

Quarterly Report on Cable Television Service



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Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority

Royal Government of Bhutan

(April - June, 2024)

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1. Monitoring Visit

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 made a field visit to Tsirang, Dagana, and Wangdue Phodrang for follow-up and re-verification of CATV layout and CATV quality service from 22nd – 27th April, 2024. Likewise, the team took a monitoring tour to Samtse and Phuentsholing from 13th- 18th May, 2024 and Gasa and Punakha, to follow-up on the verification of CATV and ISP layout as per the report from cable operators that the work has been completed.

The team also visited Tsirang Dzongkhag on 5th – June to verify the use of DTH cable services in areas having accessibility to Local Cable Operators services. Lastly, the team went on a monitoring and verification tour to Dogar and Naja gewog of Paro Dzongkhag on 21st – 22nd June to verify the shutdown of analog stations under Dogar cable services and Zhenphen Lhendrup Digital cable services.

The objective of undertaking a monitoring tour was mainly to monitor the control room of the local cable operator and to check the cable layout and see if they have complied with the sent directives of the Authority.

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 regulations, technical issues, and way forward to providing the best services to the customers.

1.1 Monitoring and re-verification of Cable layout and use of DTH services in Tsirang Dzongkhag, Damphu Peripheral Areas.



Figure 1: DTH usage in Drubchugang Chiwog and Tsholingkhar Gewog

- The team visited to verify the use of DTH cable services in the areas having accessibility to Local Cable Operators services. The team visited the nearby places of Damphu town like Drubchung Chewog and Tsholingkhar Gewog along with the Tshogpa and technician of Kuenzang Cable Service.

After visiting few areas of Drubchung Chiwog and Tsholingkhar Gewog following findings were made:

- Earlier the citizens there used cable service (Analog) offered by the cable operators. But when the digitalization of Television started the services were stopped.
- During the 2018 World Cup due to slow services to the customers by Cable operators, the localities have been using the DTH services to date.
- It was also found that the fiber layout of those areas were delayed.
- The cost for the one-time Installation of Cable services ranges from Nu.2500 to Nu.5050 due to the location of user ends.
- During the conversation with the people of the communities, it was found that they were willing to use the cable services offered by the LCO's however they were concerned with the quality of service of channels.
- The advantages of using Cable Services provided by LCO over the use of DTH service were mentioned in the conversation.



(After)

(Before)

Figure 2: ADSS fiber cable of GovTech in Damphu Town, Tsirang is fixed.

- Govtech have removed the ADSS fiber cable and increased the height of the cable as directed by the Authority.



(After)

(Before)

Figure 3: Multiple cable road cross over of BTL and Kuenzang Cable in Damphu Town, Tsirang is fixed.

- Multiple cable road cross over of BTL and Kuenzang Cable in Damphu Town, Tsirang is fixed. They have removed and maintained proper cable layout adhering to the directive as shown in Figure 3.



(After)

(Before)

Figure 4: improved low cable road cross over of Kuenzang cable in Damphu Town

- Low cable road cross over of Kuenzang cable in Damphu Town has been fixed. They have removed the previous cable made use of poles as shown in Figure 4.

1.2 Monitoring and re-verification of Cable layout in Dagapela and Dagana Peripheral Areas.



Figure 5: Norbu Cable Service control room.

- Norbu cable is still using analog system and has not transitioned to digital system as shown in Figure 5.



Figure 6: Road cross over in the peripheral area of Dagapela town by BTL and NL Cable is fixed.

- BTL and NL cable service have fixed the road cross over in the peripheral area of Dagapela in which they have removed the previous cables and made use of poles as shown in Figure 6.



(After)

(Before)

Figure 7: Non-usage of Poles for cable road crossover despite poles available for sharing by BTL and T&T cable near Dagana Dzong Area is fixed.

- Non-usage of Poles for cable road crossover despite poles available for sharing by BTL and T&T cable near Dagana Dzong Area is fixed. BTL have removed their cable and made use of poles while T&T have removed the previous pole and increased the height of the pole as shown in Figure 7.

