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An in-depth analysis on the impact of the growth of India's telecommunication industry as a vehicle of growth in the manufacturing-Sterlite and services sector (Airtel & Jio); case study of the growth of service providers on the companies- Airtel, Jio, Vodafone overtime

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ABSTRACT

The growth of the telecommunication sector of India has been primarily channeled by the ***telecommunication policies*** *followed by the government. The government has continuously adopted policies aligned to the changing technology of this sector. This has led to the growth of industries engaged in* ***laying*** *and* ***manufacturing of optic fiber*** *as well as data service providers. The paper has undertaken the case study of the growth of Sterlite industries in manufacturing and laying of optic fibers and the company's data has indicated that despite a 30% market share, the revenue earned by this industry translated into ₹3830cr. Profit. It also analyses authentic secondary data in two* ***service provider firms*** *Airtel & Jio and their role in spreading of communication. The entry of Reliance Jio in the service provider space led to a complete change in the provision of data services which led to a major benefit to the consumers. The result of all these endeavors have resulted in the Indian economy being the* ***third largest*** *in this area in* ***2025****. The main reason being the active encouragement by the government. This paper would analyze* ***"To what extent has the growth of India's telecommunication industry impacted companies in the manufacturing and the services sector? An analysis of these sectors overtime will be compared. Is there a relationship in the growth of telecommunication and the growth of the companies in both these sectors? Is there a commensurate growth of the industry and the company? If so what is the relationship? Have these companies increased their profitability overtime?***

Key words: Telecommunication, Broadband, bandwidth, Policies, Market Share , Revenue, Manufacturing.

1. Introduction

The **Telecommunication Industry** links all forms of communication across the world through cables, telegraph, telephones or broadcasting. **India's telecom industry ranks as the second-largest telecommunications market in the world.** It is known for its **vast subscriber base**, which is growing ubiquitously providing a significant contribution to the country's GDP. The Indian telecom industry is a **global leader in international *mobile broadband internet traffic and bandwidth*,** with universal plans of expansion through the widespread introduction of **5G services** throughout India.

Government policies have played a pivotal role in the growth of this sector through policies like- ***National Telecom Policy (1994)*** which was the first major post-liberalization policy foundational for private sector involvement. ***New Telecom Policy (NTP) 1999***, this addresses the **shortcomings** of the *NTP 1994* and was crucial for accelerating growth of this sector. It lifted the restriction of the number of **private operators** and moved from a f**ixed license fee model to a revenue-sharing model** which was financially beneficial to both the government and the operator, as well as for the citizens of India. Further, the ***Telecommunications Act (2023),*** further simplifying licensing, thus creating an elementary framework with respect to the authorizations while establishing telecom companies.

Figure 1. Siemens Automation Venture

The growth of the telecommunication sector has had a **huge linkage impact on the manufacturing and services sector of the country.** The Indian manufacturing industry has seen a vast growth of itself primarily due to the growth of the telecom industry. This has directly impacted the manufacturing sector by enabling **advanced automation**, **improving supply chain visibility**, **reducing operational costs**, fostered new product development and enabled the industry to be globally competitive through **5G technology and Internet of Things (IoT).** An apt example of this is the multinational company, ***Siemens*** which uses both **IoT and 5G** to connect and monitor its automated production facilities that allow for immediate adjustment to quantities and at the same time adhering to enhanced quality control. After liberalization and globalization, the Indian market has geared itself to use the best quality services, irrespective of whether they are multinational or homegrown. The idea is to **achieve efficiency and growth.**

The growth of telecommunication sector has revolutionized the services sector by enabling **remote working conditions, digital services, e-commerce, and enhanced customer experiences** across various sectors like **finance, healthcare, and education**. Real world examples include shifting to remote work facilitated by video conferencing tools, rise of digital banking and payment apps, and the growth of online education.

The most unique service that has united India is payment through the **Unified Payment Interface (UPI)** format, which has been provided and encouraged by the government to ensure that all subsidy and welfare payments reach the end user without it being reduced, resulting in nil corruption. The defining feature is the passing of the benefit to the marginalized sections of the society such that they are able to uplift themselves from the circular flow of poverty.

Figure 2. Benefits of UPI

The growth of the telecommunication sector has impacted and affected every citizen of India, and this can be observed in the way they conduct their lives and businesses. An important aspect of this growth is in the **increasing relevance of service providers** namely- *Airtel, Jio, Vodafone*. An in-depth study of their growth model and their varied linkage affects specially in the manufacturing and services sector, would give an important insight into the various aspects involved as well as the extent of support that the government of India has provided and is still providing.

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2. Background of Telecommunication Service Providers

To enable adequate penetration of service providers, a timeline for one of the telecom industry service providers (Vodafone) which is among the top leaders of the market is indicated in ***table 1*** below.

