

## **Non-owner tele-users at the Bottom of the Pyramid in emerging Asia: removing the Barriers to ownership**

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The enormous potential at the 'Bottom of the Pyramid' (or BOP) has been much talked about. In the telecommunications sector, companies have already started to understand this burgeoning market, adapting products and business models to better serve its needs. 'Any-amount' electronic top-ups on prepaid mobiles are one such example, akin to the 'sachet' strategy adopted by many the fast moving consumer goods industry in developing countries.

The Asia Pacific is one of the world's fastest growing telecom markets. It is widely accepted that the next billion subscribers will come from emerging markets, particularly India, China and other emerging countries in the Asia Pacific. Given that South Asia contains the largest number of poor people, it is implicit that many of these new subscribers will come from the BOP especially South Asia.

The key findings of a five country study on the use of telecom services and other information and communication technologies at the BOP (Teleuse@BOP) in five emerging Asian countries will be presented. The Teleuse@BOP study finds that while access to telephone services is high among the BOP in emerging Asia, ownership is not. The BOP use multiple modes of access to fulfill their communication needs. But as many as 140 million of these non-owners at the BOP in just the 5 countries studied are considering purchasing one in the near future. Almost all of these new connections will be mobile. This will have knock-on impacts on the up-take of emerging technologies becoming available through mobile and SMS platforms such as SMS-based remittances, voting and banking, inter alia.

### **Bio**

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