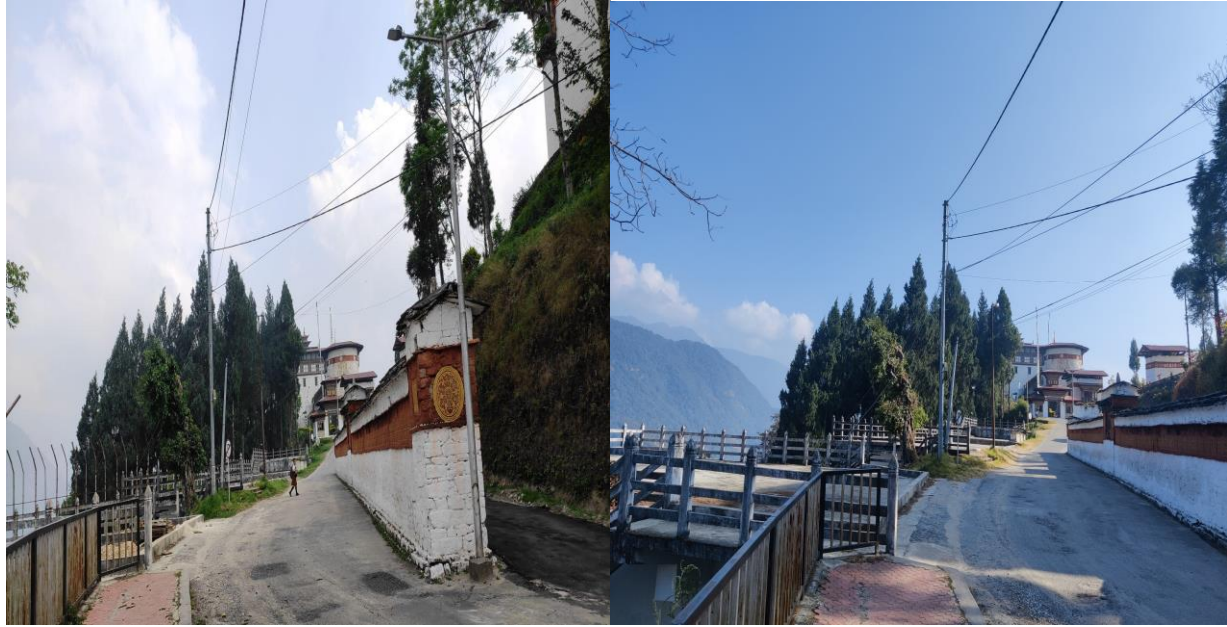


(After)

(Before)

Figure 8: Low hanging cross over cable of T&T cable in Dagana Town is fixed.

- T&T cable has fixed the low hanging cross over cable in the town area as shown in Figure 8.



(After)

(Before)

Figure 9: Low hanging cables of T&T cable near Dagana Dzong area have been fixed.

- T&T cable service has fixed the low hanging cables near the Dzong area as shown in Figure 9.

1.3 Monitoring and re-verification of Cable Layout in Bajo Town, Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhag



(After)

(Before)

Figure 10: Cable layout in Bajo Town has been fixed.

Observation/ Recommendations

- All the issues pertaining to CATV cable layout in Wangdue, Tsirang, Dagapala and Dangana Peripheral areas have been fixed according to the Directive of Authority.
- It has been discovered that Norbu Cable still operates on an analog system and has not yet fully transitioned to digital. Our team has briefed on the advantages of digital signals and how this switch could benefit both the operator and subscribers. However, it has come to our attention that the owner's spouse lacks the knowledge to manage the cable service after the owner expired and is considering canceling the license. Due to an existing loan, canceling the license is not feasible. As a solution, the spouse intends to sell the license to individuals interested in operating a cable service.

1.4 Monitoring visit at Gasa ,Soechu

In addition the team also visited Gasa Soechu Cable Service control room located in Gasa town to check the quality of cable service and verify on the set top boxes price charged to customers as per the complaint received by the Authority on high charges levied.



Figure 11: Control room of Gasa Soechu Cable Service

- The proprietor was not available at the time of inspection. However, the team met with Proprietor's wife and it was informed that they never collected high prices from customers for set top boxes.

Thus, the team did a random inspection and met with few customers in the town areas.



Figure 12: Set Top boxes with customers

- All the customers that the team met said they paid Nu.3500 for set top boxes.
- According to the directive from the Authority, the cable operators can charge a maximum of Nu.2000 only per set top box which includes cost of STB, installation and transportation costs.
- Gasa Soechu Cable service charged Nu.3500 per STB which is against the directive of the Authority.
- Therefore, the team reminded the cable operator about the directive and applicable penalties and laws if repeated.

