that the marital status had no influence on the perception score of the sample customers. But other factors like the gender, age, educational qualification, occupation, income and marital status of the customers had influenced the perception scores.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This Study is entitled “Customer Perception towards BSNL Telecom Sector - A Study with Special Reference to Madurai District”. It begins with origin and development of telecommunications, growth and overall performance of BSNL in India. Among the telecommunication service providers, BSNL is owned by the Central government. They offer a wider range of facilities and services. BSNL had introduced new schemes and services for retaining existing customers and to draw in new customers. An attempt was made in this study to analyse the customer perception towards BSNL telecom service in Madurai district to promote its services. It has been observed that the BSNL had succeeded to a considerable extent in this aspect.

The approach to the study is both descriptive and analytical. For collecting primary data, the researcher used a well constructed interview schedule. A sample of 300 respondents comprising of Madurai district were selected by applying the multistage random sampling technique. Secondary data were collected from various sources like published and unpublished records of BSNL office, annual reports, journals, newspapers, internet and the like.

7.2 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The following are the important findings of the study.
From 2005-06 to 2011-12 the wire line telephone connection had shown a decreasing trend. This was due to the fact that mobile era had set in by that time and most of the customers were found switching over to wireless way communications than rather than wire line communication.

There was a steady increase in the wireless telephone connections in India from the year 2002-03 to 2011-12. Year after year so many schemes and services were introduced by the BSNL and the number connections had increased.

The circle wise number of wire line telephone connections in India in the year 2011-12 shows that of the 26 states Kerala (30,65,384) was foremost followed by other states. Tamil Nadu was in the fifth place as regards wireless connection all over India with (16,65,407) lines.

Regarding the circle wise number of wireless telephone connections in India in the year 2011-12 Uttar Pradesh (E) (96,67,435) was having the highest number of wireless connections followed by other states. Andaman Nicobar (1, 83,067) was having the lowest number of wireless telephone connections.

The assets of BSNL in India had increased in the years 2000-01 to 2006-07. From the year 2007-08 to 2011-12 they had begun to decline. The liabilities of BSNL in India had increased during the years 2000-01 to 2006-07. From the year 2007-08 to 2011-12 there was a decline in the liabilities. The reserves and surplus of BSNL in India had increased in the years 2000-01 to 2008-09 except in the year 2002-03. From the year 2009-10 to 2011-12, there was a decreasing trend. The turnover of BSNL in India had increased from the year 2000-01 to 2005-06 and thereafter it had decreased.
It is seen the total income of BSNL had an increased trend from the year 2000-01 to 2005-06 except in the year 2002-03 and thereafter the income had shown decreasing trend. Total expenditure of BSNL had increased throughout the study period, except in the years 2006-07 and 2009-10.

The number of wire line telephone connection in Tamil Nadu was going on a fluctuating trend during the year 2000-01 to 2004-05. This went on a decreasing trend during the 2005-06 to 2011-12. This was because of the customers switching over to mobile culture and the emergence of good lot of competitors on the line.

Regarding Tamil Nadu in the year 2011-12 Coimbatore (2,38,026) was seen having the highest number of wireless connections followed by other districts. Coonoor district was (30,657) having the lowest number of wireless telephone connections.

BSNL wireless telephone connection was started in the year 2002-03 in Tamil Nadu. The numbers of wireless telephone connections were steadily increasing from that year onwards during the years. But it had decreased four fold in the year 2011-12. This was because the competitors of BSNL had offered many popular value added schemes and services to the customers and outwitted the BSNL. They had introduced the mobile number portability scheme that during this period. Unfortunately BSNL lagged behind in all these innovative style of functioning due to very many reasons.

The number of wire line telephone connection in Madurai District was going on a decreasing trend during the year 2001-02 to 2011-12. The year 2001-02 was seen as having the highest number of wire line telephone connections in these 12 years. The competitors had multiplied after 2002 and also the mobile technology appeared as an avalanche and swept the entire world after 2003. India was no exception to this. As a
result a decline was observed in the number of wire line telephone connections in Madurai district.

Out of the seven taluks in Madurai district Madurai. South topped the list with 39,225 wire line telephone connections followed by Madurai North (30,306), and other districts. Peraiyur (331) had the lowest number of wire line telephone connections in these 12 years. The year 2004-05 was found to have the highest number of wireless telephone connections in Madurai district. Since then many competitors had entered the field and the market had been shared between them. To-day BSNL is having 64 per cent of the total market share. However Air Tel had come to be in the top of the market. The private sector companies were able to capture the market with many innovative and many attractive offers, schemes and services compared to BSNL.

Among these seven taluks, Madurai South (40,082) had the highest number of wireless telephone connections in the year 2011-12 followed by Madurai North (31,104) and other taluks. Peraiyur (490) and Vadipatti (486) were having the least number of wireless telephone connections in Madurai district in the year 2011-12.

Most of the respondents (62.3 percent) were males in the age group of 20-30 years. Many of them were post graduates and were married. Majority of them were government employees. They got a monthly income of below Rs.15,000. Majority of the respondents (68 percent) were having the family size of 4-6 members in the family. They were having BSNL telephone connections for the purposes of their business, profession, and personal matters.

