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Headline	K. Sunil

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Chief Operating Officer, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, SSSL

Cut throat competition notwithstanding, establishing Sistema Shyam TeleServices Limited (SSTL) in India as a localised brand with an international pedigree is at the top of K. Sunil's to-do list. He seems to have already made an impression in the Tamil Nadu and Kerala markets. "Increasing SSTL's subscriber base in these circles to 1.6 million and attaining double-digit growth in average monthly revenue have been important landmarks," he says.

So, what next? "My immediate target is to establish SSTL's leadership position in these circles," he explains. "We currently offer high speed data services in 130 towns and are expanding our reach rapidly. We are also launching multiple smartphones."

His strategy seems well planned, given his view that data services will emerge as a key trend. "There will be an increased emphasis on data services," he says. "Also, the focus on voice will shift from being tariff driven to becoming more of service and quality driven. We don't expect any further fall in tariffs. There is bound to be an increase in VAS offerings, especially as more applications are being developed."



Interestingly, despite spending the better part of his career in telecom, this was never Sunil's first career choice. A chemical engineer by qualification, Sunil says he wanted to become an entrepreneur. Still, he has no regrets. He brings to the table over 15 years of experience in the telecom, IT and FMCG industries. His functional areas have been strategy, business planning and managing operations.

Prior to joining SSSL, Sunil was COO of Etisalat India's Chennai circle for a year. Before that, he had worked with Vodafone Essar, Microsoft India, Reliance Infocomm, Dabur India and HCL.

Currently, as COO of SSSL's Tamil Nadu and Kerala operations, he is responsible for driving the company's strategic plans. He oversees all circle-related operations, including rollout execution, capacity enhancement, and governance-related functions.

Tapping the rural customer base is also a priority. "It is a fallacy that only urban consumers use data services. The major quantum of usage is driven by non-metro consumers. It is our endeavour to ensure that our data services are available to these customers as well."

As for his management style, he says he believes in "empowering the team and ensuring the right person is carrying out the right job is the style that works best".

In the midst of all this, does he get any spare time? "Yes", he laughs. "I spend my spare time with my wife and son. We are all keen on keeping fit and so spend a considerable amount of time hiking and cycling." ▲

Publication	The Hindu Business Line
Date	25 th April 2011
Headline	'I'm okay, you're okay'

'I'm okay, you're okay'

How geared are telecom players to keep the communication network going in times of a disaster? eWorld assesses the ground scene.

ADITH CHARLIE

July 26, 2005, was an unforgettable day in the history of Maharashtra. Large numbers of people were stranded on the road, lost their houses, and many walked for long distances back home from work that evening. The Maxin city was brought to a standstill by floods caused due to the eighth-heaviest-ever-recorded 24-hour rainfall figure of 994 mm.

Mumbaiers still recall how they were unable to connect with their near and dear ones that evening due to jammed mobile networks. There were several instances of worried relatives venturing out of their homes because they could not reach out to their folks on the mobile phones. Sadly, many of them never returned. 1,094 deaths were recorded in Mumbai alone. Disaster-recovery efforts too were hampered due to the failure of communication systems in the state.

Thankfully, the state has not seen a natural calamity of such magnitude in the last six years. During this time, the Indian mobile communications industry has grown exponentially, albeit through a series of changes.

Today, some circles have 12-14 mobile operators compared with four or five then. Telecom operators, especially some of the newer ones, work on an outsourced model wherein their passive infrastructure and data centre activities are taken over by third-party vendors.

Due to climate change, the threat of natural disasters has only amplified in the last few years, as seen by the recent events in Japan (tsunami), New Zealand (earthquake) and Pakistan (floods). Telecom plays an important role in disaster management as it helps in dissemination of disaster-related information to residents as promptly as possible in addition to ensuring the restoration of a speedy communication system after the disaster occurs. And hence telecom operators need to have strong redundancy plans

for the passive, active and the applications layer of their infrastructure.

eWorld tries to understand the disaster-recovery strategies of companies in the Indian telecommunications arena.

