

A Survey of the Factors That Impact Customer Satisfaction of Mobile Telecom Operators

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Abstract: The Indian telecom industry commands a huge subscriber base is continuously experiencing high growth. While choosing the telecom service provider, consumers are substantially influenced by telecom players' marketing strategies. The study aims to find the impact of marketing strategies on customer satisfaction of the telecom subscribers. It also tries to validate if the sample exhibit the established SWOT model (as found from the literature related to the Indian telecom industry). A close-ended questionnaire was designed by the researchers, and a sample of 165 responses was collected from urban, suburban and rural areas of South Bengal. Statistical tools namely, factor analysis and regression modelling were conducted to find out the primary strategies that impact customer satisfaction of the telecom subscribers. The study discusses strength, weakness, opportunity and threat faced by the Indian telecom industry. It also elaborates on the 8Ps of service marketing mix strategies and tries to find the primary strategies that impact customer satisfaction of the Indian telecom industry. In the study it is observed that Product, Process and Performance mix impact the consumers more significantly than the other marketing mix strategies. This influences choice and loyalty of the consumers. The study emphasises the strengths that make the telecom industry the second largest industry globally. It also relates these strengths with the empirical exhibit to state the primary marketing strategies that contribute towards the growth of the subscriber base of the Indian telecom sector.

Keywords: customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, retention, marketing mix, marketing strategies, SWOT, telecom.

Introduction

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs for the Agenda 2030) highlighted that telecommunication is essential for empowerment of the people, driving out poverty and sustainable development of any economy.

India's telecom industry has witnessed phenomenal growth in the past few years, which was fuelled by strong customer demand and conducive government policies. The Indian telecom industry has prospered due to high

competition among the telecom players, customer demand and favourable telecom policies. Globally, the Indian telecom industry is the second

largest with 1.17 billion users as its subscriber base (Department of Telecommunication)

Table 1: Mobile Telecom Subscriber Data Base (March 2020 - March 2024) (in million)

Service Provider	Mar 2020	Mar 2021	Mar 2022	Mar 2023	Mar 2024
Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd.	387.52	422.92	403.99	430.23	469.73
Bharti Airtel Ltd.	327.81	352.39	360.33	370.91	385.76
Vodafone Idea Ltd.	319.17	283.71	260.77	236.75	219.82
Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd.	119.87	118.63	113.74	103.68	88.25
Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd.	3.36	3.3	3.25	2.35	1.93
Total	1157.73	1180.95	1142.08	1143.92	1165.49

Source: TRAI Annual Report

Table 1 discusses the number of telecom subscribers of the major mobile telecom players namely Jio, Airtel, Vodafone Idea, BSNL and MTNL from March 2020 to March 2024. Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd (Jio) and Bharti Airtel Ltd (Airtel) have a steady and consistent growth in number of subscribers i.e. 82.21 million and 57.95 million respectively. The growth rate of 21.21 percent indicates that Jio still rules over the Indian telecom market contributing towards highest number of subscriber base. In contrast, Vodafone Idea Ltd (VI) and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) have significant decline in subscriber base over these 5 years. VI and BSNL lost 99.35 million and 31.62 million subscribers in March 2024 with respect to the base year March 2020 due to the financial struggles, poor network coverage and tough competition from the other telecom operators. The subscriber base of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL) had a severe decline by 42.56 percent. As in West Bengal MTNL does not operate, so, the researchers have not considered MTNL in this study. In summary, the total telecom subscriber base grew from 1157.73 million in March 2020 to 1165.49 million in March 2024. The overall growth rate is .67 percent that indicates that the total telecom market structure remained stable.

