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Weak January–March quarter

The conventional color television market saw a 30 percent decline in sales in January to March quarter. Sales dropped from 3 million units in January–March 2011 to 2.1 million units in January–March 2012. This is quite a dramatic decline and while conventional color TV is slowly giving way to LCD TV, this sharp drop may partly be attributed to reduced color picture tube supplies from Samtel since January 24, 2012. Samtel is facing financial problems and expects to resume production from Kota in mid-April and from Ghaziabad in May.

With JCT unable to bridge the shortfall in supply, color TV manufacturers have switched to imports from Indonesia, Malaysia, and China. In the January–March quarter, imports were as high as two-thirds of the Indian conventional color picture tube market. Inadequate supplies of 21-inch ultra-slim color picture tubes, a Samtel specialty, are hurting the market.

LCD TV sales remained static at 0.78 million sets in January–March 2012, similar to the January–March 2011 level. This is not surprising as last year sales received a boost in February and March from the cricket world cup. The industry is expecting 25 percent growth in LCD TV sales during April–December 2012, with the LCD market estimated at 5.5 million sets in January–December 2012.

While the air-conditioner industry did not show any growth in January–March 2012 over the corresponding period last year, the industry is upbeat for the April–June quarter. Against the backdrop of a dismal April–June 2011 quarter, the industry expects a 25–30 percent growth this April–June quarter (even then sales will still reach only the April–June 2010 level) and is planning production on this basis.

According to Census 2011, the states of Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi NCR, Tamil Nadu, and Puducherry have the highest levels of TV ownership with 80 percent of total households owning TV sets. Assam, Jharkhand, and Orissa have poor viewership with only 30 percent households owning TV sets. Bihar is at the bottom of the list with only 14.5 percent households owning TV sets. This offers hope that the conventional TV market will remain alive in India for some more time.

The increase in excise duty in the 2012-13 Union Budget has resulted in an increase of two percent in prices of air conditioners, refrigerators, and washing machines. Samsung, LG, Godrej, and Voltas have already passed on this increase to consumers.

Anju Arora