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# **CONTENTS**

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	IMPACT OF COMPANY'S PERFORMANCE AND GREEN STRATEGY ON ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE: PHENOMENON OF INDONESIA	1
2.	ASEP ROKHYADI, TULUS HARYONO & WISNU UNTORO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CORPORATE ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION AND DUAL INNOVATION: THE MODERATING EFFECTS OF KNOWLEDGE RIGIDITY	8
3.	BAI JINGKUN, XIE MENGZHU, YANGZHI & DONG XIAOHUI FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF REAL ESTATE COMPANIES IN ANDHRA PRADESH G. RAMA PRASAD REDDY & DR. P. MOHAN REDDY	14
4.	A STUDY OF PERFORMANCE OF SELECT WOMEN CREDIT COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES SHYAM JIVAN SALUNKHE & DR. (MRS.) M. V. WAYKOLE	20
5.	A STUDY ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE AND SATISFACTION TOWARDS DIRECT-TO-HOME TELEVISION (DTH) SERVICE IN SALEM DISTRICT DR. R. RAJESWARI & R. PAVITHRA	27
<b>6</b> .	JOB STRESS AMONG THE EMPLOYEES OF TIRUPATI CO-OPERATIVE BANK, CHITTOOR DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH M. SANTHI & P. NIRANJAN REDDY	31
<b>7</b> .	EFFECTS ON CONSUMER SALES PROMOTION: A MAJOR DEVELOPMENT IN FMCG SECTOR T. RAJESH & DR. P. ASOKAN	35
8.	OPPORTUNITY COST: DAY IN AND DAY OUT BHAVANI AKKAPEDDI & KOUSHIK S	37
9.	APPLICATION AND CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARD TO INDIAN CORPORATE BHAVANA K. PATEL & BIJAL M. SHAH	39
<b>10</b> .	HEDGING APPROACHES TO REDUCE FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATE EXPOSURE IN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE AMIT BHATI	41
<b>11</b> .	WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT DR. B. SANDHYA RANI	50
12.	EMOTIONAL LABOUR AS A PREDICTOR OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN SELECTED CALL CENTRES LOCATED IN CHANDIGARH REGION DR. RENUKA MEHRA	54
<b>13</b> .	A STUDY OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS INFLUENCE ON CONSUMERS' IMPULSE PURCHASE BEHAVIOR	59
<b>14</b> .	VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS OF ONION MARKETING IN SOME SELECTED AREAS OF PABNA DISTRICT MD. DIN-LL-ISLAM & AIRIN RAHMAN	63
15.	IDENTIFYING THE FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTION OF CHOOSING FARMING AS A CAREER DR. KULDEEP CHAUDHARY & ASHA	69
<b>16</b> .	EFFECT OF LIQUIDITY ON THE PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN KAKAMEGA TOWN, KENYA WAWERU GRACE MUMBI, POIPOI MOSES WESANG'ULA & WAWIRE PETER	72
<b>17</b> .	GREEN ACCOUNTING: A STUDY ABOUT ITS IMPORTANCE AND CONCEPT DR. R. JAYANTHI	76
<b>18</b> .	MANDATORY CSR AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BUSINESS AND SOCIAL SECTOR IN KERALA DR. RENJINI D.	81
<b>19</b> .	INTANGIBLE ASSETS DISCLOSURE: A STUDY OF INDIAN COMPANIES SHWETA NARANG	84
<b>20</b> .	ECONOMIC VALUE ADDED (EVA): A PERFORMANCE MEASURE OF STRATEGIC FINANCE K. NAGARAJAN	89
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	92

ii

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#### A STUDY ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE AND SATISFACTION TOWARDS DIRECT-TO-HOME TELEVISION (DTH) SERVICE IN SALEM DISTRICT

