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Title: Need to make available all free-to-air channels of Doordarshan under the bouquet of DD Direct Plus in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

SHRI JOSE K. MANI (KOTTAYAM): The pioneering move of Doordarshan to mass entertainment electronic media easily accessible to the masses through its DD Direct Plus service was widely welcomed and acclaimed by all households. The DD Direct Plus had diversified channels like sports, entertainment, educational programmes, health, apart from 24-hour news channel in vernacular languages. Beyond the channels of Doordarshan, the DD Direct Plus ensured transmission of popular free to air channels. Together the DD Direct Plus direct to home (DTH) service commanded the largest viewership of audience covering almost every home owning a television. Doordarshan's success spawned business rivalry with cable TV operators. Private DTH operators offering free to air channels hitherto broadcast free by DD Direct Plus, clandestinely hiked the subscription rates. Presently the private DTH operators are reaping the harvest of mass electronic media revolution starving Doordarshan of its legitimate share being the pioneering mass channel venture.

This situation apart from denying free viewership to the masses has caused Doordarshan dearly in terms of advertising revenue, the backbone of sustenance in view of the diminishing audience. Kerala and Tamil Nadu have more DD Direct Plus DTH connections with a mass audience who stand deprived now of the free to air channel facility earlier enjoyed by them because of Doordarshan's changed policy in denying the free to air channel facility it had pioneered earlier.

I would, therefore, urge the Centre to restore the credibility of Doordarshan as the mass entertainment channel by making available again, all free to air channels under its bouquet of DD Direct Plus to subscribers in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

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