1.5 Monitoring visit at Punakha

The team also visited Punakha to reverify on the CATV layout with Bhutan Telecom Limited.



Figure 13: BTL cable layout

- BTL Manager informed the team that duct handing taking is under way and thus layout can only be fixed after handing taking of duct.
- The team informed the office to report to the Authority once handing taking of duct is done and layouts have been cleared.

1.6 Monitoring and reverification of cable layout in Phuentsholing town and peripheral areas

- Upon inspection with the cable operators, it has been found that neither of the ISPs has layout in that area and Tshela Cable agreed that a single line layout is theirs.
- However, cable operator's and ISPs said the layout is BTL's.



Figure 14: improper cable road crossover and improper cable layout of BTL and Tshela Cable Service below Zangdopelri road crossover

- Upon the Authority's directive on the improper Cable Layout at Dekilam, Phuentsholing town, the cable operator has made necessary changes.

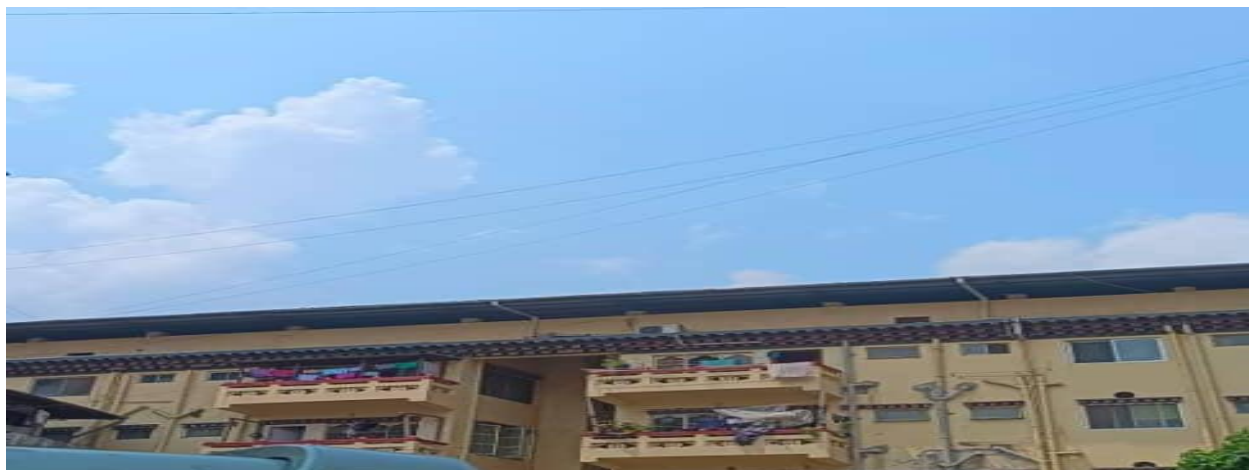


Figure 15: Proper cable layout at Dekilam, Phuentsholing town.

- Moreover, the cable layout issue of low hanging stray cable (RJ-6) of cable operators near CableSat Office has also been changed after the Authority's Directive.



Figure 16: Proper layout of stray cable(RJ-6) near CableSat Office

1.7 Monitoring and re-verification of cable layout in Samtse town and peripheral areas



Figure 17: Criss crossing of cable layout of BTL and SKD cable in back of buildings in Samste Town has been rectified.

- After visiting all the identified sites of SKD cable services with improper layout in Samtse town, it was observed that all the changes had been made as per the requirement of the Authority.

Observation and recommendations

- While the majority of issues pertaining to CATV cable layout in Phuentsholing town and Samtse town have been fixed, in one of the areas near Zangto Pelri (Phuentsholing) BTL and Tshela cable service has not made the changes.
- Write letter to BTL Phuentsholing office and Tshela Cable reminding them to make changes.
- Discuss with Management on applicable fines and penalties on the failure to make changes to cable layout despite reminders from Authority after first inspection.