Table 1. Vodafone Service Provision & Company history

Year	Products/ Services	Provision Of Products	Revenue/Loss	Profit	Growth%	Government Support
1995	Acquired Hutchison max and renamed as Birla Communications limited.	Small, circle-level startup only Gujarat & Maharashtra. Provide broadband services and mobile telephony.	-	Negative (loss)	The initial investment was huge and no official data available	DoT licence for Gujarat, Maharashtra was auctioned by TRAI, where an upfront amount was given and subsequently, there was revenue sharing between the two.
2000	Expanded GSM (Delhi, Kolkata, Gujarat). Renamed as Birla AT&T.	Mobile telephony, Roaming service, network expansion, mobile services and banking tied up with ICICI. Wireless broadband.	Debt load of 2000 crores	Loss	Due to it being a new startup, there is no data available but the records show that the company was in a loss.	Revenue sharing, one time license fee under the 1999 telecom policy.
2005	It was renames to	Roaming, Data and	Rapid revenue	Loss continue	Substantial growth	2G spectrum

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	Birla Tata AT&T as Tata joined them.	Value Added services and expanded to small towns, improving connectivity.	increase indicated below	d till 2007	in the rural areas	allocation
2010	Vodafone India; 2G + 3G services, VAS	Millions of SIM sales	Multi-billion USD	EBITDA positive, profits pressured	Double-digit subscriber growth	3G spectrum auction support
2015	2G/3G; 4G launch Dec 2015	Strong Handset/ data sales	~US$5.3–5.4 bn	Margins under stress	~20%+ data growth	Spectrum auctions, broadband policies
2020	Vodafone Idea (post-merger); 2G/3G/4G	Large, but shrinking	₹463,267 million	Heavy net loss (AGR dues)	Negative growth vs rivals	Govt discussions on AGR & dues
2021	Vi brand; 4G focus, consolidation	Declining	₹423,653 million	Continued net losses	Market share falling	Sept 2021 relief package (dues moratorium, reforms)

The above table indicates the impact of telecommunication policies on the growth of one of India's major service providers. A similar analysis for the growth of Airtel & Jio industries, is seen in subsequent sections of this paper.

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3. Analysis on the impact of the government policies in the growth of the telecom industry

The National Telecom Policy (1994)- envisaged that the phone would be available on demand and that all villages would be covered in India by 1997 and all Value-Added Services should be in place by 1996. The hardware for the above had to be provided if the above objectives were to be met by 1996/1997. Private investment for Value Added Service were allowed in July 1992 for: Electronic Mail, Voice Mail, Data Services, Audio Text services, Video Text services, Video Conferencing, Radio Paging, Cellular Mobile Telephone. **[1]**

Cable Regulation Act of 1995- Under the provision of the Cable Regulation Act of 1995, cable service providers shall continue to be *freely permitted to provide last mile linkage, for this no extra license/permission would be required*. **[2]**

The New Telecom Policy (1999)- The target of 1994 was not completely met, the government recognized in 1999 that earlier system of privatization led to the existence of similar cellular mobile network only in the metros. The rural areas were not a part of this network. The main objectives of 1999 policy was telephone would be now available on demand by 2002. For this it was necessary to roll out a suitable tariff structure and ensure that the providers mandatorily provide rural communication. Internet access to all district headquarters was to be achieved by 2000 and high-speed data along with multimedia capability in towns where the population is greater than 2lakh, was to be provided by 2002. Spectrum availability and spectrum use would be monitored and could be reviewed by TRAI, as and when required. The importance of this NTP 1999, was the acceptance that with the growing demand of mobile telephony, the spectrums provided to the providers, may have to be enhanced periodically. **[3]**

The Broadband policy 2004- The broadband policy 2004 that Telecommunications is considered as part of growth of infrastructure, which is important for the economy and for a healthy competition. For this, the government encouraged the growth of telecommunications as integral part of expansion of infrastructure. The spread of optical fiber network was emphasized, keeping in view the long-term perspective. Cable TV network, Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSAT) and Direct-to-Home (DTH) was encouraged for penetration of broadband and internet services. This encouraged rapid R&D (Research & Development), and the government accepted willingly any new technologies that would increase penetration of telecommunication services. Packages were developed, in consultation with ministry of Finance and concerned service providers, to achieve almost *universal provision at affordable rates.* **[4]**

National Telecom Policy 2012

The main emphasis of the 2012 policy was to bridge the gap between the rural and the urban areas, the main requirement to achieve this objective was to adopt facilities that would achieve

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'Broadband on Demand'- affordable and reliable. They envisaged a convergence between telecom, broadcast and IT services, networks, platforms, and technologies. To achieve this, there must be a simultaneous growth in hardware, telecom connectivity and IT. This requires mobile technology, Internet and Fiber penetration in all villages of India to achieve higher levels of rural tele density. **[5]**

