reiterated that the purpose of the survey mechanism is to identify trends, patterns and areas requiring improvement rather than to serve as an isolated compliance parameter.

III. With respect to suggestions for minimum acceptable satisfaction thresholds, the framework already requires service providers to submit adequate consumer Feedback data as part of the Quarterly Performance Reports. The Authority, if required, may seek additional information from time to time. It is also noted that consumer satisfaction levels on Grievance redressal may vary significantly depending upon the nature of complaints, geographical conditions, network characteristics and consumer expectations. Consequently, a single uniform satisfaction threshold may not accurately reflect service provider performance across all circumstances.

IV. Further, the broader amendments proposed under these regulations seek to enhance multilingual accessibility across consumer-facing grievance redressal mechanisms. Service providers are therefore expected to ensure that consumer interaction channels, including feedback mechanisms, remain accessible and user-friendly for consumers across different linguistic backgrounds. Also, the prescribed survey is objective, simple to administer and comprehend, and reflects a practice that is widely adopted across service industries.

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V. With respect to stakeholders' suggestions regarding the methodology for conducting Feedback surveys or appointment of third-party agency, the Authority is of the view that prescribing such operational aspects would amount to regulatory overreach and unnecessary micro-regulation. Accordingly, the methodology shall remain within the operational discretion of service providers.

VI. Some stakeholders have highlighted that Section 11.1(b)(v) of the TRAI Act, 1997 requires TRAI to carry out periodic surveys of services provided by service providers but does not empower TRAI to mandate TSPs to carry out surveys of their own services and publish the results. In this regard, it is noted that the provision under Section 11.1(b)(v) of the TRAI Act, 1997 is specific to the survey about the quality of service being provided by the service providers, whereas the survey prescribed under regulation 14A is a limited feedback mechanism forming integral part of the grievance redressal framework. The Authority's mandate to independently conduct surveys under the Act is distinct and remains unaffected by the proposed requirement.

VII. The proposed Feedback survey framework aims to systematically capture consumer feedback immediately after closure of complaints and appeals and to provide the Authority with measurable indicators regarding the effectiveness of grievance redressal mechanisms. Since the survey is directly linked to individual complaints and appeals handled by the concerned service provider, the service provider is best positioned to administer the survey contemporaneously with the closure of the grievance.

Regulation 15 - Reporting requirements:

34) KPI based Reporting for complaints and appeals.

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. Some stakeholders supported the proposed requirement for service providers to submit and publish comprehensive quarterly performance reports on complaints and appeals for each Licensed Service Area (LSA), viewing it as a measure to enhance transparency and regulatory accountability.

II. Some stakeholders contended that publication of granular performance reports, already monitored internally by service providers, could lead to misinterpretation of data without adequate operational context.

III. Some stakeholders said that providing an adequate implementation period for the proposed quarterly KPI reporting framework to enable service providers to upgrade their IT systems, data management processes, and reporting infrastructure would be better.

IV. Some stakeholders were for reconsidering the proposed detailed KPI-based quarterly reporting framework for complaints and appeals, suggesting that the existing reporting mechanism or a more outcome-oriented and simplified reporting framework be continued instead of the proposed granular reporting requirements.

V. Some stakeholders suggested reviewing the proposed record retention requirements for appeal-related records, recommending a shorter retention period or greater flexibility for service providers in determining the retention duration. They further recommended dispensing with the proposed half-yearly compliance reporting requirement relating to the publication of Consumer Care Number, General Information Number (GIN), and other prescribed information, along with supporting documentary evidence.

VI. Some stakeholders stated that appeals were often under-reported of appeals and urged stricter regulatory oversight and enforcement and expressed concerns over premature complaint closures and proposed a common platform, jointly accessible by TSPs, CAGs and TRAI for independent verification of grievance resolution.

VII. Some stakeholders recommended sharing of such reports with CAGs for independent review. They also recommended enhancing the proposed quarterly performance reporting framework by introducing standardized and consumer-friendly disclosures, additional performance indicators, and periodic verification/audit mechanisms to improve transparency, consistency, and data reliability and further suggested strengthening the disclosure framework by providing more frequent and granular public reporting of complaint statistics, in addition to the proposed Quarterly Performance Reports (QPRs).

