

**A STUDY ON AWARENESS OF RAPU SALES AMONG RETAILERS OF BHARTI  
AIRTEL LIMITED IN ARIYALUR**

**R.Karthika\***

*\*II Year MBA student, School of Management, SASTRA University, Thanjavur, South India.*

**ABSTRACT**

The study 'Awareness of RAPU sales among retailers of Bharti-Airtel' is all about evaluating the sales promotion technique of 'Bharti Airtel'. Bharti-Airtel is a major player which was started on 1995 and it is holding 23.25% market share. To acquire more customer base and also to retain the existing customers, Airtel employs a sales promotion method called R-Offer, means a unique tailored package of offers for each and every customers according to their usage levels. Airtel has been implementing R-offer sales through the traditional method of recharging called LAPU stands for Local Area Payment Unit. Therefore, Rapu = R-offer+LAPU. The research is conducted in Ariyalur an interior district of Tamilnadu. The objective of the study is to explore the retail outlets located in and around Ariyalur to inquire about Rapu participation and determining the factor influencing Rapu participation among retailers. This study arrives at the result of the relationship between awareness about RAPU and Rapu participation. The study employs random sampling method and 150 samples were collected and the data were collected by interview method. The study reveals that the most influencing factor is time insufficiency followed by offers mismatch. The further findings are, retailers are satisfied with RAPU commission rates provided by Airtel and they found RAPU sales as economically helpful mechanism for sales as well as revenue growth.

**INTRODUCTION**

The term RAPU refers to one of the sales promotion as well as recharge mechanism employed by AIRTEL. First of all sales promotion means Stimulation of sales achieved through contests, demonstrations, discounts, exhibitions or trade shows, games, giveaways, point-of-sale displays and merchandising, special offers, and similar activities.  $RAPU = R-OFFER + LAPU$ . RAPU method is beneficial to both customers and retailers as customers can avail many offers as per their requirements based on previous usage volume and thereby retailers could get more commissions

for RAPU transaction. This method is also beneficial to the company as the sales volume will get increased.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

In this study “Awareness of RAPU sales among retailers of Bharti Airtel limited in Ariyalur” there is a research to attain the result that whether the retailers are aware about R-Offer and RAPU, whether they are implementing RAPU or not. If not implementing, to find out the reasons behind it. The problems to be addressed are to know the commonly practiced recharge mechanisms, to enquire about awareness of commission rates.

The process of RAPU Sales involves the following steps

1. Entering into the RAPU portal for checking offers available for the particular customer by typing \*122\*<customer number># from the retailer number.
2. The window shows the available offers for that given number and the retailers has to explain those offers to the customers.
3. Entering the customers’ preference as respective number/link given in that window.
4. Entering the MPIN of the retailer number to done the process successful

## **OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of the study “ RAPU Sales in Ariyalur” are as follows,

- (i) To explore the distributor points and retail stores in particular territory
- (ii) To enquire the recharge methodologies practiced by retailers
- (iii) To know the awareness about RAPU
- (iv) To explore the participation level of RAPU among retailers

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Nalini ,Syed Thoufic. A & S. V. Karthikeya (1998)** Sales promotions are varied. Often they are original and creative and hence a comprehensive list of all available techniques sales promotion

includes several communication activities that attempt to provide added value or incentives to consumers, wholesalers, retailers or other organisation customers to stimulate immediate sales.

**Kotler, (2002)** Marketing information system is a continuing and interacting structure of people, equipment and procedures to gather, sort, analyse, evaluate, and distribute pertinent, timely and accurate information for use by marketing decision makers to improve their marketing planning, implementation, and control.

**Gupta, 1988; Boddewyn (1989)** Sale promotion consists of a set of various and different and often short period motive tools which is used for consumer's or buyer's provocation to buy more and faster. Promotion tools consist of coupon, rewards, free samples, discounts, advertising goods and etc.

**Soni Nehal and Verghese Manoj (2013)** In the emerging business scenario various promotional techniques are used by the marketer for influencing the purchase decision of their consumers. Sales promotion, a key element of promotional mix has been widely used to sustain competitive advantage, increase sales and stimulate consumer purchase decision, is becoming a valuable tool for marketers to influence purchase decision.

**Brassington and Pettitt (2000)** Sales promotions is a range of marketing techniques designed within a strategic marketing framework, to add extra value to a product or service over and above the "normal" offering in order to achieve specific sales and marketing objectives, this extra value may be a short term tactical nature or it may be part of a longer-term franchise building program.

