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Report on Cable Television Service (CATV)

1. Monitoring Visits

The Authority regularly takes the monitoring, inspection, and verification of cable television services visits to the Dzongkhags and Gewogs. In this quarter, the team from the InfoComm and Infrastructure Division along with the Spectrum and Technology division of the Authority made a field visit to Samtse and Zhemgang from 20th March- 8th April, 2023 to monitor the CATV services. In addition, the monitoring work was also carried out in Pema Gatshel and Samdrup Jongkhar dzongkhag from 22nd April - 7th May, 2023.

The objective of undertaking a monitoring tour was mainly to monitor the control room of the local cable operator and to check if they have complied the sent directives vide letter no. BICMA-MCD/CATV/2022/1628 dated 23rd May, 2022 on migration to full digital signal and removal of the local dishes. The main purpose of the tour was to meet with the LCOs and discuss the digitization status in the Dzongkhags and to create awareness on digitization and Ku-band dishes.

During the entire tour, the team met with the LCOs including their technical team to discuss the status of the digitization of the CATV. The discussion mainly focused on advocating policy, rules and regulation, technical issues, and wayforward to transition from analog to digital by the end of 2022.

1.1 Monitoring Visit to Samtse Dzongkhag

1. *Namkhai Cable Service, Denchukha, Samtse.*



Figure 1. Control Room and service of Namkhai Cable Service in Denchukha, Samtse

- Upon visiting the Control room of Namkhai Cable Service located at Denchukha, it was found that the analog station was removed and the signal was provided in fully digital.
- The cable service covered Denchukha, Dorokha and Sengteng with around 20 customers at Denchukha, 70 plus customers in Dorokha and 30 plus customers in Sengteng.
- The backup dish for BBS was found to be in use while no backup battery incase of power failure was found.
- It was also observed that the cable service has enough set top boxes in stock. However, customers are reluctant to use set top boxes due to the preferences to use dish TV.
- The team also briefed on the need of SLA and its importance.

2. *RG Cable Service in Gomtu*



Figure 2. Control Room and service of RG Cable Service in Gomtu, Samtse

- The team visited the RG cable service control room located in Gomtu. It was found that the analog station was removed and the signal was provided in fully digital from Netcom.
- Total customer with RG cable service is 392.
- It has been observed that while the analog station was removed, there were dishes still installed which had been asked to be removed by the team.
- No back up battery and back up dishes were in place.
- The service level agreement (SLA) was not found and the team briefed on the need of SLA.

3. Gurung Cable Service, Tendru, Samtse.



Figure 3. Control Room and service of Gurung Cable Service in Tendru, Samtse

- Similarly, the team visited Gurung Cable Service that caters services in Samtse Tendu.
- The control room was located in Tendu and was fully digital with all the dishes removed.
- There are around 437 active subscribers with the Gurung Cable service. However, it has been shared to the team that the issue of Ku band dishes is hampering his service delivery.
- No backup battery and backup dishes were found. Set top boxes were limited and not in stock.

4. KPC cable service- Tading, Samtse.



Figure 4. Control Room and service of KPC Cable Service in Tading, Samtse.

- While visiting the control room of KPC Cable Service located at Tading geog, it was found that the analog station was removed and the signal was provided in fully digital. It was informed that the KPC cable service started as a fully digital operator and has been operating for not even a year with only 71 customers.
- The signal was brought from Netcom. 40 more set top boxes were found in stock.
- Both battery back up and dish back up were found to be in use.

5. Bishnu Cable Service, Tashicholing, Samtse.



Figure 5. Control Room and service of Bishnu Cable Service in Tashicholing, Samtse.

- While visiting the control room of Bishnu Cable Service located in Tashicholing geog, it was found that the analog station was removed and the signal was provided in fully digital.
- The cable service is providing service to around 300 plus customers.
- While the power backup was found in use, backup dishes for BBS were not found.
- The team briefed on the requirement to maintain SLA and its importance.
- It was also informed that set top boxes were directly purchased from India and currently there were no set top boxes in stock.

6. SKD cable service, Samtse town.



Figure 6. Control Room and service of SKD Cable Service in Samtse town.

- The team visited the SKD cable service control room located in Samtse town covering the Town and Tashicholing area. It was found that the analog station was removed and the signal was provided in fully digital from Netcom.
- Total customer with SKD cable service is 1500.
- It has been observed that while the analog station was removed, there were dishes still installed which had been asked to be removed by the team.
- Both back up battery and back up dishes were found to be in use.
- The service level agreement (SLA) was not found and the team briefed on the need of SLA.

1.2 Monitoring Visit to Zhemgang Dzongkhag

1. Dawa Cable Service, Tingtibi, Zhemgang



Figure 7. Control Room and service of Dawa Cable Service in Tingtibi, Zhemgang.