National Digital Communications Policy-2018

The main emphasis in the 2018 policy was on adoption of new technology and the availability of the same at affordable rates. An initiative called 'Bharat Net' which is the beginning of widespread use of 5G technology, and the economy wanted to move towards digital sovereignty. The mantra that was adopted in this policy document, was moving towards 'Digital India'. **[6]**

National Broadband Mission 2019

The government of India realized that to achieve universal rural connectivity at affordable prices, the emphasis must be on the spread of 'Broadband Technology'. This led to policies being addressed under the National Broadband Mission. **[7]**

Telecommunications Act – 2023

The telecommunication Act of 2023 was commensurate with the fast-changing technical environment in the industry and the economy. This new act enabled quick adoption of technical changes as well as specifying the processes to be followed for the private sector, PSU's (Public Sector Undertaking) center and state governments. **[8]**

4. Research Gap & Methodology

The paper would specifically analyse the growth of the telecommunication industry and its impact on both service providers as well as those companies that produces optic fibers. The service provider companies that have been analyzed are- Airtel & Jio, while the major companies manufacturing optic fibers that have been studied is Sterlite Technologies.

The methodology adopted would be a mixed method one, where both quantitative and qualitative analysis would be considered in explaining the trend that these companies have and are following according to the growth of the telecommunication industry in India. The data used in both cases would be from authentic secondary sources.

The paper analyses the various telecommunication policies impacting the growth path and market share of Airtel & Jio and the extent of its effect on Sterlite industries as providers of optic cables.

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5. Impact of Telecommunication policies on the growth of Sterlite Technologies Limited (STL)

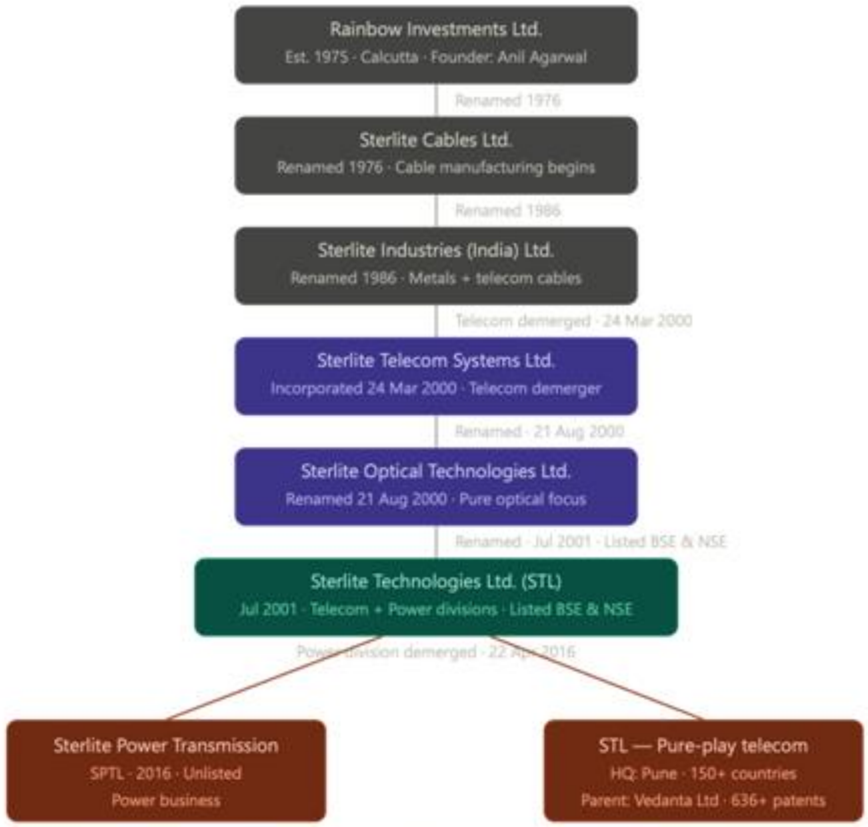

Figure 3. Sterlite Industries Telecom Evolution Timeline
Source – Audited results of the company

Sterlite Industry, originally started as ***Rainbow Investments ltd. in 1975*** by Anil Kumar Agarwal. Subsequently, it was called ***Sterlite Cable in 1976***, where for the first time, they entered **copper cable manufacturing**. It was in 1986 that Sterlite Cables ltd was renamed into ***Sterlite Industries (India) ltd***., and then they started exclusive manufacturing copper wire and optic fiber cable for the telecom sector. This was the period coinciding with the entry of progressive telecommunication policies in India. On *24th March 2000*, the telecommunication sector of Sterlite industries was placed under a separate entity known as *Sterlite Telecom Systems Ltd.*, which in the initial few months of its corporate rebranding was further renamed as *Sterlite Optical Technologies Ltd.* Further to 2000, in the beginning of the **second quarter of FY2001-2002**, the company was again renamed to ***Sterlite Technologies Ltd. (STL),*** which encompassed both the **telecom and the power division**. STL had been a listed entity on the stock exchange, holding a debt of ***₹6500 cr.*** To avoid the harmful impacts of this debt on the listed company,

