

"State of Telecom Services in India"

(Current State, Issues, Root Causes and Solutions)

Collective inputs from over 165,000 Citizens in "Transform India with Modi" community

October 27, 2014

Telecom Services in India

Executive Summary

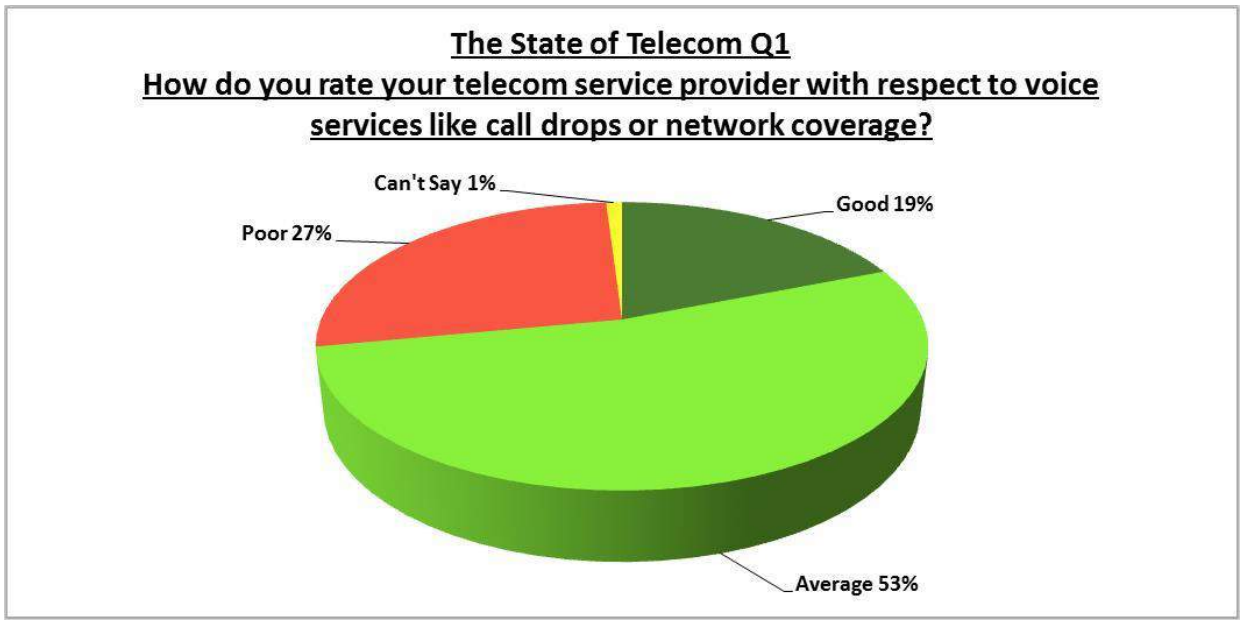
Reliable telecommunication services serve as a key enabler for social and economic development of a country. Today's global economies demand modern and reliable telecom and internet infrastructure to support such development. India has experienced telecom and mobile revolution in the last two decades with a large majority of population getting connected via mobile phones.

The subject of Current State of Telecom, Issues, Root Causes and Solutions was covered in the 165,000 strong citizen community for governance " Transform India with Modi". With a large number of citizens participating in the Poll and Discussion, the following reflects how the Citizens of India feel about the Current State of Telecom Services.