Most of them had only one telephone connection. They were BSNL customers for the past several years. They came to know about BSNL products from advertisements
and other avenues of publicity by the BSNL. They used to make 10-20 calls and receive
10-20 calls per day on an average. They were not using SMS facility in the BSNL.
Majority of the respondents (34.53 percent) sent more than 15 SMS per day. Majority of
the respondents received more than 15 SMS per day on an average. Majority of the
respondents (48.92 percent) were using free SMS facility. Only few were availing
internet facility for personal purposes. The felt no need to avail of the internet facility.
Majority of the respondents felt that services of BSNL were without much faults. If there
were any complaints they were set right within two days. Majority of them were aware
of the automatic complaint system. Most of them called the customer care occasionally
for redressing their grievances and for getting information regarding new schemes. BSNL
caller tunes were found to be popular among the customers. The voice mail service and
conference call services were not availed of by most of the customers. Many of the
customers felt that BSNL was much better than other networks. Most of them did not
want to switch over to some other company other than BSNL.

Regarding the overall perception of the respondents it was seen on that reliability
dimension got the highest score and tangibility dimension got the lowest score. Majority
of the respondents belonged to medium level of perception on all the five dimensions
viz., tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

It was also observed that the marital status had no influence on perception score of
the sample customers. But other factors like gender, age, educational qualification,
occupation, income, and marital status of the customers had influenced the perception
scores.
7.3 SUGGESTIONS

- Customer service camps must be organized to create awareness. In these camps, complaints specifically regarding network, value added services and call charges and the like could be resolved to achieve “customer satisfaction”.

- If customer is loyal with BSNL for a continuous three years BSNL should give 50 percent offer in 3G services, Customer Loyalty Rewards should be given like Free movie tickets/Events/Concerts, Free stock market news, mobile anniversary celebration (date/year), product launch invites and the like.

- Tie-up with banks for bill payment facility

- The BSNL should take necessary steps to give special schemes for women, similar to those available for students, youth and the like. In order to increase the women users/subscribers base.

- Most of the BSNL subscribers have connectivity problems in network coverage. To overcome this problem, the service provider must install more towers where they are not having their wide service area coverage. BSNL should take necessary measures to increase the transmitting towers based on the number of connections. The network congestion is a major problem with the customers and companies. Network coverage should not drop even in interior buildings. Hence the companies should take necessary action to find a suitable remedy to such kinds of problems.

- Abrupt disconnection of outgoing services should be avoided due to non-submission of documentary evidences, non-payment of bills for regular customers.

- BSNL is offering many value added services to their customers but all the consumers are not able to use them due to abnormal charges. If the services are
provided at a fairly normal price all the consumers will be able to make use such services.

- BSNL should concentrate more on the factors such as ‘dial in service’, ‘call waiting’, ‘call forwarding’, ‘roaming’, and ‘bill information’ for the efficient utilization of value added services by both prepaid and post paid subscribers.

- More number of bill collection centres has to be established in all areas for easy payments, even in rural areas also.

- BSNL should see to it that the accessibility to the customer care centres should be easy and they must be located in important and strategic places.

- The tariff rates while roaming in other territories should be reduced. This will help to increase the subscriber base many folds.

- Internet telephony services should be improved by increasing the download speed and providing related value added services like private service providers.

- BSNL should take measures to avoid congestions on the line. The line should not be too busy even in the peak hours.

- New schemes and offers should be efficiently communicated to the customers by BSNL.

- Recharging facilities should be made available through internet using credit cards.

- Consumer survey reveals that the telephone rent is high. BSNL should try to minimize rent on telephones.

- Reducing the STD call rate, increasing the transmission ability of media to cater for high speed data transmission with optical fibre cable, minimising the interruption in local lines and prompt services to customer call for fault repair,
shifting, provision of STD/ISD facility within norms formulated for them, will certainly improve the revenues of the department.

- The goals of this service sector are making available telephone connections on demand, improving the quality of services at a lower rate and offering diversified services. The reform effort must include a specific plan for implementation to arrive at world class levels of tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

- Customer meet should be conducted at regular intervals on SSA levels with proper announcement and publicity to customers and the outcome of the customer suggestions are to be implemented wherever possible.

- A long term policy for training and educating the large work-force in the immediate future in technical and managerial aspects, software design, maintenance and service development has to be an integral part of any future telecom policy. The role of organisational culture and management of various groups is critical to a successful privatisation program. These need to be incorporated in the future reform processes, decision making committees must consist of professionals from a wide of fields to strengthen the analytical component of any policy design and implementation.

- BSNL’s unique positioning of infra led biggest food print in rural India by creating additional revenue streams for rural infrastructure and capabilities should be fully exploited.

- Proactive offer of sharing of active and passive infrastructure to other operators to generate attractive returns and ensure non-cannibalization of BSNL customers by seeking compliance with appropriate conditions. Shared serv
ices may include intra-circle roaming, renting of capacities on active and passive infrastructure and the like.

- Enhance and expedite rural communication facilities, services and applications by connecting 2,50,000 panchayats and integrating various government flagship programmes targeted at rural development through NREGA, Rural Health Mission, Food Distribution, PDS, and the like to augment the inclusive growth agenda of the Government.

- Create a separate subsidiary company for tower related infrastructure to aggressively market to other public and private sector customers and unlock substantial potential value through strategic stake sale, M&A or separate IPO explore possibilities of monetizing other such sub systems e.g., interconnect operations.

7.4 CONCLUSION

In the present scenario telecommunication plays a major and an anchor role in the world. Many private sector telecom service providers are there in the field. But BSNL is the only one central government telecom service provider. It is a largest network. BSNL is the best service provider in India. The achievement made by BSNL is excellent. BSNL connects India. It has impacted the functioning of the other service providers in a big way. It has thousands of employees both officers, other staff in thousands of branches in the nook and corner of the country to connect India at large. It has reached the out reached areas and connects every kind of people in the society. Therefore a good health of BSNL is not only in the interest of BSNL itself, but it is in the larger interest of country as well. There are multiple stakeholders apart from the government, BSNL employees and officers. They are all clearly visible. But what is not visible is that not less