

A Qualitative Study On Mobile Number Portability-7th Amendment In Indian Telecom

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Abstract: Purpose: The purpose of this study is to understand the changes due to proposed mobile number portability (MNP) -7th amendment in consumer life cycle, analyse customer awareness on exiting mobile number portability withdrawal process and impact of proposed MNP -7th amendment process on the customer behaviour. There are many aspects such as mobile number return, use of block chain for DND in MNP 7th Amendment, this study is restricted on MNP request withdraw process. Design: To study the first objective, theoretical study of previous TRAI consultation papers, Industry experts, article papers and website contents were used. In order to study the second & third objective a discrete choice experiment, qualitative research analysis is used with in-depth interview method to understand consumer understanding about the current and revised process and then customer has been given choice on the selection of revised and old MNP withdrawal process. For this, 100 customers were randomly selected who has used mobile portability service in last 90 days. The second objective was explored through qualitative research analysis using semi structured interviews to systematically collect and analyze the data in order to generate a model for analyzing impact of new process. For this, 87 customers were randomly selected who were used the MNP service. Further grounded theory approach has been used to code the verbatim (indicates recording of interviews in the exact same manner as responded by the interviewee) and further proposed a retention model with industry experts. Findings: study of the MNP - 7th amendment shows that customer will be more empowered and it will give easiness to consumers for withdrawal of the MNP request. Originality/Value: MNP- 7th Amendment is new process which is proposed to be live from 16th Dec 2019 and going to bring revolution in MNP retention process. On this not more study is available and this study provides insights on its impact and consumer awareness on this process. Study shows that 98% of customers were not aware about the exiting MNP withdrawal process and never tried the MNP withdrawal process previously. Further study shows 20% of the customers will try the new process, if they get the desired benefits from the operators.

Keywords: MNP, retention process, MNP withdrawal process, Indian telecom industry, changes in Indian telecom Paper Type: Research paper

INTRODUCTION

It was 20th Jan 2011 when mobile number portability launched in India, this was limited to only within the licensed circle area only, latter on from 3rd Jul 2015 full mobile number portability launched which enables customer to port his mobile number from one licensed circle area to anywhere in India. This is also called national mobile portability. In Second amendment issued by TRAI, on 24th Nov 2010 the deadline for verification and acceptance, rejection of the mobile number portability request has been modified to 4 days from 24hrs, this was on the done basis on the security guidelines by DOT. According to the TRAI data, maximum number of rejections between November 2010-February 25, 2013 were made against Bharti Airtel (37,16,966), Vodafone (27,63,957), Idea/Spice (21,05,882), Tata Teleservices (GSM) (8,74,468), Aircel (8,21,917), Reliance Com (GSM) (8,00,567) among others. However, the data does not specify number of complaints in which TRAI discovered that procedures were not followed. The above data shows customer's pain while processing the mobile number portability request. In order to curb this issue TRAI has issued the financial disincentive in fourth amendment of the mobile number portability on 19th Sep 2012 states that any deviation on the processing of mobile number portability will have financial disincentive of Rs 5000/- for each case and in case there is established fact that same has been rejected by donor operator Rs 10,000/-for each wrong rejection. As per the process of the Mobile number portability donor operator is not supposed to reject any request apart from the below reason

1. Outstanding bill payment due for the issued bill (normal billing cycle)
2. New connection with less than 90 days from the date of activation
3. In process change of ownership
4. The mobile number is sub-judice
5. Prohibited by a Court of Law
6. Wrong UPC
7. Contractual obligation not cleared by the subscriber before porting
8. In case of a corporate mobile number, the porting request is not accompanied by authorization letter from authorized signatory
9. Validity of UPC has expired

Now if we see the above criteria there was no opportunity was given to donor operator to protect its customer from mobile number portability after submission of documents. Hence there was long battle was going on between TRAI & mobile operators. In order to empower the customer as per regulation 13, 2009 of the MNP Regulations, the customer can withdraw the porting request within 24hrs of making the request, by informing the recipient operator in writing only and donor operator is not authorized to entertain / action such request. But point to be noted that since recipient operator has interest in the customer acquisition as per TRAI, there are not many requests are actioned by the recipient operator even if customer given the request within timeline. Impact Aadhaar/digital activation on MNP retention process After introduction of electronic know your customer process (EKYC) that reduced the documentation processing of any new MNP activation time to less than 10 minutes, resulting reduced the retention opportunity of donor operator. This can be detailed with the help of below graphical presentation. Retention time for donor operator assuming customer gives documents at the same of UPC generation to recipient operator Retention Time = Document travel time & punch

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time at central processing unit + 24 hrs. (customer is to give the written request to recipient operator) After digital activation document travel time & punch time at central

processing unit has reduced to 10 minutes from 24 hrs. earlier.

