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## CUSTOMER'S PREFERENCES TOWARDS DTH (DIRECT-TO-HOME) SERVICES IN NASIK CITY

**Dr. NILESH R. BERAD**  
**PROFESSOR**  
**MET INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT**  
**BHUBAL KNOWLEDGE CITY**  
**ADGAON**

**ABSTRACT**

*After the emergence of Cable entertainment industry, cable TV has become a necessary accessory in every family's drawing room. Similarly, over a period of time DTH is an almost all good home entertainment kit which depends on modern direct to home technology. There are lots of DTH service providers for instance Sun TV DTH, Dish TV DTH, Tata Sky DTH, Big TV, Airtel DTH, Videocon D2H which present superfluous features in addition to greatest digital TV services with their buyers. DTH service providers present a variety of technology by using several fees in addition to packages. So, it is always advisable to compare DTH services with the offers before acquiring any DTH television set service to receive plan which will be the greatest package as well as service which fits the needs. A Consumer must make an assessment before choosing the best service provider taking into consideration all aspects such as maximum no. of channels, picture quality, recording, pause and play and so on. So, the researcher has tried to study the various services and offers provided by all the available service providers in Nasik city and assessment of the consumer preferences for direct to home services in Nasik City.*

**KEYWORDS**

DTH, television, service providers, consumer preferences, entertainment.

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**INTRODUCTION**

After the emergence of Cable entertainment industry, cable TV has become a necessary accessory in every family's drawing room. Similarly, over a period of time DTH is an almost all good home entertainment kit which depends on modern direct to home technology. This specific Direct to Home service offers television services direct to subscribers at any place in around the globe. Making use of wireless technology, this specific service transmits programs directly from the satellite to subscriber's television set that eliminating the demand of cables & intermediate mediators. The average Indian disposable income & Purchasing power has risen to levels ever seen before. The Indian Entertainment & Media Industry which is currently estimated at Rs. 450 Billion is at its peak with young working hands preferring watching Cinemas & IPL Cricket matches on LCD TVs at home. The Direct-To-Home (DTH) service is a digital satellite service that provides television services direct to subscribers anywhere in the country directly through satellite communication and allows the customer an elite TV watching experience with High Definition (HD) picture quality and stereo sound. Since its inception in the year 2003, DTH services in India have registered a very impressive growth. Today, besides Doordarshan, there are six prominent private DTH service providers along with few of the new entrants with a subscriber base of over 21 million subscribers<sup>2</sup>. In 2001, the Government of India, withdrew the prohibition on the reception and distribution of television signal in 'Ku band'. The first Direct-to-Home (DTH) license was awarded by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in 2003 to Dish TV. The fast growing Indian DTH subscriber's base is projected to grow at a CAGR<sup>3</sup> close to 21% between 2009 to 2014; in the process making India the largest DTH market in the world. In recent coherent move, on 21 May 2011, GSAT-8 India's most powerful Communication Satellite<sup>4</sup> was successfully launched by I.S.R.O. from French Guiana to give boost to Direct-to-Home services in the country. It carried 24 transponders to augment India's Ku-Band relay capabilities primarily for DTH broadcast services with a coverage zone including entire Indian subcontinent. Prior to this there were very few service providers available such as Doordarshan, Tata Sky and Dish TV by Essel Group. These providers competed with each other in the initial years. As there were fewer players, they tried market skimming. But due to high initial setup prices and heavy monthly rental consumers of suburban and sub metro cities they were gathering low momentum. But with the entries of several new service players like AirTel, Reliance Big TV, Videocon DTH there was tremendous competition for surviving current market share and at the same time connecting to new customers. This was materialized by price cuts, free installations and economic monthly rentals. The marketing strategy then had to be changed from PULL to PUSH. With these several choices of service providers and numerous offers it became difficult for them to settle down quickly with their final choice. Yet the consumer is expected to undergo assessment for choosing the best service provider considering all aspects such as maximum no. of channels, picture quality, recording, pause and play and so on.

