

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 339
TO BE ANSWERED ON 4TH FEBRUARY, 2021**

INCONVENIENCE CAUSED BY PRE-CALL COVID MESSAGE

339 SHRI PRABHAKAR REDDY VEMIREDDY:

Will the Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that pre-call COVID messages are hugely creating inconvenience to mobile users as the pandemic-related message has outlived its relevance;
- (b) whether the messages are wasting 1.3 crore mandays apart from bandwidth in a day and resulting in holding up or delaying distress calls from going through during emergencies;
- (c) whether it is also a fact that TRAI also feels that this message is causing a lot of inconvenience to mobile users; and
- (d) if so, whether the Ministry would consider removing this message or permit those consumers who wish to make it their pre-call message?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS, EDUCATION AND
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI SANJAY DHOTRE)**

(a) & (b) The outbreak of COVID-19 in December 2019 took the world by surprise. The people across the country had to be reached out immediately with messages of Do's and Don'ts to enable breaking the chain of transmission. The idea of leveraging pre-caller tunes for maximum outreach at the shortest possible time was conceived at the time of outbreak of COVID-19, keeping in view the larger public interest. The message disseminated via the caller tune has changed several times since the outbreak depending upon the changed circumstances and requirements from time to time. The pre-caller tune has played a critical role in reaching important messages timely across the length and breadth of the country. These messages have also included information regarding the National Helpline Numbers (1075) and on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare website to promote health seeking behavior. As such it is considered indispensable in the fight against COVID-19.

(c) TRAI has received few complaints/representations against these messages. However, TRAI has stated that pre-call announcement has been made in public interest.

(d) The ministry would consider removing this message at appropriate time.
