

Quarterly Report on Cable Television Service



འབྲུག་བཅད་དོན་བརྒྱུད་འབྲེལ་དང་བཅད་བརྒྱུད་དབང་འཛིན།

Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority

Royal Government of Bhutan

(April - June, 2022)

Table of Content

1. Background	3
2. Monitoring Visits	4
2.1 Monitoring visit to Geneykha Gewog under Thimphu Dzongkhag	4
2.2. Monitoring visit to Paro Throm	6
2.3. CATV monitoring tour to Chapchaa Gewog, Chhukha	9
2.4 Visit to Kikhorthang under Tsirang Dzongkhag	12
2.5 Visit to Drujeygang, Tashiding and Dagapela of Dagana Dzongkhag.	13
3. Complaints received with and compiled by the Authority	16
4. Key Activities carried out by the Authority	23
5. Findings:	23
6. Way Forward	23

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 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 SMS system which supports the accurate billing and collection system. Now NetCom is working towards interconnecting the LCOs to the systems.

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 (April-June, 2022) to enhance the effective and efficient delivery of cable television service in the country.

2. Monitoring Visits

2.1 Monitoring visit to Genekha Gewog under Thimphu Dzongkhag

The Authority regularly takes the monitoring, inspection, and verification of cable television services visits to the Dzongkhags and Gewogs. In the month of April from 02-03rd, 2022, the team from Market and Competition Division made a field visit to Genekha Gewogs under Thimphu Dzongkhag and Paro Throm. The objective of undertaking a monitoring tour was mainly to monitor the quality of cable television services and check the reach of digital signals to Genekha. The tour was also intended to hear the challenges faced by local cable operators, the service provider (Nakchung Cable Service) and the people of the Genekha Gewog. Following the issuance of directives on transitioning from analog to digital for Paro Throm, the tour was intended to monitor the quality of analog and digital signals, available channels and to see the digitization progress in the areas.

Findings:

- The team from MCD visited the areas around Genekha Gewog and monitored the cable television services provided by Nakchung Cable Service.
- It was observed that there were both the digital and analog signals being provided by the cable operator.
- Those who have Set-Top Boxes, the picture and sound quality were good and there were a total of 58 channels being provided.
- It was observed that the cost of the Set-Top Boxes were charged Nu.1500 only per STB.
- While meeting with the subscribers there, it was found that although the proprietor responds to the complaints positively, the technicians take longer to come to rectify the issues.
- The team were informed by LCO that with the ongoing Gewog road widening project, the cable lines are cutting off timely and the way towards the Gewog is opening only with the timing set by the project.
- It was also learned that the people are misusing the cable wires.
- The team also observed that the cable wires were not laid properly.
- Nakchung Cable Service sourced the signals from Etho Metho Cable Services
- The team also checked the cable television services in the Chizhi Goenpa area under Genekha Gewog.
- There were both analog and digital signals provided and 47 channels were available for analog signals. However, it was observed that for the analog signals, the picture quality was poor and not clear.
- For the analog signals, BBS 1 &2 channels were available except the BBS 3.



Figure 1. Road closing and opening time of Genekha centre road

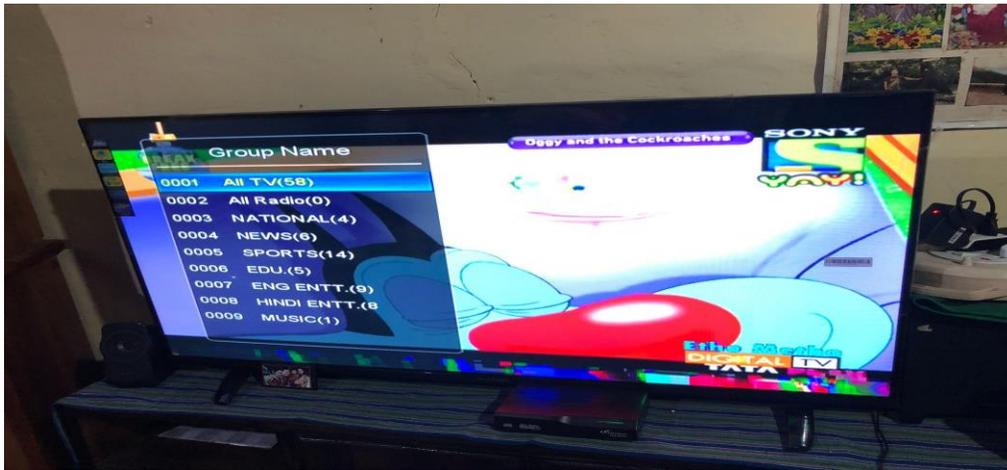


Figure 2. 58 Channels provided by Nakchung Cable Service (Digital Signal)