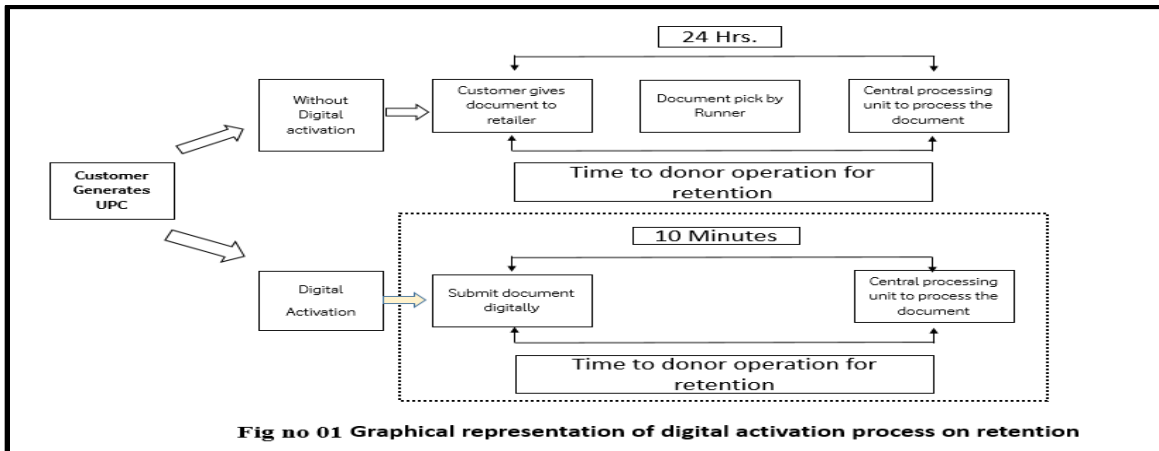


Fig no 01 Graphical representation of digital activation process on retention

Source: Industry Sources and Consultation Paper on Review of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) process New Delhi, 06th April, 2018

This gives TRAI opportunity to look better process of the of handling the customer withdrawal process. The purpose of this paper is 1. Understand the mobile number withdrawal process as per MNP-7th amendment 2. Study the understanding level of current withdraw process with customers 3. To determine the impact of new process on telecom industry. To achieve the 1st objective, an empirical study was done and data was collected from TRAI, research journals and other internet websites. In order to explore the 2nd and 3rd objective survey was done with 100 customers in Andhra and Telangana state with purposive sampling where in customer who used mobile number portability in last 3 months has been chosen for the survey. The questioner is

prepared to know the understanding of the exiting process of mobile number portability withdrawal process and option were given to customer whether they would have opted the revised withdrawal process, basis on their inputs data is collected for analysis purpose

LITERATURE REVIEW

As per TRAI data published on MNP trend shows that MNP is excessively used by the customer to change the operator and this is very useful to protect the number during closure of any mobile operator like RCOM, Aircel (Dec'17 to April'19 period).

