

Weak advertising growth persists; margins steady

Media & Entertainment ▶ Result Update ▶ January 23, 2025

TARGET PRICE (Rs): 130

Zee reported another quarter of subpar advertising growth, down another 8% YoY in Q3FY25. Ad revenue has now declined (YoY) in nine of the last ten quarters. Subscription revenue reported a steady uptick of 6.6% YoY while other sales and services was weak on account of no major movie releases. EBITDA margin jumped up by 590bps YoY to 16.1%, ahead of our estimate of 14.2%, as the company curtailed its operational expenses. The macro environment remains sluggish, particularly on the urban front, hindering advertising growth. The management highlighted it has successfully completed the first phase of its turnaround plan centered around cost optimization, and focus now is on driving revenue higher. We trim FY25-27E EBITDA by 4-11%, factoring in the Q3 performance and slower advertising growth going ahead. We believe the company will find it difficult to meaningfully improve margins from current levels in the absence of advertising growth. We maintain **REDUCE** on Zee, and lower our TP by 7% to Rs130 (8x Dec-26E Broadcasting EBITDA).

Zee Entertainment: Financial Snapshot (Consolidated)

Y/E Mar (Rs mn)	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
Revenue	80,879	86,372	83,713	88,720	93,485
EBITDA	11,011	9,071	12,615	14,156	15,840
Adj. PAT	5,811	4,738	7,318	8,542	10,231
Adj. EPS (Rs)	0.5	1.5	7.6	8.9	10.7
EBITDA margin (%)	13.6	10.5	15.1	16.0	16.9
EBITDA growth (%)	(36.1)	(17.6)	39.1	12.2	11.9
Adj. EPS growth (%)	(95.0)	196.0	417.4	16.7	19.8
RoE (%)	5.4	4.4	6.6	7.4	8.3
RoIC (%)	6.1	4.5	7.1	8.0	9.0
P/E (x)	20.0	24.5	15.8	13.6	11.3
EV/EBITDA (x)	10.0	11.7	8.5	7.5	6.7
P/B (x)	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.0
FCFF yield (%)	(1.9)	2.6	2.6	3.5	2.9

Source: Company, Emkay Research

Results Summary

Zee's consol revenue declined 3.3% YoY to Rs19.8bn, below our estimate of Rs20.3bn. Advertising revenue declined 8.4% YoY, with domestic advertising falling by 10.8% YoY. International ad revenue jumped up 50% YoY to Rs600mn. Subscription revenue growth was steady at 6.6% YoY. Other sales and services declined 42.6% YoY to Rs557mn, on account of no major movie releases. Zee5 revenue grew 8.1% YoY, with EBITDA losses reducing to Rs1.4bn from Rs1.6bn in Q2FY25. The OTT platform released 14 shows and movies in the quarter (7 originals). Consolidated EBITDAM of 16.1% was up by 590bps YoY, aided by lower operational expenses. The company reported a profit of Rs1.6bn. There was an exceptional item to the tune of Rs809mn related to arbitration claim for Margo Network. Zee's market share declined by 50bps QoQ to 16.9% in Q3FY25. **What we liked:** Improvement in margin, steady growth in subscription revenue. **What we did not like:** Persistent weakness in advertising revenue, loss in market share (QoQ).

Earnings call KTAs

1) Growth for the industry has been soft during the quarter with broad consumption slowdown outweighing the festive season impact. There were some green shoots at the start of the quarter which though did not sustain post festive season 2) Rural saw a marginal pickup, but Urban and the Hindi heartland were weak, while the South held up relatively better. 3) The company witnessed an uptick for the Marathi language channel, where it has made significant investment in the past. Zee Tamil has also done well on a YoY basis. Zee continues to invest in strengthening the Hindi language channels. 4) New channel tariff should aid subscription growth a few quarters down the line. 5) Profitability is steady in the music segment, while overall competitive intensity has increased led by domestic music labels. International labels are not aggressive yet. 6) Zee5's revenue growth was impacted by delay in renewal of a B2B deal, which ended in September, with discussions currently under way. There has been a thorough calibration of the Zee5 cost structure. 7) Q3 was a lean quarter for the movies segment. Five movies were released, with Zee being the distributor (2 Hindi, and 3 Regional). The movies segment acts as a feeder into the core business. Despite the subpar performance of movies at the box office, the company has no plans of a scale down, though some rejig is possible among languages. 8) Wage hikes were undertaken effective 1-Sep.