Figure 3. Reached of cable television services in Genekha Gewog Centre



Figure 4. Picture quality of analog signals (without Set-Top Boxes) at Chizhi Goenpa, Genekha

2.2. Monitoring visit to Paro Throm

Finding:

- The team also visited Paro and monitored the cable television services provided by Sigma and TD Metho Cable Service around Paro Throm and nearby Gewogs.
- It was observed that Sigma Cable Services were providing a total of 58 channels and 56 channels by TD Metho Cable Service through the digital signals.
- There was also an additional local channel for Sigma Cable Service through which they air the recorded dance shows.
- The picture and sound quality were good. However it was learned that LCOs are taking longer to rectify the issues if there is any.
- The cost of the STBs were charged as per the directives of the Authority.

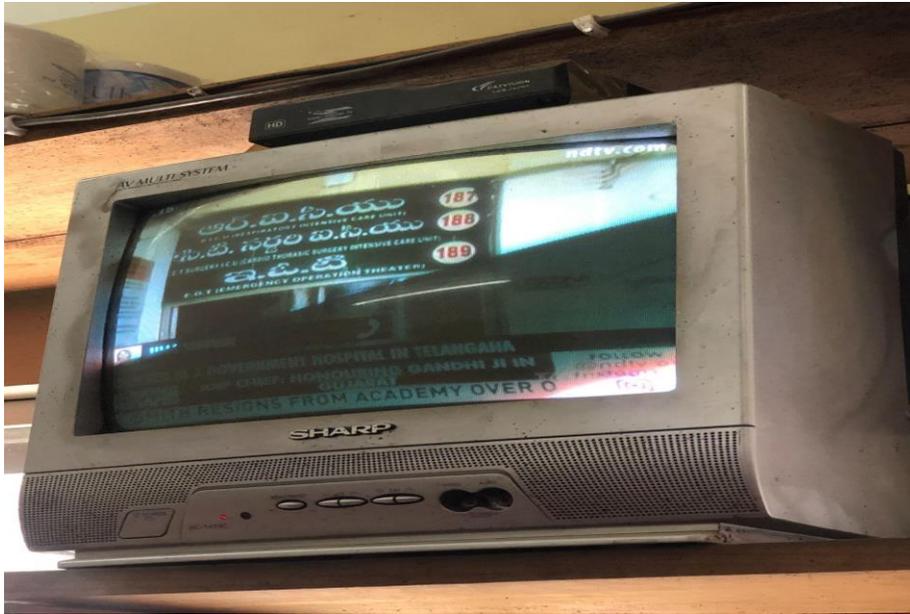


Figure 5. Quality of cable television services at Paro Town



Figure 6. Quality of cable television service (Analog) at Woochu, Lungnyi Gewog

- The team monitored the cable television services provided by Sigma Cable Service around Woochu under Luni Gewog.
- The team observed that there were also analog signals provided by both the cable operators (TD Metho and Sigma Cable Service).
- Although there was no Set-Top Box, it was found that the picture quality was good.