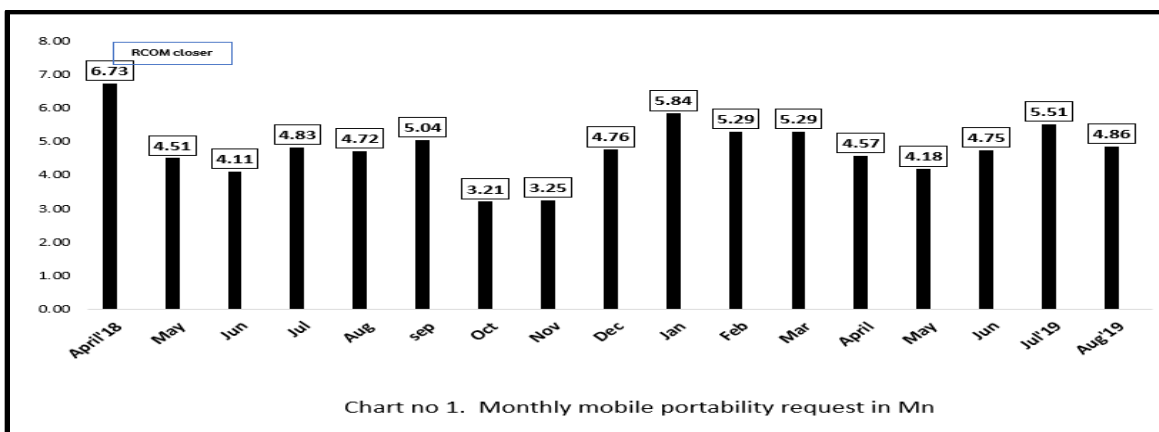


Chart no 1. Monthly mobile portability request in Mn

Source: TRAI Monthly report

As per the current MNP process drafted in 2009 after submission of mobile number portability request customer has to visit the recipient operator and give the written withdrawal request to withdraw his MNP request. Since donor operator has no rights to reject any customer request and because of interest conflict recipient operator is also not processing these request (Consultation Paper on Review of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) process New Delhi, 06th April, 2018) There have been various issues reported of wrong rejection like charging 1900 number, interim bill

generation (NDTV, February 22, 2011) was creating in convince to customers. Hence in order to have easiness for customers on the wrong rejection TRAI has imposed the financial disincentive for each wrong MNP rejection up to Rs 10,000/- (TRAI 2012). As per donor operator this process was not business friendly as not enough opportunity was given to them to retain the customer.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There has been little study done on the MNP 7th Amendment, consumer awareness & impact of the new MNP process on the Indian telecom industry. This research paper provides insights on above questions. Newspapers, Research papers and Internet sources are used to analyze first objective. In order to study 2nd objective questioner is built, where customers who has used the mobile number portability service in last 90 days are taken as sample size and asked about their understanding about current MNP withdrawal process. In order to study 3rd objective discrete choice method is used, the study was purely qualitative in nature. for 2nd and 3rd objective data is collected with purposive sampling technique, customers from Andhra Pradesh and

Telangana has been chosen for the study, further customers which has experienced the mobile number portability has been taken for survey. a non-probability sample which is selected based on some characteristics of the population and the objective of the study is called as purposive sample. Purposive sampling is not like convenience sampling and is also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling (Black, K. (2010), [2] Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2012), Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2012). The interview started by taking customer permission to participate and done one at one time. The clear information was given to interviewees about the purpose, objectives of interview and study.

EVENT	Before MNP7th Amendment	After MNP 7th Amendment
UPC Generation	UPC was generated by TSP without any validation	UPC will be generated by MCH - "Donor" forwards the request to MCH MCH dips in operator systems via a query for customer eligibility to generate UPC (like AON, Outstanding etc.) DNO will not know the UPC code now Once UPC is generated, port out request cannot be rejected (except corporate numbers only based on authorization letter related rejections)
UPC Validity	15 days (all circles except AS, NE & JK) 30 days (AS, NE & JK)	4 days (all circles except AS, NE & JK) 30 days (AS, NE & JK)
Port-in TAT (excluding Sundays & National holiday)	4 days from port request	Intra Circle Port-in TAT - 3 days Inter Circle & COCP TAT remains un-changed to 5 days AS/NE/JK port in TAT continues to be 15 days
Port Withdrawal (within 24 hours of port request)	Subscriber to give written request to RO within 24hrs of port-in request given.	Port withdrawal through SMS Subscriber can send port withdrawal SMS to 1900 within 24hrs of port request - Applicable for both Individual & Corporate requests
Non Payment Disconnection process	Donor raises request to RO (through MCH) for payment collection with MSISDN & Outstanding amount. Recipient to confirm payment cleared or number disconnected within 30 days	Additional information to be sent to MCH i.e. date of bill, last date of payment, date of notice, period of notice If recipient confirms payment, MCH triggers confirmation to donor through online dip and then only request is closed. If DO confirms payment is not received request is closed number return process starts If DO receives payment, proactive trigger is sent to MCH for closure of request

Table no 01 Scenario comparisons Pre and Post MNP amendment

Source: Consultation Paper on Review of Mobile Number Portability (MNP) process New Delhi, 06th April, 2018

ANALYSIS OF DATA :