**Luick and Zeigler (1968)** There are various reasons for this distribution among them quick sales generation is one. Sales promotion includes those activities, which enhance and support mass selling and personal selling and which help compete and or coordinate the entire promotional mix and make the marketing mix more effective.

**Pithadia, Vijay and Sharma Ashish (2005)** The authors defines the types of sales promotion as  
i. Allowance: short term incentive offered to induce a retailer and stockiest to stock up on a product.  
ii. Priceoff: selling products at a reduced cost than usual.  
iii. Trade shows: a large exposition to promote awareness and sales of especially new products within an industry.  
iv. Sales

contest: contest or competition to reward retailers that sell the most products. v. Point of purchase display: extra sales tools given to retailers to boost sales.

**Vyas (2010)** The study found out that how choice is made by consumers where there are several brands known which can be preferred by them. The study reveals that the sales promotion offering immediate incentives of price-cut nature is likely to appeal to all segments of consumers.

**Joshy Joseph and Bharadhwaj Sivakumaran (2011)** The study examined the utility aspect of promotion has been explained in terms of offer which provides economic benefits of buying the product immediately by the customer and It may not intend to understand the feelings of the customers towards the product or brand. Promoters feel that the customers should think and cognitively process the information about the promotion for making a rational decision.

**Erasmus, Boshoff, and Rousseau (2001)** The study explained that the goods are consumed on the basis of various needs, preferences and purchasing power. Internal as well as external factors facilitates in understanding more about purchase decision in terms of what to buy, how to buy, where and when to buy and in how much quantity. In formulating the marketing strategy for effective selling cost, value and benefit analysis is to be considered. Promotion plays a critical role in clear understanding of the above analysis.

**Kotler and Armstrong (1994)** Sales promotion to consist of short – term incentives to encourage purchase or sales of a product or service. Whereas advertising offers reasons to buy a product or service, sales promotion offers reasons to buy now. In service industries like telecommunication Sales promotion includes a wide variety of tools: consumer promotion tools, samples, coupons, rebates, price pack, premiums.

**ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION****Table-1 Classification of respondents based on business tenure and Location of business**

	No. of respondents	Percent
Business tenure		
Less than a year	5	3.3
1-3 yrs	37	24.7
4-6 yrs	62	41.3
7-9 yrs	36	24.0
More than 10yrs	10	6.7
Location of business		
Rural	57	38.0
Semi urban	35	23.3
Urban	58	38.7

Source : Field study

From the table it is observed that among 150 respondents 5(3.35) retailers are doing business less than a year. 37 (24.7%) retailers are doing 1-3 years, 62 (41.3%) are doing 4-6 years and 36(24%) retailers are doing 7-9 years followed by 10 (6.7%)are doing more than 10 years. Among 150 respondents 57(38%)of retailers are operating from rural area, 35 (23.3%) are from semi urban followed by 58(38.7%) retailers are operating from urban area. It is concluded that majority of retailers are (41.3%) involved in Airtel business 4-6 years and majority (38.7%) are from urban area.

**Table -2 Retailers' responses towards economical satisfactions on Airtel business**

Response	No. of Respondents	Percent
Highly disagree	41	27.3
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	0	0
Agree	41	27.3
Highly Agree	109	72.7
Total	150	100

Source : Field study

From the above table it is observed that majority 72.7% of respondents were highly satisfied with economical benefits given by Airtel and 27.3% of respondents were satisfied with economical benefits given by Airtel. It is evident that most of all retailers (72.7%) were highly satisfied with Airtel business and they felt Airtel business is economically beneficial to them.

**Table-3Retailers' responses towards non-monetary supports from Airtel**

Response	No.of responders	Percent
Highly dissatisfied	0	0
Dissatisfied	2	1.3
Neutral	8	5.3
Satisfied	90	60.0
Highly satisfied	50	33.3
Total	150	100

Source : Field study

From the above table it is observed that among 150 respondents, majority 60% of the respondents are satisfied with the Non- monetary benefits from Airtel, 33.3% of respondents are Highly satisfied followed by 5.3% of are gave neutral response and 1.35 of respondents are Dissatisfied with non-monetary benefits from Airtel. It is evident that most of all retailers (90%) are satisfied with Non-monetary benefits given by Airtel.

**Table-4 Respondents' opinion on Awareness of R-offer**

Response	No. of respondents	Percent
Yes	143	95.3
No	7	4.7
Total	150	100

Source : Field study

From the above table it is observed that among 150 respondents,143 respondents (95.3%) are aware about R-Offer and 7 retailers (4.7%) are unaware about R-Offer method. It is concluded that most of all retailers (95.3%) are aware about R-Offer method of checking for an offer.