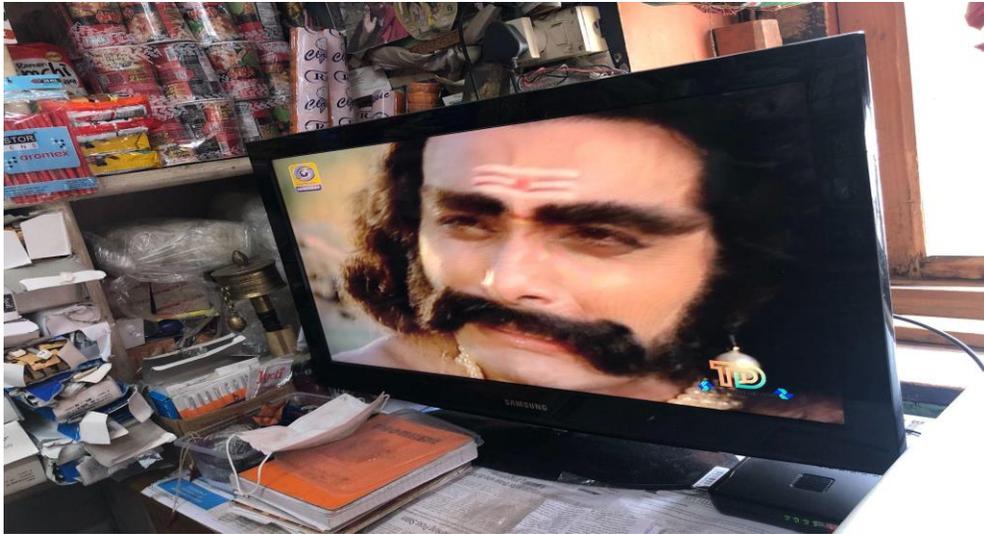


Figure 7. Quality of cable television service at Bondey

- The quality of cable television around the Bondey area was found good.
- There were 56 channels provided by TD Metho Cable Service.
- However, it was found that there was no prompt action during the disconnection of signals.
- The cost of the Set-Top Boxes were found to be charged according to the directives of the Authority.

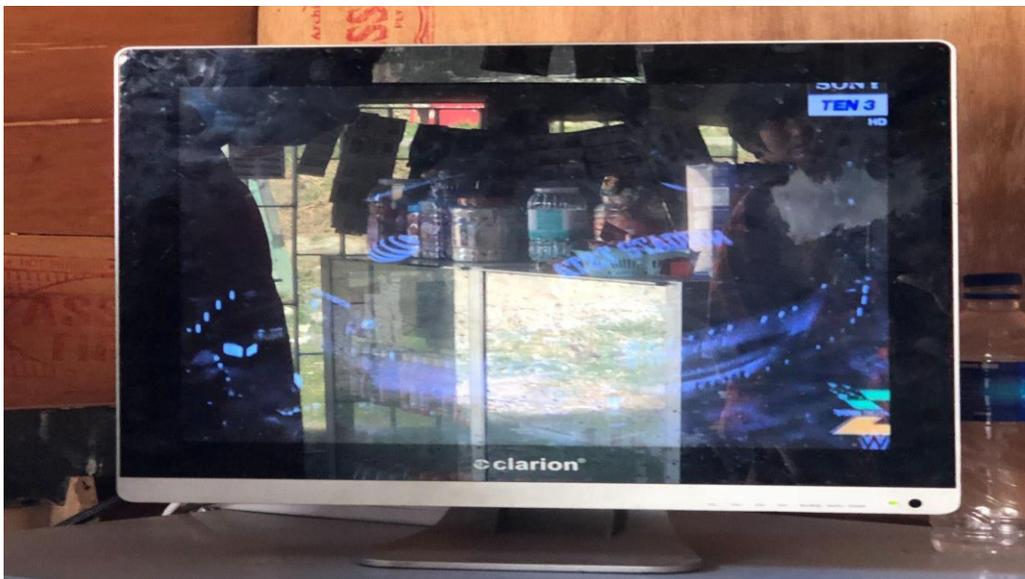


Figure 8. Quality of cable television service at Shaba,Paro

- The quality of cable television services around Shaba were found good in general even without the STBs but in some households, the picture quality was poor.

- Upon inquiring about it, subscribers said they are waiting for LCO to bring additional equipment which they had promised earlier.
- The services were provided by Sigma Cable Service and there were 55 channels.
- The team also monitored the cable television services around the Issuna village and found out that there were both the signals of Sigma as well as the signal of TD Metho cable service.
- The team were informed that most of the villagers have switched to Sigma Cable Service since there was poor service of TD Metho Cable Service.
- The picture quality was good for those who have STBs.
- It was also learned that there was poor customer service of TD Metho Cable Service as per the villagers, the owner is not responding to the complainants positively.