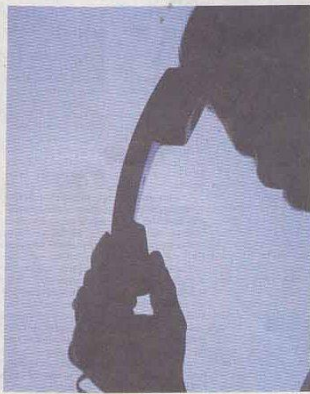
The occurrence of a disaster cannot be prevented fully. However, the overall impact can be reduced by preparing appropriate advance operational plans, establishing warning systems, training emergency response personnel, educating citizens and testing emergency procedures.

"India, as a country, has taken advantage of late entry into mobile communication by incorporating learnings from other countries, specially by having robust tower design for coastal areas, distributed switching locations, multiple power back-ups for critical centres," says Vishant Vora, Chief Technology Officer of Vodafone Essar.

Unfortunately, the first causality in any natural disaster is the power supply that propels the telecom cell site. A telecom cell site basically consists of electronic infrastructure such as base tower station, microwave radio equipment, switches, antennas, transceivers, etc. and non-electronic infrastructure that includes tower, shelter, air-conditioning equipment, diesel electric generator, battery, electrical supply and so on.

"One of the biggest lessons that the Indian telecom industry learned after 26/7 was to keep the diesel generator at an elevated position. On 26/7, several generators were burned following the unexpected rise in water levels," says Rajeev Batra, Chief Information Officer of Sissana Shyam Tele services, which operates CDMA-based services under the MTS brand.

Batra was one of the hundreds stranded in a Mumbai suburb for over 15 hours that day. India has close to three lakh telecom towers of which about half are connected to the electricity grid while the remaining ones are fired by diesel generators. Thanks to the irregular power supply scenario in the country, even the towers fired by electricity have



Weak with relief.
BILJOY GHOSH

Remote managing of networks is paramount because the actual impact of the disaster, if a mild one, may not be immediately felt.

a battery back-up option. Annually 1.8 billion litres of diesel, equivalent to the diesel consumption of the Indian Railways, are mopped up by telecom towers in India.

A massive power outage, as seen after the devastating earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand, earlier this year, means that cell sites and telephone cabinets immediately switch onto battery back-up mode. If power is not restored within the next 24 hours, the cell site goes off the operators' network.

A CDMA tower generally has a range of up to five miles. For such situations, operators can use rapid deployment towers known as Cell-on-Wheels (COW). As per Wikipedia, a cell-on-wheels is a mobile cell site that consists of a cellular antenna tower and electronic radio transceiver equipment on a truck or trailer, designed to be part of a cellular network. This can be deployed in a short span of one day to ensure uninterrupted connectivity during dire situations.

"The van with emergency equipment could be taken as near as possible to disaster places. The BTS (base transceiver station) is connected to nearby working BSC (base station controller) either by radio system (with-

in 30 km) or by pre-terminated optical fibre cable. The COWs are also equipped with arrangement for built-in power supply, battery, generator, etc.," a spokesperson for tower company Viom Networks (formerly Tata Quipco) says.

CRUCIAL ROLE FOR IT

Information technology too can play a crucial role in managing the power situation. Telecom towers face during a crisis.

Systems can be programmed in such a way that they would "action" the movement of people and direct them to supply fuel to the most critical towers first, says Prashant Pradhan, Business Head, Service & Asset Management, Global Technology Services, IBM India/South Asia.

IBM remotely monitors 30,000 cell sites of Bharti Infratel in India from its network operating centre in North India.

Remote managing of networks is paramount because the actual impact of the disaster, if it were a mild one, may not be immediately felt. In the case of earthquakes it has been noticed that the vibrations from the quake, apart from shaking electronic equipment and civil infrastructure, can cause soil to liquefy, in addition to stressing or breaking pits, ducts, and cables. If the liquefied soil were to enter the pits and ducts, there could be failures days or weeks after the initial earthquake, say analysts.

