

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:645  
ANSWERED ON:07.05.2003  
PURCHASE OF HANDSETS  
MAHENDRA SINGH PAL

**Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether some major limited mobile service operators are compelling their customers to buy expensive handsets;
- (b) if so, the facts thereof;
- (c) whether a customers' organisation has asked the Telecom Regulatory Authority to look into this matter;
- (d) if so, the outcome thereof;
- (e) the interim measures proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard till the disposal of the matter;
- (f) whether the marketing policy adopted by the WLL Mobile companies is arbitrary; and
- (g) if so, the action proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND DISINVESTMENT (ARUN SHOURIE)

(a) to (g): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT TO BE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA IN REPOSECT OF PARTS (a) TO (g) OF LOK SABHA STA  
QUESTION NO. 645 FOR 7TH MAY, 2003 REGARDING PURCHASE OF HANDSETS.

(a) & (b): According to information received from various basic service operators, customers are free to buy handsets from the market; customers are not compelled to buy expensive handset.

(c) to (g): The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) had received complaints from three customer organisations viz. Telecom Watchdog, Consumer Coordination Council and Cellular Phone Users' Association alleging that customer was beingforced to buy expensive handsets for limited mobility. TRAI took up the matter with the concerned service providers and it was found that in the standard tariff package, choice had been given to the subscriber to opt for the handset from the service provider. If he opted to do so, he would be required to give a refundable security deposit of Rs.6000/- (ceiling amount) or a monthly rent of Rs.50/-, or arrange for the handset on his own according to his choice, and opt for relevant standard tariff package. Basic service providers have also offered alternate tariff packages in addition to the standard tariff packages. This combination of tariff packages is within the regulatory guidelines.

Keeping in view the foregoing, that the marketing policy adopted by the WLL mobile companies cannot be construed as arbitrary and, accordingly, no action by the Government is envisaged in this regard.

Further, as per the TRAI Act, in case of a dispute between a service provider and a group of consumers an appeal lies before the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT). According to the available information, no appeal against such a practice has been filed against any service provider in TDSAT. Moreover, consumers are protected by Consumer Protection Act and can approach various Consumer Redressal Forum at district/state/national level for redressal of their grievances.