2.3. CATV monitoring tour to Chapchaa Gewog, Chhukha

The objective of undertaking a monitoring tour was mainly to hold a meeting with Gewog as the Gewog left without CATV services for a few months following the licence cancellation of GG Cable Service of Chapchaa Gewog. The officials also intended to see the feasibility of establishing a new CATV as one new applicant approached for the new licence. The team visited on 13th May, 2022.

Report:

- The team met with Gewog Administrative Officer and the proprietor of GG Cable Service at Gewog Office. However, the team couldn't meet with the new applicant as she was out of the station.



Figure 1: Meeting with Gewog Administrative Officer, Capchaa Gewog and GG Cable Service

Cable Television Service continuity in the Gewog

- The chief of MCD started with the explanations of the reason for visiting the Gewog.
- He explained the current state of the licence of GG Cable Service cancelled after failing to renew it despite repeated reminders and time extension granted to him.
- During the suspension of licence for three months, the Authority made MSO (DrukMSO) to provide the service to the public. However, the GG cable didn't appeal and neither came forward for the licence renewal. Therefore the Authority cancelled the licence.
- Subsequently the MSO also cut off the signal for GG Cable Service and currently there is no cable service in the Gewog.
- The team requested the Gewog to inform the people on the state of current situation with the licence, it was informed to the team that the people are already aware of the current situation with the GG Cable Service and waiting for the new applicant to reconnect to the service.





Figure 2: Dish TV are using in the absence of CATV services

New applicant of the licence (Ms. Pema Choden) and feasibility

- The Gewog administration said that there are around a total of 500 households in the Gewog.
- Currently GG Cable Service has connected more than 250 households and provided the cable television services in the Gewog.
- The Gewog said that they have given the recommendation letter to Ms. Pema Choden to provide cable television services in the Gewog as requested by her. They have made internal agreement with her that the Gewog will give only one year to provide the services, after which the extension of the year will be depending on the quality of the services she provides for a given one year.
- The Gewog expresses that people of the Gewog have a high demand for cable services.
- However, it was informed that the scattered villages and natural disasters are impeding the smooth service provision by the LCOs.

Digitization and awareness to the people

- The team requested the Gewog to sensitise on following the people of the Gewog on behalf of the Authority.
- MSO, LCO, modality of the business of them and challenges faced by the LCOs of far flung places.
- Tariff of Nu.300/- only and how this three hundred divided into taxes, MSO fees, licence fees, bandwidth charges, pole sharing charges and other charges the LCOs need to manage from the current tariff of Nu.300.

- Digitization process and digitization target of the Royal Government. The team also asked to inform the people on the digitization target of the government, the need of Set Top Boxes for receiving digital signals and its prices. The team explained the challenges and advantages of digitization.

Use of Dish TV

- The team also asked the Gewog to sensitise on allowing the installation of Ku-band only in the remote areas where there are no cable television services.
- Although the team found that there are many dishes in the Gewog, the team was informed that people prefer the cable television services over the Ku-band dish and they use it only when there are no services. So, they subscribe to CATV as well.
- The explained disadvantages of using dishes such as revenue leakages for the government, unfiltered channels, etc.



Figure 3. Meeting with GG Cable Service

2.4 Visit to Kikhorthang under Tsirang Dzongkhag

On 3rd June, the official from the Tsirang Base Office visited Lower Kikhorthang to monitor the quality of cable television services and check the reach of digital signals to lower Kikhorthang under Tsirang Dzongkhag.

Finding:

- People are still using dish TV and they are not aware of digital cable television service. However, some are willing to switch to digital signals immediately.
- During inquiry with the operator, it was found out that kuenzang cable is not able to provide digital signals to this area because of manpower shortage and non-willingness of people to switch from dish to cable network.



Figure 1. Dish TV at Kikhorthang.

2.5 Visit to Drujeygang, Tashiding and Dagapela of Dagana Dzongkhag.

The official from the Tsirang base office visited Norbu Cable Service, Drujeygang, Dagana and NL Cable Service, Dagapela, Dagana Dzongkhag on 7th June and 11th June, 2022 respectively to check the quality of cable TV service. It was also intended to find the status of digitalization of cable service and reach of Cable Service in nearby Gewogs.

