

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 607

(TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.07.2025)

ENCOURAGING SOUTH INDIAN LANGUAGE CHANNELS

607. DR. BYREDDY SHABARI:

SHRI APPALANAIDU KALISETTI:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of subscriber base of DD Free Dish in the country during the last five years, State-wise along with trends observed during the said period;**
- (b) the details of Government programmes broadcast through DD Free Dish along with their State-wise viewership;**
- (c) whether the Government acknowledges the challenges in expanding the reach of DD Free Dish in South India and if so, the details of specific factors contributing to these challenges; and**
- (d) the steps taken by the Government to encourage South Indian language channels to secure slots on DD Free Dish and the results achieved through these measures?**

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

(DR. L. MURUGAN)

(a) to (d): DD Free Dish is the free-to-air (FTA) Direct-To-Home (DTH) platform of Prasar Bharati. Its footprint spans the entire country, including remote, border, and otherwise inaccessible areas.

Government flagship schemes and public awareness campaigns are disseminated through programs on various national & regional channels of Doordarshan on DD Free Dish.

It has experienced consistent growth in its reach over the past few years. As per industry estimates, DD Free Dish reaches approximately 49 million households nationwide as of 2024. The figure was 33 million in 2018, signifying the positive audience growth.

The Government has taken various proactive measures to increase the representation of South Indian language channels on DD Free Dish, including:

- For better regional representation, slots had been reserved for South Indian language channels in the e-auctions of DD Free Dish platform (done in 2025)**
- Eligibility norms have been simplified to ensure greater participation from private broadcasters in the southern region**

- **Furthermore, dedicated slots were offered for Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam channels in recent e-auctions.**
- **Three additional South Indian language private channels viz. TV9 Telugu, Aastha Kannada & Aastha Telugu, have been onboarded on DD Free Dish since 01.04.2025.**

Doordarshan's own regional channels, such as DD Tamil, DD Saptagiri, DD Chandana, DD Yadagiri, and DD Malayalam have also been onboarded. The channels are being technologically upgraded and better promoted to enhance their visibility.

Apart from this, there are 27 educational channels on DD Free Dish, which are relaying programs in various South Indian languages.
