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HYPOTHESES

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

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A SURVEY ON CONSUMER ATTITUDE TO CHOOSE AND USE VARIOUS TELECOM SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

With the introduction of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) concept in the telecom sector in India, service quality and customer satisfaction has become a yardstick to achieve business success. More focus has been laid on the customer requirement and fulfilling them under single window solution. Faced with the stiff competition in the market, telecom companies are adopting various imperative business strategies to survive in the market. Customers are also in a demanding position, asking for their requirement. This study analyses the consumer attitude in choosing and using of various telecom services. Based on the type of service, it has been categorized into three service area, viz. Landline services, Mobile services and Internet services. This study represents the findings of quantitative and qualitative research into consumer attitude towards the choosing and usage of telecom services in India. The very purpose of the research is to provide an insight into the understanding of the consumer demand according to the telecom market. The main objectives of the study are to identify the level of usage of various telecom services, the factors that motivate the customer to choose the particular service, the perception and the decision of the customer to choose the service and the influence of various factors like age, gender, economic status, household structure, life style and locality in the service usage.

KEYWORDS

Consumer Attitude, LPG, Marketing, Survey, Telecom Service.

INTRODUCTION

Telecom sector in India has witnessed tremendous growth in the past two decades. From Mechanical and Electro-mechanical switches, rapid development has paved the way for newer technology telecom switches and equipment. With the introduction of auto-exchanges and the low cost switches which are tailor-made for Indian conditions, the tele-density in the country has seen a vast and unparalleled rise. Based on the New Telecom Policies, the sector was opened for private operators which introduced stiff competition and level playing field in the market. With the introduction of wireless technology in India, the gates were wide open to deepen the tele-density and penetration to the sub-urban and rural parts of the country. Today, Cell phones have become an integral part of basic amenities for almost every individual and the cost per call is very much reduced compared to the fixed line services. In the country, the number of mobile connections has already exceeded that of the wired services. Ease of establishment of front end connection and the advanced technologies which could accommodate bulk of customer base and switching activities at the back end led to the major rise. When mobile services almost reaching the saturation point, Next Generation Networks (NGN) has started emerging which works on data transmission and reception. In NGN, every information whether voice or data is sent in the form of digitized packets across globally. When internet ruling the world today, entire globe has become a small village and the access and sharing of information across the world is inevitable. So the provision of Internet services to the demanding mass community is the need of the hour. Broadband and Internet Leased Line (ILL) services provide internet services through the wired technologies where as Mobile 2G, 3G services and WIMAX provide internet through wireless technologies. The three different telecom services, landline, mobile and internet are the broad categories which attracts the customer market. Focus has to be given by the telecom operators to attract new customers and to satisfy the existing ones. So a consumer attitude analysis regarding the willingness to take up these services and the usage pattern need to be done to meet out the customer demands.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE**NATIONAL TELECOM POLICY 1994**

In 1994, the Government announced the National Telecom Policy which defined certain important objectives, including availability of telephone on demand, provision of world class services at reasonable prices, improving India's competitiveness in global market and promoting exports, attractive FDI and stimulating domestic investment, ensuring India's emergence as major manufacturing / export base of telecom equipment and universal availability of basic telecom services to all villages. It also announced a series of specific targets to be achieved by 1997.

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA (TRAI)

The entry of private service providers brought with it the inevitable need for independent regulation. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) was, thus, established with effect from 20th February 1997 by an Act of Parliament, called the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997, to regulate telecom services, including fixation/revision of tariffs for telecom services which were earlier vested in the Central Government. TRAI's mission is to create and nurture conditions for growth of telecommunications in the country in manner and at a pace, which will enable India to play a leading role in emerging global information society. One of the main objectives of TRAI is to provide a fair and transparent policy environment, which promotes a level playing field and facilitates fair competition. In pursuance of above objective TRAI has issued from time to time a large number of regulations, orders and directives to deal with issues coming before it and provided the required direction to the evolution of Indian telecom market from a Government owned monopoly to a multi operator multi service open competitive market.

According to "Enhancing competition in telecommunications: protecting and empowering customers – 2008", policy and regulations in the telecom sector has been connected with the consumer interest including consumer protection and empowerment. Legislation, Policy and Statements always give importance to the welfare of the customers. Regulation of telecommunication services has covered a range of services including the regulation of licensing to permit the market entry, Interconnection, Numbering policy, Universal service, Local loop unbundling, Quality of service and Number portability.