Finding:

- Control room of Norbu Cable Service is located at the heart of Drujeygang town. The operator is still providing analog signals to its customers.
- During inquiry it was found out that the operator was waiting for technical help from MSO (Bhutan NetCom) and soon they will digitise their cable service.

- They have a total number of 70 subscribers as of now. Operators are reminded of documents required for renewal of cable licence, renewal period, proper book keeping and submission of complaint form to the Authority on monthly basis.
- It was found that Tshangkha Gewog of Dagana Dzongkhag does not have a cable facility. The area includes Sunkosh satellite town. Since Norbu Cable Service at Drujeygang is interested in providing service in the area, he was asked to submit an application on area extension to the Authority



Figure 1. Meeting with the proprietor of Norbu Cable Service and his control room.

NL Cable Dagapela

- The official from the Tsirang Base Office visited NL Cable Service Dagapela, Dagana on 11th June, 2022 to check the quality of cable TV service and to find the status of digitalization of cable service.
- Control room of NL Cable Service is located at Dagapela town. The Cable service has been fully digitalized for almost a year now.
- They have a total number of 420 subscribers as of now.
- Operator was reminded of documents required for renewal of cable licence, renewal period, proper book keeping and submission of complaint form to the Authority on monthly basis.



Figure 2. Signboard and Control Room of NL Cable Service Dagapela.

Tashiding Gewog

- It was found that the people of Tashiding Gewog are using KU-Band dishes in the absence of cable television service in the Gewog Centre.
- Since NL Cable Service was showing his interest in extending the services to the people of Tashiding Gewog, he was asked to submit application on area of extension to Authority



Figure 3. Tashiding Gewog Centre using dish TV in the absence of Cable Television Services

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) and social media (Facebook) page (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/1FAIpQLSeFgg1JZRe1DLjyL2kHlxXZ11Xx2y-CyVuqO-S16YIirDE28g/viewform>) through which anyone can lodge the complaints. They can also write an email to 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”.

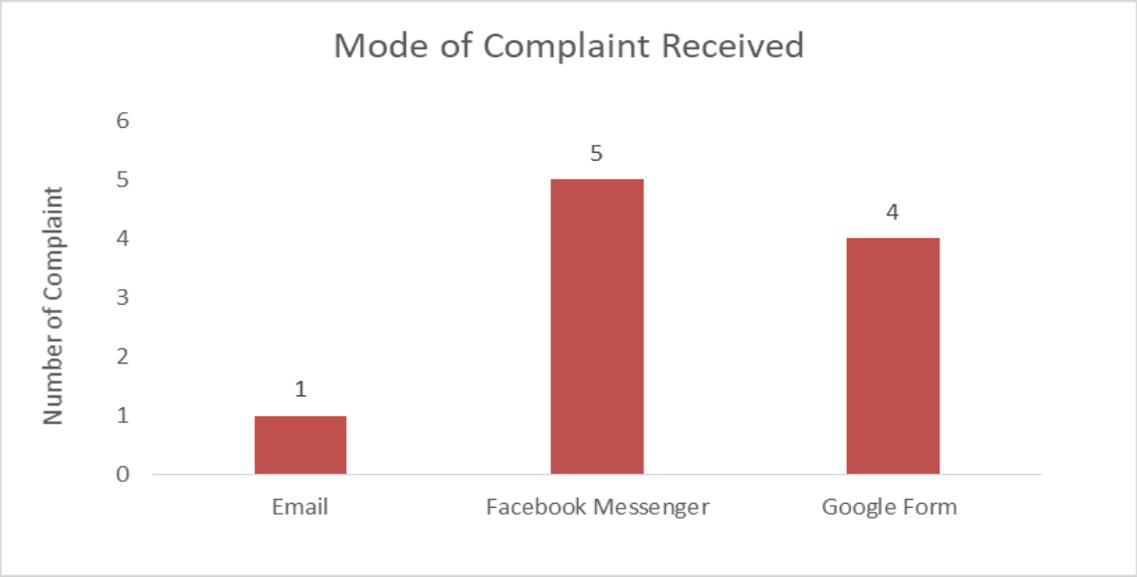
For the last three months (April-June, 2022), the Authority received a total of ten complaints on the cable television services. Of ten complaints, all were from Thimphu Thromde except one from Paro Dzongkhag.