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b) Analysis:

I. With regard to suggestions for requirement of adequate operational context to avoid misinterpretation of data, unlike the existing regulation, which primarily focuses on appeals-related reporting, the proposed amendment mandates comprehensive reporting for both complaints and appeals separately for each Licensed Service Area (LSA).

II. Further, the proposed Quarterly Performance Reports (QPRs) require disclosure of a wide range of performance indicators, including complaints and appeals received, disposed of and pending; compliance with prescribed timelines, average resolution time, percentage of complaints resolved, consumer satisfaction levels and survey results. Such disclosures are intended to provide consumers, service providers and TRAI with a more comprehensive understanding of grievance redressal performance. The reporting requirements are fundamental, not granular, and are indispensable for ensuring transparency and regulatory oversight.

III. With regard to suggestions to provide adequate implementation period, the Authority notes that the amendment provides a period of sixty days from the date of notification of these regulations for collection of primary data, its storage, processing, performance report generation and their online submission to the Authority

IV. Concerns have also been raised for providing flexibility in data retention periods. The authority notes that a minimum retention period of six months is necessary to facilitate audits and inspections. Accordingly, to strike a balance between data adequacy and compliance burden, the Authority maintains that the six-month period is appropriate.

V. Suggestions for dispensing with requirement for publication of Customer Care Number, General Information Number etc. have been dealt with under Regulation 5(1).

VI. With respect to the suggestion for a common platform jointly accessible by TSPs, CAGs and TRAI for independent verification of grievance resolution, the proposal of Grievance Redressal Oversight Committee under Regulation 11 adequately addresses this aspect.

VII. With regards to suggestions for introduction of standardised disclosures, the proposed amendment already requires service providers to publish comprehensive performance reports on their websites, portals and applications within fifteen days of the end of every quarter. These reports include adequate complaint and appeal statistics, resolution timelines, pendency levels, consumer satisfaction metrics and survey outcomes, striking an appropriate balance between transparency and operational feasibility. More frequent reporting may increase compliance burden, require continuous validation of large volumes of operational data and potentially result in publication of provisional figures that may subsequently require revision.

VIII. Also, Regulation 15(2)(a) and Regulation 15(2)(b) prescribe a non-exhaustive reporting framework and specifically provide that the report shall include, the identified Key Performance Indicators. Further, Regulation 15(2)(d) empowers the Authority to amend or modify reporting requirements from time to time as necessary.

IX. Therefore, the proposed framework already provides sufficient flexibility to prescribe additional reporting parameters in future based on regulatory experience, consumer requirements and market developments, without necessitating frequent amendments to the regulations themselves.

X. Some stakeholders suggested sharing of reports with CAGs for review. The Authority notes that reports will be published in public domain which can be utilised for review.

Regulation 17 -Telecom Consumer Charter:
Sub-regulation (1), (2) and (3)
35) Information in telecom consumer charter.

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

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I. It was suggested that the Telecom Consumer Charter be made available through digital channels, such as websites and mobile applications, in place of the proposed requirement to maintain physical copies.

b) Analysis:

I. The Authority has examined the stakeholder suggestions seeking discontinuation of physical copies of the Telecom Consumers Charter and limiting its availability exclusively to digital platforms such as websites and mobile applications.

II. It is noted that the increasing adoption of digital channels for dissemination of consumer information and the efforts undertaken by service providers to make consumer-related information readily available through their websites, mobile applications and other digital interfaces. However, it is also true that the Telecom Consumers Charter serves as a fundamental document informing consumers of their rights, obligations, available services, grievance redressal mechanisms and other important service-related information.

III. Exclusive reliance on digital modes of dissemination may inadvertently exclude certain categories of consumers who may have limited access to digital devices, internet connectivity or the requisite digital literacy to access such information. This is particularly relevant for consumers residing in rural and remote areas, senior citizens, economically disadvantaged consumers and other sections of society that may continue to rely upon physical modes of communication.

IV. Accordingly, the Authority is of the view that retaining physical availability of the Telecom Consumers Charter, alongside digital dissemination through websites and mobile applications, is necessary to promote inclusivity, reduce information asymmetry and ensure that no category of consumers is deprived of access to essential consumer information.