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#### ABSTRACT

Advancement in science and technology has brought out many types of equipment, machineries and apparatus, which made human life more comfortable and enjoyable. Direct-to-Home (DTH) is one of the recent addition and has become a major entertainment medium by attracting the minds of everyone. Direct-to-Home (DTH) television is one of the recent contributions of science, which is meant mainly for dissemination of information and it is a remarkable achievement of the human brain. DTH is defined as the reception of satellite programmes with a personal dish, in an individual home and has become a powerful, useful and attractive mass media compared with cinema and cable TV. Emergence of middle class and increase in discretionary spending also promotes the growth of DTH services. Huge market potential has been one of the key factors augmenting the demand for DTH transmission. The objective of the study is to identify the factors influencing the consumer preference towards DTH services and to find the Brand preference and level of satisfaction of consumers towards DTH services. The shortcomings of cable operators had lead to the creation of DTH industry in India. Focus towards exclusive value added services by DTH players have also been a significant uptrend in the market. Hence fast and consistent penetration of DTH services and competition in these markets necessitates to examine consumer's preference and satisfaction towards DTH services.

#### **KEYWORDS**

Consumer Preference, Direct-to-Home (DTH), Satisfaction.

#### INTRODUCTION

The history of Indian television dates back to the launch of Doordarshan, India's national TV network in 1959. In this period television was a luxury and the transmission was in black and white. In 1992, the cable TV industry was started which lead to revolution. Every city in India had a complex web of co-axial cable running through the streets with a new breed of entrepreneurs called as cable wallahs or Local Cable Operators (LCO) taking in charge of distribution. There were simply too many cable operators in the country and the channels had a difficult time in getting its return as the existing system was a non-addressable and the operators could simply give a reduced number of subscribers to a mass profit. This lead to the emergence of country's first DTH services and it has been awarded to Dish TV in 2003 which started its operations in 2004. DTH is the short form of Direct-To-Home technology and is defined as the reception of satellite program with a personal dish in an individual's home. Direct-to-Home (DTH) television is a very popular technology. It is satellite distribution that provided the consumers their first widespread opportunity to enjoy digital television. Since it is a wireless technology and the programmes are sent directly to the subscriber from the satellite, it eliminates the need of the cable infrastructure. DTH can also reach remote areas where terrestrial transmission and cable TV failed to penetrate. Apart from enhanced picture quality, DTH also allows for interactive TV services such as movie-on-demand, active music, active games, active dharsan, active english, active fun learn and so on.

#### ADVANTAGES IN USING DIRECT-TO-HOME (DTH) TELEVISION

- 1. Digital picture: The picture quality in DTH TV is much better. The quality of picture is uniform across all channels, whereas in cable the quality of picture is inconsistent, some channels are clear but the balance is fuzzy and snowy.
- 2. *Digital audio:* It provides services with stereophonic sound which leads to better sound effects.
- 3. Electronic Programme Guide (EPG): It is an on-screen guide that shows the programme schedule or listing of all the channels.
- 4. Payment modes: DTH viewers pay only for what they watch and the service charges are paid in advance. Recharge is easy with various sources like the Internet, mobile phones, vouchers from vendors, etc.
- 5. Interactive services: This is one important point which differentiates the broadcasters. All the broadcasters offer interactive TV services. Apart from enhanced picture quality, DTH also allows for interactive TV services such as movie-on-demand, internet access, video conferencing and e-mail.

#### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Acharyulu, Raja and Sudhakar (2009) measured the customer preferences towards Direct-To-Home (DTH) Television services in India. They opined that DTH market is witnessing a fierce competition with entry of many new players. Based on this study it was found that quality of service is the key differentiator in DTH service operations. The study expressed that content differentiation may not be possible in the future and companies have to differentiate themselves only at their cost levels and quality of services. The study suggested that in order to increase the market share and to ensure the win-win situation the DTH players should design a good customer service strategy.

Dheeraj (2012) tried to analyse the Indian DTH Industry. He opined that shortcomings of cable operators had lead to the creation of DTH services in India and that served as a better alternative to high-end cable networks. It was found that as television buyers in India gravitate to purchase more of flat panel displays this Direct-to-Home (DTH) satellite television has emerged as the choice of medium. The study suggested that DTH market players should offer latest bouquet of services so that people could be hooked towards DTH services. The study concluded that as DTH TV industry is currently in growth phase, it is expected to attract a large number of subscribers in near future.

