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# CONTENTS

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>TITLE &amp; NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
1.	<b>ASSETS TURNOVER AND PROFITABILITY OF SELECTED INDIAN AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY</b> <i>DR. N. PASUPATHI</i>	1
2.	<b>WALKTHROUGH ON NEURAL NETWORK AND FUZZY LOGIC FOR CLASSIFICATION OF MEDICAL IMAGE DIAGNOSIS</b> <i>A. SORNA GOWRI &amp; DR. K. RAMAR</i>	4
3.	<b>SERVICE QUALITY, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY: A STUDY OF AIRTEL SERVICE PROVIDER</b> <i>DIVYA.L &amp; B. H. SURESH</i>	7
4.	<b>MOBILE BASED DECISION SUPPORTING SYSTEM FOR WEATHER INDEX BASED CROP INSURANCE SCHEME: A CASE STUDY OF KARNATAKA'S MOBILE ONE PROJECT</b> <i>DR. G. KOTRESHWAR &amp; V. GURUSIDDARAJU</i>	10
5.	<b>SCENARIO OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN KASHMIR</b> <i>FARAH FAYAZ QURAISHI &amp; DR. MUSHTAQ A DARZI</i>	16
6.	<b>GOVERNMENT POLICY TOWARDS ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR</b> <i>DR. NIHARIKA MAHARISHI &amp; BILAL AHMAD DAR</i>	21
7.	<b>PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF VERTICAL CONVEYOR REAPER FOR HARVESTING PADDY CROP</b> <i>Y. M. PATIL, B. ANURAJ &amp; S. R. KAREEKATTI</i>	24
8.	<b>HADOOP MapReduce</b> <i>MANISHA AGARWAL, SOURABH MUKHERJEE &amp; SUSHMA GREWAL</i>	26
9.	<b>MEASURING POST ACQUISITION EFFICIENCY OF CORPORATE M&amp;A IN INDIA (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TATA STEEL ACQUIRING CORUS)</b> <i>DR. ARUN KUMAR, DR. RANJIT SINGH &amp; DR. SATVINDER KAUR</i>	30
10.	<b>BIT COINS: CEMENTING REGULATORY GAPS IN EMERGING MARKETS</b> <i>DR. LATHA SREERAM &amp; AKSHAY RATHOD</i>	35
11.	<b>A STUDY ON PAYROLL MANAGEMENT: SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY</b> <i>G. SRIKRISHNA &amp; G. NANDA KISHOR KUMAR</i>	41
12.	<b>COMPARATIVE FINANCIAL STATEMENT ANALYSIS OF DR. REDDY'S LABORATORIES AND CIPLA LTD.</b> <i>S. DHARCHANA &amp; DR. P. KANCHANA DEVI</i>	50
13.	<b>INVESTORS' EDUCATION &amp; AWARENESS - ROLE OF VARIOUS STAKE HOLDERS</b> <i>DR. G. SURENDAR</i>	54
14.	<b>A LINK BETWEEN POS AND HR PRACTICES: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b> <i>ROHINI.S.NAIR</i>	57
15.	<b>ROBOTS REPLACING HUMAN IN THE BANKING SECTOR - NEW ERA OF ROBOTS: A SYSTEMATIC STUDY</b> <i>SHAILAJA KONEK</i>	62
16.	<b>PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF MGNREGS: A CASE OF PUTHURANI PANCHAYAT OF SIVAGANGA DISTRICT (TAMIL NADU)</b> <i>M.SATHANAPRIYA &amp; B. SIVAKUMAR</i>	66
17.	<b>WORKERS PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT IN INDIA: AN EVALUATIVE STUDY</b> <i>SIDDANNA APCHAND, MAHESH URUKUNDAPPA &amp; DR. RASHMIRANI AGNIHOTRI H.R</i>	73
18.	<b>THE EFFECT OF HEDONIC SHOPPING MOTIVATIONS ON IMPULSE BUYING TENDENCY AND THE MODERATING ROLE OF BUYING POWER</b> <i>SHARIQ ZIA, MUHAMMAD WAQAS, SHAHZAD AHMAD &amp; AMMAR ARSHAD</i>	76
19.	<b>A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF COMMERCIAL BANKS PERFORMANCE IN GHANA</b> <i>ALHASSAN BUNYAMINU &amp; FUSEINI MAHAMA</i>	81
20.	<b>A FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF CEMENT INDUSTRIES IN INDIA</b> <i>SOMESHWAR PRIYA D.</i>	91
	<b>REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK &amp; DISCLAIMER</b>	94