International Journal of Business Research and Management states that "The Indian Telecom Industry has an overall teledensity of 72.09 in April 2011 and the mobile segment teledensity of 69.19" and the customer analysis is done by means of software statistic tools. The telecom industry in India has witnessed a transformation from a monolithic regime, through an age of de-regulation and privatization; it has seen the rapid rise of market players who offer innovative products and services. This change has been commensurate with the growth of the industry, now ranked the fifth largest in the world and soon expected to be

second largest. Faced with a growing market and increasing competition, companies in the telecom business are adopting to new technological imperatives in order to outperform their competitors.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To identify the levels of choosing and usage of various telecommunications services by consumers.
2. To explore consumer attitudes and behaviours towards these services, such as:

What motivates consumers to take up particular services?

Why do consumers use particular services?

How do consumers decide which services to purchase?

What do consumers perceive to be critical telecommunications services?

3. To ascertain how factors such as age, gender, occupation and locality influence consumer take-up and use of telecommunications services.

SURVEY DESIGN

The questionnaire was designed and prepared by the research scholar with the guidance of the supervisor. The questionnaire was informed by the qualitative phase and was designed to explore consumer attitude and behaviour. Many questions and terms within the questionnaire were not defined, which allowed the respondents to self-interpret or assess questions; this is highlighted in the research report where relevant.

DATA ANALYSIS

The quantitative survey was analysed by socio-economic and demographic factors, including by geographic location to identify any areas with significant differences. Only results with significant differences were reported in this research.

LIMITATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY

As an overview of consumer choosing and using a particular telecom service which is carried out within the focus groups showed there is no uniform consumer profile. Consumer behavior segments has been categorized as Enthusiastic Embracers who belong to young age group, Mainstream followers of middle age group and Techno non-adopters who are of old age group.

RESEARCH DESIGN

For the research analysis, the following format was prepared for collecting the response from the consumers. Questions were asked about customer using which of the services, landline, mobile, internet or combination of these three. Multiple choice answers were allowed for the question. Today's business environment forces the individual customer to have more than one mobile. A Question was framed for analyzing the nature of the customer having multiple mobile services. Among the mobile user segment, age wise analysis has also been done.

The salient feature of the research was to list out the benefits of choosing the particular service, either landline or mobile for both voice and internet purposes. Landline telephone has the general benefits such as cheaper calls, ease and convenient to use, shorter calls and better reception were listed and the consumers were asked to list out their order of preference. For Mobile services, the general benefits listed are mobility in usage, ease of handling, any time contact and the availability of using text messages. An option of no benefits has also been listed in both the questions to give the consumer the accurate level of selection.

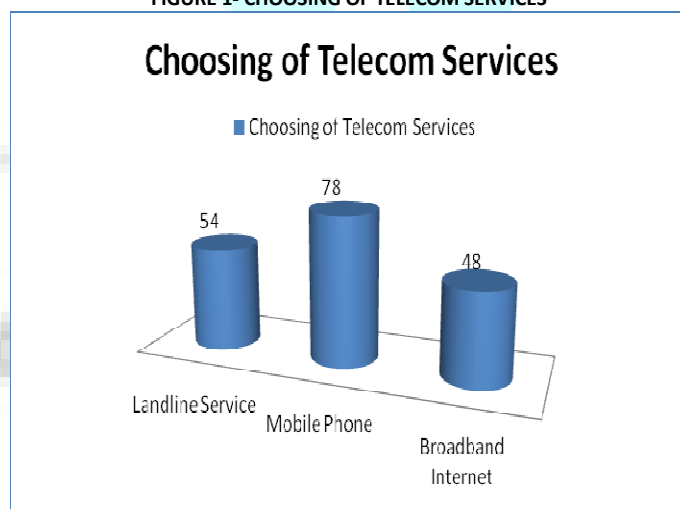
Today's world has been moving very fast and the percentage of people who are in mobility is increasing drastically. A question has been framed for finding the group of people who still believe the importance and advantages in the landline services. Internet connectivity in telecom services is becoming very vital and the questionnaire analyzed how the consumer was accessing the internet whether through wired or through wireless medium. Also, the usage of the internet services according to frequency. Finally from the financial point view, the amount spent for the internet usage per month has also been summarized.

RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

Based on the response from the participants, the following tabulation and graphical representation were demonstrated, which depicted the exact consume attitude towards the choosing and usage of the telecom services.

