



CONSUMER PERCEPTION REGARDING MOBILE NUMBER PORTABILITY (MNP): A THEORETICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT :

Mobile Number Portability is not very old term even though it's very hot and interesting topic to do research and investigate into from different perspective for strategy makers and researchers. Many studies has been conducted and going on in many countries. Researchers have focused majorly on implementation of MNP, Switching cost, Government Policies and regulations, Benefit to the operators and customers as well, Competition in the market and the steps taken by operators to retain existing customers and to attract other operators subscribers and consumer take ups towards MNP. This paper is try to attempt the analyze the studies done on this topic and take the review of studies and find the new conclusion regarding consumer attitude towards MNP



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KEYWORDS : Mobile, MNP, Service, Customer, Operator, Subscriber.

INTRODUCTION

Due to new Economic policy Indian economy has undergone dynamic changes which were adopted in the year 1991. In today's business environment, service industry play an important role to increases the Customer value in the field of telecommunication. In the recent time advance technology make easier and cheaper way to provides affordable services to the customer in telecom industry. The growth of Indian telecommunication companies has created a saga in past few years. Discovery of mobile phones in today's world has become one of the most important product in both urban & rural market. Different network operators have captured the most of the important parts of India. The fastest growing service industry in India is the cellular service industry which made has far-reaching changes in the global recognition of the overall economic development of the nation.

Communication has undergone metamorphic change in the last decade. The distance is no longer considered as limitation for any information and communication flow. Now a days, most of the people irrespective of various social background, carry a mobile phone with them. The high usage of mobile phones among different users and the switching behavior of their mobile service provider without changing their number (MNP) is a common a phenomenon today.

OBJECTIVES & RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Present paper is based on secondary material only, the paper aims to find out the meaning of Mobile Number Portability, its origin and its effect on the telecommunication industries in India as well as to know the reason behind switching their operator by the consumer. For fulfilling those objective researcher tries to take review of existing studies done before on the same topic and drawn new conclusion. Secondary material collected through the research paper published.

MOBILE NUMBER PORTABILITY (MNP)

“Mobile Number Portability” means the facility which allows a subscriber to retain his mobile telephone number when he moves from one Access Provider to another irrespective of the mobile technology or from one cellular mobile technology to another of the same Access Provider; (TRAI)”. Mobile Number Portability (MNP) was first introduced in the world by Singapore in 1997, and then UK, Hong Kong and Netherlands followed in 1999. Slowly other countries implemented it. The Indian telecom industry was about to launch Mobile Number Portability (MNP) in a phased manner, on September 2009 and to be completed by March 2010. But it delayed due to some reasons till 30th June, first phase in MNP implementation began in Metros in December 31, 2009, and the second phase, for the rest of the country by March 2010.

ADVANTAGES TO SUBSCRIBERS

- Free mobility from one service provider to another, without changing the mobile number.
- Price competition if the market is competitive.
- Competition among service providers will lead to improvement in quality of service and product innovation, in order to retain and expand the customer base.
- Many value-added services may be offered by service providers to attract customers, either free or at low costs.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ashok Kumar Jha (2016) concluded in his study entitled ‘A Holistic Approaches on Review of Related Literature on Mobile Number Portability’ that India and China have almost comparable populations, India’s slow mobile penetration offers huge scope for growth. In the recent time advance technology make easier and cheaper way to provides affordable services to the customer in telecom industry. In telecom sector shows tremendous growth rate approximately 45% in current time span of 4 to 5 years. As per the need of consumer they want easy and convenient services from operators through company also want to retain customer through better service provide.¹

Debarun Chakraborty & Dr. Jayanta Kishore Nandi (2016) conclude in his paper ‘Reasons behind Consumers Switching Behavior towards Mobile Network Operators: A Study Conducted in Western Part of Rural West Bengal’ that the reasons behind the switching behavior of consumers are mainly influenced by the “Poor network quality” followed by high call rate/SMS charges & less promotional activity. They are also influenced by family/friends/others at the time of shifting their service provider in the rural areas of West Bengal. But they are not so much influenced by the other factors like high call drop rate, poor coverage, poor voice clarity, poor roaming facilities etc. The companies need to take care of these areas and they also need to think on concentrating more on most influential areas compare to other areas. The rural consumers in West Bengal still not much influenced by high internet charge or new brand trial, that are true but side by side it is also evident from the study that though they are price sensitive community still they have ranked network quality as a number one influential factor, then the rate plans & other factors are coming one after another. Now it is a job of both Government & Corporate sector to take initiatives to work on those areas where they will be benefited in the long run & to achieve 100 percent tele-density by few years only from rural areas.²