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STL was demerged into ***SPTL (Sterlite Power Transmission Ltd.)*** which wiped out ***₹5500 cr.*** of debt from STL's books. **[9]**

Over the years, Sterlite Industry is an integral part of **India's Telecommunication sector.** This industry provides copper and optic cable to maximize benefits and growth of the telecommunication service industry in India.

Optic fibers in recent years are primarily used in the following areas:

1. **4G/5G-** Increasing penetration in rural and semi urban areas.
2. **Data Centers-** All over India
3. **Gram Panchayat-** Specifically to rural India
4. **Bharat Net-** A PSU undertaking to increase the spread of digitalization.

The above areas are serviced by both **PSU's (Public Sector Undertaking)** & **Private sector operators** like *Airtel and Jio*. The extent of market share of various companies manufacturing optic fiber cables for *June 2024* are indicated in ***table 2*** below.

Table 2. Market share of OFC manufacturers June 2024

Year	Sterlite Industries	Birla Cable	Finolex Cable	Vindhya Telelinks	Aksh Optifiber	HFCL
2024	30%	20%	18%	15%	12%	5%
Source: https://www.stocksmantra.com/optical-fiber-cable-manufacturers-in-india/						

Table 2. above indicates the importance of the optic fiber cable industry to achieve last mile connectivity. Among the most important Indian manufacturers of these cables is Sterlite Industries. They have maintained a high market share over the years.

The extent of **profits earned** due to growth of the **optic fiber industry** can be seen from the figures of financial year ending **2024.** Sterlite Industry clocked an average of ***30%*** of its Indian operations for the same year. This translated into ***₹3,830 Cr.*** Which indicates that the total extent of optic fiber growth in **2024** is estimated to be ***₹13000 cr.***, clearly indicating a positive impact of policies adopted by ***TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India).***
Research has indicated that the optical fiber cables market is valued at **$1.73 billion in 2024** and the ***CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate)*** is expected to be *20.11% from 2025-2032*, indicating a market that is valued at ***$7.5 billion in 2032***. **[10]**

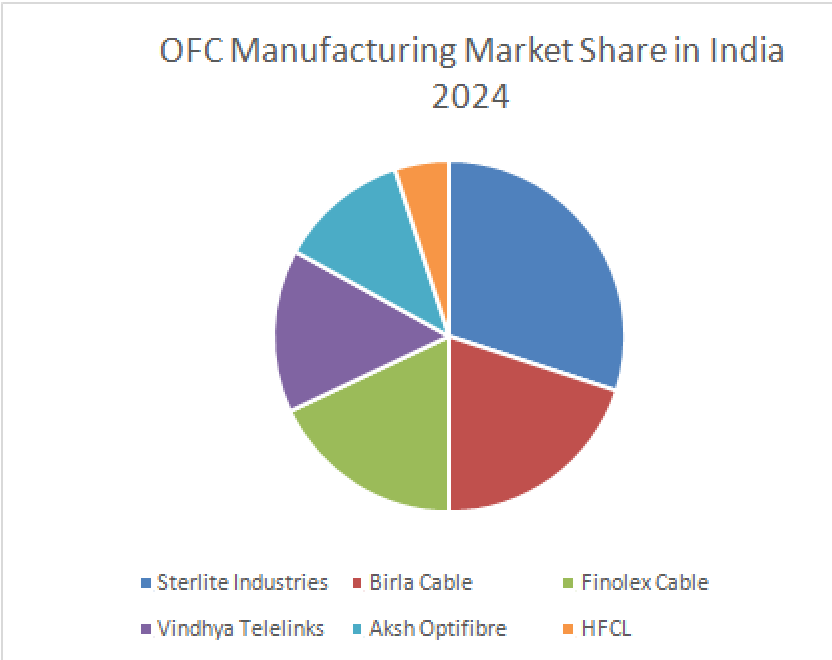

Figure 4. Optic Fiber Competitors Market share Distribution

This clearly indicates the **increased penetration of digitization** all over India. It is a direct effect of the policies and the efficient implementation by the TRAI. The effort to provide affordable data and smartphones have acted as an impetuous to the service providers as also the laying of optical fibers. This is evident in the earnings of the Sterlite Industry as well as their forecasted profits.