7th MNP amendment has proposed below changes, the major change on experience life cycle is empowering the customer on MNP withdrawal with process through SMS based action. Any customer can withdraw request by sending port withdrawal SMS to 1900 within 24hrs of port request – which Applicable for both Individual & Corporate requests 7th Amendment of the mobile number portability has given easy option to withdraw the mobile number portability request to consumers. 20% of the consumers studied shows that they may utilized this given facility if option were given to them. 98% of the consumers were not aware that mobile number portability can be withdrawn, neither competition has

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY:

This amendment has given the opportunity for the donor operator to retain their exiting subscribers as donor don't

given this information. As a business requirement it was assumed that donor operator will educate the consumer about the withdrawal process but out of the sample studied none of the customer confirmed that the withdrawal of mobile number portability process is shared with them in pre MNP 7th Amendment scenario. 2% of the customers who knows the process has got the information when they called the donor operator call center to know the status of the mobile number portability. 95% of the customer were reluctant to visit again to donor operator and give written withdrawal request. 20% are ready to use the SMS based tool, if donor operator given the same offer like recipient operator. This percentage increases as high as to 40% ,if customer gets the better product offer than recipient offer. have to depend the recipient operator for processing the MNP withdrawal request. Customer don't need to visit the recipient operator for withdrawal of the MNP request as new MNP rule gives SMS based tool to withdrawal the request, rather than written request to recipient operator.

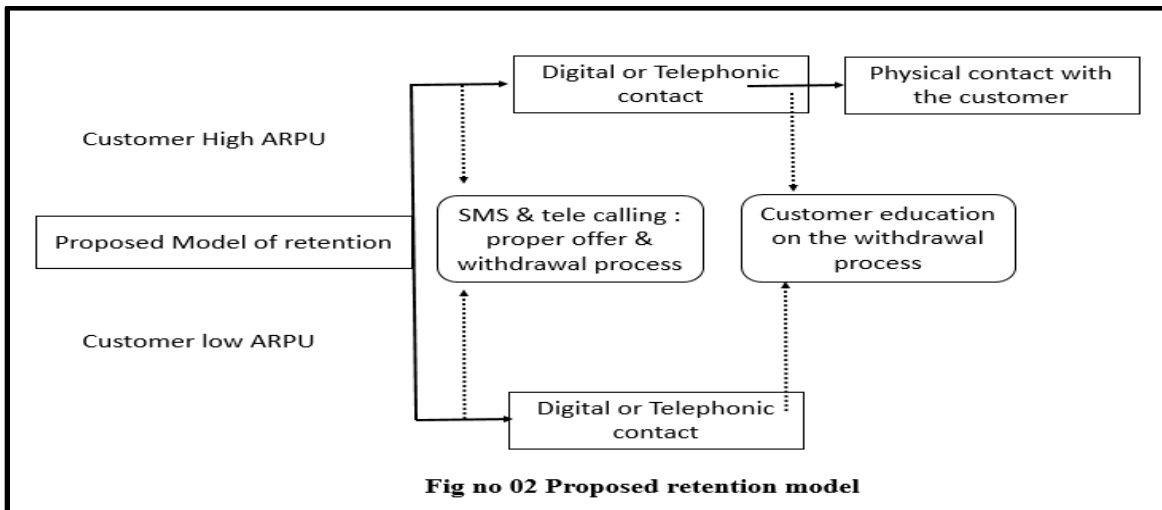


Fig no 02 Proposed retention model

The role of operator on generation of UPC / controlling the mobile portability request is going to be removed from the operator.

Segmentation of customers: for cost effective retention process, customers are bifurcate with the high ARPU & low ARPU customers. High ARPU customers are worth retain. Here low ARPU is referring average monthly revenue per user less than Rs 200/-. All ARPU calculations are taken from the Industry experts. Segmented approach for retention: since cost of field retention is very high Rs 75/- per visit for all low ARPU customers only SMS based and outbound calling or digital mode of connect is recommended along with filed forced to be deployed for retention activity. Any SMS based, outbound calling or digital mode of connect required less cost Rs 15-20/- per call.

CONCLUSION

MNP 7th Amendment is going to be revolutionary measure by TRAI for enhancing the customer experience and also helps donor operator to protect their business interest, resulting companies are expected to intensify the MNP retention process. Companies are expected to change their retention strategy with segmented approach, high ARPU customers will have more focused approach retention. This will also help to reduce the customer complaints on the MNP rejections as ownership UPC generation will goes to mobile clearing house from the mobile operator.

Because of this operator needs to change the retention model, below is proposed model which is built with consultation of the industry experts

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