ISSN: 2278-4632
Vol-10 Issue-5 No. 14 May 2020

BRAND PREFERENCE OF MOBILE OPERATORS – A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON RURAL AND URBAN MOBILE SUBSCRIBERS IN THRISSUR DISTRICT.

* **Annie K.T** ** **Chandanraj S M** *** **Bindu. V** **** **Treesa Antony**

*** Assistant Professor, Nirmala College of Arts and Science, Meloor**

****Assistant Professor, Post Graduate Department of Commerce, Siena College of Professional Studies, Edakochi – 682010**

*****Assistant Professor, Nirmala College of Arts and Science, Meloor**

******Assistant Professor, Nirmala College of Arts and Science, Meloor**

Abstract

Branding has always been an important aspect of marketing. Brand is a powerful differentiator in a highly competitive market place. It provides the company the power to deflect competitive moves. A strong brand rings trust, confidence, comfort and reliability in the customer's mind. Brands live in the minds of consumers and are much more than just a tag for their recognition and identification. They are the basis of consumer relationship and bring consumers and marketers closer by developing a bond of faith and trust between them.. The present paper focuses on the study of brand preference for mobile operators with reference to the rural and urban population of Thrissur district of Kerala.. The present study follows descriptive research. Brand preference analysis is done by conducting the survey which describes the preferences for different mobile phones of the surveyed in Thrissur District. 400 samples were taken from 7 taluks of Thrissur district and Garretts ranking method was applied for data analysis.

I. INTRODUCTION

India's telecommunication network is the second largest in the world by number of telephone users (both fixed and mobile phone) with 1.1724 billion subscribers as on 31 Dec 2019. It has one of the lowest call tariffs in the world enabled by mega telecom operators and hyper-competition among them. As on 31 Dec 2019, India has the world's second-largest Internet user-base with 661.94 million broadband internet subscribers in the country. As of 31 December 2018, India had a population of 130 crore people (1.3 billion), 123 crore (1.23 billion) Aadhaar digital biometric identity cards, 121 crore (1.21 billion) mobile phones, 44.6 crore (446 million) smartphones, 56 crore (560 million or 43% of total population) internet users up from 481 million people (35% of the country's total population) in December 2017, and 51 per cent growth in e-commerce.

Major sectors of the Indian telecommunication industry are telephone, internet and television broadcast industry in the country which is in an ongoing process of transforming into next generation network, employs an extensive system of modern network elements such as digital telephone exchanges, mobile switching centres, media gateways and signalling gateways at the core, interconnected by a wide variety of transmission systems using fibre-optics or Microwave radio relay networks. The access network, which connects the subscriber to the core, is highly diversified with different copper-pair, optic-fibre and wireless technologies. DTH, a relatively new broadcasting technology has attained significant popularity in the Television segment. The introduction of private FM has given a fillip to the radio broadcasting in India. Telecommunication in India has greatly been supported by the INSAT system of the country, one of the largest domestic satellite systems in the world. India possesses a diversified communications system, which links all parts of the country by telephone, Internet, radio, television and satellite.

Indian telecom industry underwent a high pace of market liberalisation and growth since the 1990s and now has become the world's most competitive and one of the fastest growing telecom markets. The Industry has grown over twenty times in just ten years, from under 37 million subscribers in the year 2001 to over 846 million subscribers in the year 2011, and 1.1514 billion at the end of December 2019. As of Dec 2019, India has the world's second-largest mobile phone user base with over 1.1514 billion users.

According to London-based telecom trade body GSMA, the telecom sector accounted for 6.5% of India's GDP in 2015, or about Rs. 9 lakh crore (US$130 billion), and supported direct employment for 2.2 million people in the country. GSMA estimates that the Indian telecom sector will contribute Rs. 14.5 lakh crore (US$200 billion) to the economy and support 3 million direct jobs and 2 million indirect jobs by 2020.

Customers select a particular brand of mobile depends upon its price, Picture quality, brand name, etc. So the study focused on comparative study of rural and urban consumers regarding the brand preference of customers towards mobile operators in Trissur district of Kerala.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Telecommunication has supported the socioeconomic development of India and has played a significant role to narrow down the rural-urban digital- divide to some extent. It also has helped to increase the transparency of governance with the introduction of egovernance in India. The government has pragmatically used modern telecommunication facilities to deliver mass education programmes for the rural folk of India.