The market share, specifically of *Sterlite Industries* has changed from **2010 (45%) to 30% in 2024** in the Indian market, but this has not impacted its profits. One of the possible reasons could be the **merger and acquisitions** that took place in the Sterlite Industries, along with the increased competition faced from other manufacturers namely- *HFCL*, *Birla cables*, *Finolex* in this sector. All these industries are old manufacturing units who may earlier have been manufacturing cables but have now specialized in only manufacture of optic fibers.

Table 3. Market share comparison over the years.

Year	Sterlite Industries
2010[1*]	45%
2014[2*]	22%

2016[3*]	40%
2020[4*]	45%
2024[5*]	30%

SOURCE:

1*http://innovision.sushilfinance.com/Modules/Files/Company%20report/02%20Mar%202010_Sterlite%20Technologies-Initiating%20Coverage-Mar.10.pdf

2*https://www.stl.tech/new_pdf/pdf/investor-resource/Sterlite-Technologies-Earnings-Call-Transcript-2013-14.pdf

3*https://www.stl.tech/new_pdf/pdf/investor-resource/Result_Update_Sterlite_Technologies_KRC.pdf#:~:text=Also%2C%20SOTL%20is%20moving%20up%20in%20value,market%20share%20in%20optical%20fiber%20space%20domestically

4* https://www.icra.in/Rating/GetRationalReportFilePdf?id=89808

5*https://www.stocksmantra.com/optical-fiber-cable-manufacturers-in-india/

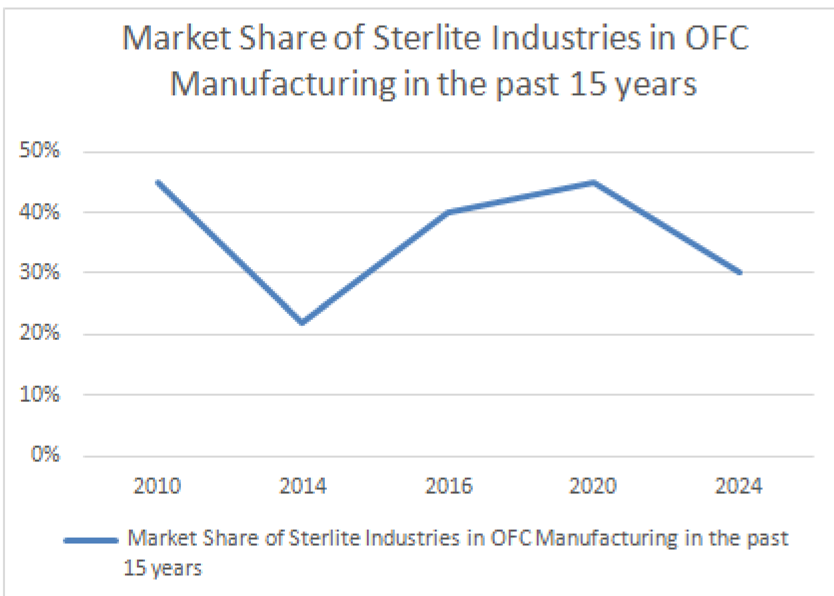

Figure 4. Sterlite Industries Market Share Timeline 15 years

6. Growth of Airtel Subscriber base and subsequent competition from Jio Services

Airtel started operations in India with its **first cellular mobile service** in Delhi on **September 27, 1995**, under the brand name *Bharti Airtel*, marking India's first private mobile service and ending the government's monopoly. The company initially focused on voice calls which were competitively priced. In the initial years of its advent, Airtel faced intense competition from *Vodafone* and *MTNL/BSNL*. Bharti Airtel earned profits till it faced competition from ***Jio***.

They made a loss of ***₹652.30 cr.*** in **FY 2017-18 Q4 [11]** due to aggressive price competition from **Jio.** It is in 2017-18 that they revamped their operations making it more efficient and viable resulting in it becoming the most favored service provider in India. Airtel regained competitive strength in profitability and revenue quality, with its ***Average Revenue Per User (ARPU)*** rising to **₹256 in Q2 FY26** which surpassed Reliance **Jio's ₹208.8 ARPU [12]** that signaled stronger customer base and a shift towards premium customers, even as Jio maintained a larger subscriber base.

The moment *number portability* was allowed, many of the current subscribers shifted their allegiance to *Airtel*. Earlier people were reluctant to change their service provider as they wanted to keep their number unchanged, irrespective of the quality of services.

Reliance Jio entered the Indian cellular industry on ***September 5th, 2016,*** more than two decades after the entry of **Bharti Airtel in 1995**. It used a disruptive market-entry strategy of **free voice calls and free mobile data at the start**, followed by **low-priced data plans**. Jio's investment was only in 4G, data-centric network, unlike existing service providers, that drove its lower cost per MB of data as well as its connectivity and expansive nature of setting up towers. Before the launch, the company also tied up many additional applications that increased its consumer base. It marketed cheap smartphones under the name **JioPhone**, which was an attractive proposition for customers in rural and semi urban areas. The company invested in increasing its network throughout the country. These policies helped it to grow quickly and at the same time started a price war amongst existing service providers and changed the Indian telecom landscape.

