

# 'NRIs can make bill payments via BBPS soon'

The Reserve Bank of India-conceptualised Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) has been clocking 80 million monthly transactions. It is employing a three-pronged strategy for growth, NPCI Bharat BillPay CEO **NOOPUR CHATURVEDI** tells Swapnil Joglekar in a Zoom interview. Edited excerpts:

**This month, the RBI allowed non-resident Indians (NRIs) to pay utility bills and education fee for their family members living in India via BBPS. Would you say this is just to increase the ease of access or to bring in more inward remittances?**

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has been driving its inclusion agenda. We have more than 30 million Indians staying abroad. India is also one of the biggest recipients of inward remittances. Typically, Indians outside send lump sum money to their family and then the family struggles to make payments. We wanted to make that process completely seamless and easy for the NRIs and the PIOs (persons of Indian origin) so that they could not only help their families financially but also in terms of convenience. To that extent, we do feel that the number of transactions, on account of convenience, will definitely go up. If it translates value terms, only time will tell.

**Is the back-end ready for this?**

Yes, and no. There will be two legs for every NRI payment. One is the India leg, which is the existing BBPS ecosystem, which is ready and

waiting. However, the international leg is being worked upon. We are waiting for more operational clarity from the regulators before we can call it live.

**When do you see it going live?**

Hopefully, in the next few months. Definitely this calendar year.

**How is the Unified Presentment Management System (UPMS) for autopayment of bills coming up?**

It's coming up really well. I feel UPMS will change the way BBPS operates today. Today we are just a pass-through pipe which is enabling fetch and payments. But, at times, it gives customers an incomplete experience if they are using multiple payment channels. So, if you are using Paytm at times for your postpaid bill and at other times you use Kotak Mahindra Bank or ICICI Bank account, then all of them are reminding you

and asking you to use their channels to make the bill payment. We want to simplify it for you. So, the minute you make a payment, on a real-time basis, that information will be made available to everyone, so they can stop troubling you. Even the billers will have a simplified experience. Once



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they generate a bill, they will inform us and then we will ensure that your choice of channel gets intimidated at the same time. Then they can communicate with you, rather than you having to figure out if the bill has come, the amount, so on and so forth. The entire autopay experience, where you can place an instruction for paying a bill, becomes seamless for the user. That, at its core, is UPMS and we should be live with a few partners in the next quarter.

**Are you looking to deepen BBPS penetration in the existing fields or are you looking to expand into**

**newer fields?**

Both. Why should I limit it? There's a three-pronged approach that we are taking. One is to go deeper into the existing categories, and continue to introduce new categories for consumers. Second, is to move ahead of the B2C (business-to-consumer) payments and see if we can leverage the platform for B2B (business-to-business). And the third agenda is — we are a platform company, why should we restrict ourselves to bill payment? Why can't the consumers and billers interact with each other for more information? So, first, is more categories for consumers,

second, is opening up a completely different vista in the form of B2B and third, can we leverage our platform for doing much more communication outside of payment? All three are in the pipeline.

**But even as so many people use it, many don't realise that it is BBPS. They recognise UPI, or RuPay but not BBPS. Are you looking to change that?**

UPI is a consumer-facing product. I always call us (BBPS) akin to the chip inside your smartphone. The question is, do you need to know what is happening in the background? I feel, maybe in 2-3 years, more customers will know us. But for now, our focus is on creating value for them.

**What are you doing to stamp out frauds?**

We have a very strong fraud risk management (FRA) module that we ride on, which does velocity checks and a number of other checks. Every biller that joins the BBPS system goes through our due diligence, so no one can misuse the system. To that extent, our gates and our moats ensure that when the customer uses our platform, he is paying a genuine biller a valid bill. In addition, we are working with our partners to ensure that, if the bill is inordinately high, we are able to prevent that from autopayment, etc.

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