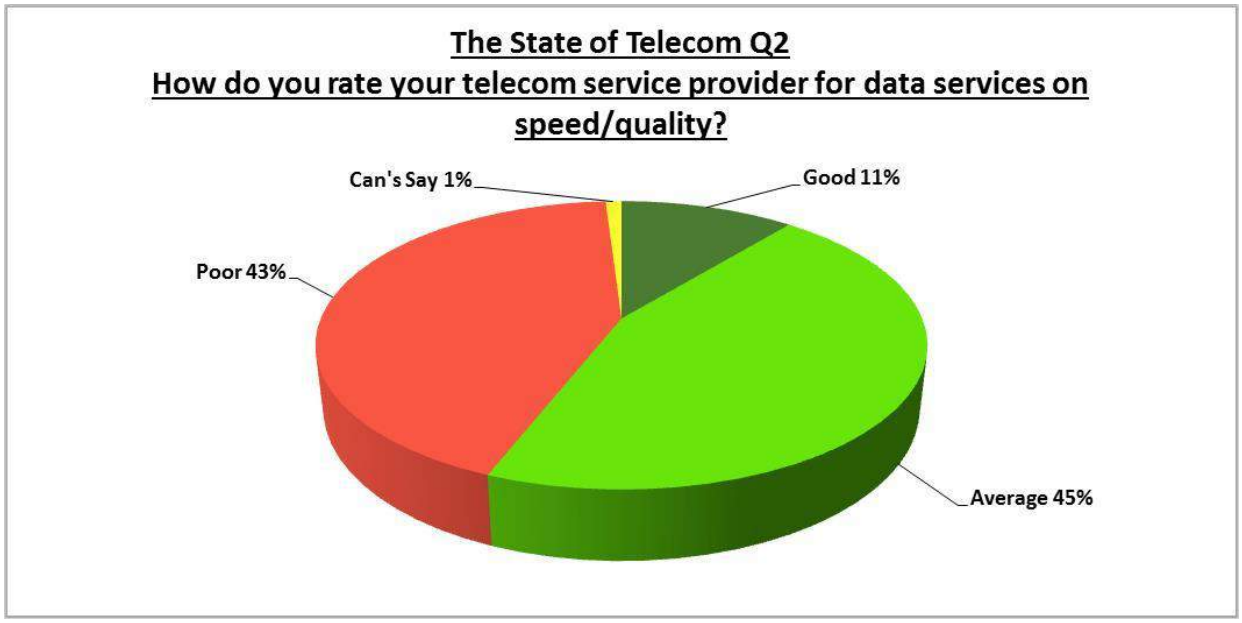
Based on the inputs, it appears that the collective need going forward is that of improving the quality of voice and data services, lowering tariffs where possible and winning consumer trust. The citizens also expect the regulator to play a more active role in minimizing consumer grievances and improving the state of industry.

Telecom Poll Results

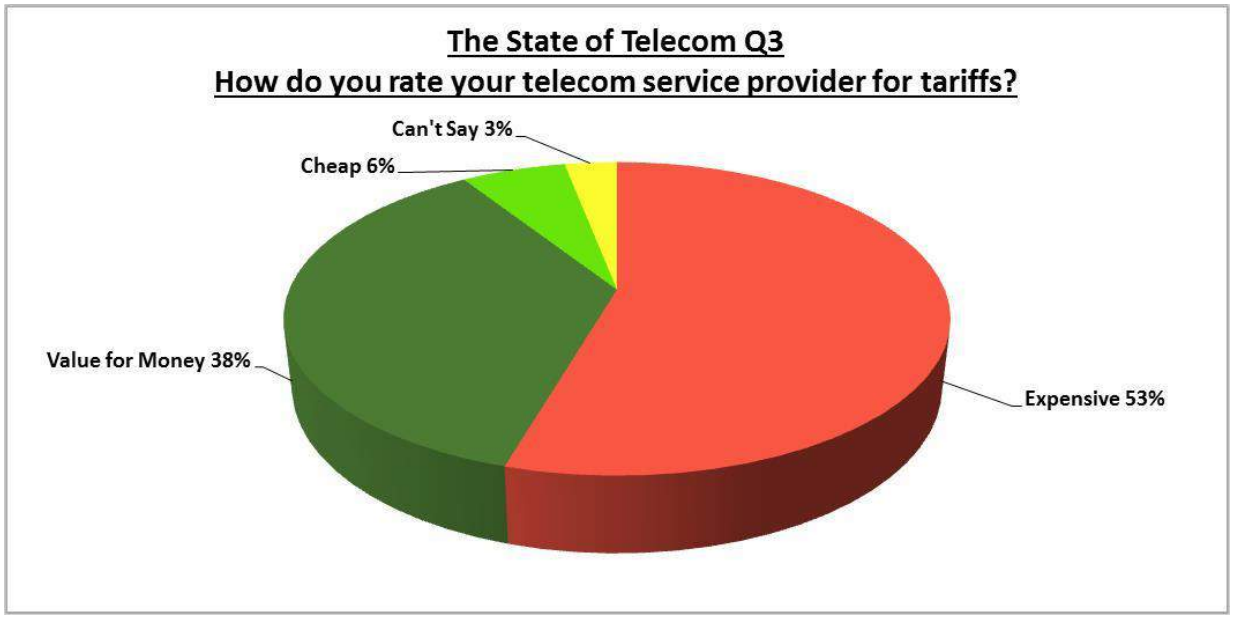
Poll # 1 – How do you rate your Telecom provider on Voice Services? (37,646 votes)



