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INTRODUCTION
REVIEW OF LITERATURE
NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
OBJECTIVES
HYPOTHESIS (ES)
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
RESULTS & DISCUSSION
FINDINGS
RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS
CONCLUSIONS
LIMITATIONS
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- Always indicate the date that the source was accessed, as online resources are frequently updated or removed.

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IMPLICATIONS OF MARKETING STRATEGIES ON TELECOM SERVICES: A STUDY IN BANGALORE

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ABSTRACT

An important contribution of this study is how marketing strategy is developed and sustained over different target market in telecommunication sector. The beneficiaries of the competition are the consumers, who are given a wide variety of services. In the years to come the country is predicted to witness a communication revolution, which would increase the subscriber base to match that of the developed world. The future commitment of the customers to organization depends on perceived marketing element. The issue and challenges is therefore increasingly recognized as a critical success factor in the emerging scenario.

KEYWORDS

telecom service, networking, marketing strategies, technology.

ABBREVIATIONS

IT	Information Technology
PCO	public call office
ISDN	Integrated Services Digital Network,
GSM	Global System for Mobile communications
CDMA	Code Division Multiple Access
GPSS	Gateway Packet Switched Data Services
CPS	Concert Packet Service
DoT	Department of Telecom

INTRODUCTION

Globalization, liberalization and privatization are the three most spoken words in today's world. These initiatives paved way for all-round reforms, especially in developing economies, like India. These countries realized that development of effective and efficient means of communications and information technology is important to push them onto the path of development. The growth of the telecom sector in India during post-liberalization has been phenomenal. This research aims to throw light on the factors that contributed to growth in the segment and presents an insight on the present status of the industry.

NATIONAL TELECOM POLICY - OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the NTP 1999 are as under:

- Access to telecommunications is of most importance for achievement of the country's social and economic goals. Availability of affordable and effective communication for the citizens is at the core of the vision and goal of the telecom policy.
- Strive to provide a balance between the provision of universal service to all uncovered areas, including the rural areas, and the provision of high-level services capable of meeting the needs of the country's economy.
- Encourage development of telecommunications facilities in remote, hilly and tribal areas of the country.
- Create a modern and efficient telecommunications infrastructure taking into account the convergence of IT, media, and telecom and consumer electronics and thereby propel India emerging as IT superpower.
- Convert PCOs, wherever justified, into Public Tele information centers having multimedia capability like ISDN services, remote database access, government and community information systems, etc.
- Transform in a time bound manner, the telecommunications sector to a greater competitive environment in both urban and rural areas providing equal opportunities and level playing field for all players.
- Strengthen research and development efforts in the country and to provide an importance to build world-class manufacturing capabilities.
- Achieve efficiency and transparency in spectrum management.
- Protect defense and security interests of the country.
- Enable Indian telecom companies to become truly global players.

TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES

Today tariff for telecommunication services in India is one of the lowest in the world. The Indian consumer has immensely benefited from such lower tariffs which has also been a major factor for explosive growth in the sector.

The list of services offered by both GSM and CDMA operators are telephone services, NSD/ISD services, computerized trunk services, pay phones, national & international leased lines circuits, telex, X-25 based Packer Switched Data Network (NET), Gateway Packet Switched Data Services (GPSS), Gateway Electronic Data Interchange Service (GEDIS), Gateway E-Mail and Store & Forward FAX Service (GEMS-400), Concert Packet Service (CPS), Satellite based remote area business message network, Electronic Mail, Voice, Audio-text, Radio paging, cellular mobile telephone, public mobile radio trunked service, video-text, video conferencing, V-SAT, internet, ISDN, INMARSAT mobile service, INMARSAT data service, Home country direct service, Intelligent Network (IN) services.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Telecom in India is one of the fastest growing sectors. It has undergone both evolutionary and revolutionary changes. Latter is faster, farther and deeper than the former. Telecom has completely shaken the way of communicating among the masses and corporate sector. The process of globalization is facilitated by communication through interconnectivity, networking and the speed with which information is flooding. The concepts of globalization, liberalization, marketisation and privatization are more pronounced in the telecom sector of our country. Instantaneous connectivity, access, interception is made feasible by high-end cutting edge technology. The speed with which changes are taking place in the sector is inexplicable. The advancement in technology made so many products and services obsolete and brought in the new sophisticated communication media. The rate of obsolescence is very high owing to the Research and Development (R&D) in telecom and Information Technology (IT) sector. The life cycle of the products and services are very low. The environment of telecom sector is highly turbulent making existing functional practices to fall out within a short period of time and the service providers have to continuously scan the internal and external environments for strategic and beneficial practices.