**Table-5 Awareness about benefits of RAPU**

Response	No. of respondents	Percent
Yes	128	85.3
No	22	14.7
Total	150	100

Source : Field study

From the table, it is observed that 128 (85.3%) respondents are aware about the benefits of RAPU sales and 22 (14.7%) retailers are unaware about RAPU sales. It is concluded that majority (85.3%) of the retailers are aware about the benefits of RAPU participation.

**Table-6 Respondents' opinion on Frequency of implementing RAPU**

Response	No.of respondents	Percent
Always	43	28.7
Not Always	107	71.3
Total	150	100

Source : Field study

From the table it is observed that among 150 respondents 43 (28.7%) respondents are always implementing RAPU on all the transactions and 107 (71.3%) respondents are not implementing RAPU on all the transactions. This is evident that lower percent (28.7%) of retailers only implementing RAPU on all the recharge transactions.

**Table-7 Respondents' opinion on Time insufficiency**

Response	No.of respondents	Percent
Highly disagree	1	.7
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	26	17.3
Agree	55	36.7
Highly agree	68	45.3
Total	150	100

Source : Field study



From the above table it is inferred that among 150 respondents 68 (45.3%) respondents are highly agreed that time insufficiency is one of the reason for not implementing RPU. 55 (36.7%) respondents are agreed that time insufficiency is one of the reason for not implementing RPU. followed by 26 (17.3%) are gave neutral response. 0.7% of respondents are Highly disagree that time insufficiency is the reason for not implementing RPU.

It is concluded that nearly half of (45.3%) the respondents of the among group are Highly agreed that time insufficiency is one of the reason for not implementing RPU.

**Table-9 Respondents' opinion on Offers mismatch**

Response	No.of respondents	Percent
Highly Disagree	3	2.0
Disagree	1	.7
Neutral	37	24.7
Agree	65	43.3
Highly agree	44	29.3

Source : Field Study

From the table it is observed that among 150 respondents, majority 65 (43.3%) respondents are Agreed that Offers mismatch is one of the reason for not implementing RPU followed by 44 (29.3%) are highly agreed and 3 (2%) respondents are highly disagreed that Offers mismatch is one of the reason for not implementing RPU. 37 (24.7%) are gave neutral response.

It is concluded that nearly half of (43.3%) the respondents are agreed that Offers mismatch is one of the reason for not implementing RPU at all the transactions.

**Table-10 Respondents' opinion on Satisfied with OTF commissions**

Response	Frequency	Percent
Highly dissatisfied	0	0
Dissatisfied	0	0
Neutral	22	14.7
Satisfied	33	22.0
Highly satisfied	95	63.3
Total	150	100

Source : Field study

From the table it is observed that among 150 respondents, 95 (63.3%) respondents are highly satisfied with OTF commissions. 33 (22%) retailers are satisfied with commission rates offered by Airtel followed by 22 (14.7%) were gave neutral response.

It is concluded that most of all retailers (63.3%) are highly satisfied with Commission rates offered by Airtel for RAPU participation.

**Table-11 Respondents' opinion on insufficient balance from retailer side**

Response	No. of respondents	Percent
Highly disagree	121	80.7
Disagree	4	2.7
Neutral	25	16.7
Agree	0	0
Highly agree	0	0
Total	150	100

Source : Field study

Among 150 respondents 121 retailers (80.7%) were highly disagreed that insufficient balance from retailer side is one of the reason for not implementing RAPU followed by 4 retailers (2.7%) were disagreed. It is concluded that most of all (80.7%) of retailers are highly disagreed that Insufficient balance from retailer side is one of the reason for not implementing RAPU sales.

**Table-12 Awareness about commission details**

Response	No.of respondents	Percent
Highly disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	23	15.3
Satisfied	52	34.7
Highly satisfied	75	50.0
Total	150	100.0

Source : Field study

Among 150 respondents 75 retailers (50%) were highly aware about the commission rates offered by Airtel for transactions done through RAPU and 52 retailers (34.7%) were aware about commission rates. There were 23 retailers (15.3%) have gave neutral response on awareness about commission rates.

It is concluded that majority of respondents (50%) were Highly aware about commission rates offered by Airtel for RAPU participation.