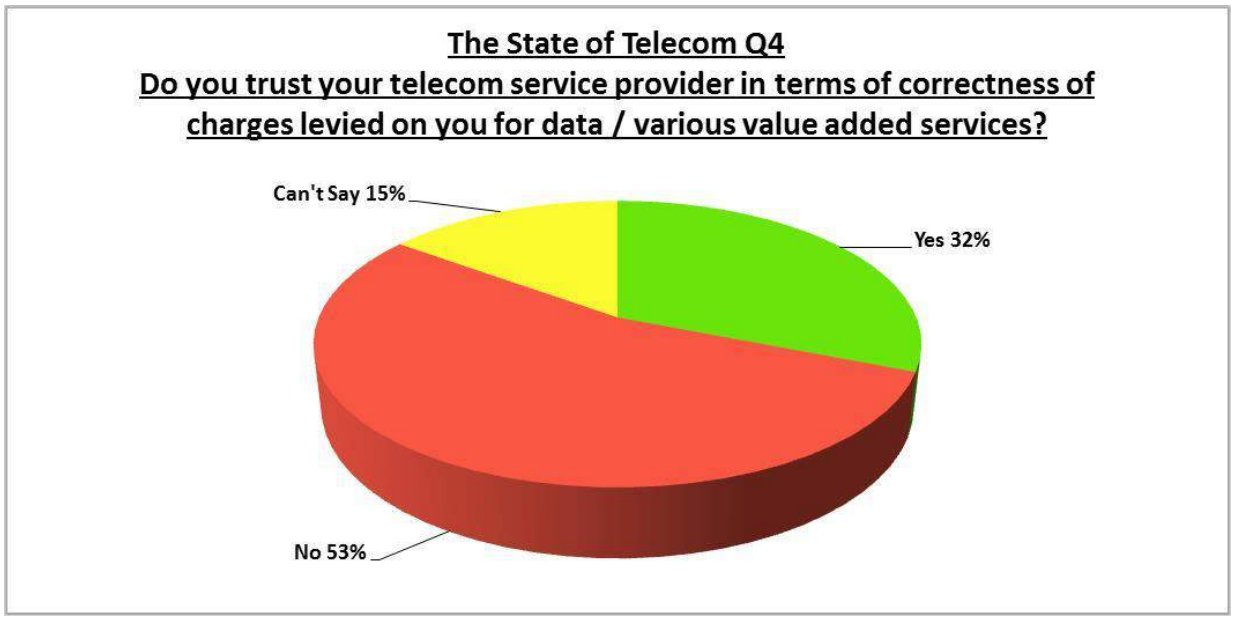
Poll # 2 – How do you rate your Telecom provider on Data Services? (37,524 votes)



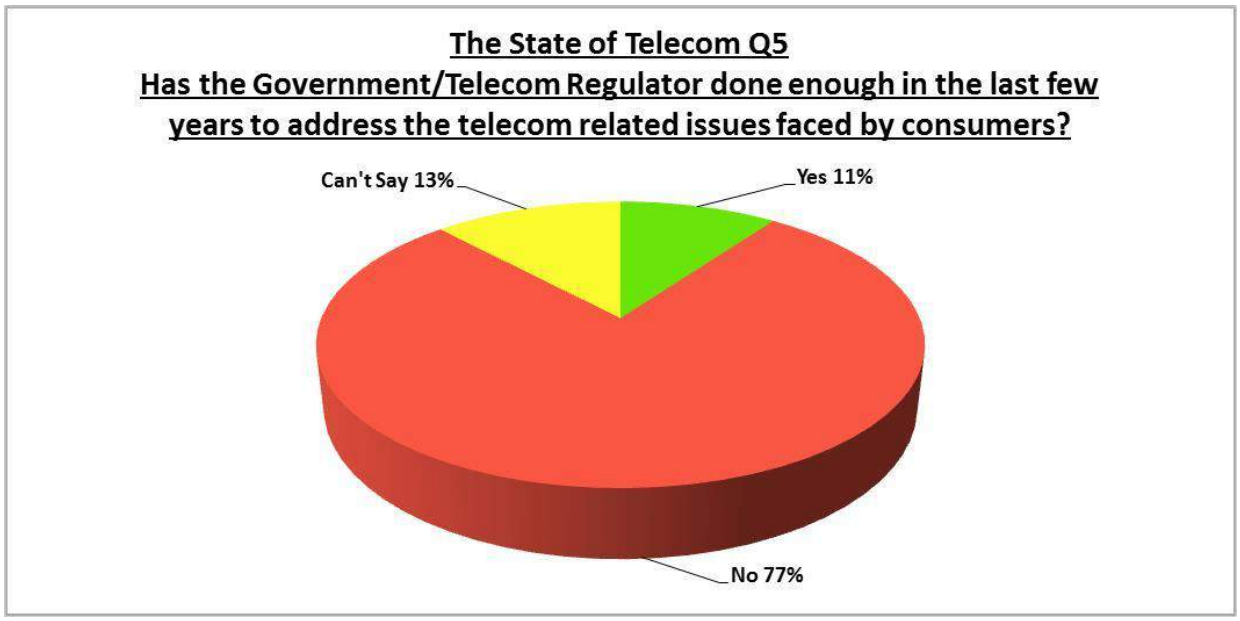
Poll # 3 – How do you rate your Telecom provider on Tariffs? (37,499 votes)



