

## Quarterly Report on Cable Television Service



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**Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority**

**Royal Government of Bhutan**

(January - March, 2022)

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## **Report on Cable Television Service (CATV)**

### **1. Background**

Television has become one of the most important parts of our life. With other mediums of communications like radio, newspaper, magazines, etc. Television is also one of the most impactful mediums. Television being an important medium for dissemination of the information and indispensable means of entertainment, its influences in the society are enormous. Although Bhutan introduced the television relatively later compared to the other parts of the world, it gained fast popularity in our society within the last two decades. Since Cable Television is an essential service, multi-services operators (MSOs) and the local cable operators (LCOs) have been asked to render consistent quality of service with minimum interruption at all times. Apart from the satellite network and few terrestrial transmitters, the Cable TV network is also one of the main distribution platforms for the three national television channels namely BBS 1, BBS 2 and BBS 3.

The Authority is working together with multi-services operators (MSOs) the TV content distributors and our local cable operators (LCOs) to ensure uninterrupted Cable Television Services during lockdowns which is crucial for dissemination of important public information and entertainment. Currently, the cable industry in the country is under digitization and almost more than 75% (of 92) of our local cable operators have connected to the MSOs and sourced their cable television contents from the MSOs while both the MSO are working towards catering the digital feeds to remaining LCOs who have not yet able to connect to the MSOs. As per the MSO license terms and conditions, MSOs shall install both the CAS and SMS system in the head office, DrukMSO was in place of both the systems and readying for the provision of services such Video on Demand(VOD), channel packaging and to go prepaid model. NetCom Bhutan has installed a CAS system and yet to interconnect the LCOs to the systems and install the separate SMS software which supports the accurate billing and collection system.

BICMA as the Authority, the cable television services provided in the country is also regulated and monitored by the Authority. Although there is no standard and equipment for the measurements to monitor the quality of cable services, the Authority carries out the monitoring visit to the various Dzongkhags and Gewogs regularly. The report contains the report from the field visit, complaints received with and compiled by the Authority. The report also contains the key activities carried out by the Authority for these three months (January-March, 2022) to enhance the effective and efficient delivery of cable television service in the country.

## 2. Monitoring Visits

### 2.1 Monitoring visit to Dangchu, Sephu and Rubesa Gewogs under Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhag

The Authority regularly takes the monitoring, inspection, and verification of cable television services visits to the Dzongkhags and Gewogs. In the month of January from 05-07<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the team from Market and Competition Division made a field visit to Dangchu and Rubesa Gewogs under Wangduephodrang Dzongkhag. The objective of undertaking a monitoring tour was mainly to check the reach and the feasibility of LCOs in the Gyalsung project areas under Rubesa Gewog. The monitoring tour was also to monitor the cable services and to meet the cable operator of Nobding under Dangchu Gewog and see the digitization progress in the areas.

#### Findings:

- ✓ Since the Gyalsung project is a big project with the potential of more than 5000 subscribers in the future, it was found that there was a feasibility of operating more than one cable operator in the area.
- ✓ The team during the visit to Gyalsung project areas monitored the CATV services under Shelly Chiwog under Rubesa Gewog. In Shelly Chiwog, the cable television service was provided by RC Cable Services and the sound and picture quality were good.
- ✓ RC Cable Service informed the team that he has completely switched to providing digital signals and even installed the CAS and SMS systems on at his head end.
- ✓ The team also visited the Nobding areas under Dangchu Gewog to see the digitization process and monitor the cable television services in the area. During the visit, the team met with the Kuenphen Cable Service and a few hoteliers in the area.
- ✓ The Team also monitored the cable television services around the Rukubji village under Sephu Gewog and found that the services were provided by Kuenphen Cable Service.
- ✓ The team found that the CATV quality was good and residents were happy with the service.
- ✓ With the 100 % digitization of the CATV, it was learnt that there was a noticeable increase in the subscription base for Kuenphen Cable Service.