Reliance Jio, a late entrant into this industry in 2016 disrupted the existing system and attracted a wide range of Indian subscribers. This it did with its **low-cost services** and **connectivity** through its **wide distribution of FREE sims**, **low-cost internet for initial period** along with a bundle of services from the Jio platform like *(JioCinema, JioTV, JioMusic, JioCloud).* This prioritized selling not just a SIM but an ecosystem. Even though they were running at a loss. During the initial six-month period of its inception from *October 2016 to March 2017*, Reliance Jio reported a net loss of **₹22.5 crore [13]** which for the full FY was **31.37cr. [14]** The strategy they followed was to provide free voice and data upto **4GB/day** which was extended to **31st March 2017** under their ***"Happy New Year"*** offer. From April 2017, Jio introduced **paid tariff plans**, they increased their prices slowly and announced a **final tariff increase** effective from **3rd July 2024**. The obvious reason was that they could not continue to **bear the losses** for long.

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During the same period, *Airtel* further increased their **efficiency** and **reduced their cost**, which they passed onto the customers, effectively countering the **service and cost provided by Jio**. Subsequently, when Jio increased their prices, Airtel was in an extremely **comfortable position** to hold onto to its **subscriber base** and possibly to increase it resulting in profits for the company. The above time frame for Airtel is indicated in ***table 4***. and the figure below in terms of increased market share and profitability both for **India and Africa operations**.

Table 4. Airtel Financial record past 15 years			
Year	Operating Revenue (Cr)	Loss/Profit (cr)	
		PBT	PAT
2010[1*]	₹35,609	10,699	8,976
2015[2*]	₹92,039	10,713	5,183
2020[3*]	₹87539	(2,612)	(32,183)
2025[4*]	₹1,72,985	31,112	17,573

Source: All figures for fiscal year ending on 31st March of each mentioned year.

1* https://assets.airtel.in/static-assets/cms/investor/docs/bsy/iportal/images/Quarterly_report_Q2_10_9112716422BDFCCBE1AB74ADA8F6799B_1518502435935.pdf

2* https://assets.airtel.in/static-assets/cms/investor/docs/bsy/iportal/images/Bharti-Airtel-Limited_Press-Release_March-31-2015_D391BA8E799A2805C503D25E935A8BD7.pdf

3* https://assets.airtel.in/teams/simplycms/web/docs/Press_Release_Mar_2020.pdf

4* https://assets.airtel.in/static-assets/cms/investor/docs/quarterly_results/2024_25/Q4/Press-Release.pdf

2010[*]- Airtel started its Africa operations, buying Zain's operations.

The **African operations** of *Airtel* were a drag on the profits that were earned by their Indian operations. It is only in **2018,** that the African operations become a **profitable venture**. This was achieved through continuous effort of striving for greater efficiency and accountability. ***Table 5.*** (*Airtel Market share comparison*), compares the **customer market share** of Airtel from the year **2010 to 2025**, depicting a growth from **20.8% to 33.41%,** with emerging competitors like *Jio* taking over the industry in 2016, Airtel maintained a positive growth rate, through a shift in the focus from "**price-war strategy to a premiumization**, focusing on network quality and service to retain customers willing to pay a premium. By driving migrations to **4G and 5G** networks, offering **zero-touch customer support**, and segmenting the market, Airtel routinely boasts the **highest ARPU** in the Indian telecom sector." **[15]**

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Table 5. Airtel Market share comparison	
Year	Bharti Airtel
2010[1*]	20.8%
2014[2*]	22.78%
2018[3*]	27.4% (post Jio disruption)
2022[4*]	31.95% (4g/5g migrations)
2025[5*]	33.41%

Sources:

1*https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://assets.airtel.in/static-assets/cms/investor/docs/bsy/iportal/images/Quarterly_report_Q2_10_9112716422BDFCCBE1AB74ADA8F6799B_1518502435935.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwj9gN7xosmRAxUVSWwGHVr4EZYQFnoECBoQAQ&usg=AOvVaw075xWS1_18eK9SaqwzBsGy

2*https://www.medianama.com/2014/10/223-august-2014-india-telecom-data/#:~:text=–%20Bharti%20Airtel%20holds%20the%20maximum,712.5M%20Active%20Mobile%20Connections

3*https://telecomlead.com/telecom-statistics/india-mobile-operator-market-share-for-april-2018-84947#:~:text=June%2026%2C%202018,TRAI

4*https://www.trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-09/19th.pdf

5*https://www.trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/2025-07/YIR_08072025_0.pdf

Table 6. compares the distribution of **customer market share** of different service providers in the Indian Telecom Industry, as of 31st March 2025. The figures demonstrate Reliance Jio being the **market leader** with the **highest market share**, despite of it being the **latest entrant** into the industry, due to the **tactical strategies** like the **low-cost data** and cellular service rollout and free distribution of its service to maximize **customer acquisition**.

