Mobitel Announced As A Nominee For The Annual Global Mobile Awards



Mobitel Liyasara package was announced as a nominee for Global Mobile Awards for the Best Mobile Product or Service for women in emerging markets by GSMA at the 18th Annual Global Awards ceremony held in Barcelona, Spain. More than 160 independent analysts, journalists, academics and subject matter experts throughout the world participated in the judging process to select the nominees for the 2013 awards.

The GSMA represents the interests of the worldwide mobile communications industry. Spanning 219 countries, the GSMA unites nearly 800 of the world's mobile operators, as well as more than 200 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset makers, software companies and equipment providers. 'Liyasara' which literally means 'voice of women' in Sinhala, was a package launched as a tribute to Sri Lankan women after extensive research as a package for the first time of its kind in the history of mobile communication in Sri Lanka. The first Liyasara SIM card was ceremonially presented to the First Lady Shiranthi Rajapaksa on International Women's Day in 2012. As the National Mobile Services Provider, Mobitel believes that women are a vital element in society and its development – being a pillar in every family and organization. Mobitel has over the years, supported this belief by providing special facilities and services for women in Sri Lanka.

"This package is unique. Created with the Sri Lankan woman in mind, includes a free value bundle of voice minutes, SMS, Data, value added services, and a comprehensive insurance package and access to the 'Liyasara' portal. All this for a nominal fee of Rs. 99 per month," said Jean Fernandez, Senior General Manager – Customer Care of Mobitel.

The GSMA Development Fund formed the 'mWomen' programme after identifying a sizeable gender gap in mobile phone ownership in middle and lower income countries in a comprehensive study produced in partnership with Cherie Blair Foundation for Women. The research indicated that mobile operators and the development community were interested in closing the gender gap to generate both, new commercial opportunity and social development.

Hence, Liyasara was designed to reduce this gender gap in mobile phone penetration in Sri Lanka, particularly in rural areas where the gap is more prevalent than in urban areas. "It is the rural and low-income groups that are deprived of or do not have access to information such as those offered in the Liyasara offering," explained Jean Fernandez.

The 'Liyasara' portal is rich in content relevant to women. Information on maternal health – developed by the Perinatal Society of Sri Lanka gives week on week

information on the foetal development – a complete voice based resource for new expectant mothers. Similarly information on Child Psychology developed by the Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, content on cancer awareness, developed by the Sri Lanka College of Oncologists, Diabetics prevention and control – developed by the Diabetics Association of Sri Lanka and information on Cerebral Palsy from the Cerebral Palsy Lanka Foundation to name a few.

Content in local languages with a very simplified method of access through an IVR (Interactive Voice Response system) makes Liyasara an user-friendly method for women of diverse backgrounds. The short code to remember is 222 to access this portal from a Mobitel service number. “Out of around 600 entries, to be nominated within the top five in our category is an achievement. To even be recognised as an award nominee, is truly an honour for Mobitel,” concluded Jean Fernandez.