*Figure 1. Meeting with TT Cable Service and Tshogpa of Shelly Chiwog. Figure 2. CATV Services in Shelly village, Rubesa Gewog*

## **2.2. Monitoring visit of cable television services under Tsirang Dzongkhag**

In order to monitor the quality of cable television service and to find the status of digitalization of cable services under Tsirang Dzongkhag, the official of the Authority based in Tsirang has visited few Gewogs and areas under Tsirang Dzongkhag on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2022. Cable Television services in Mendrelgang Gewog;

Finding:

- ✓ Both analog and Digital cable service was available at Mendrelgang gewog.
- ✓ There were 55 channels provided in digital cable service and 7 channels in analog.
- ✓ The picture quality was better in the digital cable service but CGTN, BBS TV 2 and Al Jazeera channels were in poor quality at the time of visit.
- ✓ The official has visited places like Old bazaar of Mendrelgang, Tashipang, Kameghola and Dupi



*Figure 3. The picture quality of some mentioned channels were poor in Mendrelgang Gewog*

The official also visited the Damphu Town and the Control Room of Kuenzang Cable Service on 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2022.

Findings:

- ✓ Kuenzang Cable Service was the most distributed cable television service in Tsirang Dzongkhag and other operators were sharing the cable feed from his control room.
- ✓ Upon providing a letter of Intent (recommendation to Dzongkhag) to lease government land for re-locating the control room a year ago, the construction were completed and had shifted to new office.
- ✓ They are still providing both analog and digital signals.
- ✓ The location of the new office of Kuenzang Cable Service was below the Telecom Staff colony.
- ✓ The office consists of one room as a control room and other two as staff rooms.
- ✓ The official has also checked their log book and found out that they have maintained log book on area base.
- ✓ While checking complaint book maintained with them it was found that they have just maintained the name, contact number, location and subject. Missing some of the perimeters required by the Authority, therefore, they were asked to maintain complaint book as per Authority's requirement and submit to the Authority on monthly basis.



Figure 4. New Office of Kuenzang Cable Service Figure 5. Control Room of Kuenzang Cable Service

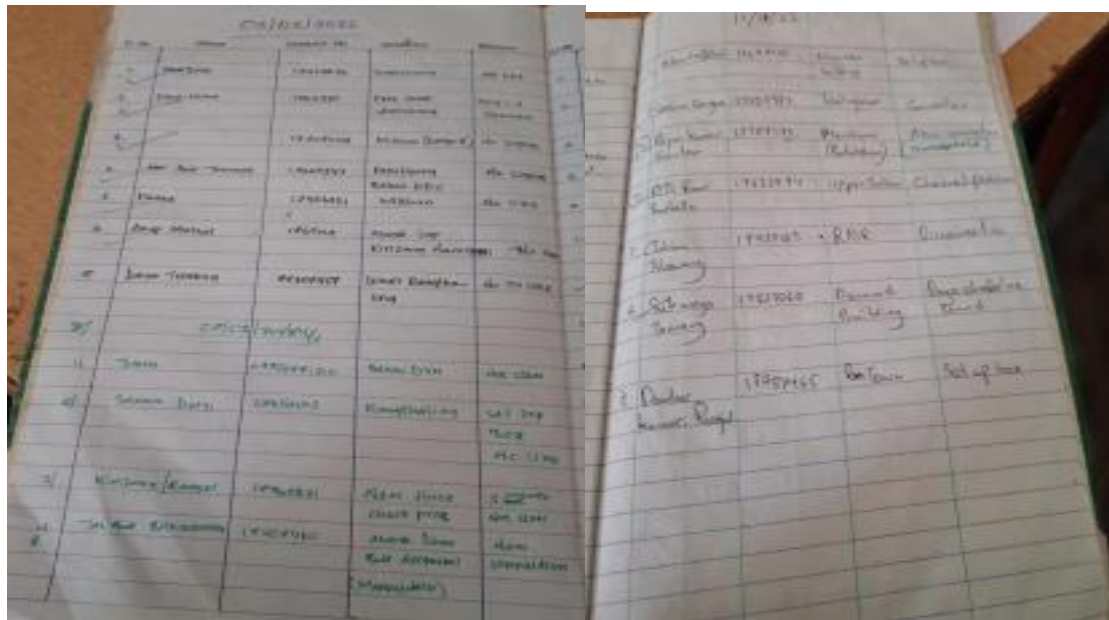


Figure 6. Complaint and log books maintained by Kuenzang Cable Service

The official again visited Dupi under Mendrelgang Gewog on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2022 to check the quality of cable service after shifting control room of kuenzang Cable Service to new location and it was found out that cable signals has been improved and channels such as CGTN, BBS TV 2 and Al Jazeera which was not clear during first visit were improved and all clear.

