



## PAGE 3: B. ABOUT YOU

**Q1: Respondent details**

|               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| Name          | -             |
| Organization  | Telenor India |
| Email Address | -             |
| Phone Number  | -             |

**Q2: Country or Customs territory** INDIA

**Q3: Organization** Private sector

## PAGE 4: C. ABOUT YOUR CASE STORY

**Q4: Title of case story**

Project Sampark

<https://www.telenor.in/about-us/p/project-sampark>

**Q5: Case story focus** E-commerce development and efforts to bridge the "digital divide".

**Q6: Case story abstract**

We at Telenor believes that the mobile connectivity can help transform the lives of individuals- providing access to knowledge, financial services and making health services affordable and accessible for all. From this, societies are empowered to grow and progress. It has become a catalyst for change and growth – for individuals and for society at large. Making those benefits accessible to a wider audience is one of Telenor's key objectives. By enabling access to services like affordable voice and Internet , or allowing for financial inclusion or access to knowledge, we have been creating shared value.

**Q7: Who provided funding?** Private sector

**Q8: Project/Programme type** Single country

**Q9: Your text case story**

Project Sampark

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6-QCPrTgZ8>

Telenor believes that women's empowerment is "catalytic and central" to achieving social and business goals. In 2013-14, Telenor commissioned a study through which gender gap with regard to mobile accessibility was measured in rural areas of Aligarh district in Uttar Pradesh. The study revealed the inequality in the case of women owning and using mobile phones. The research findings brought out that the incidence of mobile phone usage was significantly higher among males-76 men out of 100 owned a mobile phone while only 29 women out of 100 owned one.

Two key issues noticed behind low mobile penetration amongst women were: a) men are most often the decision maker on giving women access to mobile telephony and b) mobile services are confusing and perceived to be complicated. From time to time, social dogmas and diktats have also restricted women's access to mobile telephony.

Project Sampark was created to address the socio-economic causes behind the gender gap in mobile usage and increase women's access to mobile phones in the rural areas of India. It was conceived to manage the challenges through innovative product and unique distribution model to make easy and hassle free mobile services amongst rural women. The entire effort got support from GSMA under its Connected Women programme and Project Sampark was launched in 2014.

Instead of attempting to demolish the barrier that create the gender gap in mobile usage and prevent women from owning a phone, Project Sampark attempts to work with and around it -- all the time keeping the end-objective of placing a mobile phone in the hands of the woman in mind. Once this objective is achieved, we believe that the benefits of being connected will automatically flow and over time it will also address other perceived value and stigma in the society. In doing so, Telenor India is testing an unconventional method to deal with a barrier-an approach that can lead to an easier and faster realisation of the end objective of narrowing the gender gap on mobile telephony access.

An innovative 360-degree approach:

Project Sampark is a combination of an innovative product, direct marketing and retail model and an awareness campaign that creates a positive impact and drives inclusive growth in the society. Telenor identified and trained Anganwadi (health workers) workers as promoters to spread the message around why women should own and use mobile phones.

These local women were aware of the ground realities, were familiar with the social structures and are easily accepted in the family as they have worked in the village in the past. The 40 promoters, which included Neelam Chauhan, got access to the families and they spent time talking about the change mobile phones are bringing in the society. They sold Bandhan Packs. These twin SIM products work on a unique product concept to give maximum value to the customers. It links two SIMs in a manner that recharge of either SIM accrues additional benefits to the second. The rates were affordable, often lower than the prevailing tariffs, to promote higher usage. This kind of linkage has never been conducted in any telecoms product in India.

This approach of a women selling telecom services to the lady of the house has proved to be more successful than them walking into a retail store with a male salesman. These promoters are supported by a Patna-based call centre DIAL. This centre is playing key role in ensuring continuity of the usage of Bandhan SIMs and enhancing the customer service for women users in rural areas.

An important component of Sampark was to have an awareness campaign to spread the message of gender equality in general and the importance of women owning a mobile in particular. Mera Mobile Mera Sathi is a series of Nukkad Natak (street plays) and puppet shows are being performed in the project area. Trained artists perform well scripted street plays at local market, villages hat and panchayat meetings and demonstrate how a phone can improve social and economic status of a women and help them stay connected, better informed and feel empowered.

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**Q10: Lessons learnt**

The results:

Project Sampark has given a sense of confidence to the women in the target rural areas by creating livelihood opportunities and giving them a phone in their hands. They have stepped out of their homes to get attached with the Project and within 18 months they have converted 72,000 to users of Bandhan Jodi packs. Next step: new promoters are now being being trained to sell data products and three more zones -- Rudrapur, Dehradun and Moradabad -- will have Project Sampark being rolled out. New women promoters have been hired in new zones and ambition is to cover 300 villages with 180 of these promoters.

Project Sampark is another way to align Telenor with the Digital India mission of the government and makes its own digital journey more inclusive by bringing the gender gap in mobile usage.

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