



## TRAI Recommends New Numbering Plan

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### Why in News

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Recently, the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** has given few recommendations for the development of the **new National Numbering Plan for the fixed as well as mobile telecommunication services** in the country to ensure availability of the **uniquely identifiable numbers to every subscriber in India**.

### Background

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- **Current Scenario:**

- Currently, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) administers the numbers for **fixed and the mobile networks** on the basis of the **National Numbering Plan (NNP), 2003**.
  - NNP (2003) provides a set of rules and guidelines for the use and assignment of numbers to telephone services delivered over the public networks.
  - It also describes the assignment of numbers to international services, trunk service, emergency services and special services such as voicemail and Intelligent Network (IN) services.
- Thus, the **management of numbering resources** is governed by the NNP.
- NNP is based on the **International Telecommunication Union's (ITU)** standardization sector recommendations.

- **Challenges:**

The availability of numbering resources is threatened due to an **increase in the range of services** and **massive growth** in the **number of connections**, especially in the mobile segment.

- The total number of telephone subscribers in India stands at **1,177.02 million** with a **tele-density of 87.45%** at the end of January 2020.
- Telephone density or teledensity is the number of telephone connections for every hundred individuals living within an area.

### Key Points

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- **Recommendations:**

- **Switching to a 11-digit mobile number** instead of existing 10-digit mobile number.
- **Reallocation** of mobile numbering resources **surrendered by operators** who have closed the telecommunication business.
- **Prefixing zero** for all mobile calls made from a fixed line to create **sufficient numbering space**.
  - The numbering space includes numbers that cannot be preceded by a prefix.
- All the SIM-based M2M (Machine to Machine) connections using 10-digit mobile numbering series to be **shifted to the 13-digit numbering series** allocated by DoT.

Machine-to-Machine SIM (or M2M SIM) refers to technologies that enable devices and sensors to communicate with one other, along with other Internet-enabled devices and systems. It is used for receiving and sending data.

- **Enlistment of all newly allocated numbering resources** for fixed line as well as mobile services **every year**.
  - **Automated allocation of numbering resources** using number management system software to speed up the process of allocation in an efficient and transparent manner.
- **Possible Future Challenges:**
    - The migration to 11 digits mobile numbers would require **modifications in the configuration of switches** involving cost.
    - It would also cause **inconvenience to the customers** in the form of dialing extra digits and updating phone memory.
    - It may lead to **more dialing errors, infructuous traffic**, and subsequently **loss of revenue** to the Telecom Service Providers (TSP).
    - Further, the telephone numbers are also associated with the **digital identity of individuals**, and, hence, changes will be required in the databases of all services requiring telephone numbers for identity like financial banking services, e-commerce, and government welfare schemes.

## Way Forward

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- The mobile users in the country has increased massively due to **increasing digitisation**. This increasing digitisation would pave the way towards the **dream of digital India and mobile economy**.
- Thus, it has become necessary **to review the utilisation of the numbering resources** in the country. Considering the above scenario the implementation of the TRAI's recommendation with solutions to possible issues would help for **sustainable growth of the telecommunication services**.

Source:TH