Brand preference of mobile connection in urban and rural peoples may differ. Some buyers are totally brand loyal, buying only one brand in a product group. Most of the buyers switch over to other brands.

These reasons made the researches to take up the research study entitled “Brand Preference of customers towards Mobile operators –A Comparative Study of Rural and Urban Customers in Thrissur district in Kerala”.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the present study is as follows.

- To analyze the Socio-Economic status of Rural and Urban respondents in Thrissur district of Kerala.
- To study the factors influencing the brand preference of customers towards different mobile operator among rural and urban respondents in Thrissur district of Kerala.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. For the collection of primary data questionnaire were used. Secondary data were collected from books, journals, articles, newspapers and websites.

V. SAMPLE DESIGN

The Thrissur District consisted of 7 taluks. From these 7taluks total of 400 samples were taken. 200 respondents from rural areas and 200 respondents from urban areas. Convenient method of sampling were used to choose samples. For the present study the researcher select five popular mobile operators in Thrissur district of Kerala. The famous mobile operators Which are currently operating in Thrissur district are Airtel, JIO , Vodafone, Idea and BSNL.

VI. ANALYSIS INTERPRETATION

In order to fulfill the objectives of the study the collected data were processed with the help of appropriate statistical tools. For the present study simple percentage analysis and Garrett’s Ranking Technique were

This part analyses the socio-economic profile, brand preference, reasons for the selection of particular brand of mobile operators among rural and urban consumers in Thrissur District of Kerala in various aspects.

1. GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS

The following table shows the gender wise distribution of respondents.

Table 1
Gender of the respondents

Gender	Rural		Urban		Total	
	No. of Respondents	Percent	No. of Respondents	Percent	No. of Respondents	Per cost
Male	120	60.00	115	57.50	235	58.75
Female	80	40.00	85	42.50	165	41.25
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Source: Primary data

It is clear from the table that out of 200 rural customers120 (60.00%) are male and 80 (40.00%) are female. Thus majority of the customersare male in rural area.

Among the 200 urban consumers 115 (57.50%) customers are male and 85 (42.50%) customers are female. Thus majority of the customers are male in urban area.

Among the total 400 respondents 235 (58.75%) customers are male and 165 (41.25%) customers are female. Thus majority of the customers are male.

2. AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The following table shows the age wise distribution of respondents.

Table 2
Age of the respondents

Particulars	Rural		Urban		Total	
Age (in years)	No. of Respondents	Percent	No. of Respondents	Percent	No. of Respondents	Percent
Less than 20	21	10.50	25	12.50	46	11.50
21 – 40	82	41.00	70	35.00	152	38.00
41 – 60	75	37.50	68	34.00	143	35.75
61 and above	22	11.00	37	18.50	59	14.75
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Source: Primary data

It is clear from the table, among the rural respondents 21(10.50%) respondents age is less than 20 , 82(41.00%) respondents age ranges between 21-40,75(37.50%) respondents age ranges between 41-60and the remaining 22(11.00%) respondents age is more than 61 and above. most of the rural customers age ranges between 21 – 40 years .

The table also shows, among the urban consumers, 25(12.50%) respondents age is less than 20, 70(35.00%) respondents age ranges between 21-40,68(34.00%) respondents ranges between 41-60 and the remaining 37(18.50%)respondents age is more than 61 and above. Thus Most of the urban consumer’s age ranges between 21-40.

Among the total 400 consumers 46(11.50%) respondents age is less than 20, 152(38.00%) respondents age ranges between 21-40,143(35.75%) respondents ranges between 41-60 and the remaining 59(14.75%) respondents age is more than 61 and above. Thus Most of the consumer's age ranges between 21-40.

3. OCCUPATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

The following table shows the occupation of respondents.

Table 3

Occupation of the respondents

Occupation	Rural		Urban		Total	
	No. of Respondents	Percent	No. of Respondents	Percent	No. of Respondents	Perce nt
Government Employee	20	10.00	35	17.50	55	13.75
Private Employee	50	25.00	80	40.00	130	32.50
Businessmen	45	22.50	34	17.00	79	19.75
Farmer	75	37.50	29	14.50	104	26.00
Others	10	5.00	22	11.00	32	8.00
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Source: Primary data

It is clear from the table 3, among the rural mobile customers 20(10%) respondents have Government job, 50(25.00%) respondents have private job, 45 (22.50%) respondents are businessmen, 75(37.50) are farmers and the remaining 10(5.00%) respondents have other jobs. Thus majority of the rural customers are farmers.