Jayashree and Sivakumar (2013) examined the customer perception towards DTH services in Coimbatore City. Their study also analysed the competition that existed in the market regarding DTH services. It was found that, majority of the respondents prefer to buy Sun direct because it offers various kinds of packages with best picture quality and reasonable price. The study concluded that DTH service providers should pay attention towards customer service, picture quality and as well as reasonable price.

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

DTH market in India is one of the fast growing segments of the segmented pay TV industry and it is witnessing significant growth on account of rising per capita income and government mandate of complete digitalization. Huge market potential has been one of the key factors augmenting the demand for DTH transmission. In addition, emergence of middle class and increase in discretionary spending also promotes the growth of DTH services. Increasing television penetration accompanied with attractive offers and price war has also been driving the market. With the entry of new players in the Indian DTH industry, competition is getting intense. Due to the intensifying competition, installation prices are declining and subscribers have a wide range of options to make choices. Fast and consistent penetration of DTH services and competition in these markets necessitates the DTH service providers to examine consumer's preference and satisfaction towards DTH services.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- The study has been undertaken with the following objectives:
- 1. To identify the reasons for preferring DTH services.
- 2. To find the Brand preference/Brand loyalty of consumers towards DTH services.
- 3. To study the level of satisfaction of consumers in Salem District towards DTH services.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The sample has been selected on the basis of proportionate stratified random sampling technique.

SAMPLE SIZE

Data has been collected from 75 selected sample respondents in Salem District.

AREA OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in Salem District.

#### SOURCES OF DATA

**PRIMARY DATA:** Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire.

SECONDARY DATA: The secondary data was collected from different sources like newspapers, magazines, journals, books, websites and pamphlets.

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED FOR ANALYSIS

Statistical tools such as Simple percentage analysis and weighted average method have been used for the study.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

In the course of selection of the respondents, due care has been exercised to cover all the sections of the society like different gender, age, education, occupation and income backgrounds.

S. No	Demographic Variables	PROFILE OF THE RESI Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
		21 – 30	12	16.00
	• • • •	31-40	20	26.67
1.	Age (Years)	41 - 50	25	33.33
		Above 50	18	24.00
2	Condon	Male	54	72.00
2.	Gender	Female	21	28.00
		SSLC/Martic	8	10.66
	Educational Qualification	Higher Secondary	14	18.67
3.		Diploma	9	12.00
		Under Graduation	26	34.67
		Post Graduation	18	24.00
		Business	19	25.33
		Employees	26	34.67
4.	Occupational Status	Professionals	15	20.00
		Agriculturists	12	16.00
		Home Maker	3	4.00
		Below 10,000	8	10.67
		10,001 - 20,000	34	45.33
5.	Family Monthly Income	20,001 - 30,000	18	24.00
		30,001 - 40,000	10	13.33
		Above 40,000	5	6.67

#### Source : Primary data

From Table 1 it is clear that, 33.33 percent of the respondents are in the age group of 41–50 years, 72 percent of the respondents are male, 34.67 percent of the respondents are Employees, 45.33 percent of the respondents' family income is between Rs. 10,001-20,000.

#### SOURCE OF INFORMATION / PRODUCT AWARENESS

After the need arousal, the consumer tries to solve it by gathering the information about the product. Depending upon the intensity of need, it produces two states in an individual. The first state is called heightened attention when the consumer becomes more receptive to the information regarding the item he needs. He becomes alert to information bearing on the need and its gratification. If a consumer needs to purchase a television, he will pay more attention to TV advertisements. He keeps remembering the remarks made by friends and associates about TVs.