TABLE 1- CHOOSING OF TELECOM SERVICES	
Landline Service	54
Mobile Phone	78
Broadband Internet	48

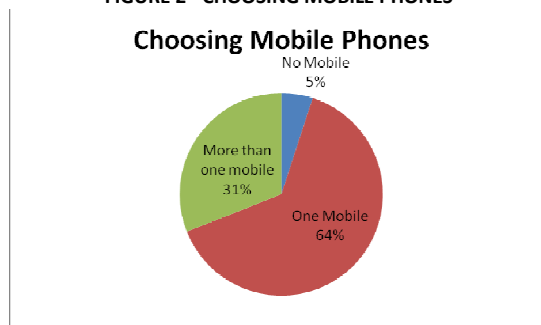
FIGURE 1- CHOOSING OF TELECOM SERVICES



While choosing the telecom services, most of the respondents were interested in choosing the mobile services (more than 75%) where as landline services were preferred by 54% of the sample. The usage of internet among the consmers was around 48%. The internet usage was either through broadband or mobile services. (Table -1 and Figure -1)

TABLE 2 - CHOOSING MOBILE PHONES	
No Mobile	5
One Mobile	64
More than one mobile	31

FIGURE 2 - CHOOSING MOBILE PHONES

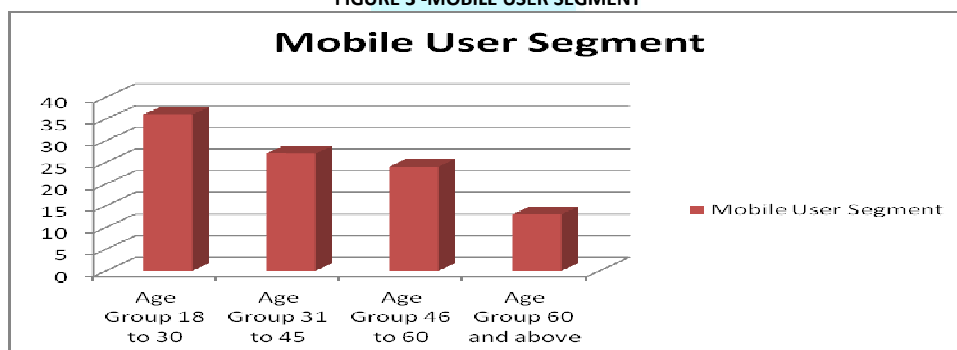


Among the respondents, around 64% of the people are having one mobile for their telecom usage. The increasing trend of consumers using more than one cell showed the deep penetration of the mobile market. The consumers distinguished the purpose of usage whether the mobile should be used for official or personal usage. Around 5% of respondents were not using mobile phones at all. (Table -2 and Figure -2)

TABLE 3 -MOBILE USER SEGMENT

Age Group 18 to 30	36
Age Group 31 to 45	27
Age Group 46 to 60	24
Age Group 60 and above	13