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**NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

**OBJECTIVES**

**HYPOTHESIS (ES)**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**RESULTS & DISCUSSION**

**FINDINGS**

**RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS**

**CONCLUSIONS**

**LIMITATIONS**

**SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

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- Hunker, H.L. and A.J. Wright (1963), "Factors of Industrial Location in Ohio" Ohio State University, Nigeria.

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**SERVICE QUALITY, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY: A STUDY OF AIRTEL SERVICE PROVIDER**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Study has considered service quality tool to identify the gap between customers' perception, expectation and satisfaction with Airtel service provider at Mysore city. Service quality consists of five variables like tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. 78 samples are considered for the study. The sample size covers Airtel mobile users of Mysore city. Study has identified that customers are satisfied with quality of services offered by Airtel service provider. Customers are expecting for more number of offers in tariff plans and message pack value added services and less prices per calls.*

**KEYWORDS**

service quality, customers' expectation, customers' satisfaction, customers' retention, airtel mobile service provider.

**INTRODUCTION**

Business sector is facing different competitive situations. New technologies have made environment more competitive. New business organisations are entering with new business techniques, which have created stiff competition. Service sector is one among business sector. Telecom sector is a part of service sector. There are many players in telecom market. Major players are Airtel, Vodafone, Idea and BSNL. This sector offers both wire-lines, mobile and broad band services. Most of the customers have afforded mobile and broad band connections. The players are providing services to metropolitan cities, urban, semi-urban and focusing on rural areas.

"Bharati Airtel" is a leading service provider in Indian telecom sector. It entered the Indian telecom market in 1995. It has the highest market share. It offers 2G, 3G and 4G wireless services, e-commerce, fixed line services, high speed DSL broadband, IPTV, DTH, enterprise services including national and international long distance services. It has 1006.96 million subscribers as of June 2015.

Customers may perceive about the brand and its usage and other related factors through different sources. Expectations vary with different age group. Customers meet their needs and expectations with different brands or services. In high competitive situations, it is necessitated for service provider to find out the needs and desires of the customers. High quality performance would satisfy customers if low performance leads to dissatisfaction. Hence, service provider has to assess attributes and services offered. If the customer is satisfied in all the aspects with offered product or service she or he will become regular customer.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Anantha Raj A. Arokiasamy and Abdul Ghanikanasanbin Abdullah (2009) examined the impact of service quality dimension on customer satisfaction through the gap analysis. They have determined the perception and expected satisfaction level of each service quality dimensions and concluded that all the dimension of service quality has an influence on customer satisfaction in the form of loyalty and attitude.

Debarun Chakrabarty (2013) studied the customer satisfaction and expectation towards a telecommunication company in west-midnapore. It is found that the dimensions influence the satisfaction level of customers care core service like good coverage, good connectivity and network quality and call rate. Further it is found that there is a significant relation between the brand name and the preference of customers. Hence, it has been recommended that telecom companies should focus on connectivity, call rates, coverage and network quality.

Olu Ojo (2010) analyzed the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in the telecommunication industry with a focus on mobile telecommunication network in Nigeria. The author has employed regression analysis and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was employed in testing the hypotheses. It is found that service quality has effect on customer satisfaction and that there is a positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. It is also observed that it costs to attract new customer than to retain the existing ones. The organization should welcome suggestion from customers and more programs should be designed to measure service quality and customer satisfaction. It is also clear from this research that customer service has impact on service quality perception and customer satisfaction.

Rajesh K Yadav and Nishant Dabhade (2013) pointed out the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction of mobile users by analyzing measures taken by the Airtel and customer satisfaction level and factors that affect quality of service, which will result in customer loyalty towards the operator. Chi square test is applied in this paper to check the authenticity of data given by the respondents. In which researcher has pulled the attention on service quality with special consideration given on attractive/aggressive tariff plans, innovative services, quality of service setup, customer relationship, management cell, brand strength, network quality and better customer care services and value added services etc.