In this paper, market research survey of DTH (Direct-to-Home) services and customers preferences towards them in the context of Nashik city is taken. This Survey would enable one to envisage the digitalization of TV watching in numerous 2<sup>nd</sup> tier cities in India and capture such market insights.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To study the various services and offers provided by all the available DTH service providers in Nashik city.
2. To assess the consumer preferences for Direct to home services in Nasik City.
3. To study the major factors affecting the brand awareness and the decision making about selection of DTH service Provider.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Information is gathered through Market Surveys and is absolutely Primary, since the research is **Descriptive** in nature and requires learning about people's knowledge, beliefs, preferences and satisfaction. The instruments for collecting data were:

1. **Questionnaire:** A Structure Questionnaire was prepared for gathering information from customers.
2. **Google Spreadsheets:** Using this we could reach to more and distant respondent in short period of time. These sheets were sent through emails and responses gathered were easily convertible into Excel sheets and hence prepare analysis.

**SAMPLING**

**Sampling technique:** Simple Random Technique

**Sample Unit:** DTH (Direct-To-Home) Services User

**Sample size:** 500 across Nahik city.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

T. Samson Joe Dhinakaran (2012) in a paper on "A Study on Customer Buying Behaviour Of DTH Services In Palayamkottai" found that DTH Services are in a nascent stage in our country. However, there is a stiff competition among the present 6 Service providers. Most of the people are confused with which Service connection can be obtained. Moreover, DTH Service providers are also perplexed with what channel should be given free of cost and what channel should be offered at a price.

**DIRECT TO HOME (DTH)**

An Overview from the website claims DTH stands for Direct-To-Home television and is defined as the reception of satellite programs with a personal dish in an individual home. DTH does away with the need for the local cable operator and puts the broadcaster directly in touch with the consumer. Only cable operators can receive satellite programs and they then distribute them to individual homes.

**SUPERIORITY OF DTH OVER CABLE TV**

DTH offers better quality picture than cable TV. This is because cable TV in India is analog. Despite digital transmission and reception, the cable transmission is still analog. DTH offers stereophonic sound effects. It can also reach remote areas where terrestrial transmission and cable TV have failed to penetrate. Apart from enhanced picture quality, DTH has also allows for interactive TV services such as movie-on-demand, Internet access, video conferencing and e-mail. But the thing that DTH has going for it is the powerful broadcasting companies like Star, Zee, etc. are pushing for it.

**History of DTH**

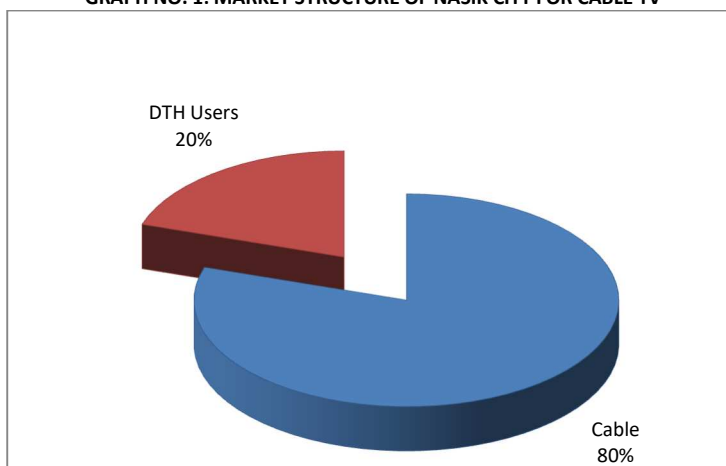
While today's hot DTH marketplace makes for an exciting story, this is an industry with a history unknown to most. It is a story of an industry which was never supposed to exist; an industry born out of the genius of a Stanford University college professor and publicized by ham radio conversations. An industry that defied all odds to grow from the backyards of techies and early adapters to today's multi-billion dollar first-line competitor to the cable monopoly in America. And, it is the story of an industry comprised of thousands of entrepreneurs who kept the dream alive during long periods of traumatic political and marketplace upheaval. Come with us now as we look at the people, the events, and the evolution of the technology.

**DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION**

The survey was conducted with the 500 respondents for different parameters & criteria. The resultant data was Summarized, Tabulated & analysed accordingly.

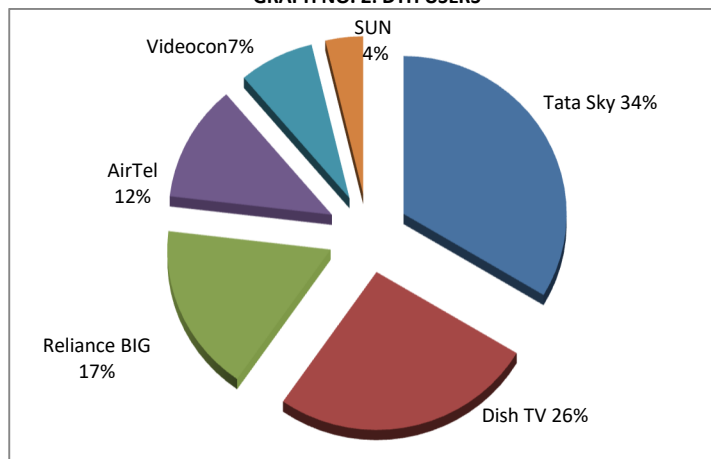
- Market Structure:** Upon analysing actual target market scenario it could be found that in Nasik city major portion of people continue with conventional Cable TV service. Major reasons being Price of DTH services (rather unawareness about pricing structure). Moreover, it was also observed that the people do not prefer DTH due to the credit system offered by local cable channel person. A whopping 80% people are continuing with cable TV. As compared with Metropolitan cities this % is very low.

**GRAPH NO. 1: MARKET STRUCTURE OF NASIK CITY FOR CABLE TV**



The surveyed sample size was indicating only 20% of the sample size is using the DTH, hence here onwards the sample continued is 20% i.e. 100 households. Among these 100 sample sizes, Researcher tried to find out the DTH connection used by the consumers. The resultant data is represented in Graph No. 2

**GRAPH NO. 2: DTH USERS**



1/5<sup>th</sup> of the total market who chooses DTH also found to have scattered tendency with Tata Sky and Dish TV being major players among others. From the above graph we can conclude that the Tata Sky & Dish TV is covering more than 60% of the market, while Videocon & Sun are still struggling for the significant market share. The reason concluded for the success of the Tata Sky & Dish TV is mainly as 1<sup>st</sup> entrants as well as the celebrity endorsement. While Reliance & Airtel were able to establish themselves very fast due to their presence in communication, Videocon & Sun being the late entrants are still struggling to find out the space in the market. Market structure (Nasik City) can be depicted as below:

TABLE NO. 1: MARKET STRUCTURE OF NASIK CITY FOR DTH

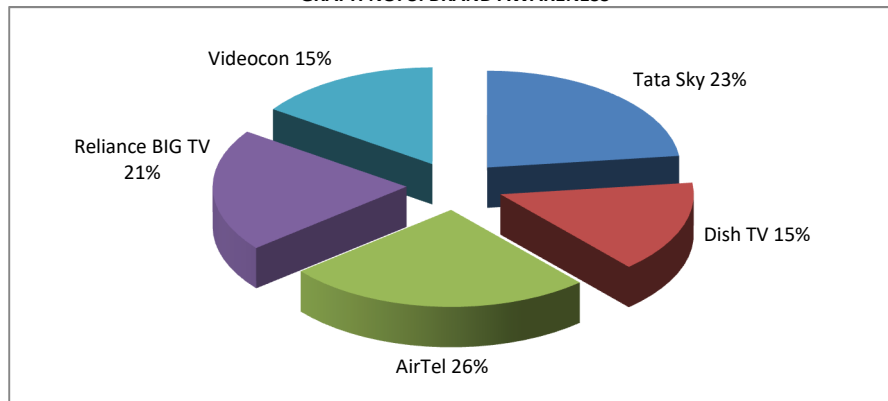
<b>Market Leader</b>	TATA Sky	Working more on Distribution network and finding new market segment can give vital edge to them in coming years.
	Dish TV	
<b>Market Challenger</b>	Reliance Big TV	They need to strike a correct balance between advertising and profits.
	AirTel DTH	
<b>Market Niches</b>	Videocon D2H	Being laggards, they need to opt for rapid penetration with low prices, skillfully managing profit levels.
	Sun TV	

