

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND MARKETING PLANNING : A CASE STUDY OF MOBILE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM IN DELHI STATE

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The world is on the threshold of a new industrial revolution. A revolution which promises to be at least as significant as that which has brought most of the growth to the world's economy in the past two centuries. A revolution which promises to have just as far reaching an impact on a wide variety of aspects of life. And a revolution with a global reach. Telecommunications are at the epicenter of this revolution. The telecom industry has the potential to transform a nation's fate. The telecom infrastructure in India has grown at a rapid pace after 1994 when the New Telecom Policy 1994 came into force. The telecom density grew from a meager 1.2 per hundred to touch 2.3 now. This is a significant achievement. But there are other countries, especially developed countries that have doubled and tripled the telephone penetration in a shorter time. And this was made possible by being technology savvy and prioritizing the objective of offering affordable services to the public. In India, despite developments, there still remains a strong demand for telecom services at affordable rates. And the New Telecom Policy 1999 lends top credence to this objective. The Internet access business is already open, and so is the domestic long distance market. The new policy has announced sweeping changes in the licence mechanism and optimism levels among the players is quite high. But this optimism comes with the anxiety of operating in an extremely competitive environment. Technological developments along with competition have started transforming the telecom business into commodity like business. Already there exist exchanges in the US which trade in telecom bandwidth. Offering value-added services will then be the order of the day. Offering options to customers would be the only way to gain a pricing advantage. To offer a wide basket of services, and still specialise would mean there would have to be a lot many consortiums and alliances. Organisational structures would become cellular and would see more strategic business units coming up. While new equations in the telecom industry unfold, the users are in for heady days.

Consumer Behaviour and Marketing Planning of Mobile Tele-Communication Systems and Mobile Cellular Phone Services: In the process of making a decision to purchase or use the mobile telecommunication services or Mobile Cellular Phone services, the consumer is exposed to varied sources of information on various handsets available in the market and the use of the handsets and the various cellular operators who provide cellular services to the customers. The consumer's perception of the appropriateness and reliability of these sources contribute to the sources' effectiveness and help him/her to make the final choice. 'Information Search' as such an important pre-purchase activity in a purchase decision. Need and Importance of Information (Knowledge) on

Products and Services: The importance of pre-purchase information in consumer behaviour or the consumer evaluations of products/services viz., the brands and the service provider is well documented in the literature of the past. In the area of durable goods purchases, studies have been conducted to determine the amount of search by consumers prior to purchase, as well as to identify the major influences on such search. How many sources of information do consumers consult before they buy? Do the sources vary in number in terms of products? Which source of information is perceived by the consumer to be important? What factors the consumer considers at the time of making his/her choice? Or how he/she reacts before purchasing any product/service i.e., the purchase of mobile cellular phone/service? This study aims at finding answers to some such questions in respect of buyers perception, knowledge about mobile telecommunication systems, and the usage of mobile telecommunication systems and the cellular phone services.

This study deals with certain aspects of the consumer behaviour aspects like pre-purchase activities of selected Indian consumers of Mobile Cellular Phone Services and also the marketing planning of the service providers i.e., the mobile cellular phone service providers or organisations dealing in the mobile telecommunication systems and services in Delhi State viz., Essar and Airtel. Its purpose is three fold. Firstly, it is concerned with the search for and use of product/service information as a part of purchase decision making, which concerns consumer reaction to alternate product/service information sources. Secondly, the study identifies and analyses the factors which influence purchase decision. Thirdly and lastly, it identifies the various marketing planning aspects and the analyses of these aspects by the organisations dealing in mobile cellular phone systems/services. The present study is an attempt to add a little bit to the existing knowledge in the Indian context. *The study is intended :*

- (a) to assess the knowledge of consumers/customers on the use of Mobile Telecommunication Systems/Services and the knowledge on various brands of mobile telecommunication systems;
- (b) to analyse the practices of the organisations on the consumer behaviour for their products/services i.e., mobile telecommunication systems/services in Delhi State; and
- (c) to suggest measures relating to consumer behaviour and marketing planning for the speedy development of the organisations dealing in mobile telecommunications systems.

In specific terms, the objectives of the study includes to examine :

- (i) the relative importance of the particular information sources used;
 - the differences between the users and non-users of information in the search
- (ii) process and the dependency between information sources and other selected variables;
 - the evaluative criteria used in making the final choice; and the discriminating
- (iii) factors between urban and semi-urban population in terms of the evaluative criteria and other selected variables.

With the above objectives, it is hoped that this study would be able to provide an outline of the information gathering process and the factors considered in the alternate

evaluation by urban and semi-urban population and the marketing planning activities for the mobile cellular phone services thus contribute to a better understanding of the subject in the Indian context.

Questionnaire Design : The basic design of the survey instrument consisted of two types of structured questionnaires. First type is the questionnaire related to the collection of information from the consumers of mobile cellular phone on their knowledge, information sources and purchase decision factors related to the mobile cellular phones (i.e., the Consumer Behaviour aspect). Second type of questionnaire related to the information collection on the various marketing planning activities carried out by the mobile cellular phone service providers or the Cellular Operators (Marketing Planning aspect) in Delhi State. Firstly, a draft questionnaire on the first type was made and tested with 60 consumers in both urban and semi-urban population. These exercises ensured the adequacy and communicability of the questions in the questionnaire. The language in the questionnaire was made simple, clear and free from technical jargon. Adequate care was taken to see that the consumers have not misunderstood the questions so also on the part of the cellular operators front where the information required is somewhat sensitive. After making the initial draft questionnaire and testing the same on 60 consumers for identifying the reaction of the respondents on the quality and content of the questionnaire and if there is any need for changing the language of the questions for better understanding of the respondents, finally two questionnaires on both the consumer behaviour aspect and marketing planning aspect have been made and the responses of the 375 urban population and 175 semi-urban population have been collected on the research topic for analysis of the research problem. A copy of the questionnaires is provided in Appendices.

Framework of Analysis : The data and information collected have been classified, tabulated and processed in a computer. Principal component analysis and factor analysis have been used to identify factors involved in the purchase decisions. Discriminant analysis is used to discriminate between urban and semi-urban population with reference to selected variable.

Scope and Limitations of the Study : Since, India is a very big country and is the second largest country in the world from the population point of view, and because of the limitations of mobility and the time constraints and Delhi is one of the four metropolitan cities in India and is the Capital of India, it has good scope for the growth of the Cellular market and also the number of consumers of Cellular phone services is more, I limited my study to Delhi State only. The scope of the study is determined, firstly, by the sample of 550 consumers which represents a cross section of the total population. Secondly, the study focussed attention on the three categories of information sources as in the consumer behaviour as used by Newmann and Staelin. The three categories are : (1) Personal Source of Information : this source includes friends, relatives, neighbours, one's own past experience with the product or service, personal observation and examination of the product or service. (2) Commercial Source : this source includes advertisements through mass media (i.e., through newspapers, magazines, books, pamphlets, radio, television, roadside boards and cinema advertisements) and (3) Retail Outlet Source : this source includes shop visits, retail outlets and salesman talks. In addition to these sources, there may be other

groups or other ways of grouping (as referred to by many authors), have not been taken into account in this study.