On the economic front, the telecom players are shattered with cut-throat competition and every player is facing the challenges and threats in the complex environment. The position of the service provider will be jeopardized unless the company rises to the occasion to be proactive, pragmatic and positive. Among all challenges confronting the players, the major challenges such as investment of capital, controlling customer churn, increasing customer base, devicing strategic methodologies and practices for increasing the Average Revenue Per User (ARPU), keeping in pace with technological advancements, revenue sharing by transparent interconnection agreements with different players and meeting regulatory requirements are more important. The service providers in the telecom industry must judiciously manage resources and technology with effective marketing for organizational effectiveness.

The telecom industry is highly technology sensitive. This entails innovation and creativity through Research and Development (R&D) through committed and talented workforce. The challenges and opportunities and threats are coexisting. On one hand, there exists a vast scope for expansion by penetrating to rural India and on the other, the organizational structures are revamped and revitalized in view of global competition to become mean and lean endangering the positions hitherto enjoyed by the labor force. The recent paradigm shifts in the telecom industry, more particularly in the telecom services sector, calls for undertaking a micro level research study to unearth the new challenges, opportunities to be tapped and strategies to be framed in a holistic way to sustain in the telecom sector. Hence the present study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the telecom industry of India in general;
2. To ascertain the challenges, opportunities and threats for telecom players;
3. To make a critical study about the strategies framed, implemented and evaluated from time to time by the service providers;
4. To analyze the implications of the paradigm shifts in the sector vis-à-vis stakeholders; and
5. To validate the data on the topic, arrive at findings and to offer constructive suggestions to the players and stakeholders for addressing various challenges.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study encompasses the telecom scenario, telecom policy, telecom regulatory authorities, appellate tribunal, private players participation, growth of tele density, opportunities, challenges and strategies for telecom players, benefits to the customers, globalization trends and growth of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and corporate sectors with increased and reliable telecom infrastructure, digital divide, quality of services, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in telecom sectors, spectrum management, revenues sharing among different service providers, network growth, employment generation, telecom revolution, new vistas, organizational policies, philosophies, values, culture, code of ethics and the like practiced by Government and private players, fair competition, tariff structure, pricing, ease of getting a telecom service and a host of others.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature survey is the bedrock for carrying out any purposeful and objective research programme. The essence of review of literature lies in ascertaining the research gap. What has already been covered on the topic 'Telecom Services Challenges and Strategies - An Empirical Study' by the earlier researchers and what needs to be covered speaks about the chasm. Accordingly, a sincere and honest attempt has been made to identify the research gap. For this purpose, books, articles, reports, news bulletins, dissertations, theses, journals, magazines, international institutional reports, CD ROMs, microfilms and the like have been thoroughly and comprehensively reviewed.

Anthony M. Townsend and Mitchell L. Moss (2005) in their research article, coherently describe the breakdown of essential communications, which is one of the most widely shared characteristics of all disasters. Despite the increasing reliability and resiliency of modern telecommunications networks to physical damage, the risk associated with communications failures remains serious because of growing dependence upon these tools in emergency operations. The Indian Ocean tsunami of December 2004 highlighted the human cost of Communications breakdowns during disasters. Communications failures in New York City on September 11 contributed directly to the loss of at least 300 firefighters. In the 1995 earthquake that struck Kobe, Japan, communications failures prevented outsiders from receiving timely information about the severity of damage. This report establishes a framework for understanding the interaction between large urban disasters and telecommunications infrastructure, drawing upon the experiences of the 1990s and 2000s.