FIGURE 3 -MOBILE USER SEGMENT

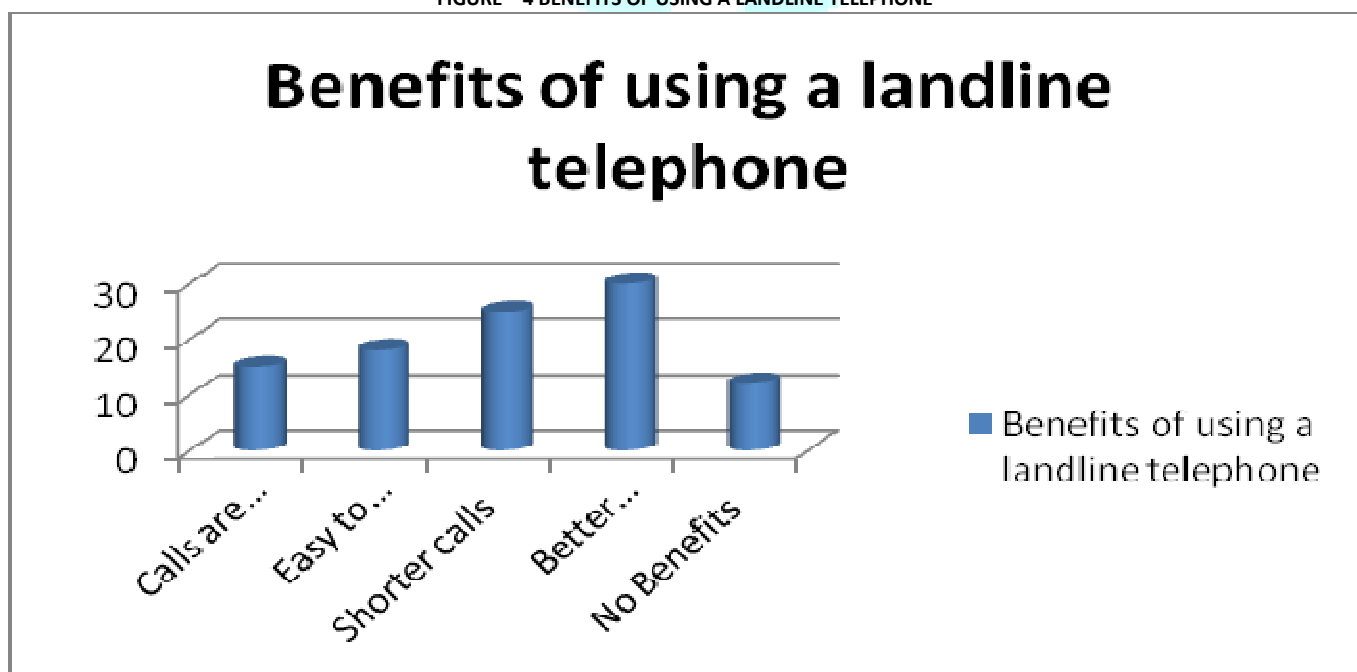


The age wise analysis clearly demonstrated the most attracted age group for the mobile market. Enthusiastic Embracers who belong to young age group are the majority (36%) in choosing mobile phone for their telecom service followed by Mainstream followers of middle age group and Techno non-adopters who were of old age group. (Table -3 and Figure -3)

TABLE - 4 BENEFITS OF USING A LANDLINE TELEPHONE

Calls are cheaper	15
Easy to handle / Convenient	18
Shorter calls	25
Better Reception	30
No Benefits	12

