

Text of the D.O. letter addressed to Dr.Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India by Selvi J Jayalalithaa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on 30.7.2011 is reproduced below:

"It has been brought to my notice that the Government of India has decided to introduce a National Eligibility cum Entrance Examination for admission to Undergraduate and Post Graduate Medical Courses. The Government of Tamil Nadu has taken steps since 2005 and finally abolished the Entrance Examination for the Professional Courses from the year 2007-2008.

This was done after detailed examination by an Expert Committee which found that rural students and students from lower socio economic backgrounds are unable to compete with the urban elite students in such Common Entrance Examinations as they lack the requisite training institutions and materials.

The rural poor students cannot afford the fees charged by the coaching centres, which impart training to face such competitive examinations. This will be particularly true in the case of a national level examination as the students who pass the 12<sup>th</sup> Standard based on our State syllabi will not face a level playing field as the topics covered for the entrance exam are likely to be different, leading to the need for separate training classes.

A large number of socially and economically backward meritorious rural students have benefited because of the decision to abolish the Common Entrance Examination for professional courses.

Tamil Nadu has also been able to manage its medical manpower requirement in the rural areas due to the large number of rural students who get admission to undergraduate courses in government medical colleges due to our existing admission policy.

As part of its policy of upholding social justice, Tamil Nadu has been following 69% reservation for Backward and Most Backward Communities and Scheduled Castes and Tribes in professional courses. The introduction of a Common Entrance Test would create confusion and litigation in the smooth implementation of this reservation policy both in undergraduate and postgraduate admissions.

Further, the Government of Tamil Nadu has reserved 50% of its medical Post Graduate seats for doctors who have completed three years of rural service with special weightage for those working in hilly and tribal areas. The Government has also successfully obtained and enforced bonds from those completing post graduate education in Government Medical Colleges to serve the State for a minimum period, which has helped to meet the need for specialist medical manpower. It will be legally difficult to implement these policy initiatives if a Common Entrance Test is introduced as we would have to fall in line with the regulations of the national test, which may not have such enabling provisions.

We had earlier been assured by the Hon'ble Minister for Health and Welfare that the States would be consulted and our views considered before evolving any policy decision with regard to the conduct of an All India Common Entrance Test. The Government of Tamil Nadu had also given its views as above, specifically stating that the All India Common Entrance Test will interfere with the rights of the State Government in administering the education system and would create problems in implementing the reservation policy followed uniquely in our State. However, it is now learnt that the Government of India has gone ahead with the decision to implement the common entrance test.

The Government of Tamil Nadu strongly protests the move to conduct an All India Common Entrance Test for admission to Under Graduate/Post Graduate Courses in the Medical Colleges as proposed by the Government of India. In view of all the facts pointed out, I request that Tamil Nadu may be exempted from the test and allowed to continue with its existing system for admission to undergraduate and postgraduate medical seats."

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