A brief analysis of Strength-Weakness-Opportunity-Threat (SWOT) of the Indian telecom industry reveals the following:

The strengths of Indian telecom market are:

1. High competition among the telecom operators favours customer engagement. The services offered by the mobile telecom operators are competent and with their own marketing mix strategies they keep the customers involved and satisfied.
2. There has been a great amount of strategic investments in the mobile sector showing commitment to growth and development. From April 2000 to March 2024 the Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in the Indian telecom industry amounted to US\$ 39.32 billion. During this period the FDI inflow in the telecom sector recorded approximately 5.9 percent of the total FDI inflows in the country (IBEF).
3. There is a large demand for value-added services in the telecom sector which changes with improved technology and in turn changes requirements of the customers. The growth of Internet of Things (IoT) is further boosting the

- market potential since it creates new opportunities for connection.
- 4. The Tele-density of rural subscribers reached 58.22 percent in December 2024 (TRAI).
- 5. India has a huge demand for wireless data. Total volume of wireless data usage in India increased from 47,629 petabytes in June, 2024 to 49,543 petabytes in September, 2024.

The weaknesses of Indian telecom market are:

- 1. A heavy dependence on prepaid subscribers may constrain profitability and limit growth prospects.
- 2. Poor service quality like call drops and network connection related problems cause customer dissatisfaction.
- 3. Drop in the Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) becomes an issue for operators to keep the company financially sound. High spectrum charges restrict network expansion and improvement in quality.
- 4. Perpetual conflicts between the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and government ministries have caused delays in the implementation of key policies.
- 5. India's telecom infrastructure has a significant urban-rural divide. In December, 2024 the urban tele-density was 131.50 percent while rural tele-density stood only at 58.22 percent (TRAI). This is due to the inadequate rural mobile network infrastructure constraining access to services, lack of power supply and lower return on investment.

The opportunities of Indian telecom market are:

- 1. Rollout of 5G network across India that has the potential to improve connectivity and support new technologies. India will require skilled employees in 5G technologies like Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, cloud computing and Artificial Intelligence (AI). With emerging technologies,

India's telecom workforce will elope to 457.62 million by 2028 from 423.73 million in 2023 (IBEF).

- 2. In near future broadband services will expand mainly in rural and suburban areas, closing the digital gap. India currently ranks second in the international mobile broadband internet traffic and international internet bandwidth which again presents a bright picture of the Indian telecom industry.
- 3. India has its advantage of leveraging new technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to provide innovative services. Over-the-top (OTT) platform partnerships can further enhance user experiences.
- 4. Digital literacy programs and skills development initiatives will enable consumers and promote deeper involvement with telecom services. The Digital India programme introduced by the government will efficiently connect sectors like healthcare, retail, etc. with internet.

The threats of Indian telecom market are:

- 1. The regulatory environment in India is complex and unpredictable. There are many issues like frequent policy changes, taxes and levies, and ambiguous regulations which presents threat to the Indian telecom industry. Constant regulatory adjustments and policy reforms presents an uncertain climate for operators.
- 2. With expanding digital footprint, India is facing cyber security concerns in the telecom sector. Cyber security attacks and data privacy concerns are ever more relevant, requiring strong actions to safeguard consumers as well as businesses. These cause financial losses and dent consumer trust.
- 3. Economic uncertainty and market volatility pose major challenges,

impacting investment and consumer expenditure in the industry.

4. A financial burden is noticed in the telecom sector. This financial threat is due to high infrastructural cost and intense competition among the mobile telecom players.

Review of Literature

Bansal and Chaudhary (2016) in their study observed that with more customer engagement, the telecom operators gain trust of the customers, who, in-turn, become loyal towards their service provider. Gupta and Sharma (2009) in their study found that customer loyalty is negatively impacted by mobile number portability but there are different other factors like engagement with customers that can make the customers more loyal. Chaudhari and Dongre (2013) observed that customer loyalty is a much broader concept than just retaining the existing customers from the operator's perspective. It also focuses on encouraging customers to maintain long-term business relationships. Additionally, loyalty translates into recommendations through the word of mouth. Thus, customer loyalty and customer satisfaction are complementary to each other.