Ashok Jhunjhunwala, et al. (2004) in their paper, in an astute manner with great concern for the rural masses, outlines that for a very long time now, the developing world has carried the burden of colonization and slavery. This has resulted in a lack of confidence among developing economies and the belief that they are not at par with the rest of the world. The lack of 'access' has curtailed their ability to compete. In fact, ingenuity and hard work has not been adequate for one to enjoy economic and social benefit. In order to acquire these benefits, access to resources like education, health, employment and rural connectivity become critical. This paper concentrates on how ICT can affect the lives of rural people in the developing world. The total rural population of the developing world is about 3.5 billion, with their average per capita income being no more than $ 200 per year. India, with 700 million rural people located in 600,000 villages, is a reflection of the developing world. Over the last 15 years, the state owned incumbent telecom operator, BSNL, has taken fiber to almost every taluka (county town) in India. These fiber lines are infinite bandwidth pipes.

Joseph E. Stiglitz (2005) highlights telecom as driver of change. Major changes in global economy have been brought about by telecom. Boom in 1990s led to over investment and excess capacity leading to low costs of connectivity. Telecom revolution will facilitate trade in services, not just in goods. Education, research issues may be of even more relevance for competition in Information Technology (IT), telecom, and related sectors. He concludes that telecom sector is a driver of change and it is driven by change leading to new market opportunities because it is at the forefront of innovation.

Vittal N (2001) judiciously identifies four engines, which are driving the telecom reform not only in India but also in the world. These four engines are technology, political will, regulatory activism, and market dynamics. The basic point to be remembered in the context of convergence is that whatever decisions the regulatory authorities take should be able to encourage competition. When it comes to competition, the critical word is pluralism. Pluralism would mean that when it comes to service providers, there could be a multiplicity of service providers. Further, pluralism should also be encouraged when it comes to the quality of service. The author raises the basic question of Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) service vis-à-vis cellular service. He opines that even fixed telephony using Multi Access Relay Radio (MARR) technology has a tinge of mobility.

Rekha Jain et al., (2002) in their paper attempted to address the issues by examining the budgetary process of the Department of Telecommunications (DOT) in the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (IT), with respect to the Government of India. The issues covered are transfer of funds, dividends, pensions, license fees, privatization, tax, social obligations and the USO, spectrum, security and Human Resource Development (HRD). The paper then looks at the relation of the DOT with its Public Sector Units (PSU) with an emphasis on the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) Corporatization and the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) privatization. Eventually, the paper focuses on the broader policy aspects of public expenditure in the telecom sector, with a perspective on the future.

RESEARCH GAP

Considerable research has gone into the topics of the telecom sector. Professionals, academicians, consultants and players have contributed their mite on the drastic metamorphosis of various aspects in the industry. However, none of them have covered comprehensively the parameters involving challenges, opportunities and strategies through an empirical study prevailing in the sector. Only handful of people covered certain topics hither thither. There exists a large chunk of research gap on the topic. The present study is aimed at narrowing down the research gap meaningfully incorporating all the vital parameters.

HYPOTHESES

Hypotheses are the milestones, guideposts, beacon lights that show the path for the researcher to carry out his/her research programme effectively. Hypothesis indicates the independent and dependent variables based on which, only relevant data are mustered eliminating the unrelated ones. Thereby it saves researcher's time, money, time and energy.

Hypotheses are the conjectures or tentative statements. Their validations are to be tested by gathering the primary data and analyzing them with appropriate statistical tools and techniques. Thereafter, they may be either accepted or rejected on the basis of the level of significance of Chi-Square test results. The present study invariably revolves around four well-constructed hypotheses. They are enumerated as below-

1. The entry of private firms has brought in a deluge of formidable challenges, opportunities and threats in the telecom industry.
2. There is a strong relationship between high customer satisfaction and quality of services in the telecom industry.
3. The strategy formulation, implementation and its evaluation is owing to rapid paradigm shifts in the telecom sector; and
4. The infallibility exists neither with telecom players nor with the telecom service users.

