



Problems Faced by the Mobile Phone Service Providers in Salem District

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ABSTRACT

Mobile phone enables people to communicate when, where and with whom they wish. In addition, the study is concerned with personal factors associated with the mobile phone use and, the link between problems of mobile phone usage. Telecommunication is one of the prime support services needed for rapid growth and modernization of various sectors of the economy. Recently, mobile phone service providers are subject to comments and criticism for various reasons. This study was undertaken to find out the problems faced by the Mobile Phone Service Providers in Salem District. The study mainly concentrates on the popular mobile phone service providers i.e., BSNL, Airtel, Vodafone, Aircel, Idea and Reliance. To undertake this study a structured questionnaire was developed to collect the required primary data from the 450 customers. The results of analysis relating to the problems faced by the customers revealed that frequent call drops has been the first ranked problem followed by poor signal. It is conclude that nearly half of the subscribers who have the switching intention are ready to leave their existing service provider basically for better customer service so effective customer care services is the key to retain existing customers and attract new customers. The providers should regularly evaluate their performance on various parameters for formulation of strategies to satisfy and retain the customers.

Keywords-- Mobile phone, Customers, Service providers

I. INTRODUCTION

Telecommunication is one of the prime support services needed for rapid growth and modernization of various sectors of the economy. Mobile phone enables people to communicate when, where and with whom they wish. There are many problems faced by customers in handling the mobile phone. Today the mobile telecommunication industry is facing a dramatically aggressive competition in a new deregulated environment. Competition will undoubtedly continue to be a more

significant factor. The winds of economic transformation are blowing across the globe. Therefore, it becomes necessary for every service provider to analyze the fundamental redefinition of its business and its relationship with its customers in terms of customer retention.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

S. Vishnuvarthani (2013) in her article entitled "Consumers" Awareness and Preference for Mobile Phone Services at Erode City" has pointed out that telecommunication is one of the most important growing service sectors in India. It plays an inevitable role in today's busy world. The telecommunication includes both mobile communication and fixed telephony lines. In recent days there is an upsurge in the use of 80 mobile phones rather than land lines. The number of mobile phone subscribers outnumbered land line telephony system. It is because of certain advantages that mobile phone has for itself. Government and private operators are competing at close margin and are trying to provide multiple value added services to people. Hence, the cellular operators should strive to provide cost effective quality equipments, affordable and competitive call tariffs for connectivity at various levels and customized services in order to satisfy and delight their consumers.

Muazzam Khan, Apoorva Kulkarni, S. Vijayakumar Bharathi (2014), conducted a study on 'A Study on Mobile Phone Buying Behavior using an Image-based Survey'. The researchers identified and analyzed certain critical drivers of mobile phone purchasing decisions and explaining their relevance. Empirical research was conducted in this study through an image-based survey amongst college students in Pune city. In this paper, three motivations which affect purchase decision namely price, brand and brand ambassador were considered. The study adopted text based questions and image based questions to solicit the responses to find whether it had an impact on the responses. The study also

ascertained how effectively an image-based survey can be administered to compliment the conventional text-based question survey.

S. Nemat Sheereen (2014) in his article entitled, "A Study on Customer Satisfaction of BSNL Services in Kerala" has stated that BSNL is one of the leading telecommunication service providers in Kerala. Most of the studies conducted in this area indicate the exploring development of services provided by number of telecommunication providers which opened new world to the customer around the world. This paper analyses the customer satisfaction of BSNL services provided in Kerala. Quality of service and maximum network coverage are the most important factor which satisfy the customers in relation to telecommunication.

Ramzan Sama and Jani B. M. (2014) narrated that the adoption of cell/mobile phones has been remarkably increasing in many parts of the world, and particularly in India where mobile phones are today almost as common as wrist watches. While mobile phone usage is rather an unexamined type in academic literature, the aim of this study was to investigate consumer buying motives in mobile phone markets. The researcher has surveyed 190 consumers and looked at their motives to buy new cell phones on one hand and on the other hand factors affecting consumer's buying behavior while choosing operator. The research study reveals that the Vodafone is one of the better service providers in the city and majority of the consumers are highly satisfied with it.