Menachem *et al.* (2015) in their study found that network experience played a pivotal role in customer experience of telecom services. With the increase in network compatibility with respect to network connection, speed and functioning of the telecom services he is using, customer satisfaction also increases. Kumar *et al.* (2011) found that network coverage was the most important buying stimulus among other stimuli like call rates, value-added services, etc., that can significantly influence customer satisfaction. Gaurav and Ray (2020) in their study discussed customer experience influencing factors that made the customers engaged. Among them network performance contributed significantly to customer loyalty. Jayendra (2018) in the study found that customers get more attracted to the telecom providers that provide high quality network services. The telecom providers are

continuously engaged to provide high quality network to compete in the Indian telecom market. Roy and Adhikari (2024) in their study found that management in any organization considers its service quality to be a major factor for customer satisfaction.

Shukla *et al.* (2022) observed that telecom operators must have an efficient process mix framework with respect to service delivery, customer support, network management, billing and revenue management, regulatory compliance, etc., in their internal management system. They should process the calls and settle down any call related issues as soon as a customer complains. The study found that with a strong process mix strategy a telecom operator can have customer satisfaction on its services. Sheeri *et al.*'s (2023) research found that customers felt more engaged in a short waiting room atmosphere, allowing them to converse with their service providers. This interaction enabled discussions about any processes they were facing issues with. Babu and Sundar (2018) in their study observed that customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention all depend on the organisation's customer engagement processes. Technological innovations in telecom increase the innovation process of the operator and thus keep customers engaged and satisfied. Ramesh and Rajeshwari (2019) in their study found that process mix significantly influences the customer behaviour and intention to choose his telecom operator. The study also observed that promotion mix does not have a significant impact on customer satisfaction and customer behavioural intention.

Parmar and Shah (2016) in their study observed that rural customers are more attracted towards their telecom operators due to the diverse promotional offers given by the operators. To make the customers engaged and to have customer attrition rate to be high the telecom operators worked more on quality of service enhancement. Jasrotia *et al.* (2019) in their study aimed to analyse the factors influencing the churn rate of customers in Reliance Jio. The study found

that promotional offers influenced the churn rate of Jio significantly. Besides promotional offers the other factors that influenced the churn rate were service quality, network coverage and pricing mix. Kiran *et al.* (2022) tried to examine the impact of net neutrality on the internet browsing experience of the telecom operators. The study observed product quality i.e. the internet browsing experience was an important factor in attracting and retaining customers. The availability of internet services in different parts of India makes the customers choose their operators and experience satisfaction.

Research Gap

The review of literature shows that the following research gap which is still unaddressed:

1. There are few studies which try to analyse the impact of primary marketing

strategies on customer satisfaction of the telecom subscribers.

2. There is no available literature that tries to validate the empirical data with the established SWOT model of the Indian telecom industry.
3. No researcher has tried to empirically address the above issues in Eastern India in general and South Bengal in particular.

Objectives of Study

To address the above-mentioned research gap and to empirically test the ground realities for the benefit of the stakeholders, the present study tries to address the following issues:

1. To find the impact of marketing strategies on customer satisfaction of the telecom subscribers.
2. To validate if the sample exhibit the established SWOT model (as found from the literature related to the Indian telecom industry).

Research Method

The study is both empirical and exploratory in nature. Theoretical information and secondary data for research work are sourced from various published materials, including books, research papers, journals, newspapers, government websites, company reports, and specific websites. SWOT analysis is conducted to formulate theoretically a strategic planning technique to evaluate the competitive position of the Indian telecom sector. It helps to identify various strategies taken up by the telecom players that eventually help in customer satisfaction. A primary field survey was conducted by researchers where some urban and rural areas of West Bengal, namely Kolkata, South Twenty-Four Parganas, and Howrah, were selected for the study. A closed-ended five-point Likert scale questionnaire was employed by the researchers

to collect information from 180 respondents, out of which 165 responses were deemed fit for the study. The data is analysed with the help of SPSS 27 software. Factor analysis is conducted to find out the primary factors that explain the variables in the questionnaire. Scree plot and eigenvalue are considered to determine the number of factors related to the marketing strategy of the telecom operators that influence the customers to choose between the operators. Regression modelling is computed to find the associations between customer satisfaction and the factors of marketing strategies. MTNL is not considered in the study as its operations are not present in West Bengal. A discussion is also made on the validity of the sample exhibit with the proposed SWOT model. Accordingly, recommendations are made for further improvement of the Indian telecom sector.