1.8 Monitoring visit at Paro

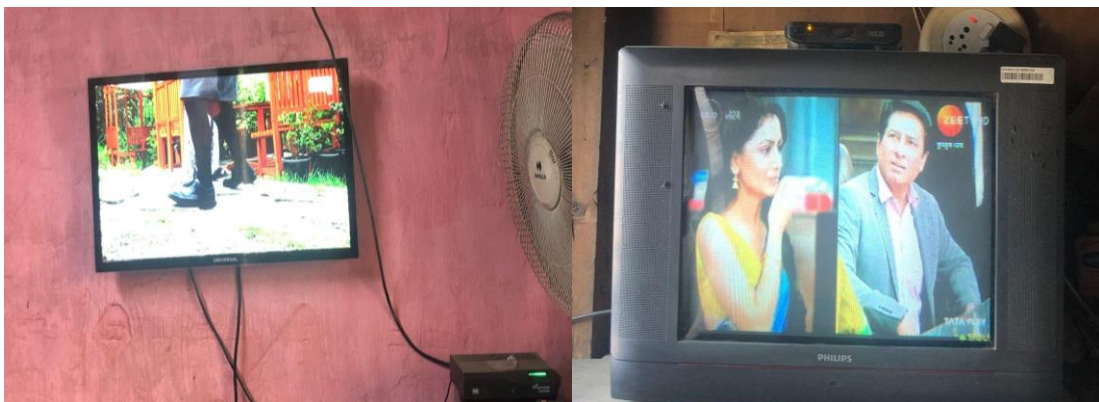
- The team took a monitoring and verification tour to Dogar and Naja gewog of Paro Dzongkhag to verify the shutdown of analog stations under Dogar and Zhenphen Lhendrup Digital cable service.
- The team visited the control rooms of cable service operator located in Tshongkha in Dawakha.
- The two cable services share the same control room with around more than 600 customers/subscribers.
- There are two technicians and an accountant working with the service provider.
- The team could not meet the proprietor despite informing about the visit the day before.





Figure 18: Control room of Dogar and Zhenphen Lhendrup Digital cable service.

- It was learned from the accountant that all the analog stations had been removed and thus the team took a random verification among the customers.
- The team met with few customers of cable service while most could not be reached due to busy schedules with work.
- However, the people shared with the team that all the analog stations had been removed a month ago.
- The customers gave positive feedback on the quality of service after the digital connection.
- Meanwhile, there are still many customers waiting for Set-Top-box where it was shared that despite repeated requests the proprietor has failed to provide.
- Many customers do not have digital connection due to lack of Set-Top-Box and since analog lines have been cut off, the customers are left with no other source than to keep the television off.



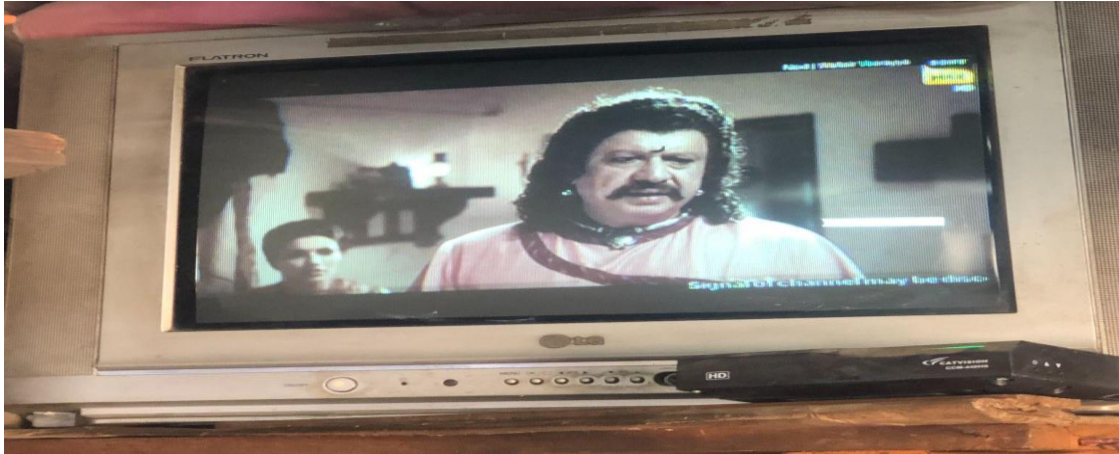


Figure 19: Some random pictures of customers with digital connection.

Observation and recommendations

- The analog stations have been removed and the line is fully digital.
- While the majority of issues pertaining to CATV service have been resolved, many are waiting for Set-Top-Box to get the TV line Connection.
- Inform the cable operator on the distribution of Set-To-Box and make the service delivery continuous and uninterrupted.