TO SHARE OR NOT TO SHARE?

One school of thought suggests that the entire concept of sharing telecom infrastructure could cause the failure of multiple operator networks at the same time. Passive Infrastructure sharing is nothing but sharing non-electronic infrastructure at cell sites.

For a telecom company, infrastructure — towers and backhaul connectivity — accounts for about 60 per cent of the cost of doing business. By outsourcing the management of majority of their telecom towers to specialist companies such as Viom, GTI, Infrastructure, Bharti Infratel, Indus Towers, etc, telecom companies save close to 30 per cent on both capital and operating expenditure. On the flip side, the failure of a single tower — which is shared amongst different mobile operators at the same time — will cause all operators' networks (in the particular area) to become dysfunctional.

"Telecom companies need to do a solid cost/benefit analysis when it comes to engaging third-party tower companies or third-party data centre companies. They need to analyse the economic and reputational risks associated with tower sharing," stress-

es Rajahu Pal, Director, Deloitte in India.

However, telecom operators think otherwise. Vora of Vodafone Essar thinks the argument is true only if the calamity is localised to a small area. In such cases it is standard practice to extend coverage to impacted area from neighbouring unaffected sites. "For calamity impacts that are over a larger geography it is quite likely that both shared and single-tenancy towers face the same risk. In such cases it is the capability to recoup that is more important and in that sense it is easier to reinstate smaller number of shared towers much faster than each operator bringing up non-shared sites," reasons Vora.

"When it comes to the active or core networks, telecom companies that have a strong disaster-recovery plan in place will be able to route majority of calls to alternate switching centres that have not been impacted. Though no company would provide for 100 per cent redundancies, preference would be given to government and rescue organisations involved in rescue operations.

"Large corporations have been serious about their disaster-recovery plans for quite some time now. However, the newer operators may not be as nimble as some of the well-entrenched ones, given the kind of competitive pressures and the need for expansion," says Pal of Deloitte.

However, Batra of SNTL, disaggrees. SNTL has protected its applications infrastructure by housing its data centres in cities (Jaipur, Noida and Chennai) across three tectonic zones.

"If a critical set of applications (CRM, billing, accounting, other systems) are housed in the Jaipur data centre, then there would be a back-up for those in the Chennai data centre. This ensures that customers in another part of the country are not impacted in case of an outage," says Batra.

In a bid to tide over the power situation in India, infrastructure companies are investing significantly in R&D to tap alternate energy sources such as bio-mass based gasifiers, fuel saver catalysts, fuel cells, CNG and energy storage platforms.

"Trials of alternate energy sources such as wind mills and solar energy are also being explored by the tele-infra companies to run their sites. These initiatives will not only help the tele-infra companies in tapping alternate sources of energy and reducing operational costs for the operators in the long run, but also reduce the carbon footprint," says the Viom spokesperson.

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MTS ties with 2 NGOs to support for underprivileged kids

Chennai, Apr 27: Sistema Shyam TeleServices Ltd. that provides telecom services under the brand MTS today extended its support to Florence Nightingale – an orphanage and NESAM – a renowned centre for physically and mentally challenged children. 50 MTS employees volunteered for a 'Bike Rally' from Chennai to Vellore in support of the work being done by these two leading NGOs. The rally was flagged off by S.Senthil Kumaran, ACP, Guindy. Additionally, MTS employees also contributed Rs. 1, 50, 000 to these organizations to support the programmes being run by these non government organizations.

According to Sunil. K, Chief Operating Officer, Tamil Nadu & Kerala Circles, Sistema Shyam TeleServices Ltd "At MTS, we believe in growing our business in a socially responsible manner. All our employees have come together to lend a helping hand to Florence Nightingale and NESAM. These NGOs are doing amazing work to support underprivileged children by

providing them with food, shelter, education and medical facilities"

During the day long rally MTS employees will visit the two NGOs and spend time with children.