Vanishree M. and Keerthy K (2016) in their study found that the gender, age, occupation and marital status have significant influence on type of application used in home/business place. The gender, age, educational qualification, occupation, family monthly income and marital status have no significant influence on reason for selection of broadband provider, internet access speed in broadband. The gender, age, family monthly income have significant and educational qualification, occupation and marital status have no significant influence on effective service provided by BSNL broadband. They have suggested that the quality of the service should be improved. Customers were dissatisfied with the download limit so it should be increased and also they are dissatisfied with the broadband speed, so it should be taken care off. Most of the respondents using broadband for educational purposes, so BSNL should provide more offers to them. BSNL should also improve their customer relationship.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Mobile phone communication is a tool for the beneficial use of individual including professional and businessman. Though the mobile phone service providers have been rendering services to its customers throughout India, it has become a target of controversy due to many reasons, such as, poor signal, excess billing, disconnection

while talking, cross talk while talking, high cost handset and high operating cost. Recently, mobile phone service providers are subject to comments and criticism for various reasons. Their services are not only commendable, but also satisfying to the customers to some extent. The important threats of mobile phone service market in India are high costs of service provision, low-income among the people cannot be offered to replicate expensive telecom infrastructure, political instability, threats from WLL service providers and also from satellite phones. The customer's expectations and knowledge of the mobile phone service are also increasing at the other hand. Hence the service providers are facing challenges, not only from the competitors, but also from their customers. The consistent updation of the service quality is the only measure to regain the existing customers and attract the new customers in order to increase their subscriber base.

IV. NEED FOR THE STUDY

As market growth slows down it becomes more competitive, service providers are more likely to attempt to maintain their market share by focusing on retaining existing customers. The increasing competition in Indian spectrum of mobile industry is reducing the price of service and customers are bombarded with various services and changing tariff plans. Brand Loyalty function, like insulator for brands, which prevent competitor to grab their customers.

V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. The objective of the study is to study the problems faced by the mobile phone service provider.
2. To offer suggestions to solve the problems and to improve the services.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is mainly based on the primary data obtained from 450 sample respondents selected from the mobile phone service providers in Salem District under convenience sampling method. The data required for the study have been obtained from the sample respondents by administering a structured questionnaire. The data obtained for the present study have been analysed by using Garrett Ranking Method.

VII. PROBLEMS FACED BY THE CUSTOMERS

The level of satisfaction of customers would be increased with the ability of the mobile phone service provider in minimizing the problems faced by the customers. Hence, the problems faced by the customers

have been examined in this study. In this regard, the following problems have been identified that have affected the customers of mobile phone service providers:

1. Frequent call drops
2. Poor signal
3. Insufficient network coverage
4. Lack of voice clarity
5. Bill related issues
6. Abnormal roaming charges
7. Tariff hike without information
8. Charging for free SMS on special days

9. Frequent promotional calls/SMS

10. Dialer tune charges

The sample respondents have been asked to rank these problems according to the order of their priority with reference to the severity of the problems experienced by them. Henry Garrett Ranking method has been used to rank the problems faced by the customers of mobile phone service providers. Accordingly, the total score for each of the problems has been computed and presented in the following table.

TABLE 1
PROBLEMS FACED BY CUSTOMERS – GARRETT SCORE

		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	Total Score
	X	81	70	63	57	52	47	42	36	29	18	
Frequent call drops	F	46	62	70	70	59	32	28	32	20	31	24504
	fX	3726	4340	4410	3990	3068	1504	1176	1152	580	558	
Poor signal	F	69	43	72	51	45	43	20	33	38	36	24181
	fX	5589	3010	4536	2907	2340	2021	840	1188	1102	648	
Insufficient network coverage	F	25	77	45	46	60	45	49	44	31	28	23152
	fX	2025	5390	2835	2622	3120	2115	2058	1584	899	504	
Lack of voice clarity	F	47	54	34	43	42	40	59	51	44	36	22482
	fX	3807	3780	2142	2451	2184	1880	2478	1836	1276	648	
Bill related issues	F	89	42	39	22	44	43	47	52	43	29	23784
	fX	7209	2940	2457	1254	2288	2021	1974	1872	1247	522	
Abnormal roaming charges	F	38	35	39	35	40	53	43	57	66	44	21115
	fX	3078	2450	2457	1995	2080	2491	1806	2052	1914	792	
Tariff hike without information	F	33	27	50	50	32	59	62	38	57	42	21381
	fX	2673	1890	3150	2850	1664	2773	2604	1368	1653	756	
Charging for free SMS on special days	F	53	42	33	33	44	36	56	57	37	59	21712
	fX	4293	2940	2079	1881	2288	1692	2352	2052	1073	1062	
Frequent promotional calls/SMS	F	16	37	33	44	46	45	50	55	63	61	19985
	fX	1296	2590	2079	2508	2392	2115	2100	1980	1827	1098	
Dialer tune charges	F	34	31	35	56	38	54	36	31	51	84	20454
	fX	2754	2170	2205	3192	1976	2538	1512	1116	1479	1512	