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 also have an online complaint platform on our website under the services/complaints section 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".

For the last three months (January- March,2024) the complaints received by the Authority are:

Monthly Complaint Report April, 2024

Sl. No.	Cable TV Operator	Date of Complaint	Complaint Resolved date	Area/Location	Name of Complainant	Contact Number/Particulars	Issue/ Description	Remarks
1	Lakey Cable CATV	28/03/2024	02/04/2024	Haa	Bji Gewog, Gup	176820554	STB user issue	Resolved
2	Etho Metho CATV	30/03/2024	02/04/2024	Changzamto g.	Tsheten Jamtsho	17782547	Deactivate the services before the dateline	Resolved
3	TD Metho CATV	31/03/2024	31/03/2024	Lamgong, Paro	17289166	17289166	STB Interoperability issue	Resolved
4	Tshering Norbu	03/04/2024	03/04/2024	Trashigang Town	17269887	17269887	Cable Line Issue	Resolved
5	Norling Cable	02/04/2024	05/04/2024	Lower Motithang	Tashi Wangdi	17727571	STB Interoperability issue	Resolved
6	Phakpa Cable	12/04/2024	12/04/2024	Dewathang	Dorji Lhamo	17794149	New line connection	Resolved
7	Norling Cable	15/04/2024	17/04/2024	Babesa, Near RTC junction	Bap Chenchu	17110599	Cable Line Issue	Resolved
8	Gasa Soechu	15/04/2024	17/04/2024	Gasa Town		02-688183	High Charge for STB	Resolved
9	NL Cable, Dagapala	29/04/2024	29/04/2024	Gaserling Dagapala	Dawa	17660693	High charges for new connection	Resolved
10	TT Cable Wangdue	26/04/2024	26/04/2024	Gaselo	Kuenzang Namgyel	17170066	New connection	Resolved