	TABLE 2: SOURCES OF AWARENESS										
S. No.	Source of Awareness	Percentage									
1.	Print Ads	12	16.00								
2.	TV Ads	26	34.67								
3.	Hoardings	9	12.00								
4.	Internet	6	8.00								
5.	Friends/ Relatives	22	29.33								
	TOTAL	75	100.00								

Source: Primary Data

28

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Table 2 presents the source from which the respondents gained brand awareness regarding the DTH. 16.00 percent of the respondents opined that they learnt about DTH services from Print advertisements. 34.67 percent of the respondents stated that they came to know about the DTH services through television advertisements. 12.00 percent of the respondents have learnt through hoardings. 8.00 percent of the respondents gathered the information from the Internet whereas, 29.33 percent of the respondents came to know about the DTH services through their friends and relatives.

#### REASONS FOR PREFERRING DTH SERVICE

DTH services are available even in remote areas and locations however the penetration of cable TV is limited and failed to penetrate. Likewise there are few reasons like Reasonable Price, Superior Video Quality, Affordable Tariffs, Low Disturbance, Extra Services and Good reputation are identified as the reasons for preferring DTH service.

Dessen	1		2		3		4		5		Mainhead Total	Mainhead Average	Denk
Reasons	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	No	Wgt	Weighted Total	Weighted Average	Rank
Reasonable Price	26	130	14	56	18	54	12	48	5	5	293	22.10	П
Superior Video Quality	30	150	24	96	12	36	5	10	4	4	296	22.32	I
Affordable Tariffs	12	60	18	72	20	60	15	30	10	10	232	17.50	v
Low Disturbance	22	110	12	48	14	42	18	36	9	9	245	18.48	IV
Extra Services	15	75	25	100	20	60	10	20	5	5	260	19.60	Ш
Total	105	525	93	372	84	252	60	144	33	33	1326	100	

TABLE 3: RANKING ON REASONS FOR PREFERRING DTH SERVICE

Source : Primary data

From Table 3 it is inferred that Superior Video Quality has been ranked first by the customers with the average weight of 22.32, Reasonable price has got the second rank with the average weight of 22.10. It is Extra services that have secured third rank.

#### **BRAND PREFERENCE OF DTH**

#### **BRAND OF DTH IN USE**

Because of arrival of new entrants, this industry has become very competitive which ultimately results in customers getting more benefits and options of latest technology. The major DTH brands in India that offer customized DTH channels and packages to the customers are Dish TV, Reliance Big TV, Sun Direct, Tata Sky, Videocon D2H, Airtel Digital TV, DD Direct plus.

TABLE 4: BRAIND OF DTH IN USE										
S. No.	BRAND OF DTH IN USE	No. of Respondents	Percentage							
1.	Dish TV	16	21.33							
2.	Reliance Big TV	10	13.33							
3.	Sun Direct	20	26.67							
4.	Tata Sky	8	10.67							
5.	Videocon D2H	12	16.00							
6.	Airtel Digital TV	6	8.00							
7.	DD Direct plus	3	4.00							
	TOTAL	75	100.00							
Source: Primary Data										

#### TABLE 4. BRAND OF DTH IN LISE

#### Source: Primary Data

Table 4 reveals that 21.33 percent of the respondents are using Dish TV, 13.33 percent of the respondents opined that they are using Reliance Big TV, 26.67 percent of the respondents stated they are using Sun Direct in their homes, 10.67 percent of the respondents assured they are using Tata Sky, 16.00 percent of the respondents agreed that they use Videocon D2H, 8.00 percent of the respondents indicated that they are using Airtel Digital TV in their homes, 4.00 percent of the respondents revealed that they use DD Direct plus. It is clear that Sun Direct DTH is the highly preferred brand in DTH.

#### LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT DTH SERVICE PROVIDER

The moment a DTH is purchased and used, customers begin to judge it. The level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction depends on how well the DTH performance meets the expectations of customers. If a DTH product or service performs as well as or better than expected, the customers will feel happy. If it falls short of the expectations, customers are not happy.