- Similarly, the team visited Dawa Cable Service that caters services in Tingtibi, Zhemgang.
- The control room was located in Tingtibi town and was fully digital with all the dishes removed.
- Currently, the total customers with Dawa Cable services is 60.
- The owner is the only technician working for the cable connectivity and upon inquiry it was informed that since he has less customers at present, the customers complaints are also less. However, he is positive about increasing customers and employing few technicians in future.
- The backup dishes for both BBS and Power backup are found in place.
- The team reminded the owner about the importance of SLA and its immediate implementation.

2. DD Cable, Buli, Zhemgang



Figure 8. Control Room and service of DD Cable Service in Buli, Zhemgang.

- The team also visited the DD cable service control room located in Buli, Zhemgang and it was found that the analog station was not removed.
- Upon inquiry, the owner told the team that due to lack of Bhutan Telecom Tower, the digitization work could not be carried out although he has written several letters to relevant Authorities. However, it is expected that a tower is soon going to be erected in the place and hence to get digitised as soon as possible.
- Further, the owner shared his concerns that people are illegally distributing ku band dishes and thus he has only 28 customers as of now.

3. DWT Cable Service, Panbang, Zhemgang



Figure 9. Control Room and service of DWT Cable Service in Pangbang, Zhemgang.

- While visiting the control room of DWT Cable Service located in Sonamthang, Panbang, it was found that the analog station was removed and the signal was provided in fully digital.
- The cable service is providing service to around 150 plus customers with signals from Netcom.
- Back up dishes for both BBS and Power backup were found to be in use.
- SLA implementation was still under process which however is expected to be completed soon.

4. Kezang Cable Service, Zhemgang town



Figure 10. Control Room and service of Kezang Cable Service in Zhemgang town.

- Upon visiting the Control room of Kezang Cable Service located at Zhemgang town, it was found that the analog station was removed and the signal was provided in fully digital.
- The total customers registered was around 250 plus.
- The backup dish for BBS was not found to be in use while the backup battery incase of power failure was found to be in use.
- He currently has 4 staff working under him.
- It has been shared that the lightning has caused major damage to equipment like QAM.
- SLA implementation is under process and yet to be completed soon.

1.3 Monitoring Visit to Pema Gatshel Dzongkhag

1. Dawa Cable Service, Nganglam, Pemagatshel.



Figure 11. Control Room and service of Dawa Cable Service in Nganglam, Pema Gatshel.

- The team visited Nima cable's control room located in Nganglam and it was found that the analog station was removed and signal was provided in fully digital with signal from Druk MSO.
- The cable service is providing service to around 600 plus customers.
- Currently, there are three staff members with Dawa CS.
- All the dishes have been removed and also it was observed that backup dishes for BBS channels are not in place. Similarly, backup power in case of power failure is also not installed.
- No issue of set top boxes shortage where shared.
- The service level agreement (SLA) was also maintained with every customer.

2. *Nima Cable Service, Nganglam, Pemagatshel*



Figure 12. Control Room and service of Nima Cable Service in Nganglam, Pema Gatshel.

- Upon visiting the Control room of Nima Cable Service located at Nganglam, it was found that the analog station was removed and the signal was provided in fully digital with signal Druk MSO.
- The cable service covered around 243 customers at present.
- Currently the Proprietor has four staff working with him.
- The backup dish for BBS was found to be in use but no backup battery incase of power failure was found.
- It was also observed that the cable service has enough set top boxes in stock.
- SLA is maintained.

3. Lekthong Cable Service, Yurung, Pema Gatshel.



Figure 13. Control Room and service of Lekthong Cable Service in Yurung, Pema Gatshel.

- The team also visited the Lekthong cable service control room located in Yurung, Pemagatshel and it was found that the analog station was not removed.
- Upon inquiry, the owner told the team that due to the lack of P2P bandwidth exchange points, the digitization works could not be completed and also the concern about this new entry to business with limited knowledge was shared with the team.
- It was also shared that with a maximum empty household and economically disadvantaged population, customers would not be able to afford set top boxes.
- Currently the cable service has only 20 customers.

4. Funso Cable Service, Pema Gatshel



Figure 14. Control Room and service of Funso Cable Service in Pema Gatshel town.

- Similarly, the team visited Funso Cable Service that caters services in Pemagatshel.

- The control room was located in town and was fully digital. However, dishes were not removed which the owner agreed to remove immediately.
- There are around 170 active subscribers with the Funso Cable service and his daughter is the only helper right now.
- Both backup battery and backup dishes were found in place. Set top boxes were also in stock.
- With few customers with limited knowledge, the billing is done both manually and in the system.
- SLA is implemented.

