

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. Letter dated 6.12.2014 addressed by Thiru O. Panneerselvam, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is reproduced below:

"A section of the media has reported that the Ministry of Finance has taken a decision to scrap the supply of subsidized kerosene through the Public Distribution System. It has been reported in a leading newspaper that the Centre plans to write to the States asking them to provide subsidized kerosene only to un-electrified households. It quotes a Union Finance Ministry source as having said that States which have achieved near 100 per cent electrification will be incentivized to become kerosene-free. In the remaining States, un-electrified households would be given a choice to choose between cash subsidy in lieu of kerosene allocation and upfront subsidy for greener solar lighting systems. This decision is reportedly based on an interpretation of the 2011 Census data that kerosene is not the fuel of choice for cooking and is used primarily for lighting purposes.

If the Government of India is actually contemplating such a harsh and punitive measure, it would impose considerable hardship on the people of a State like Tamil Nadu. Our Beloved Leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had in the Memorandum presented to you on 3.6.2014 and in a letter written to you on 11th July, 2014, and earlier to your predecessor sought an increase in the monthly allocation of kerosene to meet Tamil Nadu's full requirement of 65,140 Kilo litres of kerosene per month. Presently the allotment of PDS Kerosene to Tamil Nadu, after 10 successive reductions from the level of 59,780 Kilo litres prevalent in March 2010, stands at 29,056 Kilo litres. This causes considerable hardship to poor and middle class people in the State who are the main users of kerosene.

In many parts of Tamil Nadu, particularly in rural areas, most households use kerosene as the main cooking fuel. In addition, even in other households it is used as a supplementary and starter fuel. It is also used for supplementary lighting purposes in remote areas. Further, most households which have LPG connections, even in urban areas, have only a single cylinder connection which means they rely on kerosene as a supplementary fuel. Our Beloved Leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had pointed out that not providing sufficient allocation of kerosene would have environmental consequences due to the greater use of firewood. A complete elimination of subsidized kerosene would be an environmental disaster.

Moreover, as our Beloved Leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had also emphasized in the Memorandum presented to you on 3rd June, 2014, Tamil Nadu is strongly opposed to monetizing and transferring in cash the subsidy element of Public Distribution System subsidies, including kerosene, where the critical concern is not the quantum of subsidy but the availability of commodities.

In these circumstances, I strongly urge you to instruct the Ministry of Finance to reconsider any such proposal to scrap the supply of subsidized kerosene through the PDS and also to transfer the subsidy element by cash or other alternatives. I reiterate our standing request to restore Tamil Nadu's monthly kerosene allocation to its full requirement of 65,140 Kilo litres per month in order to ensure that the poor and the middle classes are saved from unnecessary hardship."

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Dated : 6.12.2014