### **3. Complaints received with and compiled by the Authority**

In the event of any issues/complaints related to the cable television services, the Authority has made many platforms available for the subscribers to lodge the complaints with the Authority. The complainant can contact the Authority through our focal officers appointed for the service, the details for which, have been mentioned in the website ([www.bicma.gov.bt](http://www.bicma.gov.bt)) and social media (Facebook) page ([www.facebook.com/bicmabhutan](https://www.facebook.com/bicmabhutan)). We have also online complaint platform on our website under the services/complaints section (<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeFgg1JZRe1DLlyL2kHlxXZ11Xx2y-CyVuqO-S16YIirDE28g/viewform>) through which anyone can lodge the complaints. They can also write an email to [bicma@bicma.bt](mailto:bicma@bicma.bt).

In order to enhance the customer grievance redressal mechanism, the officials from the Authority also scan the social media pages on a daily basis to see if there are any complaints and issues related to the cable television services provided by the Service providers. As mentioned above, the Authority has made many platforms available from where the subscriber of cable television as well as our licensee such as local cable operators and multi-service operators can lodge the complaints with the Authority. The complaints received are well documented and try not to leave even a single issue unresolved. The BICMA also receives the customer complaints through emails and formal letters from the public and Gewogs administrations. Particularly for the cable operators to share their challenges, issues and to submit the complaints with the Authority to take up the appropriate action, the Authority has formed the cable operators group in social media platform “Telegram”.

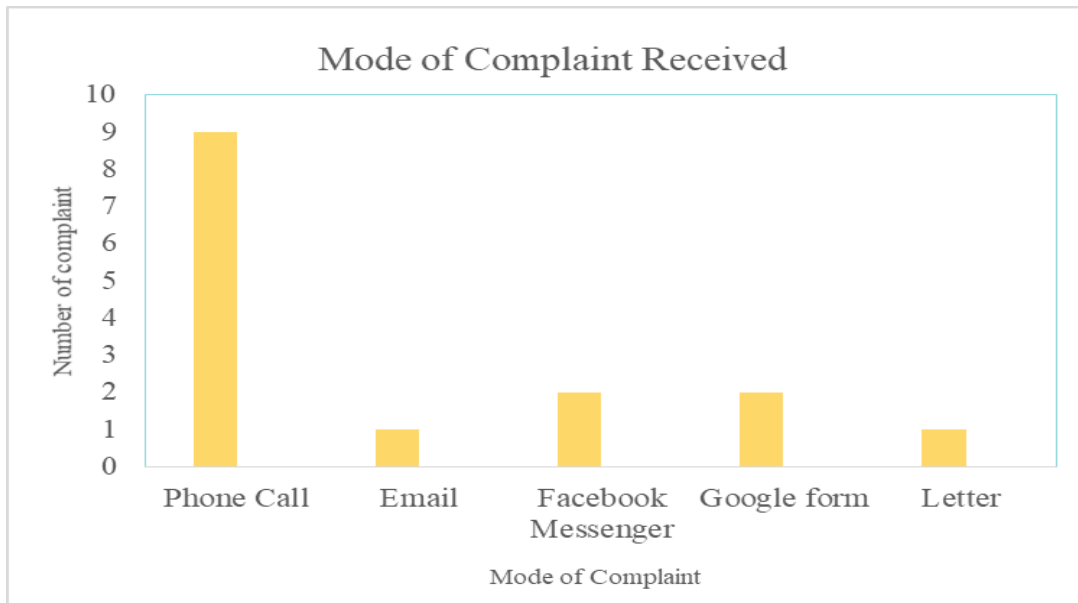
For the last three months (January-March, 2022), the Authority received a total of fifteen complaints on the cable television services. Of thirteen complaints, all were from Thimphu Thromde except one from Paro Dzongkhag.