**Table-13 Respondents' opinion on Implementing RPU**

Response	No. of respondents	Percent
Yes	125	83.3
No	25	16.7
Total	150	100

Source : Field study

Among 150 respondents 125 retailers (83.3%) were implementing RPU during their transactions and 25 retailers (16.7%) were not implementing RPU due to various reasons. It is concluded that majority of respondent (83.3%) were implementing RPU during their transactions but not all the time.

**Table-14 Respondents' opinion on Easiness of transaction process**

Response	No. of respondents	Percent
Highly dissatisfied	0	0
Dissatisfied	7	4.7
Neutral	18	12.0
Satisfied	29	19.3
Highly satisfied	96	64.0

Source : Field study

Among 150 respondents 96 retailers (64%) were highly satisfied with easiness of transaction process and 29 (19.3%) of them were satisfied. 18 retailers (12%) were gave Neutral response while 7 retailers (4.7%) were dissatisfied with easiness of transaction process. It is concluded that majority 96 retailers (64%) are highly satisfied with Easiness of transaction process while implementing RPU sales.

**Table-15 Reasons for not implementing RAPU**

Response	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Time insufficiency	150	4.26	.789
Rushing customers	150	3.27	.741
Offers mismatch	150	3.97	.867
Insufficient balance (retailer side )	150	1.36	.753

Source : Field study

Time insufficiency as the influencing factor, it has the mean value of 4.26 followed by Offers mismatch has the mean value of 3.97. Rushing customers as the influencing factor, it has the mean value of 3.27 and insufficient balance from retailer has the mean value of 1.36. It is concluded that Time insufficiency is the major influencing factor of RAPU participation among retailers since it has the higher mean value of 4.26.

**Table-16 Retailers' perception on customer's preference while looking for an offer**

Factor	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Customers' preference on Data pack	150	4.74	.484
customers' preference on rate cutter packs	150	3.53	.766
Customers' preference on Talk time offers	150	4.45	.562

Source : Field study

Customers' preference on data pack offers has the mean value of 4.74 followed by customers' preference for talk time offers has the mean value of 4.5 and customers' preference for rate cutter offers has the mean value of 3.53. It is concluded that majority of retailers are perceiving that customers are preferring data pack offers the most since it has the highest mean value of 4.47.

**Table-17 Chi square test for implementation of RAPU and Economically beneficial**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.196(b)	1	.041
Continuity Correction(a)	3.249	1	.071
Likelihood Ratio	3.897	1	.048

Source : Table 4.2, Table 4.14

H0 = There is no significance association between economic satisfaction on Airtel business among retailers and implementing RAPU sales

H1 = There is a significance association between economic satisfaction on Airtel business among retailers and implementing RAPU sales

From the table it is inferred that pearson chi-square value is typically lesser than 0.05 (0.041) hence the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected and accept alternate hypothesis (H1) was accepted. It is concluded that there is a significance association between economic satisfaction on Airtel business among retailers and implementing RAPU sales.

**Table-18 ANOVA : Business tenure and Awareness about benefits of R-Offer among retailers.**

	Sum of Squares	Mean	Std. Dev	Sig.
Between Groups	1.045	1.15	3.55	.079
Within Groups	17.729			
Total	18.773			

Source : Table 4.1, Table 4.6

H0 = There is no significance relationship between number of years in Airtel business (business tenure) and awareness about benefits of R-Offer among retailers

H1 = There is a significance relationship between number of years in Airtel business (business tenure) and awareness about benefits of R-Offer among retailers.

From the above table, the observed significance level (0.079) is higher than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) was accepted.

It is concluded that there is no significant relationship between the number of years in business with that of awareness about benefits of R-Offer.

**Table-19 ANOVA: Business tenure Vs Awareness about commission details**

	Sum of Squares	Mean	Std. Dev	Sig.
Between Groups	2.117	4.35	7.33	.417
Within Groups	77.856			
Total	79.973			

Source: Table 4.1, Table 4.13

H<sub>0</sub> = There is no significance relationship between number of years in Airtel business (business tenure) and awareness about commission rates.

H<sub>1</sub> = There is a significance relationship between number of years in Airtel business (business tenure) and awareness about commission rates.

From the above table it is inferred that the observed significance level (0.417) is typically higher than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) was accepted. It is concluded that There is no significance relationship between number of years in Airtel business (business tenure) and awareness about commission rates.

**Table-20: ANOVA Implementing RAPU Vs Awareness about commission details**

	Sum of Squares	Mean	Std.Dev	Sig.
Between Groups	16.967	1.17	0.374	0.000
Within Groups	3.866			
Total	20.833			

Source : Table 4.14, Table 4.13

H0 = There is no significance relationship between awareness about commission rates offered by Airtel for implementing RAPU sales and implementation of RAPU.