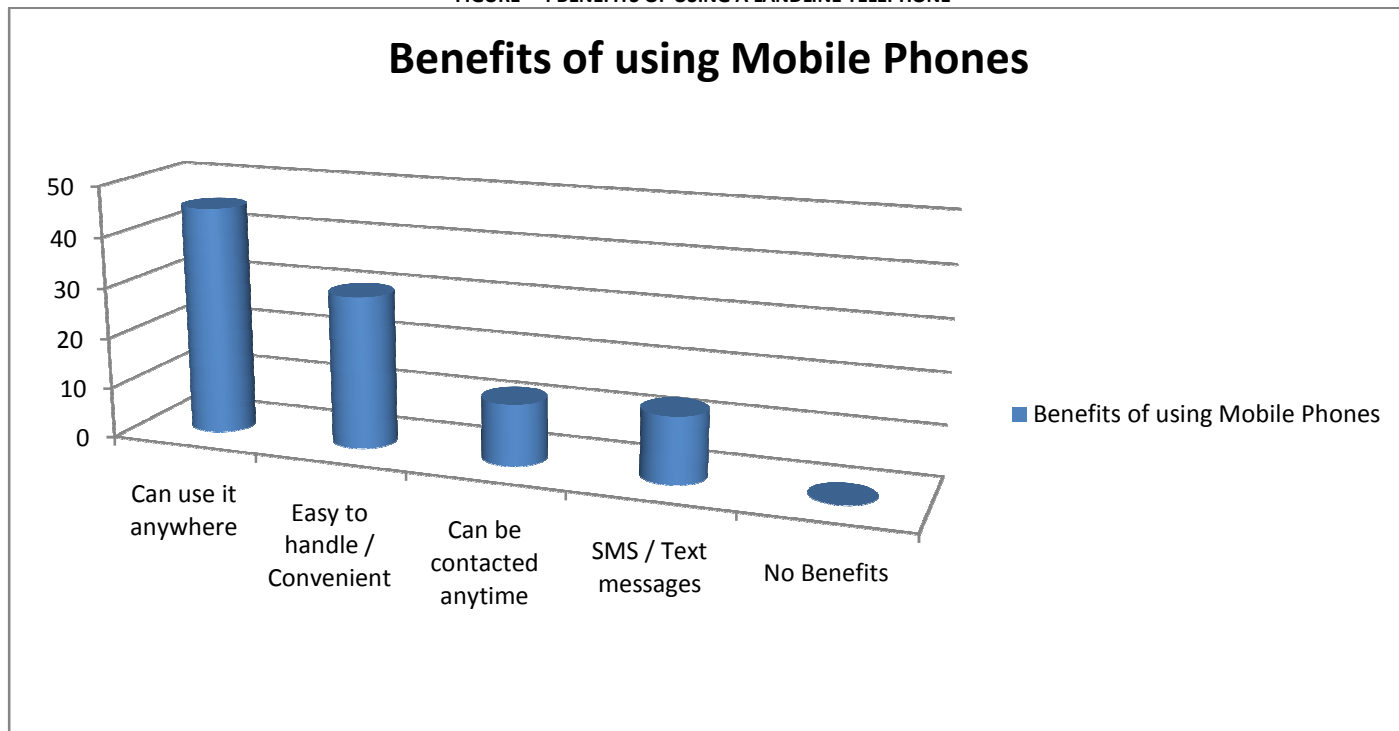
FIGURE - 4 BENEFITS OF USING A LANDLINE TELEPHONE



While listing the benefits of using the landline telecom service, the respondents were attracted towards the better reception quality. Landline services have become the tool for official calling purpose and the call durations were bound to be short which was one of the major benefits. There were some minor portion (12%) even stated that there were no benefits in landline services. (Table - 4 and Figure - 4)

TABLE 5 - BENEFITS OF USING MOBILE PHONES	
Can use it anywhere	45
Easy to handle / Convenient	30
Can be contacted anytime	12
SMS / Text messages	13
No Benefits	0

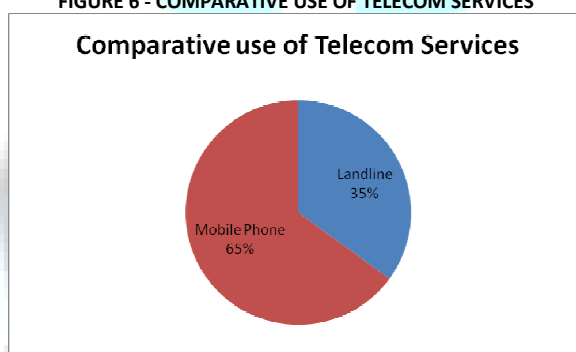
FIGURE – 4 BENEFITS OF USING A LANDLINE TELEPHONE



The foremost benefit of Mobile services was it could be used anywhere. Also people found that it was very easy to handle and it was convenient. The unique feature of SMS text was also found to be the next major benefit. (Table -5 and Figure -5)

TABLE 6 - COMPARATIVE USE OF TELECOM SERVICES	
Landline	35
Mobile Phone	65

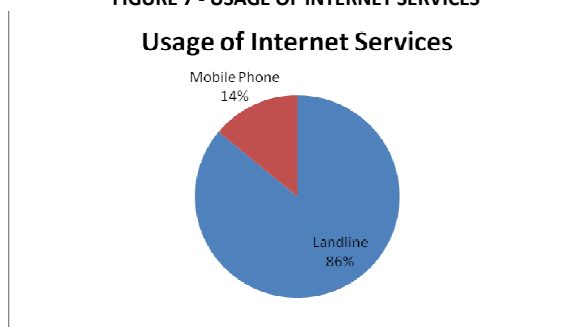
FIGURE 6 - COMPARATIVE USE OF TELECOM SERVICES



The world has been turning towards mobility and thus showed in the research also. Around 65% of the respondents preferred mobile phone service over landline services (Table -6 and Figure -6)

