

(c) whether Government proposes to provide free data with every recharge of sim card; and

(d) the proposal details of TRAI on price fixing and data usage and control over mobile connection thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI MANOJ SINHA): (a) As per some study reports available in the public domain, India is the second highest user of internet in the world.

(b) As per information provided by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), there are 537.92 million mobile internet subscribers as against 0.78 million Wi-Fi subscribers in India as on 30.09.2018.

(c) At present, there is no decision of the Government for providing free data with every recharge of sim card.

(d) As per provisions of TRAI Act, 1997 as amended in the year 2000, subject matter of tariff falls under the jurisdiction of TRAI. Presently, tariff for data services is under forbearance and Telecom Service Providers have the flexibility to fix the prices of data services. There is no proposal in TRAI to review price fixing of data services.

Charging of Service Tax

2645. DR. SANTANU SEN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that despite GST, Service Tax is still charged by many businessmen, especially in restaurants;

(b) whether this is allowed under the law;

(c) whether Government has any plan for addressing customers' grievances on service charges; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY): (a) to (d) Charging of Service Tax is not valid. The Government in April, 2017 issued guidelines on fair trade practices related to charging of Service Charge from consumer by hotel/restaurants. As per these guidelines, Service Charge is optional and payment of it depends entirely upon the discretion of the consumers.