# TO STUDY THE INTENTION OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS THE TELECOM SERVICE PROVIDERS IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

*Companies work to enhance the quality of their services and create new ones in order to increase customer satisfaction, The product with perceived quality has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. Additionally, businesses emphasize in their marketing and advertising strategies the need of expanding into various client segments. Telecom service providers need to pay more attention to the image of their brands, services, and businesses as a whole because customers constantly expect more from their operators, service providers must develop an emotional bond with them through creative strategies that improve their services' quality and brand image.*

*Keywords: Network quality, customer service, pricing strategies, Mobile service provider.*

## Introduction

Mobile Services is one of the fastest growing industries in India with competition from many players. With the economy opening up there is cut throat competition in this sector. Most important mobile phones give access to the world anytime, anywhere and have come to provide great assistance to users. Mobile phones are also economically priced to be affordable by the majority.

The rise in growth and development of information technology and mobile devices has made the Indian mobile phone service markets more and more competitive. It is assumed by all mobile service providers that value added services increases the customer loyalty. But does value added services fulfilling all the customer needs and it is the only factor that influences the loyalty of the customers. Being a buyer's market, the mobile companies must go an extra mile by not limiting themselves to

only giving range of offers. Because today's customers are very smart, and they easily understand the techniques of luring them.

Customers are more concerned about the value addition and defect free processes. Especially in the current scenario in the corona outbreak period where they were not able go outside, internet and uninterrupted connectivity with everyone was very crucial. Online academic classes in schools, colleges, universities, work from home for employees, OTT applications, online from the e-commerce sites are some of the frequently done activities of people in the lockdown period. Now in this case those service providers who have given uninterrupted and non-complaining services to people are the most sought after by customers. In addition to the above some of the value-added things which customers remember are mobile number portability, voice message, MMS, SMS, unbreakable signals, easy recharging, video calling etc.

Customers perceive services in terms of the quality of the service and how satisfied they are overall with their experiences. The study will throw light on the customer satisfaction towards different services provided by different service providers.

**Customer Satisfaction in Telecom Sector**
Customer satisfaction is refereed as overall rating that customers give to a brand after utilizing services. Telecom customers are highly unpredictable in nature. There is not a single factor that is directly responsible for delivering satisfaction among telecom users. Quality of network and price paid are determined as most important factors for customer satisfaction in telecom sector.

Additional important factors for determining satisfaction among telecom subscribers are service quality and customer care services. One of the essential service parameters in mobile sector is call connectivity. If any service provider is able to give better connectivity, then automatically customers will be more satisfied from that particular service provider as compared to competitor in the market. It is assumed that, if a customer is using services from the same operator from long time, then he/she is satisfied as compared to a customer who keeps on changing service providers in short duration. Introduction on Mobile Number Portability (MNP) has opened doors of easy switching opportunities among telecom customers without losing mobile number.

Earlier in spite of dissatisfaction by current operator, customers were not able to switch services due to constraint of change in number. Customer satisfaction is highly related to price paid for the services. Price is considered as an important factor for delivering satisfaction among telecom users. Now a day's telecom companies are changing rigid price structures into flexible one so as to delivery more satisfaction to their customers. Even customized pricing is adopted by operators as per the need and demand pattern of the customers.

## Indian Telecom Sector

The telecom sector has been recognized as an important tool for socio-economic developmental over world. Telecom sector has the capacity to boost the economy of country. It works as backbone of industrial and economic development of country. It ensures high speed connectivity among different geographical location throughout the world. It can also be used as effective tool to reach poor and social backward people. Indian telecom sector is more than160 years old The Indian telecom sector was entirely under government ownership until 1984, when the private sector was allowed in telecommunication equipment manufacturing only.