TABLE 5: LEVEL OF SATISFACTION ABOUT CURRENT DTH SERVICE PROVIDER

	Level	of Satisfaction	1								Tota	al
DTH Service Provider	Highly Dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Neutral		Satisfied		Highly Satisfied		N	%
	N	%	Ν	%	Ν	%	Ν	%	Ν	%	N	70
Dish TV	-	-	3	18.75	3	18.75	4	25.00	6	37.5	16	100
Reliance Big TV	-	-	3	30.00	2	20.00	2	20.00	3	30.00	10	100
Sun Direct	-	-	5	25.00	4	20.00	6	30.00	5	25.00	20	100
Tata Sky	1	12.5	3	37.5	2	25.00	2	25.00	-	-	8	100
Videocon D2H	-	-	2	16.67	3	25.00	3	25.00	4	33.33	12	100
Airtel Digital TV	2	33.33	1	16.67	-	-	2	33.33	1	16.67	6	100
DD Direct plus	2	66.67	1	33.33	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	100
Total	5	6.67	18	24	14	18.67	19	25.33	19	25.33	75	100

Source: Primary data

From Table 5 it is clear that 25.33 percent of the respondents are highly satisfied with their current DTH service provider. 25.33 percent of the respondents stated that they are satisfied with their current DTH service provider whereas, 18.67 percent of the respondents opined that they neither satisfied nor dissatisfied by the current DTH service provider.

#### FINDINGS

- 33.33 percent of the respondents are in the age group of 41–50 years, 72 percent of the respondents are male, 34.67 percent of the respondents are Under Graduates, 34.67 percent of the respondents are Employees, 45.33 percent of the respondents' family income is between Rs. 10,001-20,000.
- ٠ 34.67 percent of the respondents stated that they came to know about the DTH services through television advertisements.
- ٠ 26.67 percent of the respondents stated they are using Sun Direct in their homes.
- From Table 3 it is inferred that Superior Video Quality has been ranked first by the customers with the average weight of 22.32, Reasonable price has got the ŵ second rank with the average weight of 22.10. It is Extra services that have secured third rank.
- ÷ 25.33 percent of the respondents are highly satisfied with their current DTH service provider.

#### SUGGESTIONS

DTH service providers should try to reduce the initial entry cost, and also the cost of additional charges so that it will have a good impact in attracting 1. customers.

#### VOLUME NO. 6 (2015), ISSUE NO. 11 (NOVEMBER)

- 2. Installation of Dish and set-top-box could be made free to customers.
- 3. The DTH service providers must come up with more existing offers and discounts so that it will get a unique place in the minds of consumers.
- 4. The DTH service providers should try to come with many outlets and help the customers believe that DTH services are cost-effective.

#### CONCLUSION

In the second decade of the new millennium, there is no topic closer to the hearts of marketers than customer satisfaction. It is because satisfaction is the key to the long-term relationships that provide benefit to both sides of the buyer-seller equation. The most positive outcome for achieving customer satisfaction is to gain customer loyalty. With the existing regulatory restrictions, increasing content cost and lack of transponders, DTH terrain appears too steep to climb. The increasing consumer awareness and expectations also make it is difficult to satisfy the consumer. India being the home of entertainment hungry populace, volumes play the role of a growth driver. Attractively priced and feature rich package targeted at the critical mass is the mantra for sustaining the growth of DTH. Today's customer is sensitive to price as well as to quality. A prudent DTH operator should also take a serious look at the substitutes and complements. The final winner cannot be a pure DTH player but a convergent player who offers all in one to the value-conscious, price sensitive Indian consumer. Hence, in today's competitive environment, to make the DTH business more successful and to satisfy the consumers the DTH service providers will have to strive hard to attract and retain the customers.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following are the limitations of the study:

- 1. The sample size of the study is 75 and it may not reflect the interest of the whole population.
- 2. The study is limited to Salem District only.
- 3. The result can be confined to Salem District alone and cannot generalized for other areas.
- 4. Respondents' opinion are dynamic and they may change from time to time.

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