According S.Senthil Kumaran, ACP, Guindy, "I would like to congratulate MTS and its employees for their efforts in coming forward for this noble cause. I wish the organization all the best and hope they will continue their good work".

MTS believes in taking active role and responsibility in empowering local communities to achieve their ambitions. Recently, MTS partnered with India Unite to End Polio Now (IUEPN) campaign supported by UNICEF. MTS had lent its support to the cause of creating awareness for Polio eradication amongst the people of Bihar. As part of the initiative MTS sent SMSs to its customers, notifying them about the polio vaccination. Additionally, for public convenience, numerous MTS branded polio booths were also set up in Patna at high traffic locations for administering polio drops.

Publication	The Economic Times
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Headline	Recognising excellence in telecom

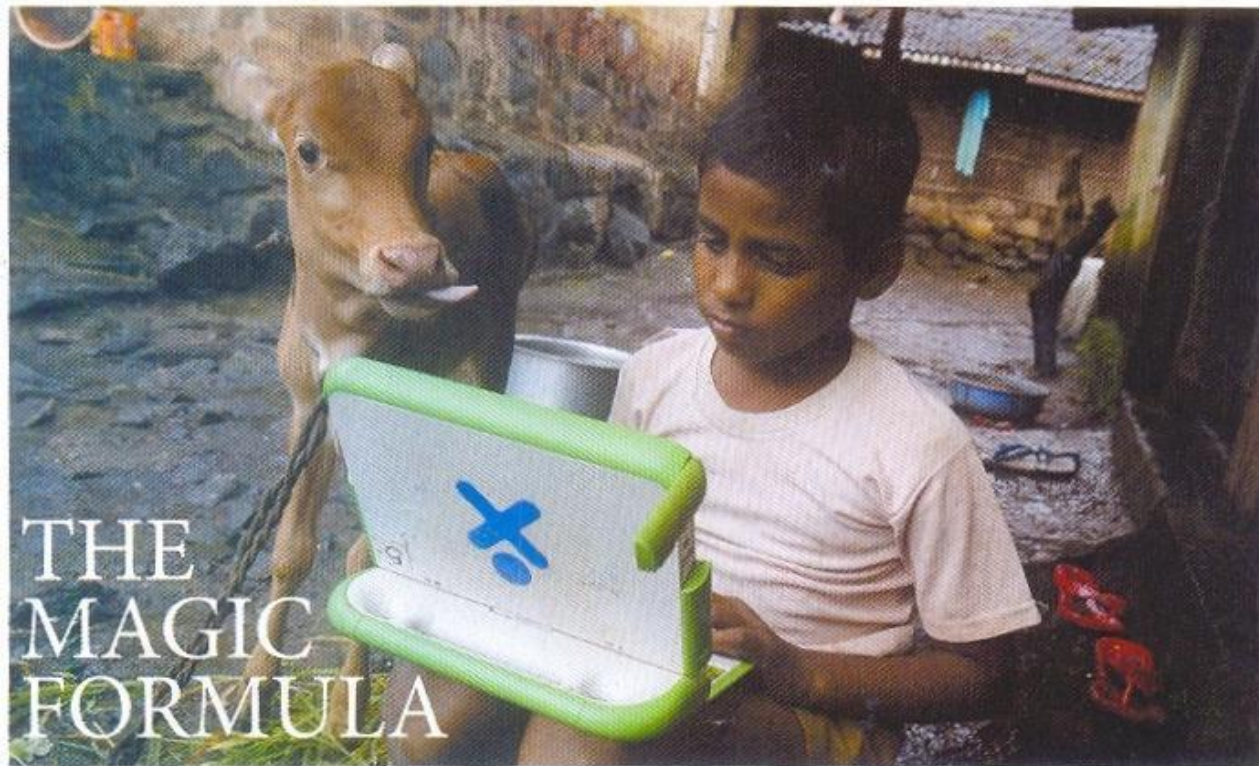


Mr. Ashoo Sethi, COO, Mumbai, Maharashtra & Goa Circle, Mr. Tapan Tripathi, Director - Marketing and Mr. Leonid Musatov, CMO, MTS India receiving award from Mr. Sachin Pilot for Innovative Product - Mobile Broadband