V. Also, such physical copies need to be provided only once during the time of subscription for service.

Regulation 18- Inspection and auditing,
Regulation 18A - Regulatory review,
Regulation 18B - Consequences for contravention of the provisions of the regulations,
Regulation 18C - Payment of financial disincentive:

36) Provisions of Audit, regulatory review, Consequences for non-compliances and payment of financial disincentives.

a) Inputs of the Stakeholders:

I. Some stakeholders supported the introduction of financial disincentives (FDs) in principle as a measure to strengthen regulatory compliance and accountability, considering them a necessary and proportionate mechanism for ensuring compliance and enhancing accountability, given the inherent imbalance in bargaining powers between individual consumers and large service providers. They advocated that QoS parameters measure macro-level network uptime, whereas this regulation addresses individual consumer grievance mismanagement - so there is no double jeopardy.

II. Some stakeholders urged the deletion of the proposed financial disincentive framework for improper disposal of complaints/appeals and delayed submission of Quarterly Performance Reports (QPRs), expressing concerns regarding its legal basis, proportionality, and regulatory approach. They further argued upon imposition of double penalties on TSPs, given the existence of Financial Disincentives under QoS Regulations and opposed introduction of FDs as unnecessary financial and operational burden.

III. Some stakeholders suggested to review the proposed mandatory one-year record retention requirement for complaint and appeal records by prescribing a shorter retention period or providing greater operational flexibility, such as aligning complaint and appeal record retention requirements with regulation 7, contending that retention beyond three months after disposal is disproportionate and offers limited additional consumer benefit.

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IV. Some stakeholders also recommended strengthening the compliance and enforcement framework through independent audits, periodic review of complaint handling practices, enhanced monitoring mechanisms, greater involvement of Consumer Advocacy Groups (CAGs), and increased transparency through regular public engagement and publishing periodic independent audit reports on TRAI website.

V. Some stakeholders suggested linking penalties to factors such as the scale of violations, number of affected consumers, repeat instances of non-compliance, or revenue, so as to enhance their deterrent effect. It was also suggested that appropriate consumer compensation may be considered in cases where penalties are imposed.

VI. Other stakeholders suggested reviewing the proposed financial disincentive framework by introducing objective and clearly defined criteria for imposing penalties and adopting a graded or threshold-based approach linked to systemic non-compliance rather than individual complaint-level assessments while demanding greater clarity in the provisions relating to 'improper dismissal/disposal' by defining the term explicitly, specifying illustrative circumstances constituting improper disposal, and introducing safeguards such as the right to seek reopening of improperly closed complaints.

b) Analysis:

I. It is noted that improper disposal is related to non-compliance of the provisions of the regulation, i.e., the complaint or appeal was closed without following the prescribed process, timelines or mandatory obligations etc..

II. Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, improper disposal shall include the following instances of non-compliance:

i. failure to register a complaint immediately upon its receipt and assign a unique docket number under regulation 7(1);

ii. failure to communicate to the consumer, through the prescribed channels, the status of the complaint, actions taken, anticipated resolution timeline, reasons for delay, or the final decision, wherever required under these regulations under regulation 6(1) (b);

iii. failure to communicate to the consumer the action taken on the complaint along with the procedure for preferring an appeal to the Appellate Authority under regulation 7(3);

iv. failure to dispose of complaints or appeals within the timelines prescribed under these regulations without recording and communicating reasons for delay, wherever required, under regulation 8;

v. failure to acknowledge an appeal immediately upon its receipt by assigning and communicating a unique appeal number through the prescribed modes under regulation 14(1);

vi. failure to communicate the decision of the Appellate Authority within the prescribed time and update the same on the website, mobile application or other prescribed platforms under regulation 14(3);

vii. failure to administer the prescribed online complaint/appeal Feedback Survey upon closure or disposal of a complaint or appeal under regulation 14A.