## Indian Telecom Service Providers

Indian telecom sector was under full control of Indian government before liberalization policy of the country. DOT was handling all responsibilities of providing telecom services in the country. Later on, DOT handed over its duties to BSNL working as Public Sector Company. In order to expand telecom services all over the country, licensed were issued to private and foreign players. Broadly, Indian telecom service providers are mainly classified into two categories:

- Public Sector Telecom Service Providers -BSNL & MTNL
- Private Sector Telecom Service Providers- Bharti Airtel, VI, Reliance Jio.

## Bharti Airtel

Bharti Airtel is a 3rd largest global telecom service provider company which is present in more than 20 countries. It started its telecom operation in 1985. It provides its services in 18 African countries and 3 Asian countries. It provides varieties of services that includes voice calling, video calling, 4G services, mobile commerce and many more. Airtel believes in establishing long term relationship with its customers and enrich their lives by winning their heart with the help of world class telecom services. Value system of Airtel includes three main elements named as "Alive" i.e., Airtel is always available for its customers, "Inclusive" i.e., Airtel will provide services to people without discrimination and "Respectful" i.e., Airtel maintains healthy relationship with its customers.

Innovative strategies and services are main reason for such large customer Airtel is working on five-point formula to be in world top companies.

i.   Market Excellence: Service providers need to focus on strategies that promise cost-effective, high-speed internet connectivity. Airtel is working on customized pricing and also started its services as payment bank to not only increase customers but also attracting new market.
ii.  Network Experience: It is primary requirement of customers. Airtel has taken serious attention towards it and now customers can check existing towers along with signal strength.
iii. Valuable Customer Base: Airtel is expanding its customer base of loyal subscribes that are ready to pay premium price for better services. It is strengthening its postpaid customer base by

providing them best store experience.

iv.  War on Waste: Airtel is redesigning its network for minimum wastage for better results. It is also following model with other operations to cut down overall cost.

v.  Win with people: Winning customers heart can only be achieved by providing them services according to their needs.

## Customer perception

A Study of Consumer Perceptions of Airtel Services Customer perception is defined as the way a customer typically sees or thinks of a particular service or product. It can also refer to customer satisfaction, which is the customer's expectations of the product. Only when the customer is satisfied with the service then only the company develop its plan further. Therefore, customers are the main reason behind Airtel's success. Customer satisfaction may be based on various circumstances related to products or services. In addition, Airtel is working to improve conditions based on the level of satisfaction of management and customers.

Satisfaction is therefore the feeling of joy or disappointment that a customer can express after becoming an Airtel customer. Airtel services for this project include cellular service, 3G, 4G and Wi-Fi. Customers are shifting their needs from basic calling services to high-speed internet connectivity. Companies are sensing shift in customer needs and changing their plans and strategies to win loyalty.

People also answer the question on why it is no more the AIRTEL it used to be?

1.  Poorest customer care service: In case of problems, you will always end up going to the Airtel store at least two or three times, even for the simplest ones. Customer care executives have typical template replies for everyone like "the network is busy", "Our system is down" and they'll redirect you to another store.

2.  Degraded network performance and Call connectivity: Calls are often broken and don't connect properly, which irritates any customer.

3.  Data connectivity: On an average Jio offers a data speed of 14mbps whereas Airtel gives 4mbps (Chennai), importantly people will be happy if it is consistent at the very least, most of the times the experience is worst, where there isn't any connection whereas JIO's internet connectivity is awesome, consistent and fast.

## Vodafone Idea

As of September 2018, Vodafone India and Idea Cellular have combined to form "Vodafone Idea," which is now India's largest telecom provider.

Governmental Programs The government has accelerated reforms in the telecom industry and keeps moving ahead to provide telecom businesses freedom to expand.

Vodafone Idea has a 1.7 million retail outlet distribution reach and a 340,000 site broadband network. On August 31, 2018, Vodafone India and Idea Cellular combined, and Vodafone Idea Limited was created as a result. The combined company still uses the Idea and Vodafone names, though.