Sl. No	Complainant Received From	Mode of Complaint Received	Against LCO	TAT Achieved	Subject of Compliant	Date of Complaint Received	Action Taken	Remarks
1	Sherpa Nim Karma, Simtokha	Facebook messenger	Etho Metho	1	Poor CATV signal	04/04/2022	The issue was forwarded to concerned LCO and resolved. However for the longer run, the LCO agreed to replace the old fibre within a week.	Resolved
2	Sonam Jamtsho, Changkhorlo	Google form	DrukCom	4	Cable lines across his property	04/04/2022	The complainant lodged the complaint to the Authority through the Google form stating that the cable line was laid out across his property. The monitoring team from MCD visited the site, identified the cable wires of cable operators and directed them to rectify the issues.	Resolved
3	Sonam, Changidaphu	Facebook messenger	DrukCom	0.5	No signal	06/04/2022	The complainant lodged the complaint stating that his cable signal was cut off even after paying the dues just before a few days. After inquiring and checking the system with DrukCom, it was found that he paid the dues for the month of December and left dues for still three more months (Jan-March).	Resolved

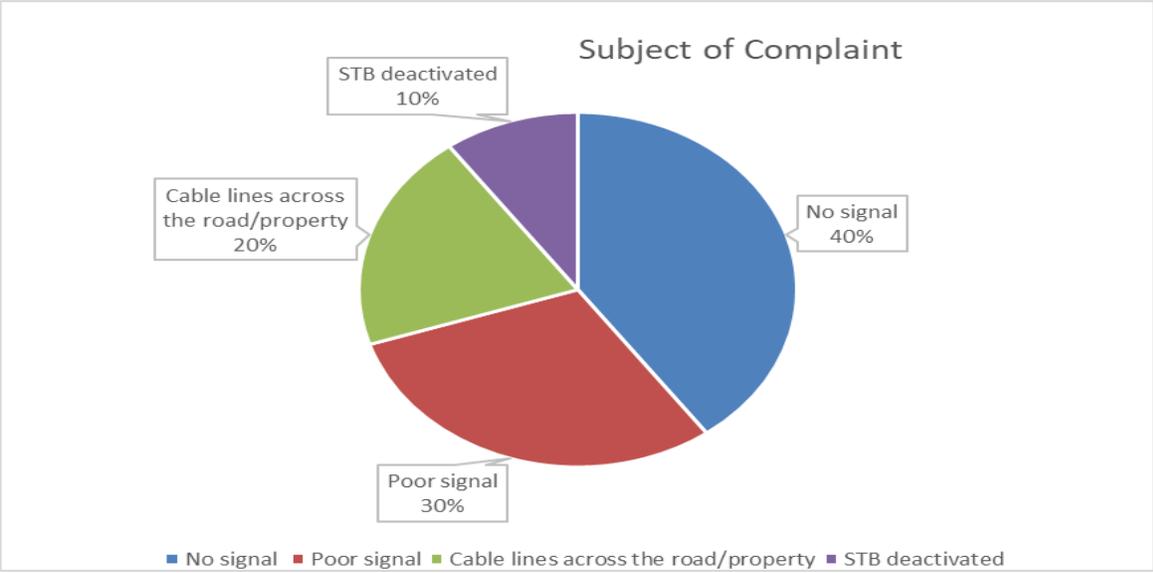
							Therefore, asked the complainant to clear the dues with LCO to avail the service.	
4	Karma Yoezer, karmayoezerni ma@yahoo.com, Depsi	Mail	Norling CS	0.5	Cable lines across the road	18/04/2022	The complainant lodged the complaint through email stating that the cable operator has laid the cable line across the road which is a disturbance for heavy and public transport. The issue was forwarded to concerned LCO and resolved the issue.	Resolved
5	Phub Gyeltshen, Upper Samtenling	Google form	Etho Metho	2	CATV signal gutter in the evening	16/04/2022	The complainant lodged the complaint through Google form. The issue was forwarded to concerned CS and rectified the issue.	Resolved
6	Phuntsho Namgay, Genekha	Google form	Nakchung CS	2	Erratic and poor signal	26/04/2022	The complainant lodged the complaint that they have been facing poor and erratic signals in the Geney Gewog. The official from the Authority also made a site visit and found that since there was on-going Gewog centre road widening, the road is open with timing and faced difficulty for LCO to attend to the complaint timely. However, the Authority	Resolved

