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India to beat China in new mobile subscribers by 2020: Report



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Smartphones are expected to push new subscriber growth. Photo: Pixabay

By ZeeBiz WebTeam

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Mumbai, ZeeBiz WebDesk



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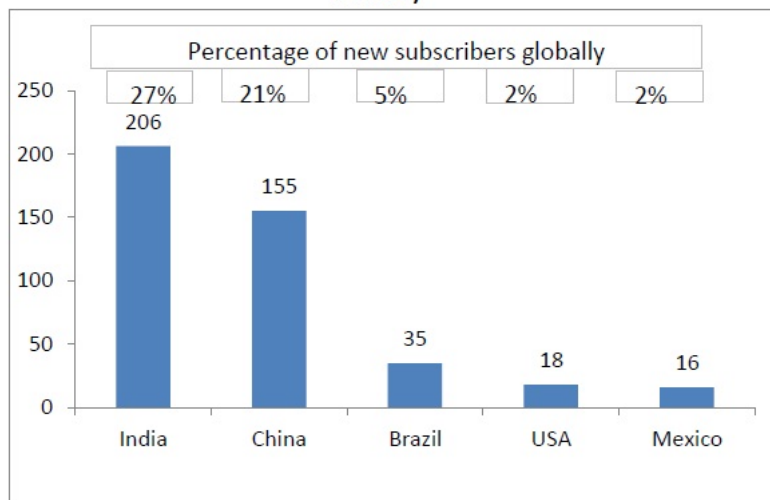
Key highlights:

- **India is expected to add 206 million new mobile subscribers by 2020**
- **China with a growth of 21% will follow with the addition of 155 million subscribers**
- **The 4G subscribers are expected to grow from 8% in 2016 to 19% in 2020**

India is expected to add 206 million new mobile subscribers by 2020 and thereby having the highest mobile subscribers globally. With the penetration rate by that date of only 65%, there will still be considerable scope for growth. China (/topics/china) with a growth of 21% will follow with the addition of 155 million subscribers.

China, on the other hand, will add another 155 million subscribers by the end of the decade, bringing its total to 1.2 billion, or 86% of the population, said a CARE Ratings report.

Chart 1: Global markets by additional subscribers, 2016–2020 (in million)



Source: Care Ratings

More than half the world's mobile subscribers live in Asia Pacific (/topics/asia-pacific-0) – mostly in China (/topics/china) and India. As of the end of 2016, there were 2.7 billion unique subscribers in Asia Pacific, accounting for two thirds of the region's population.

While mobile subscriber penetration in India was 51% in 2016 by 2020 its expected to grow to 65%. Smartphone adoption too is expected to nearly double from 28% in 2016 to 49% by 2020.

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Table 1: Subscriber penetration, Smartphone adoption and Technology Mix for India and China

	India		China	
	2016	2020	2016	2020
Subscriber penetration	51%	65%	76%	86%
Smartphone adoption	28%	49%	71%	74%
Technology Mix				
2G	78%	53%	23%	11%
3G	14%	29%	20%	6%
4G	8%	19%	57%	83%

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Source: Care Ratings

While 2G (/topics/2g) subscribers are the highest at 78% in 2016, it is expected to decline by 2020 as 3G (/topics/3g) and 4G (/topics/4g) users grow. The 4G subscribers are expected to grow from 8% in 2016 to 19% in 2020. While 3G users will grow from 14% in 2016 to 29% by 2020.

China will however see a major growth only in 4G subscribers as it will increase from 57% in 2016 to 83% by 2020. The 2G subscribers and 3G subscribers are however expected to see a decline in subscribers.

Table 2: Quick look on Asia Pacific unique mobile subscribers, sim connections and mobile broadband connections

	2016	2020	% change
Unique mobile subscribers	2.7	3.1	14.8%
Penetration rate	66%	75%	
Sim connections	4.2	5.1	21.4%
Penetration rate	98%	111%	
Mobile broadband connections	53%	72%	

Note: Unique mobile subscribers and sim connections (in billion)

Source: Care Ratings

"Across the Asia-Pacific region as a whole, total revenues grew by 3% in 2016, down from 9% in 2013. One of the reasons was the launch of Jio in India in September 2016, offering cut-price 4G (/topics/4g) services; put significant pressure on the revenues of incumbent operators: Q4 2016 total revenue in India declined for the first time by 0.1% annually, compared to annual growth of more than 6% for the three quarters previously," said Chief Economist Madan Sabnavis and Research Analyst Bhagyashree Bhati in the Care Ratings report.

The report says that the total operator revenues would grow by 2.3% CAGR during 2016-20. The revenues would stand increased to \$473 billion in 2020 from \$432 billion in 2016. It says data growth is driving the revenues.

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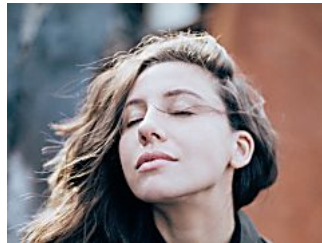
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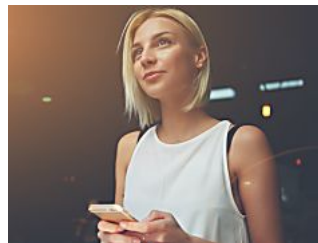
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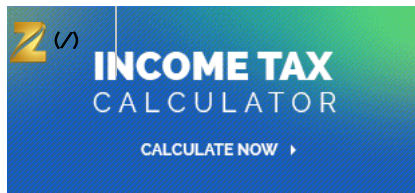
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