Analysis & Results

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.663
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		Approx. Chi-Square
df		105
Sig.		.000

Source: Researchers' computation using SPSS 27

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test value is .663, which indicates that data taken for the study is adequate for factor analysis. Bartlett's test indicates that the data is statistically significant at a 1 percent level of significance, and the

observed correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. These two tests indicate that the data can be further processed for the Principal Component Method of factor analysis.

Table 3: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.220	21.463	21.463	3.220	21.463	21.463	2.356	15.705	15.705
2	1.964	13.094	34.558	1.964	13.094	34.558	1.937	12.911	28.615
3	1.615	10.765	45.323	1.615	10.765	45.323	1.797	11.979	40.594
4	1.288	8.587	53.910	1.288	8.587	53.910	1.616	10.773	51.367
5	1.142	7.610	61.520	1.142	7.610	61.520	1.523	10.153	61.520
6	.938	6.251	67.772						
7	.868	5.785	73.557						
8	.747	4.979	78.536						
9	.665	4.436	82.972						
10	.627	4.182	87.154						
11	.532	3.545	90.699						
12	.477	3.177	93.876						
13	.383	2.550	96.426						
14	.338	2.251	98.677						
15	.198	1.323	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Researchers' computation using SPSS 27

In Table 3, it is observed that the first five components have an Eigenvalue greater than 1 and hence, five factors are considered applicable

for the study. These five factors can explain fifteen variables to the extent of 61.520 percent.

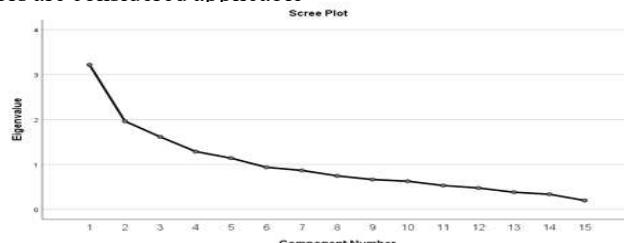


Figure 1: Scree Plot

Source: Researchers' computation using SPSS 27

The figure of Scree Plot takes the Eigenvalues in the vertical axis and the component numbers of Table 3 in horizontal axis. From the figure it is found that the first five components are above

the horizontal line from the Eigenvalue 1. Hence, pictorially, it is also evident that there exist five factors through the Principal Component Method of factor analysis.

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix

Variables	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
V11	.890				
V14	-.866				
V12	.640			.473	
V16		.826			
V15	-.313	.743			
V6		- .509			
V7			.764		
V10			.763		
V5			.596	.411	
V8				.717	
V9		.510		- .573	
V2					.733
V4					.604
V1					.580
V3				.440	.465

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Source: Researchers' computation using SPSS 27

Table 4 shows the Rotated Component Matrix, computed by researchers in their Principal Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation and Kaiser Normalization; rotation is converged in 6 iterations. It shows how the five factors correlate

to the study's fifteen variables. According to strong correlations of factors with each of the variables as observed in the Rotated Component Matrix, the factors are named as Customer Loyalty, Performance, Process, Product, and Others.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.514	.265	.242	.748	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.047	5	6.409	11.448
	Residual	89.020	159	.560	
	Total	121.067	164		

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.867	.058	66.379	.000
	Customer Loyalty	.331	.058	.385	.000
	Performance	-.097	.058	-.113	.099
	Process	.073	.058	.085	.213
	Product	.264	.058	.307	.000
	Other Ps	-.041	.058	-.047	.488
Predictors: (Constant), Customer Loyalty, Performance, Process, Product, Other Ps					
Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction					