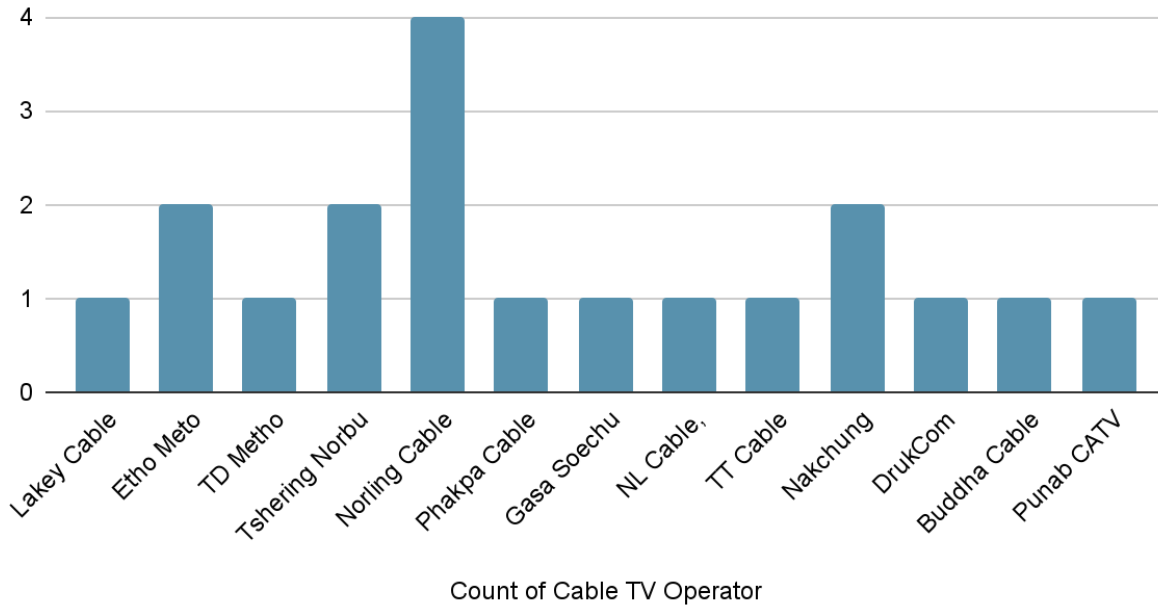
Monthly Complaint Report May, 2024

Sl. No.	Cable TV Operator	Date of Complaint	Complaint Resolved date	Area/Location	Name of Complainant	Contact Number/Particulars	Issue/ Description	Remarks
1	Nakchung CATV	03/05/2024	07/05/2024	Genekha	Kinley	17784195	Cable line Issue	Resolved
2	Tshering Norbu CATV	01/05/2024	03/05/2024	Rangjung	Namcha	17336632	Cable Line Issue	Resolved
3	DrukCom	01/05/2024	03/05/2024	Lingbukha & Shenakha	Namgay Wangchuk	17642811	Cable Line Issue	Resolved
4	Norling CATV	25/05/2024	25/05/2024	Babesa	Pema Wangdi	17623841	Cable Line Issue	Resolved
5	Nakchung Cable	30/05/2024	31/05/2024	Khasadrupchu		17110325	New Line Connection	Resolved

Monthly Complaint Report June, 2024

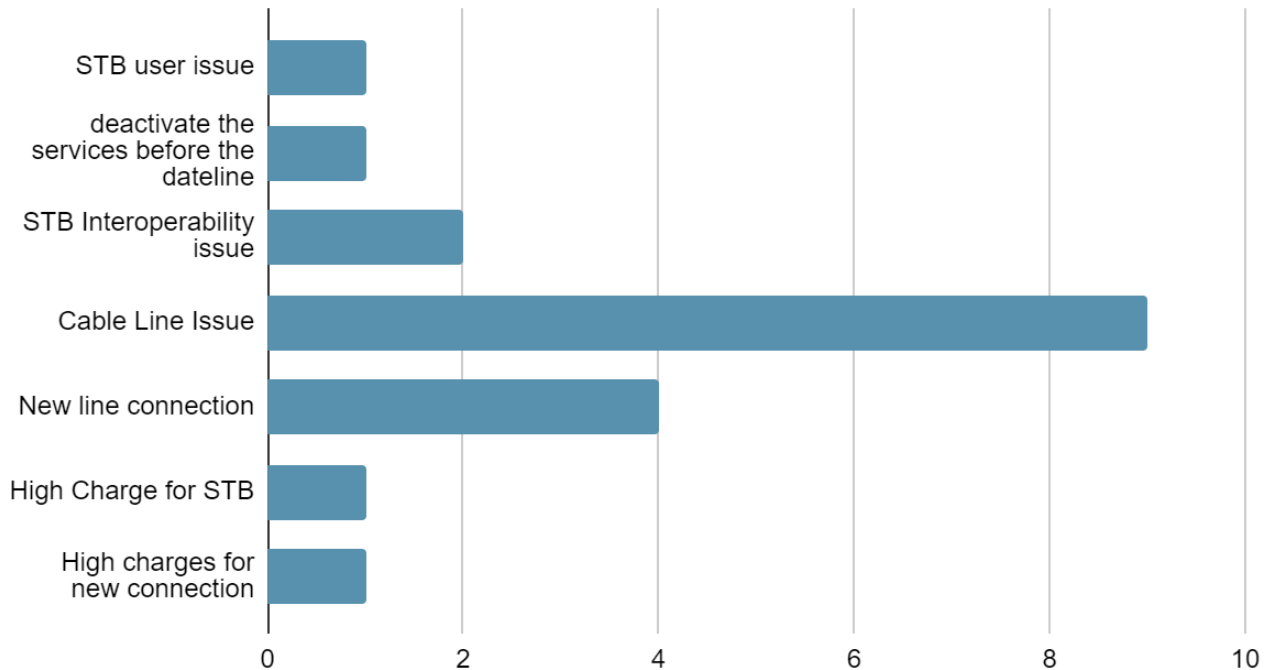
Sl. No.	Cable TV Operator	Date of Complaint	Complaint Resolved date	Area/Location	Name of Complainant	Contact Number/Particulars	Issue/ Description	Remarks
1	Norling Cable Service	08/06/2024	10/06/2024	Babesa, near sky bakery	Dechen Wangdi	17641967	Cable Line issue	Resolved
2	Buddha Cable Service	08/06/2024	10/06/2024	Punakha, Guma Gewog, Lakhu village	Pema Namgyal	77617166	New Line Connection	Resolved
3	Punab CATV	18/06/2024	18/06/2024	Near RBP office	Dorji, Roja Hotel	17447112	Cable Line issue	Resolved
4	Etho Meto Cable	19/06/2024	20/06/2024	Hejo	Ratu Yoezer	77316111	Cable Line issue	Resolved