**2. Brand Awareness**

According to *Phillip Kotler* "Consumer's ability to identify the brand under different conditions, as reflected by their brand recognition or recall performance". During survey & interviews, the brand positioning of different players could be understood. Different players have different promotional activity. e.g. TATA sky reminds respondents "Isako laga dala toh life zingalala" and the caption seemed to be deep impacted. Brand ambassadors also plays a vital role e.g. Aamir Khan is strongest among them (for TATA Sky) followed by Saif Ali Khan & Kareena Kapoor of AirTel. It was also found that, Shah Rukh Khan is such a strong ambassador, that people recall him instead of the brand which he is promoting viz. Dish TV. It is also found that many respondents are aware about Airtel's Red colour promotions & A. R. Rehman's jingle.

Airtel, Tata Sky are front runners in their awareness among customers. Dish TV, Videocon Reliance BIG TV has less memory effect which can be understood from below table.

GRAPH NO. 3: BRAND AWARENESS

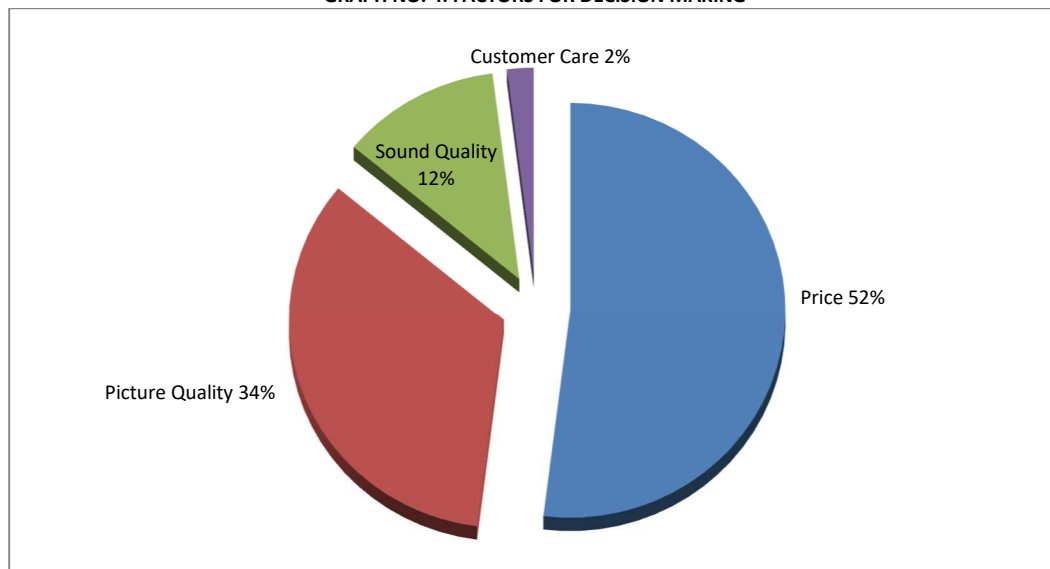


Following things could be noted from service provider's point of view:

- Due to less awareness people have limited Alternatives when it comes to select their DTH service provider.
- People hesitate to go to actual market analysis before availing service and rely mostly on TV commercials and reference from friends and relatives.
- As this is one-time choice, people are going with the advertisement without comparing the benefits. Once the set top box purchased they are unwilling to think for the shifting or exchange.