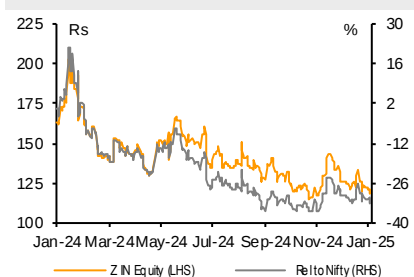
Target Price – 12M	Dec-25
Change in TP (%)	(7.1)
Current Reco.	REDUCE
Previous Reco.	REDUCE
Upside/(Downside) (%)	7.7
CMP (23-Jan-25) (Rs)	120.8

Stock Data	Ticker
52-week High (Rs)	210
52-week Low (Rs)	114
Shares outstanding (mn)	960.5
Market-cap (Rs bn)	116
Market-cap (USD mn)	1,341
Net-debt, FY25E (Rs mn)	-8,351
ADTV-3M (mn shares)	12
ADTV-3M (Rs mn)	1,512.5
ADTV-3M (USD mn)	17.5
Free float (%)	96.0
Nifty-50	23,205
INR/USD	86.5
Shareholding, Dec-24	
Promoters (%)	4.0
FPIs/MFs (%)	20.1/18.0

Price Performance

(%)	1M	3M	12M
Absolute	(3.9)	(2.3)	(22.6)
Rel. to Nifty	(1.6)	2.9	(29.1)

1-Year share price trend (Rs)


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Exhibit 1: Actual vs Estimates (Q3FY25)

(Rs mn)	Actual	Estimate		Variation		Comment
		Emkay	Consensus	Emkay	Consensus	
Revenue	19,788	20,342	21,146	-3%	-6%	Lower ad revenue, and other sales and services
EBITDA	3,184	2,889	3,149	10%	1%	Better margins on account of lower operational expenses
EBITDA margin	16.1%	14.2%	14.9%	189 bps	120 bps	
PAT	1,636	1,578	1,893	4%	-14%	

Source: Company, Emkay Research

Exhibit 2: Summary of Quarterly Financials

(Rs mn)	Q3FY24	Q4FY24	Q1FY25	Q2FY25	Q3FY25	YoY (%)	QoQ (%)
Ad revenue	10,274	11,102	9,113	9,017	9,406	(8.4)	4.3
Subscription Revenue	9,213	9,494	9,872	9,699	9,825	6.6	1.3
Others	970	1,103	2,320	1,291	557	(42.6)	(56.9)
Net Sales	20,457	21,699	21,305	20,007	19,788	(3.3)	(1.1)
Programming Cost	11,876	12,830	11,770	10,615	9,968	(16.1)	(6.1)
as % of sales	58.1	59.1	55.2	53.1	50.4		
Employee Expenses	2,442	2,552	2,258	2,275	2,433	(0.4)	6.9
as % of sales	11.9	11.8	10.6	11.4	12.3		
Admin and Other expense	4,047	4,215	4,561	3,907	4,203	3.9	7.6
as % of sales	19.8	19.4	21.4	19.5	21.2		
Total operating expenditure	18,365	19,597	18,589	16,797	16,604	(9.6)	(1.1)
EBITDA	2,092	2,103	2,717	3,210	3,184	52.2	(0.8)
Depreciation	761	772	756	732	658	(13.6)	(10.1)
EBIT	1,330	1,331	1,960	2,478	2,526	89.9	1.9
Other Income	277	154	190	337	345	24.6	2.4
Interest	183	69	55	83	108	(41.1)	30.1
Exceptional Item Fair value through P&L)	(551)	(265)	(373)	130	(786)		
PBT	872	1,151	1,722	2,862	1,977	126.6	(30.9)
Tax	288	1,018	542	769	342	18.8	(55.5)
PAT before MI	584	133	1,180	2,093	1,635	179.8	(21.9)
MI	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(1)	-	-
PAT before comprehensive income	585	134	1,181	2,094	1,636	179.5	(21.9)
PAT after MI	585	134	1,181	2,094	1,636	179.5	(21.9)
(%)						(bps)	(bps)
EBITDAM	10.2	9.7	12.8	16.0	16.1	587	5
EBITM	6.5	6.1	9.2	12.4	12.8	626	38
EBTM	4.3	5.3	8.1	14.3	10.0	573	(431)
PATM	2.9	0.6	5.5	10.5	8.3	541	(220)
Effective Tax rate	33.0	88.5	31.5	26.9	17.3	(1,571)	(957)

Source: Company, Emkay Research

Exhibit 3: Change in Estimates

(Rs mn)	FY25E			FY26E			FY27E		
	Old	Revised	Change	Old	Revised	Change	Old	Revised	Change
Ad revenue	39,977	38,052	-4.8%	41,811	39,278	-6.1%	44,245	40,932	-7.5%
Subscription revenue	39,901	39,493	-1.0%	41,633	41,842	0.5%	44,227	44,153	-0.2%
Revenue	86,490	83,713	-3.2%	91,044	88,720	-2.6%	96,872	93,485	-3.5%
EBITDA	13,161	12,615	-4.1%	15,555	14,156	-9.0%	17,751	15,840	-10.8%
EBITDA margin (%)	15.2	15.1	-13 bps	17.1	16.0	-114 bps	18.3	16.9	-136 bps
PAT	7,382	7,318	-0.9%	9,637	8,542	-11.4%	11,881	10,231	-13.9%
EPS (Rs)	7.7	7.6	-1.1%	10.0	8.9	-11.1%	12.4	10.7	-14.1%