From the Table 1 it is evident that the total score of 'Frequent call drops' was found to be 24504 while the total score of 'Poor signal' has been ascertained to be 24181 and that of 'Insufficient network coverage' was computed to be 23152. The total score of 'Lack of voice clarity' has been determined to be 22482 whereas the total score of 'Bill related issues' was found to be 23784. The

total score of 'Abnormal roaming charges' has been computed to be 21115 while the total score of 'Tariff hike without information' was found to be 21381. 'Charging for free SMS on special days' and Frequent promotional calls/SMS have got the total scores of 21712 and 19985 respectively. The total score of 'Dialer tune charges' was found to be 20454.

TABLE 2
RANKING OF PROBLEMS FACED BY CUSTOMERS – GARRETT RANKING

Problems	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
Frequent call drops	24504	54.45	I

Poor signal	24181	53.74	II
Bill related issues	23784	52.85	III
Insufficient network coverage	23152	51.45	IV
Lack of voice clarity	22482	49.96	V
Charging for free SMS on special days	21712	48.25	VI
Tariff hike without information	21381	47.51	VII
Abnormal roaming charges	21115	46.92	VIII
Dialer tune charges	20454	45.45	IX
Frequent promotional calls/SMS	19985	44.41	X

Table 2 discloses that the 'Frequent call drops' has been the first ranked problem with the mean score of 54.45 while the 'Poor Signal' has been assigned with the second rank as indicated by the mean score of 53.74. The mean score of 52.85 pertaining to 'Bill related issues' fetched the third rank to this problem whereas the fourth ranked problem according to the sample respondents was found to be 'Insufficient network coverage'. The fifth and the sixth rank have been assigned to lack of voice clarity and charging for free SMS on special days respectively. The mean score of Tariff hike without information was found to be 47.51 which resulted in the seventh rank whereas the eighth ranked problem according to the sample respondents was found to be 'Abnormal roaming charges'. Dialer tune charges have been the ninth ranked problem according to the SIM indicated by the mean score of 45.45 whereas frequent promotional calls/SMS have been assigned the tenth rank with the mean value 44.41.

VIII. FINDINGS

The following are the major findings of the study:

1. The results of analysis relating to the problems faced by the customers revealed that frequent call drops has been the first ranked problem followed by poor signal.
2. Bill rated issues have been ranked as the third problem whereas insufficient network coverage has been found to be the fourth ranked problem.
3. It is ascertained that lack of voice clarity has been the fifth ranked problem and charging for free SMS on special days has been the sixth ranked problem.
4. It could be understood that the seventh ranked problem according to the sample respondents was tariff hike without intimation and the eighth ranked problem was the abnormal roaming charges.
5. The sample respondents have indicated that the dialer tune charges and frequent promotional calls/SMS have been the ninth and tenth ranked problems respectively.

IX. CONCLUSION

It is concluded that mobile phone service providers seen growth in all the constituents of the telecom infrastructure but connectivity problem is very common problem and service providers should do the needful to make their network effective to satisfy and retain the subscribers. To have a sustainable business, tariff/call charges will need to be rationalized in the coming years, because call charges are affecting the switching intention of the subscribers. Nearly half of the subscribers who have the switching intention are ready to leave their existing service provider basically for better customer service so effective customer care services is the key to retain existing customers and attract new customers. Other factors-multimedia/value added services, billing service/tariff plans, network innovativeness, brand image/reputation etc., are also important for service providers. Service providers have already started focusing on these factors. By offering multimedia/value added services at the economical rates, service providers can maximize their revenue since the users of such services are few. The providers should regularly evaluate their performance on various parameters for formulation of strategies to satisfy and retain the customers.

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