Sandhya Joshi, Praveen Khurana and Shashi Khurana (2010) explored the key dimensions of service quality for mobile services in the telecom sector. It is found that the dimensions like network quality, responsiveness and other dimensions considered as important dimensions influencing customer satisfaction. The study suggested that mobile service providers have to give more importance to network quality, which has an influence on customer satisfaction.

Moon-Koo Kim Myeong- Cheol Park and Dong- Heon Jeong (2004) identified the influence of customer satisfaction and the switching barrier on customer loyalty. It is found that service quality has a significant impact on customer satisfaction, switching barriers like, call quality, value added services and customer support and also found that customer satisfaction and switching barriers have a significant influence on customer loyalty.

Siew-phaik Loke, Ayankunle Adegbite taiwo hanisah mat salim and Alan G. Downe (2011) examined the impacts of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangible aspects on customer satisfaction. Gap analysis was used to determine the perceived importance and satisfaction on each dimension of service quality and regression analysis was conducted to test the relationship between service quality and levels of customer satisfaction. It is found that reliability; responsiveness, assurance and empathy have positive influence on customer attitudes in terms of satisfaction and loyalty. It is also found that there is a significant gap between the perceived satisfaction and importance on all the dimensions of service quality.

Jessy John (2011) explored the factors which influence customer loyalty of BSNL. The study has taken 100 samples in Jaipur city. The result of the study shows that network quality, customer service along with value added services provided by BSNL enhanced the loyalty of the customers. It is recommended that the BSNL mobile services should focus on problems related to services and service provider should look beyond price wars to keep their customer satisfied and loyal.



Mohammad M. Almossawi (2012) focused on the importance and consequences of satisfaction in the competitive telecom industry in Bahrain. The factors related to payment and savings such as offers, rents, charges are the most significant in determining satisfaction, retention and likelihood of switching over from one mobile provider to another. Intercommunication factors such as customer service, friendly employees, and user friendly websites were found to be the least significant. Results show that a significant positive relationship between satisfaction and retention while a poor association was noticed between satisfaction /retention and loyalty.

### NEED FOR THE STUDY

Service quality concept is used in different service areas like banking, transportation, insurance and hospital etc. Telecom sector is one the service sectors. There are more competitors in the market. It is difficult for the service provider to know the expectations of the customers and reasons for switching over from one service provider to another. Perceived customers will change their purchasing pattern. They will get attracted to unique featured services, special offers, and attractive advertisements. So, the present study tries to analyse expectation, satisfaction level and loyalty of Airtel customers.

### SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to Mysore city. The sample size is 78. Airtel mobile users are considered for the study.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse the factors influencing customers satisfaction
2. To know the customers' expectation
3. To study the attributes offered by the Airtel mobile service.

### HYPOTHESIS

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no gap between service offered and customers' expectation

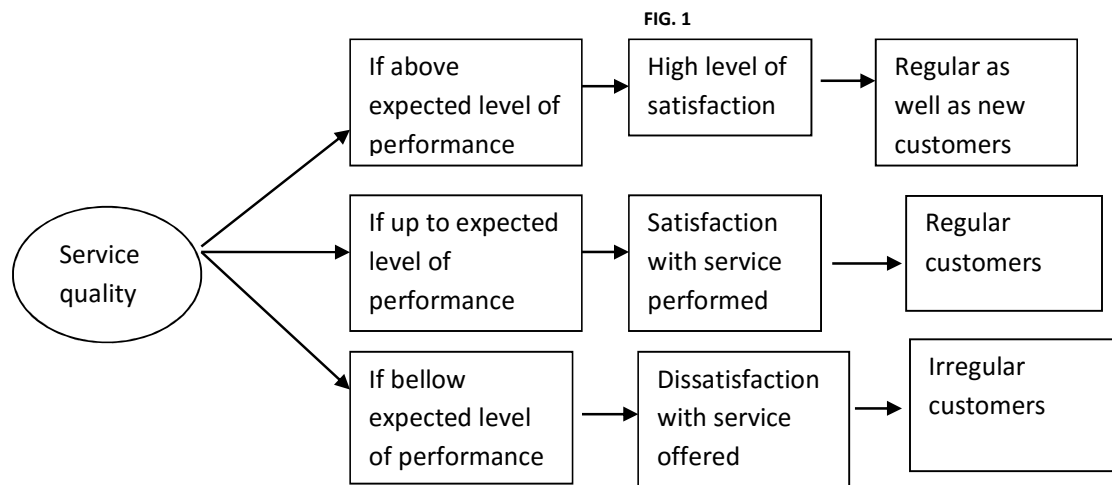
H<sub>01</sub>: There is a gap between service offered and customers' expectation

H<sub>2</sub>: There is a relationship between expected services and customer satisfaction.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no relationship between expected service and customer satisfaction.

