



Government Safety Norms for Emissions from Mobile Towers and Handsets Safe - states Minister of Communications & IT and Madras High Court



New Delhi, March 17, 2015

COAI, the association of India's top mobile service operators, telecom equipment manufacturers, infrastructure and content service providers, has hailed the judgement from the Madras High Court, which refused to order stalling of growth of mobile phone towers stating that in the absence of evidence to prove health hazards from mobile phone towers, courts cannot pass any order. COAI also welcomed the statement of the Hon'ble Minister for Communications and IT in the Rajya Sabha, clarifying that fears of mobile towers being hazardous to health are not true.

"These two developments will go a long way in assuring the public at large that the Government of India has enforced a safe regulatory regime around the emission norms for telecom tower antennae and handsets. It also reiterates the fact that the government and the industry have followed the scientifically based international best practices for formulating the policies and guidelines related to this matter. We do hope that people will stop entertaining unwarranted fears about the telecom towers in their localities, following the statement of the Honourable Minister as well as the rulings of the Honourable Madras High Court", said **Mr. Rajan S. Mathews, Director General, COAI.**

The Madras High Court's decision came while disposing off more than 50 petitions filed with it seeking a direction to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry and Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to formulate rules and guidelines to install mobile phone towers in the city of Chennai. "...*There being no materials, at least as on date, which can finally suggest any health hazards from these towers, the court would not venture into uncharted territory of technical expertise to determine the area where towers should be installed,*" stated the **first bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Justice M M Sundresh.**

The Madras High Court bench also referred to a Kerala High Court order in a similar matter, which mentioned a scientific study by a Committee constituted under chairmanship of Dr. N K Ganguly, Director General of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The ICMR analysis had found that emissions from the mobile base station are less powerful as compared to those from the AM Radio and FM Radio stations. The frequency waves used for mobile phones were found not covered under the definition of "radiation" as given in the Atomic Energy Act, 1962.

The Madras High Court further said that the Radiation Protection Division of the UK, Health Protection Agency (HPA) in 2000, was stated to have reported that the balance of evidence indicated there was no general risk to the health of those living near base stations on the basis that exposures are expected to be small fractions of guidelines.

The bench also referred to an order of the Delhi High Court in a similar matter, saying it had opined that there was neither any conclusive research nor any authoritative scientific evidence to show that emissions from such towers are a risk to human health. The Madras High Court also mentioned another Kerala High Court order that mobile base stations are essential to transmit receiving signals installed and maintained by all telecom service providers, without which there is no technology available to operate mobile phones without towers.

The Hon'ble Minister for Communications and Information Technology, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, told the Rajya Sabha on Friday that fears of mobile towers being hazardous to health are not true, adding that reports from the World Health Organisation do not substantiate the claim. He had also emphasized the fact that mobile towers are needed to improve the requisite infrastructure, which will be key to address the issues of service quality, like call drops, etc.

"Right now, there is a campaign going on in the country that it (mobile towers) emits health hazard. I have myself examined it at some point of time, I will come with further details to this house. This entire campaign is not very substantial," **Shri Prasad** said while responding to a query on call dropping and other problems.

Notably, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, **Mr. Shripad Naik** had also **told the Rajya Sabha** last week that according to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the top Indian body on advanced medical research, **there is no confirmed scientific evidence indicating that the use of mobile phones causes any mental and physical disease.**

It is pertinent to note 3 eminent high courts of India have substantiated the WHO and Govt. of India position with the following rulings last year:

"There is no evidence that the tower will affect the health of the people." - The Hon'ble Kerala High Court in the W.P. (C) No. 24569 of 2012 dated 9 July 2013

"There is no cause of alarm with regard to possible ill-effects on human health by electromagnetic field emission from cellphone towers and cellphones because the safety limits adopted in India take into account all biological effects of radiation." - An expert committee constituted in compliance to the directions of the Hon'ble High Court, Allahabad, Lucknow Bench — January 2014

"...we deem it necessary to mention that the concerned authorities should, by way of communication through T.V., Radio etc. bring it to the notice of the people at large that there is no reason for them to fear the erection of the Base Transceiver Station, known as the WIFI Mobile Tower." - The Hon'ble Gujarat High Court in SCA No. 5548 of 2014, dated 09 September 2014

About COAI

COAI was constituted in 1995 as a registered, non-governmental society. COAI's vision is to establish India as the global leader of innovative mobile communications infrastructure, products and services and achieving a national teledensity of 100%, including broadband. The association is also dedicated to the advancement of modern communication and towards delivering the benefits of innovative and affordable mobile communication services to the people of India.

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