## Customer's perception:

The majority of current customers are happy with Vodafone Service. The majority of people have been utilising a Vodafone connection for over a year. Most consumers spend between $150 and $350 each month on mobile. Additionally, some claim that VI is superior to all of its rivals. People seem to believe that Airtel would be Vodafone's toughest competition in the future. The majority of individuals won't switch from Vodafone as their service provider. Even though only a small number of people have complaints about the network, most people rate the Vodafone network as good. The most popular value-added service is SMS, according to users.

The majority of subscribers do not use the SMS service. However, some followers send a sizable number of SMSes each month.

Talked-about ideas based on research and observations conducted for the project. They could aid Vodafone Idea in providing better customer service and expanding its clientele in the Lucknow area.

Vodafone needs to lower call costs for local users. Depending on the usage type, it can be done.
- Vodafone has to roll out additional promotions and programmes for all demographics.
- Vodafone needs to add fresh programmes to its youth-focused initiatives to keep up with its competitors.
- In order to reward its loyal consumers for their continued business, Vodafone should provide additional promotions and deals.
- Vodafone should lower STD and ISD phone charges to grow its user base.
- In order to increase client awareness of its services, Vodafone must increase brand recognition. Some clients are unaware of all the services offered by Vodafone.

Some clients are unaware of the new programmes and tariff plans from Vodafone, which are very helpful to him. Another issue for the consumer is that, as a result of his ignorance, some individuals believe Vodafone plans to be highly expensive. As a result, it is crucial to focus on and never stop product promoting. Customers are not happy with retailers because they do not inform them about recharge plans, and because the information they do provide is of poor quality.

### Reliance Jio

People's perception on Jio is varied these days, some people think Jio is really messed up these days. They give 2G in the name of 4G. Like people say they have used Jio sim in most parts of India. Example in some parts of Himachal Pradesh, only Jio and Airtel signal will be there. Most of the time

Jio will have full signal but 2G speeds but Airtel will have 2–3 bars out of 4 bars on their phones but will give blazing fast speeds! Once we were stuck in a roadblock due to rocks in Himachal Pradesh.

People say they turned off airplane mode on their phone and to its surprise, Airtel had 4g services.

Jio had too, but oh well 2G speeds. The speeds were amazing like over 10mbps, please keep in mind it's on 900 MHz band and join had 1800 mhz band. In the metro cities it's even worse. Jio won't even connect to its 4G network. It is also observed that Multiple Reliance Jio customers

Reported that they are not being able to make calls or receive calls. Internet services have also been disrupted. Reliance Jio users have reported that they are receiving not registered on network message whenever they attempt to make a call. Well on the other hand we talk about people from other states like Chennai on an average Jio offers a data speed of 14mbps whereas Airtel gives 4mbps, importantly people will be happy if it is consistent at the very least, most of the times the experience is worst, where there isn't any connection whereas JIO's internet connectivity is awesome, consistent and fast. So, we can conclude that the perception is very much varied in terms of quality and experience.

## Literature Review

**DeoskarAruna (2009**), in her study "A study of mobile services from customer's perspective", shows the spectacular revolution in information technology happened in India which boosted telecom sector. The main objective is to study the impact of customer service on customer satisfaction and to associate various factors like data coverage, billing facilities with it. The findings gathered by testing data using SPSS states that all the sub parameters like billing service and data coverage have a significant impact on the customer satisfaction influencing customer perception.

**Menon (2014)** in the study entitled "Customer perception towards A public Sector Telecom Company (BSNL) in Mobile services" focuses on consumer perception about government Indian company BSNL using primary research data. The variables take here are age groups, Income of the family, qualification, opinions and also studied their correlation in between these factors. The correlation significance between these factors is 0.05 according to analysis.

**Kalyani Pawan (2015**) in her research study "An Empirical Study on Reliance JIO Effect, Competitor's Reaction and Customer Perception on the JIO'S Pre- Launch Offer" "states the future effects that will be observed after the launch of JIO. The study includes overall scenario of telecom sector, its history and its growth projected. The paper shows the future scope in this sector and different type strategies used by various companies.