Table 6. Market Share distribution of competitors by 31st March 2025					
Service Provider	Reliance Jio Infocom	Bharti Airtel	Vodafone Idea	BSNL	MTNL
Figure	40.84%	33.60%	17.65%	7.82%	0.09%
https://www.trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/2025-07/YIR_08072025_0.pdf					

Bharti Airtel, being the second player after Jio, stands on **33.60% market share** focuses on **customer satisfaction** through quality network and migrations to **4G and 5G networks**, instead of providing services at a **cheaper price point** and **reduced quality** to gain customers.

Table 7. Consumer Market share Comparison		
Year	Bharti Airtel	Reliance Jio
2016[1*]	23.5%	6.4%
2017[2*]	24.85%	13.71%
2018[3*]	27.4%	20.5%
2019[4*]	28%	26.40%
2020[5*]	28.44%	35.19%
2021[6*]	30.35%	36.58%
2022[7*]	32.16%	37.14%
2023[8*]	32.42%	37.61%
2024[9*]	33.49%	40.42%
2025[10*]	33.60%	40.84%

Table 7. explicitly compares the **consumer market share** of the two major competitors ***(Airtel & Jio)*** in the Indian Telecom Industry, which shows the market leadership of the major players over the last decade demonstrating a significant rise in the **number of subscribers** and the effect of the **Covid 19** pandemic hit in the year 2020. Reliance Jio, a new entrant in the industry showed significant boost in its market share due to the **tactical strategies** deployed to **acquire customers** and the **support from the reliance industries**, becoming the market leader with the **highest market share** in the industry in 2025.

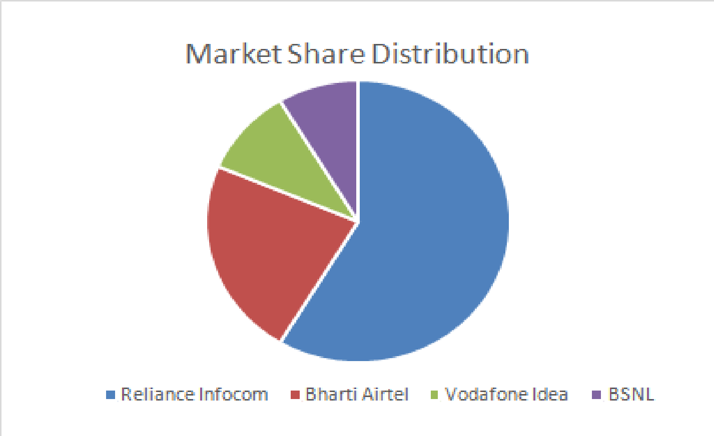

Figure 6. Market Share Distribution of Service Provider by 31st March 2025

Source:

1*-https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/reliance-jio-eats-into-market-share-of-airtel-vodafone-idea-in-2016-trai/59428987#:~:text=Reliance%20Jio%20%2D%2D%20which%20began,%2C%22%20the%20Trai%20report%20said.

2*-https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/airtel-leads-telecom-market-with-25-85-share-rjio-sees-highest-growth-in-wireless-subs-trai-dec-data/62947738#:~:text=Read%20by%20674%20Professionals,operators%20with%209.24%25%20market%20share.

3*- https://telecomlead.com/telecom-statistics/india-mobile-operator-market-share-for-april-2018-84947#:~:text=June%2026%2C%202018,TRAI

4*- https://www.trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-09/PR_No.40of2019_0.pdf

5*- https://www.trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-09/49.pdf

6* https://www.trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/2024-09/33.pdf

7*- https://www.equentis.com/blog/reliance-industries-share-fundamental-analysis/#:~:text=As%20of%20Dec%202022%2C%20Reliance%20Jio%20had,Bharti%20Airtel%20(32.16%25)%20and%20Vodafone%20Idea%20(21.11%25).

8*- https://www.ibef.org/news/telcos-added-6-2-million-4g-users-in-march-2023-highest-in-20-months

9*- https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/telecom/telecom-news/reliance-jio-and-bharti-airtel-lead-subscriber-growth-in-december-2024-amidst-losses-for-bsnl-and-vodafone-idea/articleshow/118893967.cms?from=mdr

10*- https://www.trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/2025-07/YIR_08072025_0.pdf

Analysis

Sterlite Industries ventured into optic fibers, as India's telecommunication policies favored widespread, efficient and last mile connectivity of telecommunications. The rapid expansion led to an **increasing demand of optic fibers** which Sterlite and others similar companies took advantage of. Sterlite despite of having 30% market in the optic fiber division made a profit of 3,830cr in the year 2024. There were other companies like *HFCL, Finolex Cables, Birla cables etc*. which entered this area. Or any company which had some knowledge of cables were **encouraged by government policies** to enter the optic fiber sphere.