Poll # 4 – Do you trust the telecom Providers on Charges levied? (37,488 votes)



Poll # 5 –Is the Government/Regulator doing enough to address the Issues? (37,475 votes)



Issues identified:

1. Bills are not sent on time
2. Transparency in tariff plans missing
3. Customer Care calls are charged instead of being toll free numbers
4. Customers have to wait longer time to talk to the customer care executives
5. Customer service is very poor
6. Problem of cross connection in BSNL
7. 'Line busy' message during peak hours
8. Clarity of voice not there
9. Signal transmission between various companies is not well maintained
10. Too many unwanted calls and sms from the service providers
11. Schemes get activated without customer's consent
12. Data speed is not uniform everywhere
13. Roaming charges are high
14. E-bills are forced instead of paper bills
15. MTNL's customer service is very unprofessional and lazy
16. Late payment charges are high
17. Cost of SMSs is increased during the festive season
18. Data plans are not economical and many cases signals are not sufficient while on the move
19. Service Provider's network towers are located in residential areas on top of residential buildings causing radiation hazards to the neighbourhood
20. Very difficulty in getting SIM's for achieving compatibility with the latest trending phones
21. Number portability between different service providers takes a long time
22. Lots of problems with the billing
23. Broadband speed is the slowest we have among emerging economies
24. Grievance redressal system is very poor
25. Long wait in getting a new land line connection
26. MTNL phones/landlines might not work for half the month but the bill is charged for the full month
27. The price of Airtel's 2G unlimited data plan has gone up by 15% and the speed has reduced by 55%
28. Post-paid phone disconnection is a tough task

Root Causes Identified:

1. Telecom companies are becoming more and more profit centred
2. Regulations from TRAI are pretty loose
3. DoT is not adequately monitoring compliance of licensing requirements
4. Not enough towers installed
5. Tough to install towers in very densely populated areas
6. Government owned telecom companies still have the old working methodologies
7. The employees of government telecom operators are not customer focused
8. Annual increments of the employees is not performance based (public sector)
9. No one takes the onus of the customer problems and just pass the bucks
10. Tough competition forces them to take unethical decisions
11. Push from the higher management for higher revenues
12. BSNL and MTNL do not come under Consumer Protection Act
13. Mismanagement in MTNL and BSNL
14. Corruption in all the ranks
15. The cables and wires are not properly done at home connections. It is just tied to the trees and buildings around
16. The telephone posts are indiscriminately used by local cable operators
17. The wiring is old which leads to disturbance in the line
18. The numbers to be handled are very large but the infrastructure is not that strong
19. Telecom operators want to make money from anything and everything
20. Infrastructure for providing high speed broadband connection missing
21. No Government regulations on pricing

Solutions Identified:

1. Operators need to ensure that the paper/e-bill is sent to consumers on time
2. Customer care calls should be made free
3. Number of customer care executives should be increased to reduce waiting time
4. Customer service executives should undergo regular training and development
5. The telecom infrastructure needs to be updated to the latest
6. Strict regulations should be put on marketing calls and SMSs
7. Roaming charges should be done away with
8. There should be no hidden costs in tariff plans offered to the customer
9. The Government enterprises (MTNL/BSNL) should train their customer service to be more professional

10. The operators should not be allowed to increase call/sms rates during peak festive season
11. Call to the customer care of telecom companies should be absolutely free
12. Strict timelines should be defined for number portability
13. MTNL should give a rebate in the bill for the number of days the phone/broadband doesn't works
14. Customer complaints should be proactively followed up with
15. BSNL/MTNL should be brought under the usual consumer protection act
16. More towers should be set up to boost the mobile phone signals
17. TRAI should monitor the working of telecom operators strictly
18. Any wrongdoing from the operators should be strictly penalized
19. Corruption should be completely eradicated
20. Roaming charges should be discontinued
21. Data plans should be made economical and operators should ensure that the data speed remains uniform everywhere
22. Number portability should be made quick and easy
23. A proper grievance reporting channel should be created for BSNL and MTNL
24. A time frame should be devised for grievance redressal
25. In case the MTNL landlines don't work for more than a week, discounts should be given on the monthly bill
26. The process of getting a postpaid connection discontinued should be eased out
27. MTNL and BSNL should make their network wireless