							sent directives to rectify the issues as soon as there is complaint and to make a prompt response to the complaints	
7	Nidrup Babesa Gyeltshen,	Facebook messenger	Etho Metho	0.5	No signal	20/05/2022	The complainant lodged the complaint with the Authority through Facebook messenger that there was no CATV signal. The issue was forwarded to the concerned service provider and rectified the issue. The same was validated through phone call to the service provider and the complainant	Resolved
8	Pema Dorji, Topden Changangkha	Google form	Norling CS	0.5	Disconnected the signal	31/05/2022	The complainant lodged the complaint that his CATV signal was disconnected even before the month end. However, it was found that the issue was already resolved between the service provider and complainant.	Resolved
9	Sonam Gidadom Lhamo,	Facebook messenger	Nakchung CS	1	No signal	03/06/2022	The complainant lodged a complaint with the Authority through Facebook messenger that the service provider has refused to come and check his CATV line even after repeated requests. However, it was found that the issue was an internal issue with non-payment of the	Resolved

							bills. The Authority directed the concerned service provider to resolve the issue and resolved it accordingly	
10	Phuntshok Deki,Paro Khankhu	Facebook messenger	TD Metho CS	0.5	No signal	05/06/2022	The complainant lodged a complaint that there was no signal and the service provider took one whole day to rectify the issue. The Authority directed the concerned LCO to immediately rectify the issue and the LCO resolved the issue on the same day. The follow up on done with the complainant	Resolved

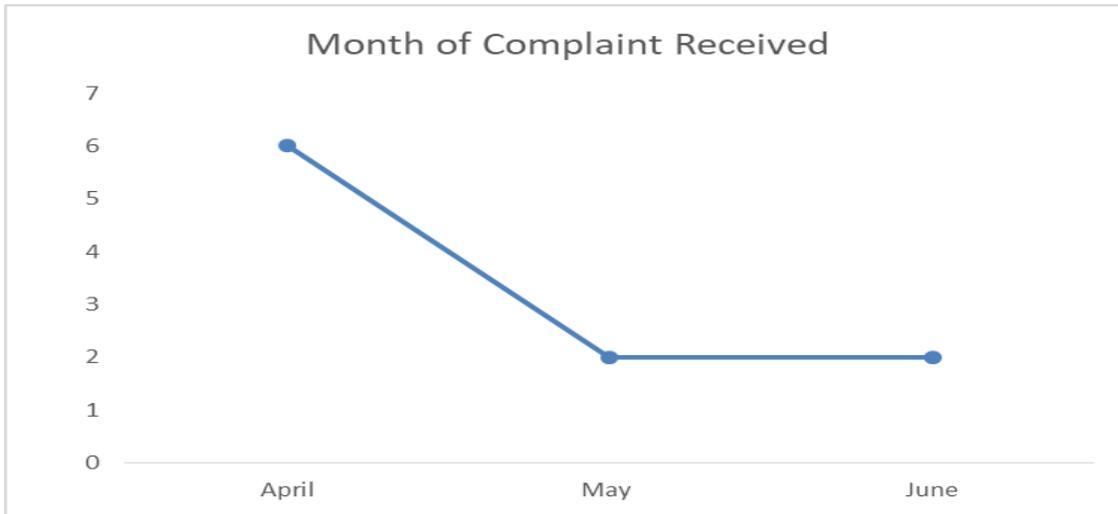


Among all the platforms available, most of the complaints (5) were lodged on Facebook Messenger followed by four (4) through Google form and 1(one) through letter.