TABLE 7 - USAGE OF INTERNET SERVICES	
Landline	86
Mobile Phone	14

FIGURE 7 - USAGE OF INTERNET SERVICES

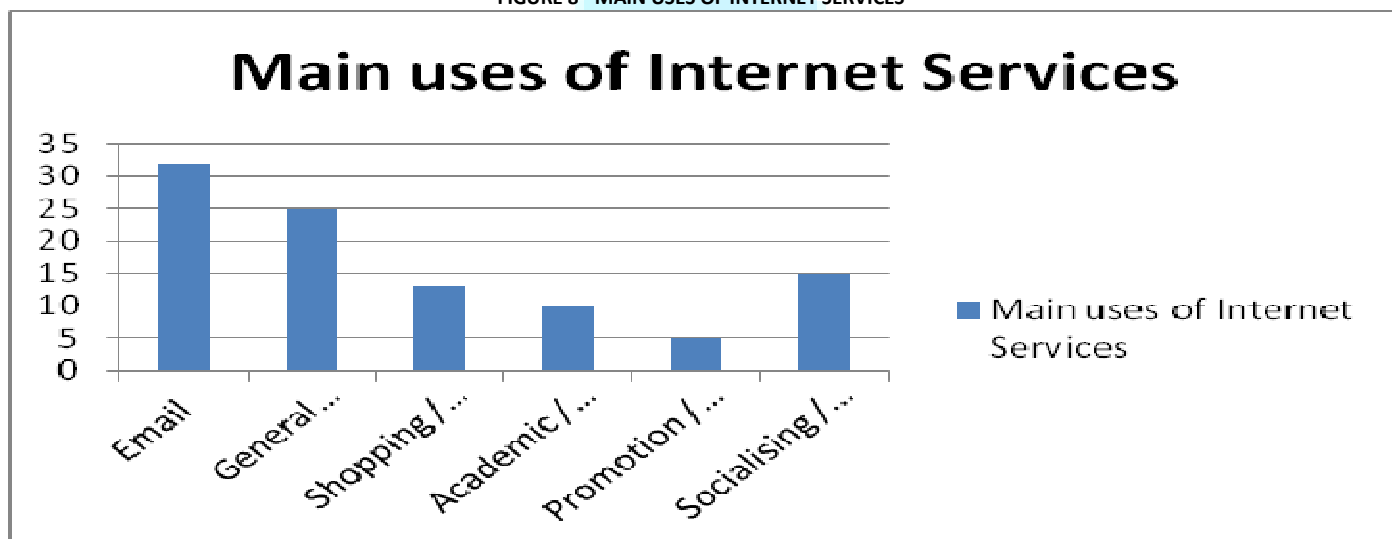


For Internet usage purpose, people still preferred Landline services over Mobile phone. Broadband connectivity yielded best recognition countrywide and people found high speed internet was very much possible using wired services. People who preferred internet browsing while in mobility used 2G/3G services for internet and thus preferred mobile phone choice (14%). (Table -7 and Figure -7)

TABLE 8 - MAIN USES OF INTERNET SERVICES

Email	32
General Browsing	25
Shopping / Paying Bills	13
Academic / Business Research	10
Promotion / Publishing	5
Socialising / Entertainment	15

FIGURE 8 - MAIN USES OF INTERNET SERVICES

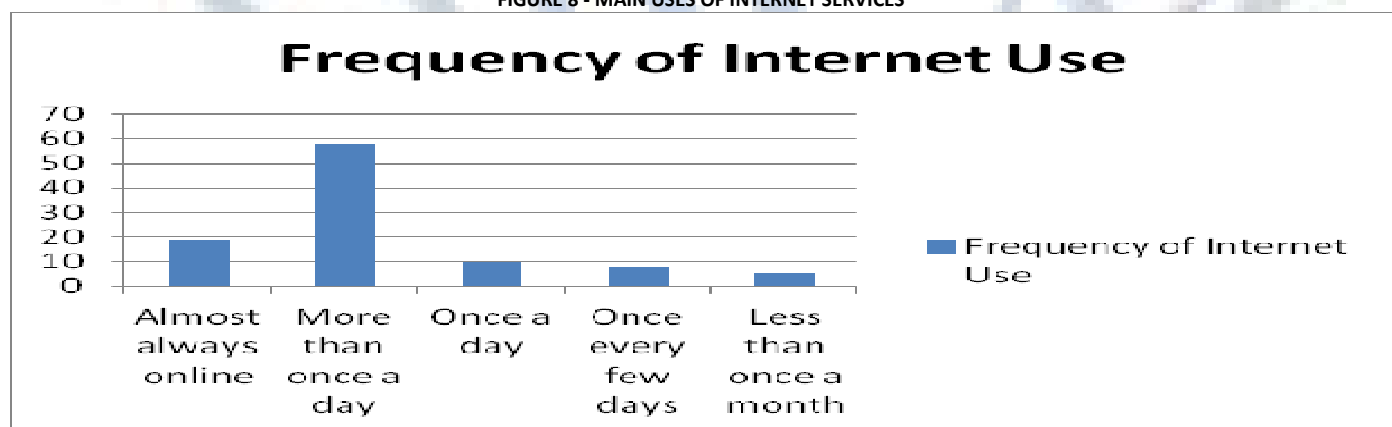


To understand how the people used internet service, a question was framed. Various uses of internet were listed. Among the list, around 32% of the people used it for Email purpose only followed by general browsing (25%). Promotion of their business through internet is yet to be popularized. (Table -8 and Figure -8)