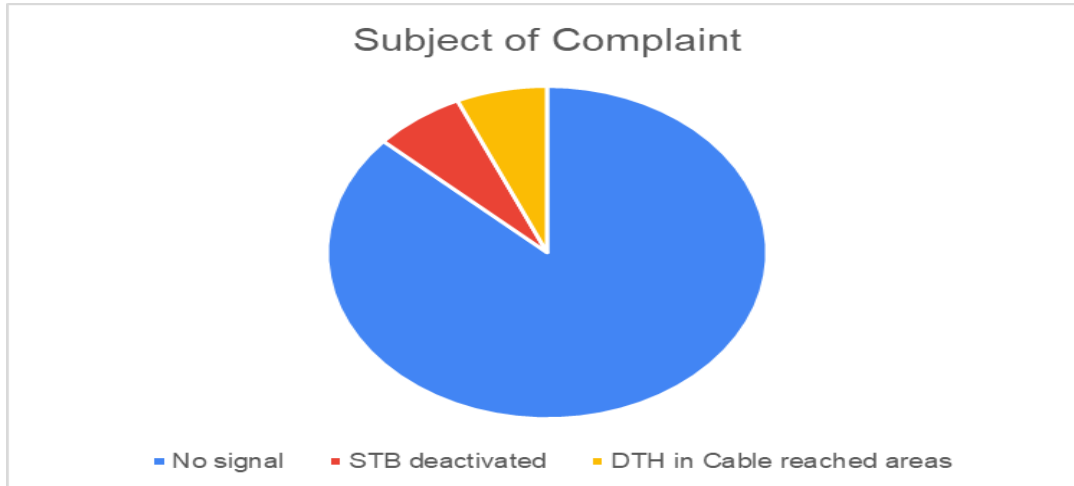
Sl. No	Complaint Received from	Mode of Complaint Received	Against LCO	Subject of Compliant	Date of Complaint Received	Action Taken	Remarks
12	Babesa(77777999)	Phone call	Etho Meto	CATV (no signal)	16/01/22	A person from Babesa(77777999) lodged the complaint with the Authority saying that Etho Metho couldn't complete rectify the issue and the lockdown was imposed the following day. The issue was resolved as soon as Etho Metho got the movement pass following the blackout period.	Resolved
13	77816776) from Motithang	Phone call	Etho Meto	CATV (no signal)	18/01/22	A person 77816776) from Motithang areas lodged the complaint with the Authority saying that there was no TV signal. Although the complaint was forwarded immediately to Norling, the issue was able to be resolved only the following day since they took time to get movement pass (During lockdown).	Resolved
14	(17444152) from Samtenling	Phone call	Etho Meto	CATV (no signal)	18/01/22	A person (17444152) from Samtenling lodged the complaint with the Authority over the phone call. The issue was forwarded to the concerned LCO and resolved immediately.	Resolved
15	Passang Lhamo(17769269) from CFM area	Phone call	Etho Meto	CATV (no signal)	25/01/22	Passang Lhamo(17769269) from the CFM area lodged the complaint with the Authority. The case was immediately forwarded to the concerned LCO and resolved the issue.	Resolved
16	Dorji Tshering (17721469) from YHSS side	Phone call	Etho Meto		3/2/2022	Dorji Tshering (17721469) from YHSS side lodged a complaint with the Authority through a phone call stating that his TV was deactivated. The case was immediately forwarded to concerned LCO and resolved.	Resolved

17	Sangay Tshering( 77100394) from Motithang area	Google form	Etho Meto	CATV(No signal)	5/2/2022	Sangay Tshering( 77100394) from Motithang area, Thimphu has lodged a complaint with the Authority that there is no CATV signal following the snowfall. The issue was forwarded to concerned CS and resolved	Resolved
18	Sonam Choden (17662015) from Olakha Chang Rigphel Side	Phone call	Etho Meto	CATV (No signal)	6/2/2022	Sonam Choden (17662015) from Olakha Chang Rigphel Side lodged a complaint with the Authority that there was no signal. The case was resolved after forwarding the case to concerned LCO.	Resolved
19	Dawa Tshering (17239962) from Jungshina	Phone call	Etho Meto	CATV (No signal)	6/2/2022	Dawa Tshering (17239962) from Jungshina lodged a complaint with the Authority that there was no signal after the snowfall. The case was resolved after forwarding the case to Etho Metho CS.	Resolved
20	77195445 from YHS side	Phone call	Etho Meto	CATV (No signal)	6/2/2022	A person with 77195445 from the YHS side complained that there was no signal after the snow fall. The case was forwarded and resolved.	Resolved
21	Sherub Dorji (17718823 )from Ramtokto	Phone and email	DrukCom	CATV (No signal)	9/2/2022	Sherub Dorji (17718823) from Ramtokto lodged a complaint that the LCO didn't come to rectify the signal cut. The case was forwarded to LCO and rectified the issue.	Resolved
22	Tashi Dema (77377007) from Bebesa	Facebook messenger	Etho Meto	CATV (No signal)	10/2/2022	Tashi Dema (77377007) from Bebesa lodged a complaint with the Authority that there is no signal. The issue was forwarded and resolved.	Resolved
23	Tenzin, Paro, Bondey, 17728758	Google form	TD Metho CS	CATV (No signal)	14/03/2022	The Authority contacted both the complainant and LCO.The LCO was directed to rectify the issue and resolved it through the manager.	Resolved