1.4 Monitoring Visit to Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag

1. Tsogni Phendey Cable Service

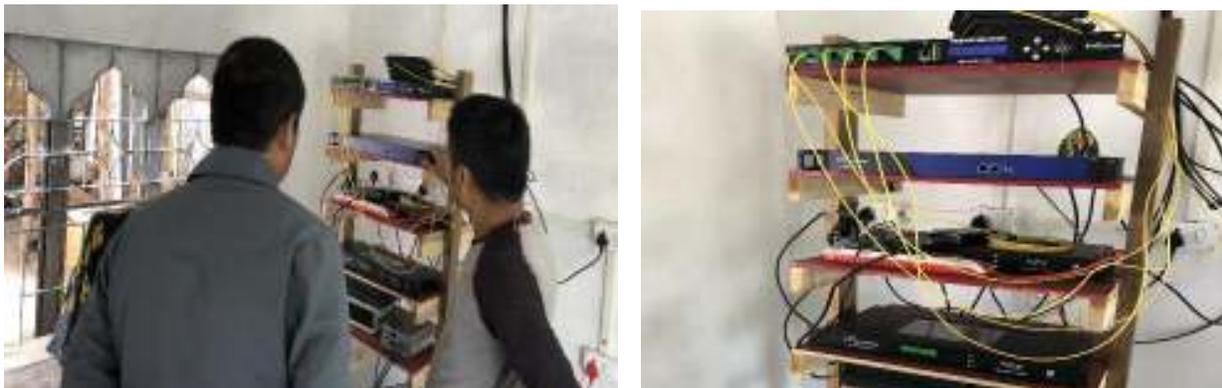


Figure 15. Control Room and service of Tsogni Phendey Cable Service, Phuntshothang, Samdrup Jongkhar.

- Likewise, the team visited the control room of Tsogni Phendey Cable service located at Phuntshothang, Samdrup Jongkhar.
- The Cable provides service to 300 plus customers with 3 staff employed for this purpose.
- The cable service is fully digitised with all the dishes and analog station removed.
- No back up dishes for BBS were found and also, no backup power was installed.
- SLA implementation is yet to be completed.
- The owner shared his concern that with less number of customers and the business location being in remote areas, the charges such as pole sharing payment made to BPC per pole is a huge burden and the Authority needs to work into this. Since remote areas are mostly scattered and so use of poles for few numbers of customers is causing maximum loss.

2. Anjan and Bro Cable Service



Figure 16. Control Room and service of Anjan and Bro Cable Service, Phuntshothang, Samdrup Jongkhar.

- Upon visiting the control room of Anjan and Bro Cable service located in Phuntshothang, the team noticed that the signal was provided in fully digital with signal Druk MSO. However, analog stations were not removed and the team instructed the owner to remove it.
- Currently, there are 200 plus customers availing the service
- Backup dishes were in place and also had a 4 hours lasting power back up.
- SLA is still under the process of implementation.
- The cable service has 3 staff employed for this purpose.

3. Peacock Cable Service, Pemathang.



Figure 17. Control Room and service of Peacock Cable Service, Pemathang, Samdrup Jongkhar.

- Similarly, the team visited the control room of Peacock cable service located in Pemathang, Samdrup Jongkhar and it was found that the signal was provided in fully digital with signal Netcom Bhutan.
- There are around 127 customers with 2 staff employed for this purpose.
- Neither backup power nor back up dishes were in place.
- SLA is still under the process of implementation.
- Owner shared his concerns of people using dish TV and not willing to buy set top boxes.

4. Gomdar Cable Service, Gomdar



Figure 18. Control Room and service of Gomdar Cable Service, Gomdar, Samdrup Jongkhar.

- The team also visited the Gomdar cable service control room located in Gomdar, Samdrup Jongkhar and it was found that the analog station was not removed.
- Upon inquiry, the owner told the team that due to the lack of P2P bandwidth exchange points, the digitization works could not be completed
- The cable service has currently 60 plus customers

5. Vajra Cable Service, Orong



Figure 19. Control Room and service of Vajra Cable Service, Phuntshothang, Samdrup Jongkhar.

- The team also visited the Vajra cable service control room located in Orong, Samdrup Jongkhar and it was found that the analog station was not removed.
- The owner told the team that due to the lack of P2P bandwidth exchange points, the digitization works could not be completed
- The cable service has approximately 100 customers at present.
- The owner shared his concern that due to lightning, TV gets destroyed and people cannot afford to repair or replace TV which reduces the number of customers.