Source: Researchers' computation using SPSS 27

In Table 5, a multiple regression analysis has been conducted between independent variables of Customer Loyalty, Performance, Process, Product, Other Ps and the dependent variable Customer Satisfaction. The R-value of .514 indicates the overall correlation between independent and dependent variables. The adjusted R² value of 0.265 indicates that 26.5 percent of the variance in the dependent variable, i.e. Customer Satisfaction is explained by the model. The ANOVA results show that the overall model fit is significant, F (5,159)= 11.448, p-value is less than 0.01. In the Coefficients table, the results indicate that Customer Loyalty (b = .331, p < 0.01), Performance (b = -.097, p < 0.1), Product mix strategy (b = .264, p < 0.01) have a significant impact on Customer Satisfaction. However, Process mix (b = .073, p > 0.5) and Other Ps of marketing mix (b = -.041, p > 0.05) have insignificant impact on Customer Satisfaction.

The regression equation can be interpreted as:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + b_4X_4 + b_5X_5$$

Here, Y is the dependent variable, namely Customer Satisfaction; a is a constant term; b1 to b5 are the unstandardised coefficients of the predictors; and X1 to X5 are the predictors, namely Customer Loyalty, Performance, Process, Product and Other Ps.

Hence, the regression equation is as follows:

$$\text{Customer Satisfaction} = 3.867 + 0.331 \text{ Customer}$$

Loyalty – 0.097 Performance + 0.073 Process + 0.264 Product – 0.041 Other Ps.

The telecom market is continuously growing and subscriber base is constantly increasing. The strength of the Indian telecom industry lies in high competition among the telecom operators and customer loyalty even in the changing environment. The regression analysis found that customer loyalty is a true strength for the growth of Indian telecom sector. With increase in customer loyalty, customer satisfaction also increases. Thus, the customers remain satisfied with the services provided by their operators.

In West Bengal, telecom service access decreased from 57.69 million users in September 2024 to 56.98 million users in December 2024, i.e. a 1.23 per cent decrease. West Bengal's teledensity also declined to 80.52 percent in December, 2024 from 80.79 percent in September, 2024. The Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) per month has also increased (TRAI). In the study, Performance mix significantly impacts Customer Satisfaction but in a negative manner. This states that although the performance of the telecom operators is increasing, leading to potential growth for which Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) are increasing, Customer Satisfaction is declining. This shows that increase in Performance mix does not always keep the customers satisfied.

The wireless data subscribers have increased to 944.96 million in December 2024 from 900.77 million in September 2024 in India (TRAI). It is found in the model proposed in the study that Product mix impacts Customer Satisfaction statistically significantly and also positively. This indicates that there is a growing demand for value-added services (VAS), Internet of Things (IoT) solutions, and both daily and lump-sum data plans among users. The subscriber base of telecom service providers expands as they deliver high quality services to their customers. This leads to increased customer trust and loyalty, ultimately resulting in greater customer satisfaction. This proves with increase in quality of products and services provided by the telecom service operators, the customer satisfaction also increases.

Conclusion and Implications

The Indian telecommunications industry is dominated by high competition, strategic investment, and high demand for value-added services. The robust expansion of the Internet of Things (IoT) has also increased market potential by opening up new technological frontiers. The industry is plagued by a few challenges, such as a high dependence on prepaid subscribers, decreasing Average Revenue Per User (ARPU), regulatory battles, and poor rural network infrastructure. The opportunities in the industry are national deployment of 5G, broadband penetration into rural regions, and utilization of cutting-edge technologies such as Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to provide cutting-edge services. Partnerships with Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms and digital literacy efforts also promote user interaction and market growth. In spite of these opportunities, the sector is faced with challenges like over-competition, regulatory fluctuations, risks due to cyber-security, and economic downturns. These can affect pricing policies, investment, and consumer expenditure. Although there is tremendous scope for growth in the Indian telecom industry; working on financial stability, regulatory challenges, and digital security issues