Source: Emkay Research

Zee Entertainment: Consolidated Financials and Valuations

Profit & Loss					
Y/E Mar (Rs mn)	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
Revenue	80,879	86,372	83,713	88,720	93,485
Revenue growth (%)	(1.2)	6.8	(3.1)	6.0	5.4
EBITDA	11,011	9,071	12,615	14,156	15,840
EBITDA growth (%)	(36.1)	(17.6)	39.1	12.2	11.9
Depreciation & Amortization	3,128	3,091	3,539	3,291	2,836
EBIT	7,884	5,980	9,076	10,866	13,004
EBIT growth (%)	(46.6)	(24.1)	51.8	19.7	19.7
Other operating income	0	0	0	0	0
Other income	797	1,293	1,000	1,200	1,320
Financial expense	702	721	386	640	640
PBT	7,979	6,553	9,690	11,426	13,684
Extraordinary items	(5,333)	(3,324)	0	0	0
Taxes	2,167	1,818	2,373	2,876	3,444
Minority interest	0	0	0	0	0
Income from JV/Associates	(1)	4	1	(8)	(8)
Reported PAT	478	1,414	7,318	8,542	10,231
PAT growth (%)	(95.0)	196.0	417.4	16.7	19.8
Adjusted PAT	5,811	4,738	7,318	8,542	10,231
Diluted EPS (Rs)	0.5	1.5	7.6	8.9	10.7
Diluted EPS growth (%)	(95.0)	196.0	417.4	16.7	19.8
DPS (Rs)	0.0	0.4	2.3	2.7	3.2
Dividend payout (%)	0.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0
EBITDA margin (%)	13.6	10.5	15.1	16.0	16.9
EBIT margin (%)	9.7	6.9	10.8	12.2	13.9
Effective tax rate (%)	27.2	27.7	24.5	25.2	25.2
NOPLAT (pre-IndAS)	5,743	4,321	6,854	8,131	9,731
Shares outstanding (mn)	960.3	960.3	960.3	960.3	960.3

Source: Company, Emkay Research

Cash flows					
Y/E Mar (Rs mn)	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
PBT	7,979	6,553	9,690	11,426	13,684
Others (non-cash items)	0	0	0	0	0
Taxes paid	(2,167)	(1,818)	(2,373)	(2,876)	(3,444)
Change in NWC	(3,436)	(873)	(6,662)	(6,154)	(7,359)
Operating cash flow	1,741	4,160	5,104	5,679	5,709
Capital expenditure	(3,793)	(1,439)	(2,300)	(1,950)	(2,600)
Acquisition of business	0	0	0	0	0
Interest & dividend income	270	270	270	270	270
Investing cash flow	(2,675)	(184)	(1,300)	(750)	(1,280)
Equity raised/(repaid)	0	0	0	0	0
Debt raised/(repaid)	2,057	(517)	1,800	0	0
Payment of lease liabilities	2,033	(513)	(200)	0	0
Interest paid	(702)	(721)	(386)	(640)	(640)
Dividend paid (incl tax)	0	(424)	(2,195)	(2,563)	(3,069)
Others	7,562	9,049	9,219	5,106	2,928
Financing cash flow	8,917	7,387	8,437	1,903	(782)
Net chg in Cash	7,984	11,363	12,240	6,832	3,647
OCF	1,741	4,160	5,104	5,679	5,709
Adj. OCF (w/o NWC chg.)	(1,695)	3,287	(1,558)	(475)	(1,650)
FCFF	(2,052)	2,721	2,804	3,729	3,109
FCFE	(2,484)	2,270	2,687	3,358	2,738
OCF/EBITDA (%)	15.8	45.9	40.5	40.1	36.0
FCFE/PAT (%)	(519.8)	160.5	36.7	39.3	26.8
FCFF/NOPLAT (%)	(35.7)	63.0	40.9	45.9	31.9