6. Phakpa Cable Service, Samdrup Jongkhar



Figure 20. Control Room and service of Phakpa Cable Service, Samdrup Jongkhar town,

- While visiting the Control room of Phakpa Cable Service located at Samdrup Jongkhar town, it was found that the analog station was removed and the signal was provided in fully digital from Netcom.
- The cable service has around 600 customers at present with 6 staffs employed for this purpose
- The backup dish for BBS was not in place. However, they have backup power that lasts for around 12 hours.
- The SLA was found in record.

7. SD Eastern Cable Service, Samdrup Jongkhar



Figure 21. Control Room and service of SD Eastern Cable Service, Samdrup Jongkhar town.

- Similarly the team visited SD Eastern Control room located at Samdrup Jongkhar town, it was found that the analog station was removed and the signal was provided in fully digital from Netcom.
- The cable service caters to 760 customers with 4 staff employed for this purpose.
- Back up dish was not found in use. However, pack power that lasts for 24 hours was found in place.
- SLA was found in record
- The Manager shared with the team that because they receive secure TV signal from Netcom which is then converted to ensure TV signal before distributing to the customers, it has caused the issue of integration.
- Netcom has asked SD eastern CS to send their server to Thimphu to which SD Eastern said it is not possible since the server is shared by all the 5 companies owned by the same Owner.
- Therefore, Netcom Bhutan has agreed to buy a new server as proposed by SD Eastern and thus it is expected that the integration issue might then be resolved.

8. Monitored Tashi Wangmo Cable Service



Figure 22. Control Room and service of Tashi Wangmo Cable Service, Jomotsangkha, Samdrup Jongkhar.

- The team also visited Control room of Tashi Wangmo cable service located at Jomotsangkha, Samdrup Jongkhar and it was found that the analog station was removed and the signal was provided in fully digital from Netcom.
- The cable service has approximately 255 customers with 1 staff employed for this purpose.
- Both backup power and backup dishes were not found to be in use.
- SLA was also not found in record and thus the team instructed on the need of SLA.

1.5 . Awareness program on the Digitization of CATV and other ICT related services of the Authority

For this quarter, the division along with the other two divisions of the Authority also conducted awareness in thirteen Dzongkhags namely Dagana, Tsirang, Sarpang, Zhemgang, Pema Gatshel, Samdrup Jongkhar, Chhukha, Samtse, Haa, Paro, Gasa, Punakha and Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhags on Digitization of Cable Services and other ICT related services of the Authority. The Cable Television networks in the country have undergone digitization with services from multi service operators (MSO). In this regard, a team from Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority (the Authority) has carried out the awareness program on digitization of cable services and other ICT related services to the relevant stakeholders.

Some of the major sensitization and awareness programs were on following topic and issues;

- Importance of digitization,

- Rules and regulations on Cable Television services,
- Online Licensing System (OLS) of the Authority,
- Rural Television services permit for Ku band installation,
- Cellular Mobile Quality of Services,
- Electromagnetic Field Radiation from Mobile towers in Bhutan,
- Radio Apparatus Land Mobile Handsets

The program was mainly conducted with the following objectives;

- To advocate the relevant stakeholders on digitization of Cable television Services and to seek their support towards the Government's initiative,
- To make aware the public on the complaint redressal platform and system of BICMA
- To extend the regulatory roles of BICMA through ICTO and other relevant agencies.

2. 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/1FAIpQLSeFgg1JZRe1DLlyL2kHlxXZ11Xx2y-CyVuqO-S16YIlrDE28g/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 resolved and documented. 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”.

3. Key Activities carried out by the Authority

- I. For this quarter (April- June,2023), the Authority conducted an awareness program on digitization of cable television services and on other services of BICMA for thirteen dzongkhags namely Dagana, Tsirang, Sarpang, Zhemgang, Pema Gatshel, Samdrup Jongkhar, Chhukha, Samtse, Haa, Paro, Gasa, Punakha and Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhags
- II. The Division also monitored the quality of cable television services and its digitization status in the Samtse, Zhemgang, Pema Gatshel and Samdrup Jongkhar dzongkhags.
- III. As of April 2023, 82 out of 89 LCOs in the country have connected and sourced the digital feed from the MSOs.

4. Findings:

- I. During the monitoring visits, the team observed that with digital signals from the MSO, the sound and picture quality are good. The team was also informed that with digital signals, the complaints that LCO gets are drastically reduced.
- II. The majority of the cable operators shared to the monitoring team about the challenges they face due to the dish TV and Ku band user in the cable reached areas. Therefore, the Authority is recommended to constantly monitor the installation of Ku band and the dishes in the cable reached areas.

5. Way Forward

- I. The complaints lodged with the Authority will be properly recorded and resolved.
- II. Since few LCOs were directed to maintain SLA, complaint records and SMS system, the follow up and compliance monitoring would be necessary in a few months later.
- 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.