Telecom Services in India – A few Citizen quotes:

1. There is no effective system for entertaining complaints from the telephone customers who are victims of the faulty telecommunication system – ***Ravi Prakash Arya***
2. There is utter lethargy and too much paper work for getting any work done. Employees are by and large disinterested. Let them perform and institute an assessment system based on quality of service to the users. A lines man's performance must be based on speed of repair of the line- unfortunately once a complaint is lodged the computer response says rectified w/o actually having done so. The workman has, as per the computer done his job but actually has not done so. The computer system needs to be made temper proof and the local officials must take a feedback from the area an individual is serving. Grand announcements are meaningless till last mile service improved – ***Rajinder Singh***
3. The biggest problem in the telecom sector is because presently it is being run by IAS and finance people who have no in depth knowledge of this field. Revolution in this field was because of Indian Telecom Service Officers who have been side lined now. Chairman TRAI is an IAS officer whereas chairman telecom commission is also an IAS officer who has little knowledge of telecom field. Policy making in any field is a highly specialized job which is unfortunately in India is being handled by IAS officers. If we have to improve the system we have to ensure that TRAI as well as department of telecom should be managed by Indian Telecom service officers who have been recruited for managing telecom in India – ***Rahul Sachan***
4. The private companies cheat on voice and data bills, whereas the BSNL equipment is outdated and service is poor. The speed of broadband in India in both private sector and public sector is very slow. All the government offices like railway stations, Airports, Income tax office, courts etc. should provide free wireless broadband. Digital libraries should be established. All big libraries should be digitalised and data therein should be available to everyone – ***Varanavasi Rajamanickkam***
5. TRAI and DOT are not very effective in grievance redressal – ***Deepak Jain***
6. Closure of connections should be hassle free, right now it is too complicated and causes one extra month bill to be paid by customer - ***Prem Prakash***
7. One India operation was announced by UPA Government but was bribed by Telecom operators to stop the operation due to their motive to earn money on roaming charges. The people at large are suffering during their travels across India as they charge money as they want. One India operation should be implemented immediately & roaming should be abolished asap – ***Ram NAth Dubey***
8. Customer care meeting be made short through phone as on calling customer care it speaks dial 1, now dial 2 etc., but customer care executive does not come but private

players contact immediately. BSNL takes 30 minutes to contact customer care executive – ***Viney Puri***

9. Government should ban the Chinese vendor companies like Huawei, ZTE etc. as they are not using equipment as per the standards, this is the reason for high call drops and bad services in the country – ***Abhimanyu Panchal***
10. Government has huge cable and optical network still the government operators(MTNL, BSNL) are unable to provide good services, we can make R & D centres where telecom equipment can be build and government can make companies like Huawei, ZTE (semi govt. org with universal standards and earn a lot) – ***Abhimanyu***
11. Airtel prepaid - Without the customer's consent, many times the pre-paid money gets debited in the name of caller tune subscriptions, or other scheme subscriptions. This is a deliberate attempt and most of the times the customers don't claim back the lost amount due to difficulty in accessing the customer care executives. Most of the times, the phone goes to Automated voice response – ***Balasanjeevi***
12. 2G data rates have increased exponentially even though the 2G data speeds are to slow, govt. should mandate minimum speed for 2G/3G data - ***Varun Jain***
13. TRAI needs to be very proactive & match the level of expectations from citizens. QOS is formulated but is flouted by service providers. Broadband Internet service providers need to be pulled up for not providing speed contracted. They have many escape routes. TRAI is running like old govt. department. It needs a MODI injection. Nowhere in the world is it contracted like in India under TRAI - speed shall be UPTO a certain speed.NO COMMITTMENT can be seen. Please look at the Consumer Forum Agencies registered with TRAI & you will get an idea of how weakly we are represented as against the all-powerful ISP lobbies. It will be an eye opener. ISP's are not accountable& TRAI is not using its powers in favour of Citizens – ***Ashok Dullu***
14. Within India the mobile plan should be one India and NO MORE ROAMING charges. Even the developing countries in Africa do not have national roaming. Roaming is only for international – ***Col. Latif VA***
15. Fraud billing based on reduced cloak speed is resorted to by some telecos. The Government should intervene with regulatory mechanism like " A software -Through me billing" in which each call billing goes through this check/audit – ***Col. Latif VA***