METHODOLOGY

(I) TYPE OF RESEARCH

The study used survey, descriptive and analytical method of research

(II) SAMPLING

The sample respondents under the study mainly constitute service providers and customers. The service providers are the core respondents in as much as they have been encountering challenges, opportunities and threats arising out of changes in the environmental forces such as Government policy, competition, economic reforms, technology, value added services, socio cultural effects and globalization. From the prospective of service providers, the telecom sector revolution has gained high velocity with transcendental effects and ramifications.

The list of service providers in Karnataka constitute sample frame. In order to have a comprehensive study, all the six important players have been considered for the study and that forms census survey.

Entire Karnataka is divided in to four zones and in each zone 250 respondents have been picked up on the basis of random sampling technique. In addition, 50 corporate consumers have been identified to answer the questionnaire specifically meant for them, which comprehensively covers the essentials of telecom services as per the needs of corporate consumers. The zones are A, B, C and D. Zone A comprises of Mysore, Chamarjanagar, Mandya, Tumkur and Kolar. Zone B consists of Hubli, Davanagere, Belgaum, Bijapur, Gulbarga and Bidar Zone C is in Mangalore cluster comprising of Mangalore, Udupi, Karwar, Sakaleshpur and Hassan. Zone D comprises of Bangalore city. In all the zones, about 10 percent of the respondents have been picked up from the rural population.

As far as the study is concerned, DOT, TRAI and TDSAT are considered as supplier of secondary data in the form of policies, procedures, Interconnect Usage Charges (IUC) revenue sharing structure, guidelines for tariffs, Quality of Services (QOS) and the like. Therefore, the primary data providers are service providers and consumers.

(III) DATA COLLECTION

PRIMARY DATA

The methodology adopted for this research programme is survey cum descriptive cum empirical one. Well-structured questionnaires for service providers and customers were prepared and administered to gather the primary data on the topic. To elicit further information personal interview of the respondents were undertaken. At times, to study the behavior of the customers, observations were resorted to.

SECONDARY DATA

For the purpose of gathering secondary data, mainly for reviewing the literature and identifying research gap, books, articles, survey reports, journals, annual reports of DOT, TRAI news bulletins and notices, TDSAT publications, reports of service providers, SEBI publications were utilized.

(IV) PLAN OF ANALYSIS

For the purpose of analyzing data, the statistical tools and techniques such as averages, percentages, dispersions, and chi square test have been used. To make the data presentable, in a meaningful way, wherever necessary tables, charts, diagrams, graphs have been made use of.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study encountered certain shortcomings. They are:

1. The volatile and dynamic changes in the telecom sector really made the study to catch the speed and update the information.
2. The findings of the study may not be useful in the long run owing to changes and strides in the sector.
3. Fear of the players to divulge core information
4. The Presence of subjective bias to certain extent.
5. Only mobile and /or basic service providers are chosen as respondents for the study excluding National Long Distance, International Long Distance and other players like Internet Service Providers.

REFERENCE PERIOD

The study commenced from September 2011 and completed in month of May 2013

PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE COMPANIES

This chapter covers the vision, mission, goal and objectives, values, corporate philosophy and other details of

1. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited
2. Reliance Communications
3. Bharti Tele Ventures
4. Hutchisson Essar
5. Tata Teleservices Limited
6. Spice Communications Limited

MARKETING STRATEGIES OF TELECOM SERVICES – ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Under this chapter, the socio-economic analysis of telecom services by the service providers incorporating their challenges, opportunities and threats are comprehensively analyzed. Going further, the appropriate strategy formulation and implementation are critically examined vis-à-vis telecom policy proposals. Subsequently the obvious paradigm shifts in the telecom industry considering typical parameters are lucidly analyzed. Eventually, the hypotheses are tested to know their veracity. The entire chapter is divided into four parts. Part A discusses challenges, opportunities and threats. Part B depicts the strategy formulated and implemented by the service providers in accordance with the ever-changing climate in the industry. Part C speaks of the quality of services and paradigm shifts realities and part D robustly portrays the spectrum of hypotheses testing results. The details are –

TELECOM CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

The opening up of telecom sector to the private players and liberating the sector from the clutches of the monopoly paved way for the emergence of infinite challenges, opportunities and at the same time the demonic threats. What are the real challenges, opportunities and threats that are ruling the telecom industry? How the players and other stakeholders effectively utilize these opportunities? What are the new telecom pursuits in the opened up regime? What are these new telecom policy proposals? These and other factors necessitate a re-look into the sector. Hence, the primary data have been gathered and analyzed sequentially and logically in the following sub-heads.