**3. Decision Factors for Selection of DTH** - Amongst data collected from respondents, it was found that the major factors for choosing the DTH services are as follows are represented in a Graph

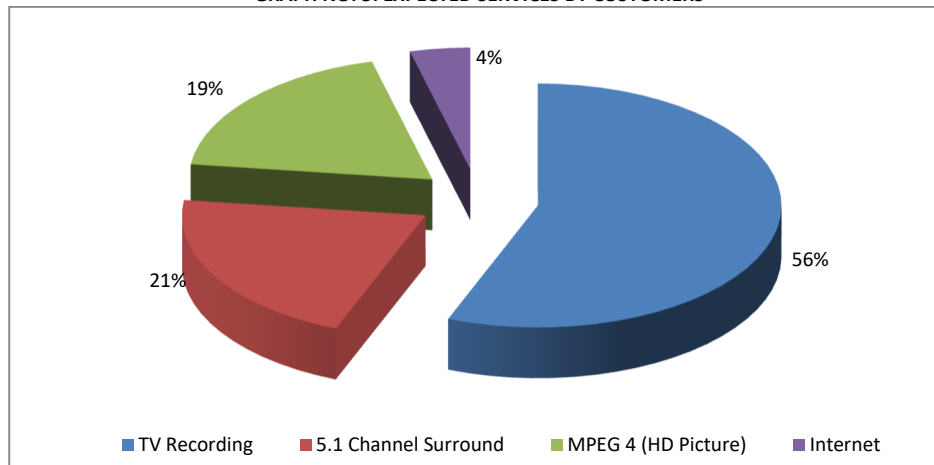
GRAPH NO. 4: FACTORS FOR DECISION MAKING



From the above graph we can conclude that Price, Picture Quality, Sound Quality, Customer Care are the major factors on which customer decides about the DTH Service.

- People are price conscious and 'monthly rent' and 'set top box prices' are Major determinants. This being evident from their income profile which on average is less than Rs. 4 Lacks. While people who are price insensitive were seen seeking features over prices.
- Respondents had shown their 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> preferences for HD picture and Surround sound. It is found that high bombarding of advertisements made them think so, since when asked about details of these features, they failed to respond.
- Very few people are obsessed with customers care and after sale services (Service providers are also not emphasising this fact in their promotion as can be noticed in commercials)

GRAPH NO. 5: EXPECTED SERVICES BY CUSTOMERS



Because of techno savvy attitude, people seem to be keen in buying new and advanced technology. Research was clearly indicating people are interested in having all advanced technology in their existing devices.

Many cable TV customers are also interested in having those features. Almost every service provider is having more or less same kind of services but as far as niche area of Live TV recording and HD Picture clarity is concerned, service providers are asking to buy a new technology enabled products over older ones. Here if local Cable operators with set top box does any low-end innovation, DTH service providers will possess threat.

### CONCLUSION

The conclusions that can be drawn from the study are as per following:

1. Percentage of DTH subscribers are very less in Nashik city as compared to Metropolitan cities and is 20%
2. Price is major influence for opting DTH service. The different packages offered by the DTH companies make a significant difference for the consumers.
3. Services provided are Standard in nature and Customization is yet to come in Nashik and will lead to dramatic marketing strategy changes for similar market. It is observed that value added services are playing a dominant role in the selection of the DTH services provider.
4. The Brand Awareness is more a result of Advertisements and Brand ambassador than any other factor.
5. The major service expected by the consumers is TV recording, but as it is available with all the service providers, does not become the influencing factor in selection of a DTH Service provider.
6. Price has come out to be the major Factor for selection of a service provider.
7. There exists a constant threat of local cable operators since they provide lower tariffs and have direct customer relationships.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Market potential in Nashik city for DTH is very high and need more awareness though Local promotional activities.
2. Being price cautious market, discounts and free accessories can form promotional part.
3. DTH service providers need to work consumer relationship management and after sales customer care.
4. At a broader level, DTH can facilitate Rural Education and Public Information system through satellite communication which can penetrate deep into remote parts of the Indian subcontinent.

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