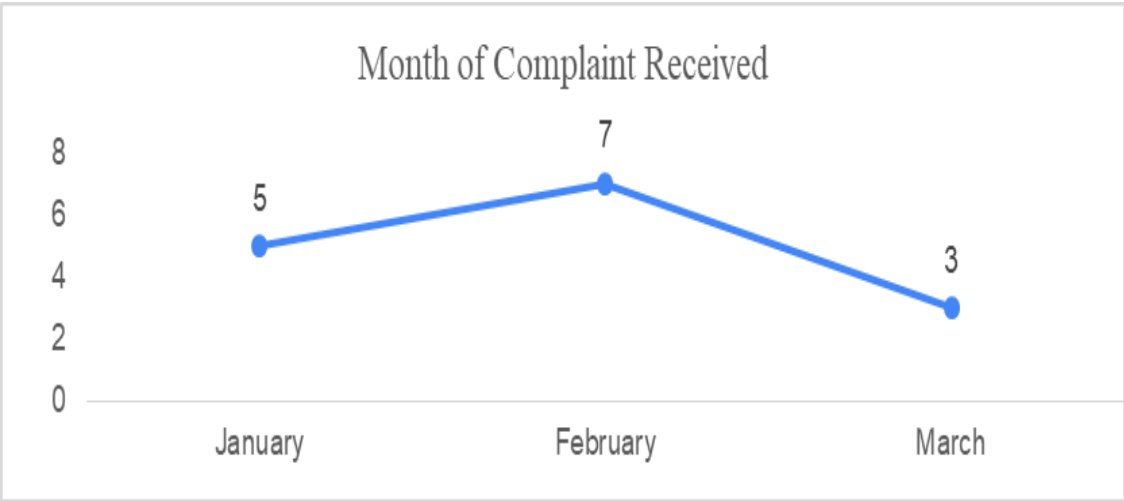
24	Gurung CS, 17416306, Samtse	Letter	NA	DTH/Pay channel in cable reached areas	16/03/2022	Gurung Cable Service of Samtse was requesting the Authority to issue a letter to Tendu and Norgaygang mentioning that DTH/Pay Channels are not allowed in the cable reached areas. The Authority issued letter to Gewogs as requested.	Resolved
25	Tenzin Thinley,777576 42, Gidagom	Letter	Nakchung CS	CATV(No signal)	26/03/2022	The complainant lodge that there is no CATV signal around his area. The issue was forwarded to concerned CS and directed to rectify the issue. The issue was followed up again by the Authority.	Resolved