AWARENESS OF TELECOM POLICY PROPOSALS BY THE SERVICE PROVIDERS

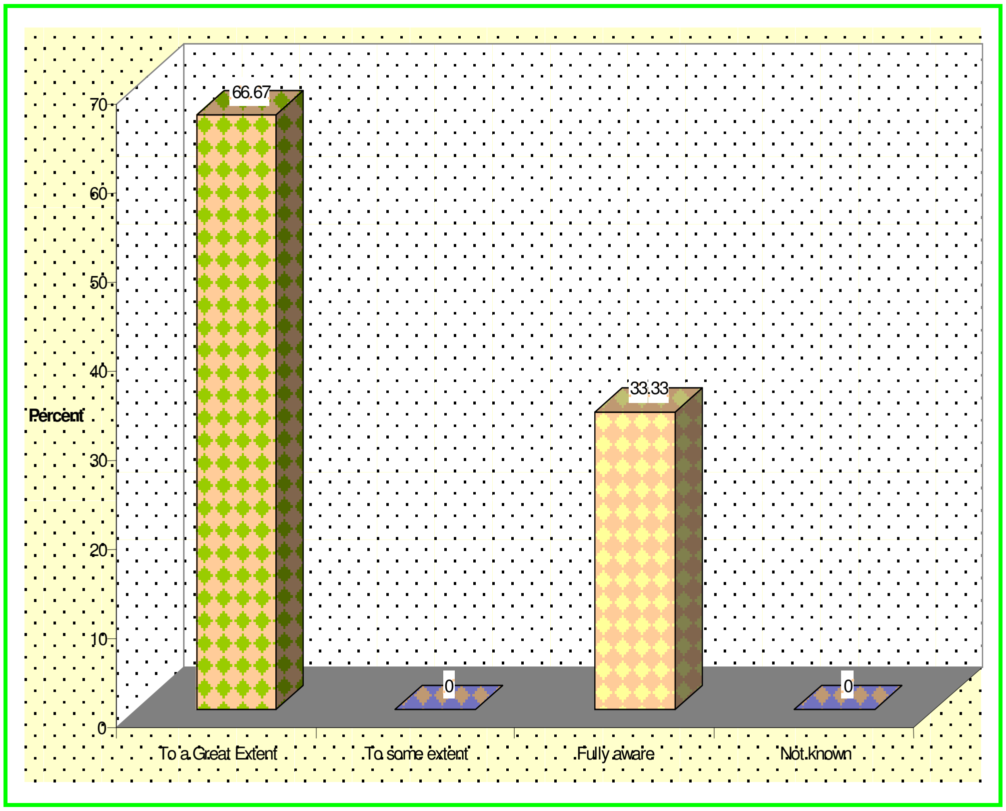
Telecom service providers to render effective services by evolving appropriate strategy, in the first place, should know and diagnose the policy proposals of the policy makers. How far they are aware of the policy proposals propagated from time to time? To elicit this information from the service providers, a question was asked to them on a four-point scale. The responses are analyzed in table 1 and figure 1 respectively.

TABLE 1: AWARENESS OF TELECOM POLICY PROPOSALS BY THE SERVICE PROVIDERS (N=6)

Sl No	*Scale*	*Number*	*Percent*
1	To a Great Extent	04	66.67
2	To some extent	0	0
3	Fully aware	02	33.33
4	Not known	0	0
Total		**06**	**100**

Source: Primary Data

FIGURE 1: AWARENESS OF TELECOM POLICY PROPOSALS BY THE SERVICE PROVIDERS



Sixty six percent of the service provider respondents know telecom policy proposals to a great extent while the remaining 33.33 percent of the respondents all the policy proposals. Interestingly, there is none who does not know the telecom policy proposals. It can be concluded that awareness of policy proposals is the initial step to evolve strategies for offering quality services to the users. In this connection, the responses are satisfactory.