remain essential to ensure success in the long run. The Principal Component Analysis taken up in the study identifies the factors, namely, Customer Loyalty, Performance, Process, Product, and Other Ps. Effective use of these marketing mix strategies influences customer satisfaction. Multiple regression analysis identifies a significant positive impact of Customer Loyalty, Process, and Product mix strategies on Customer Satisfaction. The model states that all the predictor variables explain the regressed variable, i.e. Customer satisfaction, to 26.5 percent. The predicted equation states that when there is a 1 percent change in Customer Loyalty, Process, and Product mix strategies; Customer Satisfaction changes by .331, .073, and .264, respectively, in a positive manner. Conversely, with 1 percent change in Performance and Other Ps, Customer Satisfaction changes by .097 and .041 respectively in a negative manner. In conclusion, the study found that the marketing mix strategies implemented by telecom companies significantly affect Customer Satisfaction. The predictive model shows that even minor modifications in these marketing components can positively affect Customer Loyalty and Customer Satisfaction, except for the Other Ps, which demonstrated a high negative impact.

India's subscriber base for telecom sector is steadily and consistently growing showcasing an increasing demand for the telecom services. Although high competition among operators is a major advantage of the sector, there has been a fall in telecom services accessibility in West Bengal, where the total subscribers reduced from 57.69 million users in September 2024 to 56.98 million users in December 2024, i.e. a 1.23 percent dip in Average Revenue per User. Teledensity also declined to 80.52 percent in December, 2024 from 80.79 percent in September, 2024 even though there was a nominal hike in Average Revenue per User. This means that performance improvements do not always relate to customer satisfaction, as the study proposes the performance mix can actually work against levels of satisfaction. Compared to this, the wireless data subscriber base in India has increased to 944.96 million in

December, 2024, reflecting growing demands for good quality services, value-added services (VAS), Internet of Things (IoT) services and other data plans. The positive relationship between quality of the telecom services provided and customer satisfaction leads to growth in number of subscribers. Although there are issues in Process mix and Other Ps of marketing strategies, the Indian telecom industry is having its key strength in Product mix, Performance mix and Customer Loyalty to maintain growth of subscriber base and customer satisfaction. The study emphasizes the importance of a well-balanced marketing mix framework in shaping favourable customer loyalty and retention in the telecom industry and hence in shaping a favourable customer satisfaction.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the researchers propose the following recommendations for leveraging growth and customer satisfaction in the Indian telecom sector.

1. Investment in rural infrastructure: The telecom companies must make substantial investments in rural areas and provide strong connectivity to the underdeveloped areas. Collaborations with local administration or groups while investing will be fruitful.
2. Customer-centric value-added services (VAS): The telecom operators must emphasize on creation of innovative value-added services that respond to customer requirements. Services like customized data plans, Internet of Things (IoT) solutions for agriculture and health, and educative entertainment can be offered based on the requirements of the consumer.
3. Regulatory collaboration strengthening: In order to manage the intricacies of regulatory wars, telecom firms need to interact actively and establish strong relationships with regulators.
4. Adopting technological changes: All telecom operators must swiftly adopt new technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and IoT to improve service quality, customer satisfaction, and operational effectiveness as well as generate additional revenue.
5. Digital literacy campaigns: Adequate investments are needed in digital literacy campaigns. Collaboration with schools, NGOs, and community groups can help multiply these efforts and maximize reach.
6. Building strategic partnerships: Forming partnerships with Over-The-Top (OTT) providers can complement the service offerings of telecom companies. Partnerships offering bundled internet services with leading OTT subscriptions can bring in new customers and consolidate loyalty among current users. Granting special access to content or services can differentiate telecom operators from others and create perceived value among customers.
7. Enacting strong cyber-security measures: The companies must spend on high-end security solutions to secure customer data and ensure secure online transactions. Publicizing these measures on privacy and security can build customer trust.
8. Continuous improvement using data analytics: The level of customer satisfaction must be regularly assessed through data analytics and feedbacks. This would pinpoint areas of improvement and resolve issues proactively before they become major problems.
9. Emphasize Sustainable Practices: The telecommunication companies should integrate sustainability in their business model. Measures such as carbon footprint reduction, green technology adoption, and recycling program promotion can boost brand reputation and appeal to green-conscious consumers.

With effective implementation of these suggestions, the Indian telecom sector will

improve customer satisfaction and loyalty, and also sustain its growth in the face of competition.

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