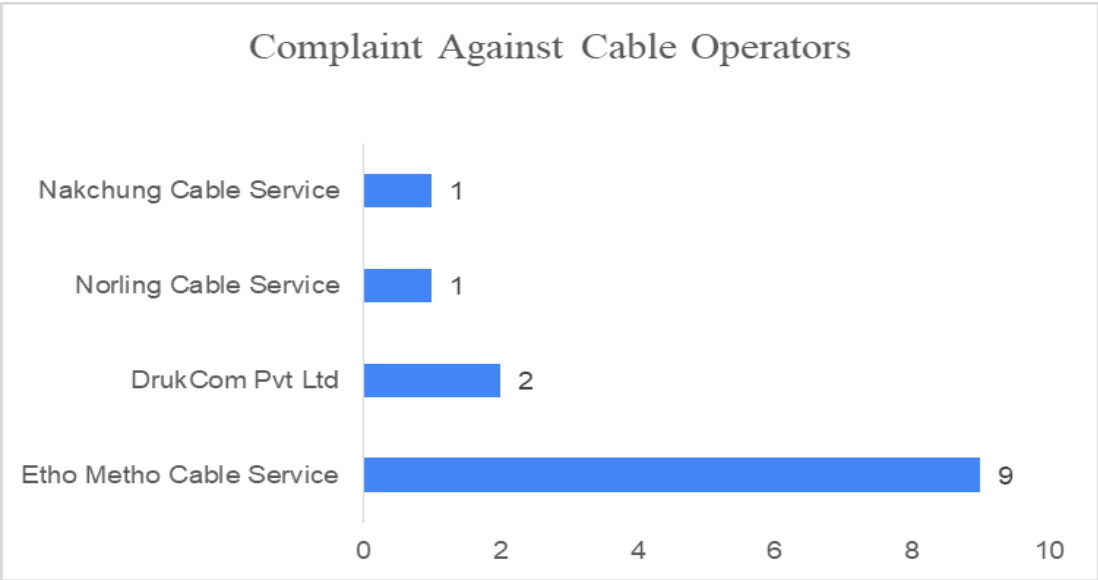
Among all the platforms available, most of the complaints (9) were lodged through phone calls followed by two (2) each through Google form on our website and Facebook Messenger. And each through email and letter.



On the subject of the complaint, more than 87 % (13) were on the cable TV signal and only around 7% (1) was on deactivation of their Set Top Box (STB) and distribution of DTH in cable reached areas. The deactivation of the STBs are mainly due to the non-payment of rental charges on time or disconnection of the services by the service providers. It also came to the notice of the Authority that there are few subscribers who do not pay rental charges on time and get their CATV signal disconnected and lodge complaints with the Authority.



The highest number of complaints received was in the month of February (7) followed by (5) in January and (3) in the month of March, 2022.



As per the data recorded, the highest complaint was against the Etho Metho Cable Service with (9) complaints and (2) for DrukCom Pvt Ltd and (1) each for Norling Cable Service and Nakchung under Thimphu Dzongkhag.

#### 4. Activates carried out by local Cable Operators



*Figure 7. LCOs of Punakha rectifying the cable line after the snowfall (January,2022)*



*Figure 8. LCOs of Tashi Yangtse Doksum maintaining the cable line (26, February, 2022)*



*Figure 9. LCOs doing the cable maintenance (23 March, 2022)*



*Figure 10. LCOs doing the cable maintenance (23 March, 2022)*

## **5. Key Activities carried out by the Authority**

- I. The Authority facilitated the movement e-pass for LCOS in the months of January and February, 2022 especially during the lockdowns.
- II. In the month of January, the Authority prepared and issued SOP for LCOs and MSOs to facilitate the provision of television services with minimum interruptions during the lockdowns.
- III. In the month of February, issuance of new CATV license was opened again so that new LCOs can reach the unreached areas and to provide better service through competitions.
- IV. On March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Authority issued new directives to the LCOs Paro Throm to switch to digital signals within six months from the issuance of the directives.
- V. The online survey was initiated for the cable television services within Thimphu Thromde for internal consumption so that the Authority can take up the necessary regulatory actions.
- VI. Press release was issued explaining the cable TV services and the complaint redressal mechanisms put in place with the Authority.
- VII. Issued Directives on the cost of Set-top-box to local cable operators.

## **6. Findings:**

- I. Although most of the LCOs have already sourced the digital feed from the MSOs, it was found that they still have both the digital and analog signals provided because of the lack of sufficient Set Top Boxes in the stock.
- II. Although there were no major complaints and issues recorded with the Authority regarding the cable television services, most of the complaints lodged were due to the signal outage during the snowfall and that too majority from Thimphu Thromde.
- III. Of the complaints recorded with the Authority for these three months, the majority of the complaints were against Etho Metho Cable Service of Thimphu Thromde.

## **7. Way Forward**

- I. The Authority will issue the directives to discontinue the analog signals to those LCOs and Dzongkhags who have already sourced the digital signals from the MSO in phase wise in order to complete the digitization of cable industry on time.
- II. The Authority will take up the monitoring, verification and inspections on a regular basis to other Dzongkhags.
- III. Compile and publish the quarterly report for the cable television services to facilitate Authority in taking proper regulatory measures for improving the quality of cable television services.