III. Some stakeholders questioned the legality of FDs, contending that the TRAI Act, 1997 does not empower the Authority to impose financial disincentives through delegated legislation. In this regard, reference is drawn towards the TRAI Act, 1997 which confers power on the Authority not only to regulate but also to ensure the compliance of the provisions of the regulations and Tariff Orders. The word "ensure" has a mandatory connotation, it means "make certain". Furthermore, the Hon'ble Supreme Court, in its judgment dated the 17, August 2007, in Civil Appeal No. 2104/2006 (Central Power Distribution Co. & Ors Vs. CERC & Anr), inter alia, held that "it is well settled that a power to regulate includes within it power to enforce". The main purposes for enactment of the TRAI Act, 1997, as discernible from the preamble thereof, and as applicable to TRAI are:

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Telecom Regulatory Authority of India
नई दिल्ली/New Delhi

i. to regulate telecommunication services;

ii. to protect the interest of the service providers and consumers of telecommunication services; and

iii. to ensure orderly growth of telecom sector.

A reading of the various provisions of TRAI Act, 1997 makes it clear that the protection of the interest of the consumers has been given paramount importance by the legislature.

IV. Apart from casting duty on the Authority to protect the interest of the consumer, TRAI Act, 1997 under section 11(1)(d) confers power on TRAI to perform such other functions including such administrative and financial functions as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of the Act. There are a catena of judgments by the Supreme Court wherein the Hon'ble Court has repeatedly re-stated the proposition that legislation should be read and interpreted so as to further the purpose of its enactment and not in a manner that derogates from its main objectives. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in its judgment in the case of State of Karnataka Vs. Vishwabharthi House Building Co-operative Societies and Ors. [(2004) 5 SCC 430], has referred the judgment of Hon'ble Guwahati High Court in the case of Arabind Das Vs. State of Assam & Ors. [AIR 1981 Gau 18 (FB)] wherein it was, inter alia, held that where a statute gives a power, such power implies that legitimate steps may be taken to exercise that power even though these steps may not be clearly spelt out in the statute. The Hon'ble Court further held that in determining whether a power claimed by a statutory authority can be held to be incidental or ancillary to the powers specially conferred by the statute, the court must not only see whether the power may be derived by reasonable implication from the provisions of the statute, but also whether such powers are necessary for carrying out the purposes of the provision of the statute which confers power on the Authority in exercise of such powers.

V. The Authority notes that the proposed framework does not amount to double jeopardy. The Standards of Quality of Service of Access (Wireline and Wireless) and Broadband (Wireline and Wireless) Service Regulations, 2024 and Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal (Fourth Amendment) Regulations, 2026 are issued under the Authority's powers conferred by section 36 of the TRAI Act, 1997 and serve distinct regulatory objectives. The Standards of Quality of Service of Access (Wireline and Wireless) and Broadband (Wireline and Wireless) Service Regulations, 2024 address network performance, at the macro level (i.e. LSA Level) while Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal (Fourth Amendment) Regulations, 2026 focuses on consumer grievance redressal framework. It is noted that QoS Regulations attract FDs upon failure to submit compliance reports under regulation 13 of QoS Regulations and failure to meet benchmarks at LSA level. However, the proposed amendment to Telecom Consumers Complaint Redressal (Fourth Amendment) Regulations, 2026 attracts FDs upon failure in submission of QPRs as specified under regulation 15 of the proposed amendment and cases of non-compliance highlighted during regulatory review. Moreover, the Authority does not envisage unilateral imposition of Financial Disincentives (FDs) and shall provide service providers with an adequate opportunity to present their case before any such action is taken.

VI. With regard to demands for shorter retention periods, the Authority notes that a 6- month period shall be adequate and in alignment with regulation 7. It notes that a minimum retention period of six months is necessary to facilitate audits and inspections. Accordingly, to strike a balance between data adequacy and compliance burden, the Authority maintains that the six-month period is appropriate.

VII. Stakeholders have suggested for increased transparency through greater involvement of Consumer Advocacy Groups. It is observed that the proposed amendments adequately address this aspect.

VIII. Stakeholders suggested linking penalties with scale of violations and introduction of graded threshold-based approach. It is noted that the proposed criteria of wrongful disposal adequately clarify such grounds for penalties.

IX. Stakeholders suggested consumer compensation for penalties. Such matters amount to dealing with individual complaint issues which is not covered its regulatory mandate under TRAI Act, 1997.

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