



## **Pudhiya Thalaimurai News Channel Case**

### **What is the issue?**

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- Recently, Tamil Nadu government filed a case against the Tamil news channel “Pudhiya Thalaimurai” for allegedly promoting enmity in one of its programs.
- Considering the circumstances of the case, this is nothing short of a direct attack on press freedom and democratic right to an opinion.

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### **What is the case about?**

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- “Pudhiya Thalaimurai” (PT) had organised a ‘discussion forum’ on the continuing protracted protests in Tamil Nadu in the recent past.
- Subsequently, Tamil Nadu government slapped a case against the channel under for “promoting enmity between groups”.
- The cause for the action was certain remarks made by a couple of the TV channel’s guests who had participated in the aforementioned program.
- Although it was some sections of the audience that was disruptive, FIRs were filed against two participants – whose remarks were clear not inflammatory.
- Notably, the FIR also included in its ambit, the program’s anchor and the management of PT channel.
- More shockingly, the FIR was filed even before the roundtable discussion on the role of protests was aired.

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- A sensitive issue like the current string of protests is bound to invoke polarising views, but the crackdown on voicing opinions is an extremely bad precedent.

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## **Is the TN government acting in a vindictive fashion?**

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- The state government-owned “Arasu Cable TV” network services about 1 crore households in Tamil Nadu and is a major TV broadcaster.
- In a clearly targeted and vindictive action, PT was suddenly pushed from the 124th to the 499th slot on the “Arasu Network”.
- In some regions, the channel was also removed from the Tamil cluster of channels and regrouped with those in other languages.
- For subscribers who are linked to Arasu via analogue, the channel has become simply unavailable in many areas.
- Significantly, a couple of other channels too were subjected to such actions in the past, thereby establishing a clear trend.

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## **How does the future look?**

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- There have been apprehensions that the State government is using its domination of the distribution space to crack down on news channels.
- The severity of crack down on PT has led many to believe that it is clearly intended to send out a larger message to all media houses.

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**Source: The Hindu**

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