Prof. Dr. Abdul Ghafoor Awan, Prof. Dr. Nasir Nadeem & Hafiz Muhammad Adnan Faisal (2016) in his study ‘Determinants of Brand Switching in Mobile Service Providers: A Case Study of Mobile Phone Industry in Southern Punjab-Pakistan’ concluded that that reason behind switching is caused by factors such as price, inconvenience, customer services, customer satisfaction, and service failure. As concerns to preferences of customer excluding existing services dissonance they have other priorities of innovative VAS and new technological attractiveness. Switched customers have used to switch from one network to another for many times and their attitude regarding switching is arbitrary and not persistent. In spite of that companies should focus on the causes mentioned in our study to reduce customer switching by creating strong customer relationship and more attractiveness to retain customer at existing network that will produce long term profitability for companies.³

Gaurav Vats (2016) in his paper entitled 'Factors Influencing Consumer Preference and Switching Behavior: An Empirical Study of Punjab Telecom Sector' the findings of the study suggest a positive significant relationship between customer satisfaction with variables like signal strength, affordability, data services value added services, customer service etc. Indian cellular operators are now focusing away from attracting new customers, towards retaining the existing profitable customers. The study also provides policy implications to the selected cellular operators and other stakeholders. The study also concluded that the two main factors found responsible which influence the switching intention of customers were poor network coverage and poor call quality and there is inaccuracy in billing/balance deduction. The main reason for opting MNP is the ability to retain the existing mobile number while switching to another service provider.⁴

Mr. Narsimha Bhatt (2013) in his paper 'A Study on Peoples attitude towards purchasing new SIM cards: A Study with reference to Hyderabad' reveals that call rates plays the most important role in purchasing new SIM cards followed by network coverage, value added service, Customer care service and TV-advertisement which plays the least important role. After analyzing the findings of the study, he suggest that Mobile service providers concentrate more on increasing network stability and setting tariff rates competitively. The findings also suggest that managers of these mobile operators should shift focus on building corporate image and analyze more carefully the reason for consumers to switch brands in this industry in order to increase loyalty among these consumers.⁵

Saravanan M & Babu S (2013) concludes in his paper 'A Survey on the Factors Impacting the Customers over Mobile Service Provider Switching' that, with the induction of mobile number switching a new order shall be created that shall be highly competitive for the telecom companies and all the more valuable for the consumers, mistakes shall not be excuse and tolerance shall come at a heavy price. The researcher recommends that, government inimplementing the mobile serviceswitching should first resolve the issue of delays in porting one'sphone number. This is to enablecustomers find it easier to deal withany operator of their choice at anygiven time as it will increase theintensity of competition.⁶

Mamta Bhatt and AtulBamrara (2012) in his study 'Customer Complaints and Switching Behaviour towards Mobile Service Providers in Garhwal Region of Uttarakhand' conclude that it is investigated that most of the customers are not satisfied with their service providers and they are willing to switch over and opine that network problems such as poor connectivity and high prices are the main reasons which influence and force them to switch to another operator who is perceived better on such issues.

DhavalMotwani (2016) in his paper 'A Study on Impact of Mobile Number Portability onThe Consumers in Saurashtra Region' conclude that The introduction of MNP has created the greatcompetition among all the telecom company. Hencethose who fail in providing the satisfactory servicewill surely lose their customers now. This perfectcompetition scenario stands as an advantage to thecustomer. It is very clear that those who providesuperior service in terms of network, call rate, lowcall drops etc. will surely gain the customer andmaximum customers will switch over to theirnetwork. MNP has also created a great hype and buzzin the market which will keep the service providerson their toes. Thus, in spite of the late introduction ofMNP in our country, it has significantly affected theway the business is done.⁸

Payal Mehta (2014) in her paper 'Consumer Switching Behaviour towards Mobile Number Portability' stated that, some important insights into the effect of MNP on the employee segment. In particular, the two significant parameters influencing likelihood of switching service providers in the employees segment are dissatisfaction with Customer Service and dissatisfaction with Plans. Also, the main reasons for wanting to switch were related to better features offered by competitors, no new schemes/plans or up-gradation of existing plan, costly value-added services, improper customer service, high call rates, high internet charges, poor network coverage, high SMS charges, frequent network problems, voice quality issues, and hidden charges. On the other hand, the main reasons for not wanting to switch were related to satisfaction with current service provider, brand loyalty, no added benefits, and same service quality across service providers and same user group plan across

service providers. This suggests that service providers are generally seen to offer good quality of service, with not much difference between them. In fact, users of Vodaphone and Airtel were very satisfied with the quality of service.⁹

CONCLUSION

Mobile Number Portability holds great potential to correct market distortions, increase competition among service providers and offer consumers the ease of transfer from one operator to another without the inconvenience of losing one's number. According to the research there are many factors which extensively affected mobile phone brand choice behaviour. These factors influence them to switch the existing one. Most research and practice assumes that relationship marketing efforts generate stronger customer relationships that enhance seller performance outcomes, including sales growth, share, and profits. All the studies reviewed are focused on the Service Quality and the Affordable tariff plan is the major concern for the subscriber to switch their network and network operator to be careful and concentrate on this issue to stop migrating their customer base.

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