H1 = There is a significance relationship between implementation of RAPU and awareness about commission rates offered by Airtel for implementing RAPU sales.

From the table it is inferred that the observed significance level (0.00) is typically lower than 0.05. Hence null hypothesis (H0) was rejected and alternate hypothesis (H1) was accepted. It is concluded that there is a significance relationship between implementation of RAPU and awareness about commission rates offered by Airtel for implementing RAPU sales.

## **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

This part of project deals with findings from the field study.

- Majority of retailers are (41.3%) involved in Airtel business 4-6 years and majority (38.7%) are from urban area.
- Most of all retailers were highly satisfied with Airtel business and they felt Airtel business is economically beneficial to them.
- Most of all retailers (90%) are satisfied with Non-monetary benefits given by Airtel. Most of all retailers (95.3%) are aware about R-Offer method of checking for an offer.
- Majority (85.3%) of the retailers are aware about the benefits of RAPU participation. lower percent (28.7%) of retailers only implementing RAPU on all the recharge transactions. Nearly half of (45.3%) the respondents of the among group are Highly agreed that time insufficiency is one of the reason for not implementing RAPU
- Nearly one fourth of the retailers (28.7%) are agreed that rushing customers are the reason for not implementing RAPU and nearly half of (43.3%) the respondents are agreed that Offers mismatch is one of the reason for not implementing RAPU at all the transactions.
- More than half of the retailers (63.3%) are highly satisfied with Commission rates offered by Airtel for RAPU participation. Most of all (80.7%) of retailers are highly disagreed that Insufficient balance from retailer side is one of the reason for not implementing RAPU sales.



- Majority of respondents (50%) were Highly satisfied with commission rates that they are receiving from Airtel for RAPU participation. majority 96 retailers (64%) are highly satisfied with Easiness of transaction process while implementing RAPU sales.
- Time insufficiency is the major influencing factor of RAPU participation among retailers since it has the higher mean value of 4.26.
- Majority of retailers are perceiving that customers are preferring data pack offers the most since it has the highest mean value of 4.47.
- There is a significance association between economic satisfaction on Airtel business among retailers and implementing RAPU sales.
- There is no significant relationship between the number of years in business with that of awareness about benefits of R-Offer and also there is no significant relationship between the number of years in business with that of implementing RAPU sales

## **SUGGESTIONS**

This part of the project deals with the suggestions to improving RAPU sales in and around Ariyalur based on my field study.

- First the TSMs (Territory Sales Managers) on behalf of the company, could educate the Field Sales executive (FSEs) about the purpose of R-Offer and the benefits of RAPU. Then insist those people to further educate the retailers.
- Educate the FSEs that is their role to make the retailers to participate in RAPU drive by creating awareness through communicating the benefits of RAPU transactions.
- The retailers could participate in RAPU drive only after they felt satisfied with its benefits, so the managers should insist the FSEs to do demo transactions at retailer points.
- Most of the retailers felt that Time insufficiency is the important factor for not implementing RAPU.
- The next important reason for not implementing RAPU is 'offers mismatch', retailers response on this was customers felt that the offers are really useful but very costly to avail. So the company could try to giving offers at low cost too. Educate the retailers to convince the customers to avail the offers even though it is costlier still it is beneficial to them.

- Most of all retailers are highly satisfied with Airtel business and they were agreed that Airtel business is economically beneficial to them, but many retailers are expecting Non-monetary Benefits such as sun packs, name boards, Gifts, etc., so that the company could fix and communicate target for RAPU participation and could give some above stated benefits on achievement of the target.
- Once they separate the group which needs special focus, the managers should visit the retail outlets in person, asking for the reason why they are lagging and try to fix those problems as soon as possible also giving adequate assistance and supports to them.

## **CONCLUSION**

‘A study on awareness of Rapu sales among Bharti Airtel retailers in Ariyalur’ was conducted in and around Ariyalur to identifying the awareness and participating level of RAPU drive among retailers. The majority of retailers were highly satisfied with the commission rates given by Airtel for RAPU participation. The retailers felt that Time insufficiency is the important factor for not implementing RAPU at all the transactions since they were operating multiple business along with Airtel business in the same retail outlet, followed by offers mismatch is the next important reason for not implementing RAPU. We can further improve the participation level by educating the retailers to convince the customers to avail the offer.

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