Regarding urban mobile customers, 35(17.50%) respondents have Government job, 80(40.00%) respondents have private job, 34(17.00%) respondents have own business 29(14.50%) respondents are farmers and the remaining 22(11.00%) respondents have other jobs. Thus, majority of the urban consumers are private employees.

Regarding the total mobile customers, 55(13.75%) respondents have Government job, 130(32.50%) respondents have private job, 79(19.75%) respondents have own business 104(26.00%) respondents are farmers and the remaining 32(8.00%) respondents have other jobs. Thus, most of the customers are private employees.

ISSN: 2278-4632
Vol-10 Issue-5 No. 14 May 2020

4. MONTHLY INCOME OF THE RESPONDENTS

The following table depicts monthly income of respondents

Table 4

Monthly Income of the Respondents

Monthly Income	Rural		Urban		Total	
	No. of Respondents	Per cent	No. of Respondents	Per cent	No. of Respondents	Per cent
Below 5000	38	19.00	3	1.50	41	10.25
5001 – 10000	75	37.50	32	16.00	107	26.75
10001 – 15000	48	24.00	78	39.00	126	31.50
15001 – 20000	25	12.50	61	30.50	86	21.50
Above Rs. 20000	14	7.00	26	13.00	40	10.00
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Source: Primary data

It is clear from table 4 that, among the rural mobile consumer’s 38(19.00%) respondents have monthly income less than Rs.5000, 75(37.50%) respondents’ income ranges between Rs.5001-10000, 48(24.00%) respondents have income ranges between10001-15000, 30(15.00%) respondents have income betweenRs.15001-20000 and the remaining 14(7.00%) respondents have income more than Rs.20000 per month.

Among the urban mobile customers 3(1.50%) respondents have monthly income less than Rs.5000, 32(16.00%) respondents’ income ranges between Rs. 5001-10000, 78(39.00%) respondents have income ranges between Rs.10001-15000, 61(30.50%) respondents have income between Rs.15001-20000 and the remaining 26(13.00%) respondents have income more

Among the total mobile consumers 41(10.25%) respondents have monthly income less than Rs.5000, 107(26.75%) respondents’ income ranges between Rs. 5001-10000, 126(31.50%) respondents have income ranges between Rs.10001-15000, 86(21.50%) respondents have income between Rs.15001-20000 and the remaining 40(10.00%) respondents have income more than Rs.20000 per month.

5. MOBILE OPERATORS CHOICE AMONG RESPONDENTS

Table 5
Brand choice of the respondents

Brand name	Rural		Urban		Total	
	No. of Respondents	Percent	No. of Respondents	Percent	No. of Respondents	Per cent
AIRTEL	44	22.00	48	24.00	92	23.00
JIO	45	22.50	58	29.00	103	25.75
BSNL	48	24.00	34	17.00	82	20.50
VODAFONE	36	18.00	28	14.00	64	16.00
IDEA	27	13.50	32	16.00	59	14.75
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Source: Primary data

It is clear from the Table No. 5, among the rural Mobile customers 44(22.00%) respondents are choose Airtel, 45(22.50%) respondents choose JIO,48 (24.00%) respondents choose BSNL 36 (18.00%) respondents choose Vodafone and the remaining 27(13.50%) respondents prefer IDEA. Thus, majority of the rural consumers are selected BSNL.

Among the urban consumers 48 (24.00%) respondents choose Airtel,58(29.00%) respondents choose JIO, 34 (17.00%) respondents choose BSNL, 28(14.00%) respondents choose Vodafone and the remaining 32(16.00%) respondents choose Idea. Thus, majority of the urban consumers are preferring JIO.

Among the total 400 consumers 92 (23.00%) respondents choose Airtel,103(25.75%) respondents choose JIO, 82 (22.50%) respondents choose BSNL, 64(16.00%) respondents choose Vodafone and the remaining 54(14.75%) respondents choose Idea. Thus, majority of the mobile customers are preferring Airtel.

