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Samsung knocked off top spot in India



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Arjun Kharpal | @ArjunKharpal
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Indian smartphone maker Micromax has taken **Samsung's** crown as the top vendor in India, just months after the Korean electronics giant suffered a similar blow in China.

Micromax has taken 22 percent of the smartphone market share in India in the fourth quarter, a rise from 21 percent in the previous quarter and ahead of Samsung's 20 percent, according to research firm Canalys. Samsung has seen a big fall from 32 percent market share in the same period last year. It marks the first time a domestic smartphone vendor has taken the top spot in India.

The brand may not be familiar outside of Asia but has made great strides selling high-spec budget smartphones. Canalys' figures will be a huge blow to Samsung who was **knocked off the top spot in China** by upstart smartphone vendor Xiaomi, now the fifth biggest smartphone maker in the world. Globally **Samsung has been hit with Apple ending up joined first** with the Korean vendor in the fourth quarter, according to Strategy Analytics.



by Taboola



Kuni Takahashi | Bloomberg | Getty Images

Samsung reported its **first annual earnings fall in three years** last month, driven by continued weakness in its smartphone division. In contrast, Apple reported blockbuster earnings while iPhone shipments

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beat Wall Street estimates.

"The problem with Samsung is first the price point - they are trying to beat competitors in the lower end," Francisco Jeronimo, research director for European Mobile Devices at IDC, told CNBC by phone.

"Their local competitors are much more competitive in the same price range with better specs. That is why they are challenging not just the low end but the high end where Samsung was doing well in the past."

Local winners

Micromax's flagship Canvas Hue and Canvas Nitro smartphones target the \$150 to \$200 segment. This has driven the company's success as 41 percent of smartphones shipments in India in the fourth quarter of 2014 were in the \$100 to £200 segment.

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Local players Karbonn and Lava came in at third and fourth place with 9 percent and 7 percent market share respectively. Motorola, which was [acquired by Chinese electronics giant Lenovo](#) in October, stood in fifth with a 7 percent market share.

This is Samsung's biggest problem

Thursday, 29 January 2015 | 7:40 GMTST | 02:09

Francisco Jeronimo, research director for European mobile devices at IDC, says the fact that Samsung is not in control of the Android operating system makes it harder for it to differentiate its product.

"Smartphone makers had been much stronger in their home markets because they know the market and their brand has an extra resonance because it is local. Micromax in India can leverage that in a way Samsung simply cannot," Ian Fogg, head of mobile at IHS, told CNBC by phone.

Micromax like Xiaomi?

India is one of the fastest-growing smartphone markets in the world, and experienced year-over-year growth of 90 percent in the first quarter with 21.6 million units shipped, Canalys said. But like [Xiaomi in China](#), the local players have been best-placed to take advantage, with Samsung failing to produce high quality phones for a cheap price.

Samsung is hoping to change its fortunes with the expected release of a smartphone at Mobile World Congress in March.

While Xiaomi and Micromax both took Samsung's crown as top smartphone vendor in their home countries, the companies' strategies have been different, analysts said. Xiaomi has focused on selling its devices online and trying to monetize through software and services.

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Micromax has relied on bricks and mortar stores and selling phones at an even lower price range than Xiaomi. "Considering the fact that most of their handsets are less than \$100 in costs, their primary market segment would be the budget, middle-income Indian who might not normally buy online and instead look in store," Canalys analyst Rushabh Doshi, told CNBC.

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