STRATEGY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION BY TELECOM FIRMS

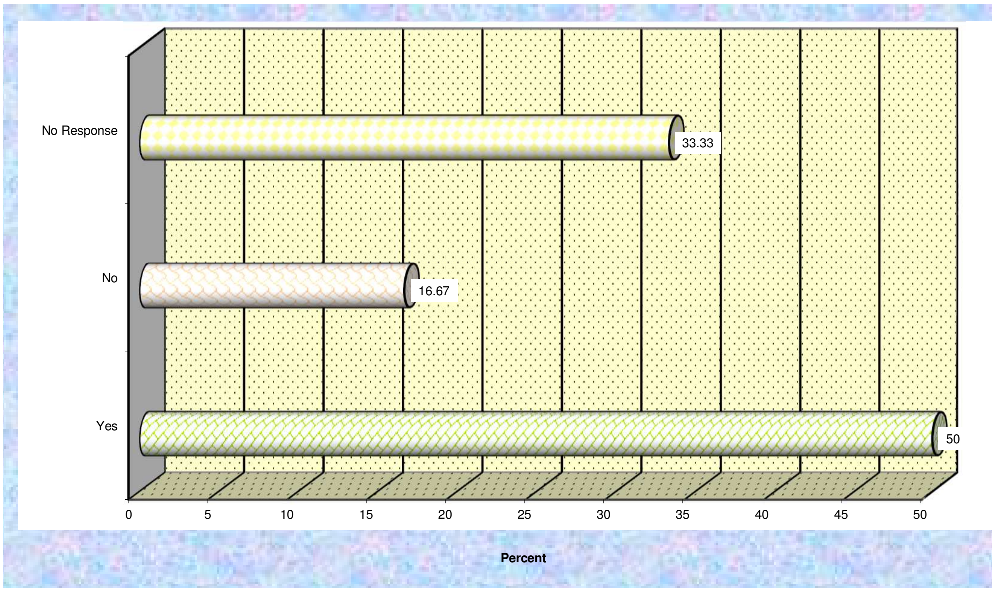
SHORTCOMINGS IN THE POLICY STATEMENTS

TABLE 2: SHORTCOMINGS IN THE POLICY STATEMENTS

Statement	*Yes*	*No*	*No Response*	*Total*
Do You find any shortcomings in the Telecom Policy Statements?	3 (16.67%)	1 (50%)	2 (33.33%)	6 (100%)

Source: Primary Data

FIGURE 2: SHORTCOMINGS IN THE POLICY STATEMENTS



Lack of clarity in respect of spectrum policy, CDMA and GSM Convergence strategies towards further technological advancement s and encashing the same for increasing teledensity, policy formulation for the budding technologies like WiMax. There should be unambiguous guiding principles for IUC agreements especially with state owned operators so that free and fair two-way agreements for traffic flow and revenue sharing is ensured. Presently, the IUC agreements with State owned operators are favorable for the government operators and private operators do not have much say in the case of disputes. Bureaucratic processes like clearances from TEC and the like must be simplified.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

This sub-section forms the DNA of the research problem and its solution. The tentative statement s which constitute the hypotheses need to be tested in order to prove or disprove the conjectures of the study. The veracity of any statement formed at the beginning of a research programme can be known only after gathering the relevent primary data and analysing them with aprropriate statistical traeatment. The study harps up on four vital and focal hypotheses. In the following pages, these are morefully expounded.

Hypothesis 1

The entry of private firms has brought in a deluge of formidable challenges, opportunities and threats in the telecom industry.