H<sub>3</sub>: There is an association between customer retention and service attributes offered by Airtel service provider.

H<sub>03</sub>: There is no association between customer retention and service attributes offered by service provider.



### METHODOLOGY

The study is empirical. Structured questionnaire was distributed and personal interviews were conducted for Airtel subscriber at Mysore city and considered as a Primary source. Secondary sources like web source, periodicals and other related sources are used for the study. Chi-square test was conducted through SPSS package to analyze collected data.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### ➤ HYPOTHESIS – 1

H<sub>0</sub>: There is a gap between service offered (service quality) and customers' expectation

H<sub>1</sub>: There is no gap between service offered and customers' expectation

**TABLE – 1: CHI-SQUARE TESTS**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.345 <sup>a</sup>	6	.155
N of Valid Cases	78		

Source: Field work

Results shows that 0.155>0.05 significance level. So, the study rejects alternative hypothesis and accepts null hypothesis. It is clear from the table that there is a gap between offered service and customers' expectation.

#### ➤ HYPOTHESIS – 2

H<sub>2</sub>: Customers' satisfaction is positively related with service quality.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no relationship between customers' satisfaction and service quality.

TABLE – 2: CHI – SQUARE TEST

Variables	Value	Df	Asymp.Sig
Tangibility	22.806 <sup>a</sup>	16	.119
Reliability	20.253 <sup>a</sup>	15	.162
Responsiveness	14.010 <sup>a</sup>	14	.449
Assurance	18.319 <sup>a</sup>	15	.246
Empathy	18.655 <sup>a</sup>	15	.230

Source: Field work

It can be concluded from the above results, that customers' satisfaction is positively related with service quality, each variable showing more significance level (>0.05). So the study reject null hypothesis.

### ➤ HYPOTHESIS – 3

H<sub>3</sub>: There is an association between customer retention and service attributes offered by service provider.

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no association between customers retention and service attributes offered by service provider.

TABLE – 3: CHI-SQUARE TESTS

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Call rates	8.029 <sup>a</sup>	4	.452
Message pack	2.069 <sup>a</sup>	4	.183
Tariff plan	2.990 <sup>a</sup>	5	.409
Billing system	5.104 <sup>a</sup>	5	.951
Network quality	2.879 <sup>a</sup>	5	.610
Validity	6.080 <sup>a</sup>	5	.721
Accessibility	3.675 <sup>a</sup>	5	.752
Value added services	9.095 <sup>a</sup>	5	.245

Source: Field work

Table -3 shows the attributes offered by service provider. Attributes is showing more than 0.05 level of significance. Message pack is showing least significance level where as billing system is showing high level of significance. The result shows that there is an association between service attributes offered by service provider and customer loyalty. So, the study accepts alternative hypothesis and reject null hypothesis.

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Customers' expectations are not matching with service offered by Airtel service provider.
- Around 33 customers have expected good network quality service, 20 respondents expected more and different tariff plan, 19 respondents expected reduction in charges especially for call rates.
- Customers' are satisfied with quality of service offered by service provider. Each variable is showing high significant level.
- Chi – square tests indicate that there is an association between service attributes offered by service provider and customer loyalty.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Respondents of Mysore city are satisfied with the actual services offered by Airtel mobile service provider. As per the results of the study the respondents are expecting more offers in call rates with low price, a good quality of network and more offers in tariff plan. Most of the customers have stressed on better offers in message packs and value added services with low charges. Respondents are satisfied with all the variables. Based on the opinions of the respondents, the study recommends Airtel service provider to give attention towards sale services, call rates, message pack with low prices and value added service with low charges. It also found that respondents are satisfied with reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy but less satisfied with tangibility. Customers expect that Airtel service provider has to respond for all the problems and should give individual attention.

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