



Media Release

THE ALL INDIA DIGITAL CABLE FEDERATION (AIDCF) MEMBERS CONTINUE TO NOT COMPLY WITH THE NEW PRICE REGIME AND MAKE FALSE CLAIMS, LEAVING MILLIONS OF SUBSCRIBERS IN A LURCH

Mumbai, 19th February 2023: The All India Digital Cable Federation (AIDCF), in its latest announcement, has made some inaccurate remarks regarding the new price regime, which came into force on February 1, 2023. After an extensive consultative process, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), notified the amended Regulations and Tariff Order on November 22, 2022. AIDCF and its members also participated in the consultative process and were clearly aware of the timelines prescribed by TRAI. They understood that the law mandates that the TV channels could only be provisioned under a signed interconnect agreement. As of today, all the broadcasters, all DTH providers and most of the cable operators, including some AIDCF members, have implemented the amended regulatory framework. Consequently, more than 90% of the DPOs have signed the revised interconnect agreement issued by the broadcasters, thereby choosing to comply with the law and ensuring that the service is not disrupted for majority of the subscribers.

Under the new pricing regime, the subscriber has the flexibility of choice on whether to pick one channel or a bouquet of channels. The maximum monthly subscription fee for a channel to be included in bouquet is INR 19/- which is significantly lesser than the price of essentials in the country. The attempt of the AIDCF to invoke consumer sentiment on the price increase is belied by their attempt to increase that portion of the consumer bill that goes only to the AIDCF members, i.e. Network Capacity Fees (NCF).

TRAI's 2017 regulations brought in a separate charge of Network Capacity Fees (NCF), which DPOs charge and collect from the subscribers for provisioning access to the TV services. DPOs collect subscription fees in advance from consumers but do not pass the share to broadcasters in a timely manner. The price hike during implementation is largely due to the demand of the increase in the NCF by the DPOs and not at the back of the channel prices. While no pay TV channel is provided against the said charge, the burden of this cost ultimately results in making the TV services expensive for the subscribers. As a result, the AIDCF's claim that broadcasters are driving up TV channel prices and that 45 Mn households have been impacted by channel disruption is completely false. Having not been granted any interim relief in multiple High Courts, the AIDCF is seeking to invoke public sympathy through a false narrative.

While the broadcasters are under no legal obligation to provide any additional opportunity to the AIDCF members, they offered such DPOs additional 48 hours to sign the revised interconnect agreement in order to continue receiving TV signals without interruption, keeping in mind the interest of the subscribers. While some operators have signed the agreement, AIDCF members, have chosen to ignore it and deliberately refused to sign the revised Interconnect offer. The broadcasters, therefore, had no legal recourse but to disconnect TV services from the DPOs that refused to comply with the regulatory framework.

Furthermore, AIDCF is not only in defiance of the law but is also holding less than 25 Mn subscribers hostage, solely for its own commercial reasons and circulating misleading information. The press release issued by AIDCF tantamounts to an attempt to influence the public with respect to the matter pending consideration before the court. These DPOs are minority in number compared to the ones who have already signed and due to their non-compliance, are depriving consumers of their favourite channels. In this scenario, Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation (IBDF) would like to urge the impacted viewers to reach out to other operators to subscribe to their favourite channels.



Consumers are the centre of any broadcasters' strategy and AIDCF members are only causing inconvenience to them by making false claims and leaving them without their favourite shows for selfish reasons. Broadcasters are constantly introducing new channels with engaging new content, further creating proliferation in the industry, creating avenues for employment and providing a variety of entertainment options to the consumers.

About IBDF:

Indian Broadcasting & Digital Foundation is the largest body of Television Broadcasters in India. Set up in 1999, IBDF represents and is dedicated to the promotion of television broadcasting in, to and from India. IBDF members provide channels and programmes that deliver about 90% of television viewership in India. Member offerings cater to most of India's diversity and plurality in every language and in every genre of television viewing. IBDF has, over the years, achieved the unique position of the accredited spokes-body of the television broadcasting industry. IBDF endeavours to work closely with and align industry, policy makers, regulators and partners so that the television sector in the media and entertainment industry grows to its fullest potential in an equitable manner.

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