TABLE 3: CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT ARISING OUT OF OPENING UP OF THE SECTOR FOR PRIVATE PARTICIPATION (SERVICE PROVIDERS' DATA ANALYSIS)

Sl No	Parameter	Table No	Chi-Square Value at 0.5 percent level of significance	Remarks
1	Technology	4.8	0.655	Insignificant
2	Competition	4.8	0.624	Insignificant
3	Liberalization	4.8	0.636	Insignificant
4	Privatization	4.8	0.649	Insignificant
5	Flow of FDI	4.8	0.499	significant
6	Inflation and deflation	4.8	0.382	significant
7	Cultural change	4.8	0.552	Insignificant
8	Regulatory Mechanisms	4.8	0.611	Insignificant
9	Globalization	4.8	0.614	Insignificant
10	Amendments to the telegraphic acts	4.8	0.699	Insignificant
11	Population	4.8	0.545	Insignificant
12	Emergence of infotech society	4.8	0.632	Insignificant
13	Surging purchasing power	4.8	0.599	Insignificant

From the above Chi-square analysis results, it shows that, the hypothesis "*The entry of private firms has brought in a deluge of formidable challenges, opportunities and threats in the telecom industry"* is proved beyond doubt. The figures indicate that at 0.5 percent level of significance, the Chi-Square values for majority of the parameters show more than 0.05 values. It can, therefore, be inferred that the statistical relationship between conducive environment and the entry of private service providers- their consequential ramifications, that is, an innumerable opportunities, challenges and threats has arisen for the telecom players in our country. The tentative statement received insignificant opinions from the service provider respondents. Hence, the stated hypothesis hold good.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. FINDINGS

GROWTH OF INDIAN TELECOM SECTOR

Indian mobile telephony may be called as "the sun-rise industry" of the Indian economy because of outstanding performance on various parameters.

- Rate of growth in mobile subscriber base has been substantially higher than growth in population, indicating a rapid proliferation of telecom services and adoption by nonusers/ first-time users.
- Teledensity has also gone up which is a reflection of the above discussion.
- From 2002 to 2008, traffic or usage of mobile phones increased, but the increase was not uniform during the period. Till 2003, mobile usage went up gradually but year 2004 onwards saw an era of speedy increase in mobile traffic. It was probably because of the reasons that in initial day of mobile telephony, call rates were high and the number of services offered by cellular operators was limited. However, 2003 onwards, because of the slashed prices and add-on-services resulted in sudden increase in traffic.
- Private operators have also shown remarkable growth in a highly competitive environment. The mobile subscriber base has grown by a factor of over a hundred and thirty, from 5 million subscribers in 2001 to over 680 million subscribers as of Sep 2010 (a period of less than 9 years). Private operators have

contributed very largely to post 1998 growth primarily in mobile services due to the obvious cost and fast deployment advantages. Competition, foreign direct investment and privatization have following implications for Indian Telecom Industry.

B. CONCLUSION

- As a result of the liberalization, privatization, and demonopolization initiatives taken by the government of India, the telecom sector is experiencing a historical growth. The trend is expected to continue in the segment, as prices are falling as a result of competition in the segment. The beneficiaries of the competition are the consumers, who are given a wide variety of services. In the years to come the country is predicted to witness a communication revolution, which would increase the subscriber base to match that of the developed world. The need of the time is a new revolution in telecom services and it is imperative that service providers work towards the same and make it a reality.

C. SUGGESTIONS

- Awareness of policy proposals is the initial step to evolve strategies for offering quality services to the users, the telecom service providers should take note of this.
- The telecom service users find it difficult to get proper rural area service network and therefore the telecom service providers suggested to cover an early as possible the rural area network coverage
- Majority of the players are grumbling over the absence of perfect level playing ground. The Government of India should help telecom firms with necessary funds to create infrastructure and compete with global network.
- There is telecom billing errors and customers are finding it very difficult to come out of the problem. It is suggested to the telecom firms to tender the correct bills as continuous error in the bills will make customer to shift their loyalty from one firm to another.
- It is also evident from the analysis that there exists ample scope for service providers to improve on accessibility and personalised services to the telecom users.
- The innovative experiences of respondents have shown that the telecom services are highly influential in the society and beneficial to the consumers. This can be capitalized further by strengthening the value added services at reasonable prices.
- A large chunk of 66.67 percent agreed to the emergence of Info-Tech society owing to the telecom revolution. It should reach every common in the rural area as inclusive telecom growth for development of the country in the near future.

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