TABLE 9 - FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USE

Almost always online	19
More than once a day	58
Once a day	10
Once every few days	8
Less than once a month	5

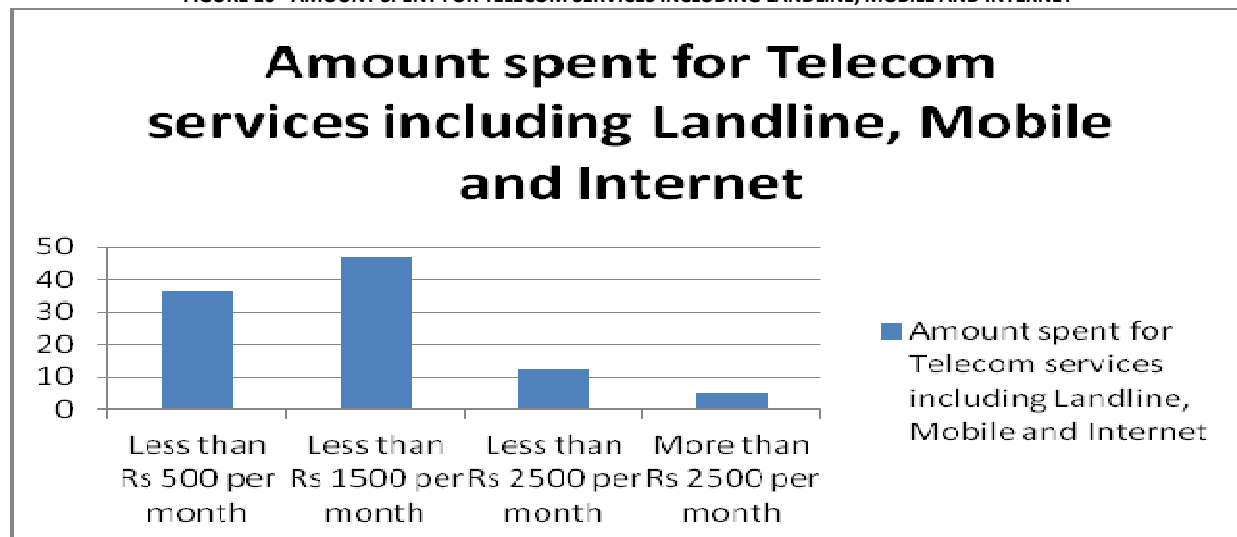
FIGURE 8 - MAIN USES OF INTERNET SERVICES



Regarding the frequency of internet usage, 19% of the people were almost always online where as majority of the people (58%) were used to see the internet more than once a day. Around 5% of the people were using internet less than once in a month. (Table -9 and Figure -9)

TABLE 10 - AMOUNT SPENT FOR TELECOM SERVICES INCLUDING LANDLINE, MOBILE AND INTERNET	
Less than Rs 500 per month	36
Less than Rs 1500 per month	47
Less than Rs 2500 per month	12
More than Rs 2500 per month	5

FIGURE 10 - AMOUNT SPENT FOR TELECOM SERVICES INCLUDING LANDLINE, MOBILE AND INTERNET



The question for finding how much respondents were spending for the telecom services, majority of the respondents (47%) were spending Rs 1500 per month where are 36% of them were spending less than Rs 500 per month. (Table -10 and Figure -10)

CONCLUSION

Today, telecommunication services have become an integral part in the lives of Indian consumers. Most of the people are accessing to both the type of services, landline and mobile. While usage of telecommunications services is generally high, there is no single profile of consumers' choosing and usage of telecommunications, with use of services varying according to age, income and perceptions of cost and benefits. Many older respondents were relying on their landline telephone and less likely to have an internet connection or a mobile phone; they did not see the benefit of these services or perceived cost as a barrier. The influence of children in the household also had a vital role in choosing and usage of telecom of services. The research showed parents choose to take up services for their children and felt that broadband internet was required for education and schooling. Parents also felt that mobile phones were a useful security tool so that family members can be in touch with each other. Thus for the continuously growing telecom market, need of the customer has to be met by the telecom service providers and the advanced technology services are to be effectively marketed to the consumers.

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