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## From underdog to unbelievable

Bharti Airtel transformed the way India communicates



Bharti Airtel was the little guy of India's wireless world. But a partnership with IBM research and software labs transformed them into the vanguard of a talking revolution. Here's how it happened.

[Watch the video](#) (WMV, 5:14 min, 10MB)

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## **BHARTI**

### **IBM Web Documentary**

*(Sound of boat engine running and fishermen singing)*

*(Mobile phone rings)*

*Fisherman answers phone*

Hello?

*Introduction: IBM PRESENTS*

*Title: Talking Revolution*

#### **Swaminathan Krishnan – Sasken Communication Technologies Ltd.**

The telecom boom has benefited every single citizen of India. The concentration of Indian industry estimates that 1% of India's GDP growth is contributed by this sector.

#### **Fisherman**

*Subtitles:* Our earnings went up after we got a mobile phone. We check prices with an auctioneer on one shore, and then another. We head to wherever we get a better price. Now we earn about 50 percent more, all thanks to the mobile phone.

#### **Fisherman calling out**

*Subtitles:* 1400/-... 1400/... 1450/...

#### **Swaminathan Krishnan – Sasken Communication Technologies Ltd.**

In terms of telecom market group, two countries that have really lead the world are China and India. And about 6 months back with the net ads increasing over 6 million, India is now the number 1 telecom market in the world. It started with the 90s where there was barely 1 phone per 1000 people in India. To a figure that's now close to about 25 per 100 people. With 250 million mobile connections, it's one of the most liberalized markets and very fiercely competitive.

#### **Elderly man**

*Subtitles:* I have two sons in the army. We use to send them letters, my sons would get them after a month or two, now it's just a five-minute phone call, that's it.

#### **Manoj Kohli – President & CEO of Bharti Airtel**

We were the smallest company of this sector, we didn't have telecom experience. Today we are the market leaders in telecom services. We had an outsourcing strategy. We outsource our entire IT, billing and 60 platforms to IBM.

**Dr. Jai Menon – Group CIO of Bharti Enterprises**

We're getting benefits from IBM software group and talent that's coming in from the software arena. We've got products coming out of the hi-fi research lab that is contributing to our revenue assurances. We've got IBM research systems across the world contributing to the architecture that is necessary to provide skill and build capability. Strategic partnership with IBM has allowed us as Bharti Airtel to focus on the customer.

**Rickshaw driver**

*Subtitles:* Most rickshaw drivers in Jodhpur have mobile phones. It's a great convenience. While I'm waiting at auto-rickshaw stands, passengers call asking me to pick them up. Mobile phones have become a necessity to the common man.

**Ramesh Awtaney – IBM**

When we wrote this agreement, we were expecting to touch 50 million subscribers in 10 years. Today in less than 4 years, Bharti has already crossed 50 million subscribers.

**Swaminathan Krishnan – Sasken Communication Technologies Ltd.**

The telecom pricing in India's seen a dramatic downward movement, call rates have plummeted from about 16 Rupis a minute to less than a Rupee a minute, which makes it very affordable to use the telecom service.

**Elderly man**

*Subtitles:* Everyone has a mobile phone nowadays, from the village boy on the bicycle, to construction workers and bricklayers...all have a mobile phone.

**Ramesh Awtaney – IBM**

Bharti keeps testing us all the time for scale. That puts a good challenge to IBM research and IBM software labs to see that we are able to have an architecture which can scale to their 50 million, tomorrow 150 or 250 million.

**Manoj Kohli – President & CEO of Bharti Airtel**

IBM has made substantial contribution to our success, and moving ahead, the contribution will be significant. We will take this country to the next level of performance and development. The entire society needs to get a taste of this technology. We will lift the society. We'll offer a higher standard of living, connectivity, and quality of work life. Higher efficiency, higher productivity. We will lead this social revolution of India.

*(Singing and credits)*

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**IBM Corporation**

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