6. REASON FOR CHOOSING PARTICULAR BRAND OF MOBILE OPERATOR AMONG RURAL CUSTOMERS

Table 6

Reasons for choosing particular brand of DTH among Rural Consumers

Sl. No.	Reasons	Garrett's Mean score	Rank
1	Good Network coverage	61.42	II
2	Most of my friends use it	75.85	I
3	Internet service	52.38	V
4	Reasonable price	45.52	III
5	Brand name	38.00	VII
6	Better Customer Care Support	47.49	VI
7	Offers and Discount	59.98	IV

Source: Primary data

It is clear from the table number 6, that majority of rural consumers prefer the particular brand of Mobile operator because of Most of my friends use it, with mean score 75.85 (ranked first), followed by Good Network coverage with mean score 61.42(ranked 2nd),Reasonable Price with mean score 45.52 (ranked 3rd),Offers and Discount with mean score 59.98 (ranked 4th), Internet service with mean score 52.38 (ranked 5 th),Better Customer Support with mean score 47.49 (ranked 6th)and Brand Name with mean score of 38.00 (ranked 7th).

Thus, majority of the rural customers prefer particular brand of mobile operator because of Most of my friends use it, Good Network coverage and Reasonable price.

7. REASONS FOR CHOOSING PARTICULAR BRAND OF MOBILE OPERATOR AMONG URBAN CUSTOMERS

Table 7

Reasons for choosing particular brand of among Urban Customers

Sl. No.	Reasons	Garrett's Mean score	Rank
1	Good Network Coverage	72.38	I
2	Most of my friends Use it	60.32	II
3	Internet service	44.38	V
4	Reasonable Price	56.64	III
5	Brand Name	50.49	IV
6	Better Customer Care Support	40.80	VII
7	Offers and Discount	41.84	VI

Source: Primary data

It is clear from Table No. 7most of the urban customers prefer a particular brand of mobile operator depends upon it Good Network coverage with a mean score of 72.38 (rank 1st) followed by Most of my friends use it 60.32 (ranked 2nd), Reasonable Price with a mean score 56.64(ranked 3 rd), Brand name with mean score 50.49(ranked 4 th),Internet Service with a mean score 44.38 (ranked 5 th) Offers and Discount with a mean score 41.84 (ranked 6th) and Better Customer Care Support with a mean score 40.80 (ranked 7 th)

Thus, majority of the urban consumers prefer particular brand of mobile operator because of its Good network coverage, most of my friends use it, Reasonable Price.

VII. FINDINGS

Following are the results of the study.

1. Thus majority of the consumers are male.
2. Most of the consumer's age ranges between 21 – 40 years.
3. Most of the consumers are private employees.
4. Most of the consumers earns between 10,001 – 15,000
5. Majority of the respondents preferring Airtel mobile connection.
6. Majority of the rural customers prefer particular brand of mobile operator because of Most of my friends use it , Good Network coverage and Reasonable price.
7. Majority of the urban consumers prefer particular brand of mobile operator because of its Good network coverage, Most of my friends use it, Reasonable Price.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

Following are the suggestions.

1. The mobile operators try to build good customer relationship with its agent and customers.
2. The companies should create awareness among their brands through various sales promotion techniques and advertisements.
3. Each company should be fix the price comparatively moderate with other brands.

IX. CONCLUSION

The study "Brand Preference of customers towards mobile operators – A comparative study in Rural and Urban Consumers of Trissur district in Kerala" determines how far the customers prefer a particular brand over other brand. In order to sustain in the market company should consider better signal quality, maintain reasonable price for calls and internet and easy availability in the markets and it will ensure satisfaction of consumers.

X. REFERENCES

- Shah C., Consumer Preferences for Mobile Service providers: An Empirical Study in Bardoli. International Journal of Marketing and Technology 2012; 2(8): 269-288.
- Myilswamy, Kumar R., Consumer Preference utilizing Mobile Communication Service Providers in Coimbatore District, International Journal of Business and Management Invention 2013; 2(9): 1-5.
- Muhammad Zeeshan Z., The Impact of Mobile Service Attributes On Males and Females, Purchase Decision. Management & Marketing Challenges for the Knowledge Society 2013; 8(4): 669-682.