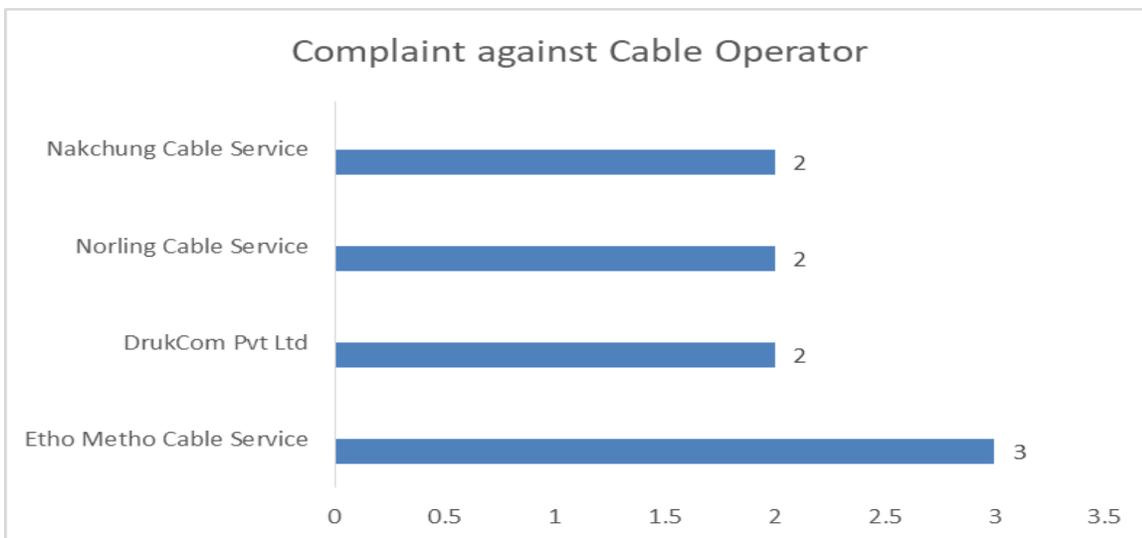


On the subject of the complaint, 40 % (4) were on no cable TV signal and 30 % (3) on poor and erratic signals. There were 20 % (2) complaints on cable lines laid across the road/their property followed by 10 % (1) on deactivation of their Set Top Box (STB). The deactivation of the STBs are mainly due 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 April (6) followed by (2) each in the month of May and June, 2022.



As per the data recorded, the highest complaint was against the Etho Metho Cable Service with (3) complaints and (2) each for DrukCom Pvt Ltd, Norling Cable Service and Nakchung Cable Service under Thimphu Dzongkhag. Out of 10 complaints received, all were from Thimphu Thromde/Dzongkhag except one from Paro (TD Metho Cable Service).

4. Key Activities carried out by the Authority

- I. The Authority issued a directive to one of the cable operators (Namsel Norbu Cable Service) of Lhuentse Dzongkhag to restore and improve the cable television services in Komo Gewog vide letter no. BICMA-MCD/CATV/2022/1414 dated 22nd April, 2022.
- II. In the month of May, the Authority also issued directives to all the cable operators in the country on migration to full digital signal and removal of the local dishes with the list of LCOs who have already connected to the MSO's signal and been with it for more than six months.
- III. The Authority also issued in-principle approval to set up the cable television services for two applicants (Ms. Pema Choden in Chapcha Gewog and Mr. Mon Bdr Tamang under Samdrup Choling Gewog).
- IV. For the smooth and on time renewal of CATV and MSO license in the month of July, 2022, the Authority called to each and every LCOs, reminding for the renewal as well as on the digitization. The Authority also issued reminder letters in both the language vide letter no. BICMA-MCD/CATV/2022/1732 dated 8th June, 2022.

5. Findings:

- I. Although most of the LCOs have registered their Set Top Boxes with MSO, the Authority found that they have not registered the exhaustive list of STBs with their MSOs.
- II. It was also found that some of them still maintained both the analog and digital signals and the Authority has called each of them and reminded them of the switchover time.
- III. Although there were no major complaints and issues recorded with the Authority regarding the cable television services, most of the complaints lodged were from Thimphu Thromde.
- IV. 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.

6. Way Forward

- I. The Authority will take up the monitoring, verification and inspections on a regular basis to other Dzongkhags.
- II. The complaints lodged with the Authority will properly record and resolve it.
- 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.