WINNERS - ET TELECOM AWARDS 2011

CATEGORY	WINNERS
Telecom Operator Categories	
Excellence In Marketing	Vodafone - Zozoo
Innovative Product - Retail	Vodafone - Rule of 4
Innovative Product - VAS	Airtel - Talk2Me
Innovative Product - Mobile Broadband	MTS - Zero Charges on Surfing on Your Favourite Website
Innovative Product - Others	Matrix - International Mobile Connections & Data Card Service Providers
Customer Experience Enhancement	Airtel - Setup Contact Centers In Rural Locations
OEM & Telecom Infrastructure Categories	
Innovative Product	Tejas Networks - TJ1600: Packet Optical Transport Platform
Excellence In After Sales Service	Indus Towers - Tower Operating Center At Indus
Innovative Managed Services	Nokia Siemens Networks - Global Service Delivery Of Managed Services
Telecom Operators and OEM & Telecom Infrastructure Category	
Social Initiative	No Winner
Derived Categories	
Global Game Changer	Sunil Bharti Mittal, Founder, Chairman and Group CEO, Bharti Enterprises
Emerging Telecom Operator	Airtel
My Favorite Handset Brand	Nokia
Quality of service (based on TRAI data)	Reliance Communications

Publication	Forbes India
Date	6 th May 2011
Headline	The magic formula



What will it take to crack the India market? A sub-Rs. 10,000 tag

by Rohin Dharmakumar & Seema Singh

Cat's whiskers to the world when it comes to IT services or mobile telephony, India has been a basket case when it comes to PCs and Internet penetration. Just 3 percent of Indian homes own a PC and less than 1 percent subscribe to a broadband Internet connection.

Unfortunately, both these aspects are bound together at the hip: Why will consumers buy a PC when Internet connectivity, essential to almost all PC activities today, is spotty and expensive? And why will they get broadband when they don't even own a PC?

The tablet PC may finally break this riddle — an affordable, reliable

and lightweight computing device that comes bundled with either 3G or Wi-Fi wireless connectivity.

India's 'magical device' (that's the phrase Apple uses to refer to the iPad), will be something like this: Rs. 10,000 in price, built-in wireless access, a 1 GHz-plus non-Intel processor and running Google's Android operating system.

"I think the sub-Rs. 10,000 tablet is a possibility. We're right now testing a Huawei tablet that is 50 percent of the cost of a Samsung one, while still offering a good experience," says Navanit Narayan, Idea Cellular's head of service delivery. At that price, sales could skyrocket to between 7-10 million tablets per year, says Rahul Sharma, co-founder and COO of Micromax, the largest Indian mobile phone maker.

But even that price can be a challenge in a developing economy. Which is where mobile operator MTS, which is launching its own branded tablet in

a few months, is attempting to copy a Western trick: Subsidised devices.

Leonid Musatov, MTS India's chief marketing officer, says his company is hoping to replicate with tablets its experience of giving away an HTC smartphone free of cost to customers provided they commit to a longer term relationship.

Unlike the West where tablets are often a 'post PC' media consumption device, in India they will be the first computing devices for many families. To facilitate this, some companies are planning to bundle wireless keyboards and mice along with their tablets, turning them almost into full-fledged PCs.

In the next 12-18 months, big mobile operators will also blanket India with 3G coverage. Vineet Taneja, Bharti Airtel's head of operations for South India, says that the Rs. 10,000 price apart, ubiquitous 3G coverage will be the single biggest factor impacting tablet sales. ■