

Local Cable Channels in Tamil Nadu: Prospects and Issues

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INTRODUCTION

Blumler & Katz (1974) argued the case of active audience making motivated choices.

For Thompson (1995) and Giddens (1991), the media can be seen to offer symbolic resources for the construction of the imagined selves & worlds so that the role of the media becomes to transform the everyday discourse and enable experiments with self making.

Local Cable Channels

CATV (community antenna television) method was first introduced in US Canada and Europe.

During 1990s, cable television entered India in a big way

Now, in Tamil Nadu there is no district without Local Cable Channels.

They seen as competitors of satellite channels in both content and quality.

Objectives of the study

Government's Responses towards Cable TV sector

Ownership patterns

Party affiliations of local cable operators

Political economy of local cable operators

Audience relationships with the local cable television programme

Key aspects of audience Study

Demographics

Monthly cable subscription spend

Number local cable channels available for viewing

Duration of viewership

Program watched by viewers on local cable channels

Reasons for viewing local cable channels

Audience suggestion for current programs of local cable channel

Audience expectations from local cable channels

Limitations of the study

Limitation of this study: This research was done in only one district (Namakkal) of Tamil Nadu.

Government Status toward Cable Channels

At present, the government MSO, *Arasu Cable*, is providing the Cable TV services with 99-100 Channels, including Free-to-Air Channels, Pay Channels and Private Local Channels.

The corporation has procured 137 pay Channels and almost all the Pay channels are in the bouquet of the Corporation.

Before *Arasu Cable's* arrival, the Cable TV sector was largely controlled by Sumangali Cables, an affiliate of Sun TV, and a few Multi System Operators they forced the local Cable TV operators as well as the public to pay exorbitant amount towards cable Tv services.

Earlier, the public were paying Rs.150 to Rs.250 per month to the private Cable TV companies to avail the Cable TV service.

Now Arasu Cable Corporation is providing the Cable TV services with most of the pay channels, at an affordable cost of Rs.70/- per month,

Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV Corporation Ltd has selected 1200 Private Local Channels and issued allotment orders,

Out of which approximately 800 Private Local Channels are running through Arasu Cable.

To start a Private Local Channel, concern person should submit an application form to the TACTV head office.

After the verification initial amount deposited to TACTV account, afterwards monthly subscription amount should pay on or before the due day.

For city based Private Local Channels sum of 3 lakhs as a monthly subscription.

If it's a District level Local Cable Channels they pay monthly subscription fee an amount of 5 lakhs.

Ownership, political and party affiliation

Like any other global, national, and regional media, the Local Cable Channels ownership too has the similar pattern, though may not be compared with the larger media.

The local tycoon and politicians are in the background directly or indirectly supporting the channels.

May be because there is no proper regulation system and the channel owners happens to depend the politicians or local business people for economical support.

Local cable channels owners perspective

They need to pay more than 3 lakh for the government every month.

Main income was the advertisement; it's the main source for running the channel successively.

The reason behind the more cinema content there is no need of money for producing program like this.

Producing other studio programs outdoor program, cost production was higher which doesn't create income.

If sponsors available for producing the programs audience will expect good programs from local cable channels.

This is due to the involvement of huge amount of money to function the Local Cable Channels successfully.

This may reflect the bias or affiliation towards the individual or party.
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In spite of this ownership issues the channels is running successfully due to the fulfillment of the needs and expectation party.

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Movie

Program content

Songs

Comedy clippings

Lifestyle programs

Magazine programs

Live shows

Educational/Religious

local cable channel program is different from satellite channel programs

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
YES	124	82.7
NO	26	17.3
TOTAL	150	100.0

viewing local cable channels apart from satellite channels

REASON	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
PROXIMITY INFORMATION	38	25.3
IT COVERS LOCAL ISSUES	28	18.7
IT COVERS ABOUT LOCAL ADVERTISEMENT	52	34.7
INFORMATION ABOUT LOCAL ADMINISTRATION	10	6.7
IT GIVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE OPTIONS FOR LOCAL BUISNESS OPPORTUNITIES	22	14.7
TOTAL	150	100.0

Program expectations from audience on local cable channels

More local news

Local sports events

Local realty shows

More educational programs,

Local stock news,

Local talent revealing programs.

Conclusion

Earlier, audience watched the local cable channels for new movies, songs, comedy clippings only.

There were expectations which were not fulfilled by the local cable channels.

The audience expects programs in local cable channels besides national/global channels because they need diverse programme.

Thank you