Table 7 indicates a **disruption of the Bharti Airtel's market share** in 2017-18 due to the policy measures followed by Jio. As a new entrant they had to provide services at an extremely low price so that existing users would leave their service providers and encouraged people in rural and semi urban areas to buy their cell phones and use their services as it was cheaper than existing landline services. This they could achieve due to the **strong financial backing** by **Reliance Industries**. These policies resulted in a dip in **Airtel's market share in 2016**. It reached a low of *23.5% in 2016*. Subsequently, from 2020 onwards there has been a steady increase of airtel's market share and a decline in Jio's market share from a ***high of 37.61% in 2023 to 40.84% in 2025.*** The table does not indicate that the decline in share market of Jio is the exact amount that airtel increased, indicating that other service providers- Vodafone might have also experienced an increase in their subscriber base.

This was a natural progression as the terms under which services were being **provided by Jio** could not be **sustained on a long-term basis**. The moment there were revisions of their plans, and mobile number portability was a reality, **a dip in their subscriber base started occurring**. Airtel on the other hand used the **interim period to launch similar schemes** to Jio and increased its efficiency by adopting economies of scale. Added to this, was their **African ventures** which turned **profitable in financial year ending March 2018**.

Limitations

The main limitations of the analysis was the **unavailability of secondary data** for market share of companies namely- *Vodafone Hutchenson, HFCL, Finolex, Vindhya, Birla Cables* for the period under consideration. Despite of these companies being connected to multinationals or world conglomerates, obtaining their market share for the Indian market was extremely difficult. For a company like *Airtel*, the data was **easily available primarily from 2015 onwards**. Data for the earlier period *(2010-2015)* was **extremely scattered and scarce**. Effort had to be made to pick up figures from different sources. **Data prior to 2015** even for a company like **Airtel** was difficult to obtain, indicating **lack of credible data** till they were listed on the stock exchange.

Companies like **Vodafone**, **underwent many changes** in their structure due to their collaborations, it became extremely difficult to **record their timeline** of their establishment as an important Indian market player. The **Telecom policies** that the government of India adopted, also changed frequently, trying to keep pace with the growth in technology that was taking place worldwide. Specific **instances of change in the policy** were not clearly mapped out and at times there was an **overlap of changes** that made it difficult for the companies to understand and compile with.

Besides market share, the other related areas that research was attempted was in the optic fiber network. This was related to the telecommunication policies adopted by the Indian government. One of the major players in this area was **Sterlite Industries**, which went **through a lot of mergers and acquisitions,** resulting in **inadequate information on the growth of their optic fiber network.**

Conclusion

The Indian telecommunication sector has been one of the fastest growing areas in the country. Since the Indian economy followed the path of **globalization and liberalization from 1991**, it is this sector which has taken precedence over any other sector. The government has adopted an **open telecommunication policy** which has changed according to changes in technology in this industry. The availability of the data in India is one of the cheapest in the world and this has been made possible due to **competition between the private sector players namely**- *Vodafone, Airtel, and Jio*. The coming in of **Jio (a late entry)** led to a further turmoil with respect to services and pricing of various services. All other players had to follow the Jio model, if they had to survive in this industry. Sooner, than later Jio too could not keep up with its **inexpensive plans** and it had to **relook at its pricing plans** and **various freebies** that it had earlier introduced during its inception to increase its market share.

The **ultimate winner** in this whole process is the **customer** both in the **rural and urban areas** who has received **efficient, inexpensive mobile services**. This has been made possible due to companies like Sterlite who have over the years, provided last mile connectivity through the laying of optic fibers throughout the country. This company along with others, have developed the technology, which has **increased efficiency and improved connectivity** especially for rural and semi urban areas, under the **guidelines issued by TRAI**. The working of the above companies has integrated the rural and urban sectors of the Indian economy, and this has resulted in it being the **fastest growing economies in the world**. It has recently overtaken Japan in 2025 as the **third largest economy in the world**. The increased and widespread connectivity has helped in the process of achieving a **"Viksat Bharat"** as the goal of 140 million people of India.

The economy is committed to **competitiveness** and does not want any **monopolistic traits** in service providers. To achieve this, it has helped **Vodafone in addressing its financial issues**. All this clearly indicates the **intent and commitment** of the Indian economy to maintain its strength in the telecommunication sector.

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