Source: Company, Emkay Research

Balance Sheet					
Y/E Mar (Rs mn)	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
Share capital	961	961	961	961	961
Reserves & Surplus	106,258	107,768	112,115	118,094	125,256
Net worth	107,219	108,729	113,075	119,055	126,217
Minority interests	0	0	0	0	0
Deferred tax liability (net)	(4,229)	(4,542)	(5,451)	(5,451)	(5,451)
Total debt	2,820	2,303	4,103	4,103	4,103
Total liabilities & equity	105,810	106,490	111,728	117,707	124,869
Net tangible fixed assets	7,455	7,212	7,429	5,842	4,909
Net intangible assets	4,645	3,376	2,041	901	1,001
Net ROU assets	1,497	1,455	1,335	2,720	3,318
Capital WIP	191	93	93	93	93
Goodwill	0	0	0	0	0
Investments [JV/Associates]	0	0	0	0	0
Cash & equivalents	8,314	11,731	12,454	13,621	13,660
Current assets (ex-cash)	109,230	105,784	110,457	119,355	126,489
Current Liab. & Prov.	27,167	23,161	22,081	24,825	24,600
NWC (ex-cash)	82,062	82,623	88,376	94,530	101,889
Total assets	105,810	106,490	111,728	117,707	124,869
Net debt	(5,493)	(9,427)	(8,351)	(9,517)	(9,557)
Capital employed	104,165	106,490	111,728	117,707	124,869
Invested capital	95,660	94,666	99,181	103,994	111,116
BVPS (Rs)	109.9	113.2	117.8	124.0	0.0
Net Debt/Equity (x)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)	(0.1)
Net Debt/EBITDA (x)	(0.5)	(1.0)	(0.7)	(0.7)	(0.6)
Interest coverage (x)	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.0
RoCE (%)	8.3	6.9	9.2	10.5	11.8

Source: Company, Emkay Research

Valuations and key Ratios					
Y/E Mar	FY23	FY24	FY25E	FY26E	FY27E
P/E (x)	20.0	24.5	15.8	13.6	11.3
P/CE(x)	13.0	14.8	10.7	9.8	8.9
P/B (x)	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.0
EV/Sales (x)	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.1
EV/EBITDA (x)	10.0	11.7	8.5	7.5	6.7
EV/EBIT(x)	14.0	17.8	11.9	9.8	8.2
EV/IC (x)	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.0
FCFF yield (%)	(1.9)	2.6	2.6	3.5	2.9
FCFE yield (%)	(2.1)	2.0	2.3	2.9	2.4
Dividend yield (%)	0.0	0.4	1.9	2.2	2.6
DuPont-RoE split					
Net profit margin (%)	7.2	5.5	8.7	9.6	10.9
Total asset turnover (x)	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
Assets/Equity (x)	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
RoE (%)	5.4	4.4	6.6	7.4	8.3
DuPont-RoIC					
NOPLAT margin (%)	7.1	5.0	8.2	9.2	10.4
IC turnover (x)	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
RoIC (%)	6.1	4.5	7.1	8.0	9.0
Operating metrics					
Core NWC days	370.3	349.2	385.3	388.9	397.8
Total NWC days	370.3	349.2	385.3	388.9	397.8
Fixed asset turnover	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.4	2.4
Opex-to-revenue (%)	31.1	31.2	32.0	31.6	31.1

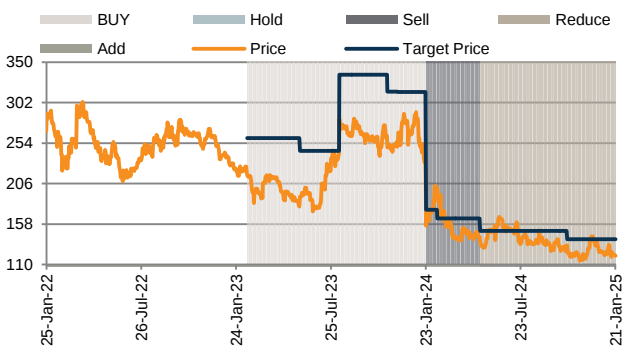
Source: Company, Emkay Research

RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - DETAILS

Date	Closing Price (INR)	TP (INR)	Rating	Analyst
20-Oct-24	132	140	Reduce	Pulkit Chawla
27-Aug-24	151	150	Reduce	Pulkit Chawla
31-Jul-24	149	150	Reduce	Pulkit Chawla
18-May-24	141	150	Reduce	Pulkit Chawla
06-May-24	136	150	Reduce	Pulkit Chawla
14-Feb-24	200	165	Sell	Pulkit Chawla
23-Jan-24	156	175	Sell	Pulkit Chawla
08-Jan-24	278	315	Buy	Pulkit Chawla
30-Nov-23	253	315	Buy	Pulkit Chawla
10-Nov-23	249	315	Buy	Pulkit Chawla
02-Nov-23	269	335	Buy	Pulkit Chawla
10-Aug-23	282	335	Buy	Pulkit Chawla
10-Aug-23	282	265	Buy	Pulkit Chawla
26-May-23	191	245	Buy	Pulkit Chawla
14-Feb-23	216	260	Buy	Pulkit Chawla

Source: Company, Emkay Research

RECOMMENDATION HISTORY - TREND



Source: Company, Bloomberg, Emkay Research

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