**Sudheesh et al. (2015)** in their study paper "A comparative study on customer satisfaction towards Airtel & Vodafone with reference to Avadi, Chennai" reviews the consumer perception about the two giants in Indian telecom industry; Vodafone and Airtel in city Chennai. The consumers expect

different services from networks; this study highlights those services and the importance of the same.

**Sugunathi Meena and Shanthi R. (2017)** in their research paper conducted a study based on customer opinions about service they are using with parameters responsiveness, reliability, empathy, assurance and tangibility. The factors which matter most are on time and right service when customer expects it.

**Debarun Chakraborty (2013)**, in his research found out that preference of customers is more inclined towards those service providers who has a brand of his own and extends un-paralleled services with respect to wide network coverage, unbreakable signal and connectivity.

**Kavitha et al (2013),** in their article titled "A study on Customer satisfaction towards Vodafone sim card special reference in Madurai city" determined the consumer satisfaction on Vodafone service providers' services in Madurai district and to find out the consumers mentality towards using the services.

**Lehtinen&Lehtinen (1991)** suggested in their research that process and output are complementary to each other as far as quality-of-service provider is concerned. Customers asses the quality from the tangible aspect of the service process without any significant errors.

**Wang and Lo (2002)** concluded in their findings that of all the factors of influencing the customers, network quality and after sales service of these providers are the deciding factors of survivability.

**Ranaweera and Neely (2003)** studied and searched that retention of customers is very much dependent on their perception towards price, service, quality of not only mobile service providers but also in fixed line telephone services.

**Dr.K. Moorthy1, K. Selvaraju2, K. Ayiswarya3 (17th Jan 2017)** inferred in their research that internet has changed the day-to-day processes of people as far as their style, nature, socializing aspect, sharing of information, flow of ideas is concerned. In order to make them satisfy the service providers have to cover extra mile to satisfy their needs and wants on their terms.

## CONCLUSION

Some mobile service providers in India are competing to give their customers top-notch services. Government and private businesses are in fierce competition for customers while attempting to provide a few value-added services. In order to satisfy and thrill their clients, mobile operators must therefore make every effort to offer affordable and good equipment, less expensive and competitive call charges for connectivity at varied ranges, and specially tailored services. According to the research report, call rates, network coverage, and value-added services are the main reasons why users choose one mobile service provider over another. The study's findings suggest that customers prefer prepaid plans to post-paid plans and that the majority of customers view their

mobile phone as a necessity. They typically use their mobile phone for personal purposes, making and receiving calls as well as browsing the internet and using the internet. According to the survey, JIO is the mobile phone service provider that users choose most, followed by Airtel and VI. The majority of clients appear to be happy with the service they receive from their mobile service provider. We may infer from the analysis that there is no correlation between gender or age and the types of plans clients select. Gender and age have a substantial relationship with how long respondents have used the services of the mobile service provider. They also have a significant relationship with how much money consumers spend each month. The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that affect consumers' impressions of the telecom sector and businesses. Variables that are positively associated to consumer perception have been discovered in this study. The consumer perception is positively influenced by a variety of things from numerous dimensions. Customers place the most value on criteria including addressing complaints, employee behaviour, meeting specific demands, location of retail establishments' physical facilities and materials, and call connection during busy times. When opposed to providing value-added services, the telecommunications industry appears to be progressing slowly when it comes to providing service quality. These are the areas that urgently need development; if the businesses want to remain competitive in the future, they will need to invest in both human capital and physical infrastructure. The companies' customer services haven't been determined to have a big impact on the customers. The results of these study's features are crucial to the overall success of India's telecom service providers. It's because businesses can draw in new clients, keep their current ones, and cultivate their loyalty by focusing on the particular factors that have a favourable impact on customer satisfaction. Additionally, they can save money and time by paying less attention to the less significant tasks at first.

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