Complaint against CATV Operators



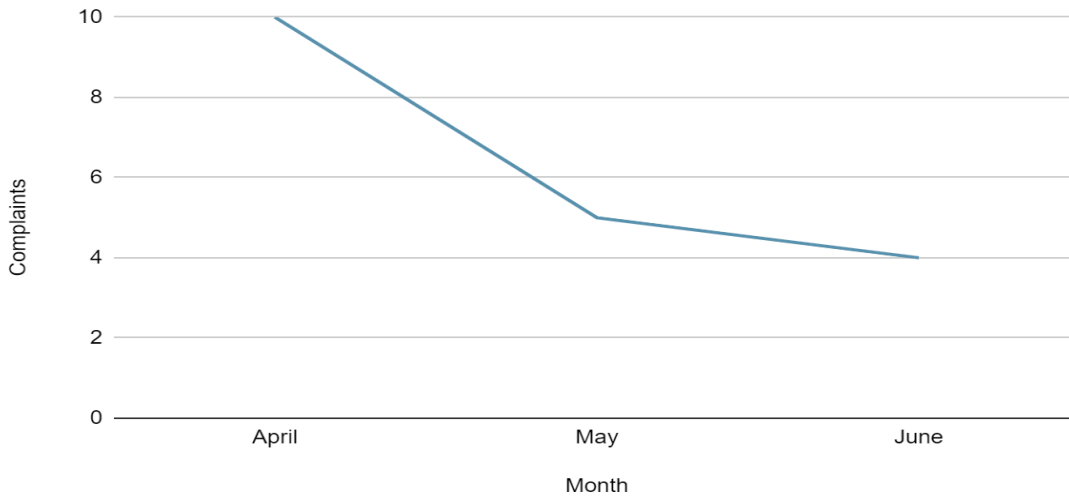
- As per the data recorded from April 1st - June 30th , 2024, the highest complaint was against the Norling Cable Service with (4) complaints, (2) complaints with Etho Meto Cable Service and Nakchung Cable Service under Thimphu Dzongkhag. Out of 19 complaints received, 8 were from Thimphu Thromde/Dzongkhag and 11 from different dzongkhags.

Subject of Complaint



- On the subject of the complaint, (10) were on Cable Line Issue, (3) on New Line Connection, (2) on Set-Top-Box (STB) interoperability issue, (1) each on STB user issue, deactivate the service before the dateline, High Charge for STB, and High charges for new connection.

Months of Complaint received



- The highest number of complaints received was in the month April (10) followed by (5) in May and (4) in June 2024.

3. Key activities carried out by the Authority

1. The InfoComm and Infrastructure Division conducted several field visits to various Dzongkhags and Gewogs to monitor and verify the status of cable television services. These visits aimed to ensure compliance with BICMA's directives, follow up on the digitization process, proper cable layout, and address issues related to the illegal distribution of Dish TV/DTH/Ku-band dishes.
2. The Authority received various complaints regarding cable television services, and the team resolved these complaints through field visits, direct communication with cable operators, and random inspections.
3. During the field visits, the team met with local cable operators (LCOs) and their technical teams to discuss the status of CATV digitization. These discussions focused on advocating for policy compliance, understanding technical challenges, and identifying ways to enhance service delivery.
4. For this quarter, the division took the monitoring tour in Tsirang, Dagana, Wangdue Phodrang, Gasa, Punakha, Samtse, Chukha and Paro Dzongkhags.

4. Findings

1. Norbu Cable Service is still operating on an analog system due to lack of knowledge and management issues after the owner's death. Dogar and Zhenphen Lhendrup Digital Cable Service have been fully digitalised.
2. Initial inspections revealed several cases of improper cable installations, including low hanging cables and non-usage of available poles. Following BICMA's directives, significant improvements were observed in the cable layouts in Damphu, Dagana, and Wangdue Phodrang, with operators fixing improper installations.
3. In areas with access to local cable services, the use of illegal DTH services was prevalent due to previous service quality issues and delays in fiber layout.

5. Way forward

1. The complaints lodged with the Authority will be properly recorded and resolved.
2. 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
3. The Authority will take up the monitoring, verification and inspections on a regular basis to other Dzongkhags.