

P.R. No. 089

Date: 09.02.2016

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 9.2.2016 of **Selvi J Jayalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

"I invite your kind attention to my earlier letter dated 7.10.2015, in which I had conveyed the Government of Tamil Nadu's strong objection to the Government of India seeking a review of the judgement of the Supreme Court on the issue of a National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET) for medical admissions. I had also strongly cautioned against any attempts to introduce such a common entrance test in any other manner or by any other name, **as it infringes upon the State's autonomy and right to regulate the admission policies to medical educational institutions in Tamil Nadu.**

I had also written to the then Prime Minister on 30.7.2011, 7.9.2012 and 30.9.2012 conveying Tamil Nadu's strong opposition to the proposed introduction of the National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET). As you are aware, in a landmark judgement, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, on 18th July, 2013, found **the Notification by the Medical Council of India and the Dental Council of India introducing a National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for the Undergraduate and Postgraduate Medical and Dental courses ultra vires the Constitution and quashed the said notification. The judgement had rightly upheld all the valid objections raised by Tamil Nadu.** This judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court was also widely welcomed. However, instead of abiding by the judgement of the Apex Court, the then UPA Government filed a Review Petition in the Supreme Court.

I had again written to the then Prime Minister on 28.7.2013, seeking a withdrawal of the Review Petition by the Government of India. The Tamil Nadu Government on its part has also filed a petition opposing the Review Petition filed by the Government of India.

You may also recall that in the Memorandum I had submitted on 3.6.2014, I had urged you to review the stand

taken by the UPA Government and withdraw the Review Petition and abide by the decision of the Supreme Court.

Despite our strong and sustained objections having been made abundantly clear, I am deeply concerned by reports that have appeared in a section of the media, which mention that, based on a proposal by the Medical Council of India, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has sought the views of other Ministries on the introduction of a Common Examination for medical admission. These media reports are yet again creating confusion and frustration in the minds of thousands of students of Tamil Nadu who are already covered by a fair and transparent admission policy laid down by the Government of Tamil Nadu, which has been working well.

Starting from 2005, the Government of Tamil Nadu has taken a number of steps to ensure a level playing field for students from rural areas and deprived backgrounds. Following up on these initiatives, after careful consideration, the Entrance Examination for professional Undergraduate courses was subsequently abolished. My Government has consistently been of the view that Common Entrance Examinations by design favour the urban elite, and rural students and students from poorer socio-economic backgrounds are unable to compete with students from such urban elite backgrounds in Common Entrance Examinations. Rural students are at a disadvantage because they lack the resources to enroll in training institutes and coaching classes and also lack access to study materials available to urban students. Consequently, a large number of meritorious students from rural areas and socially and economically backward backgrounds have benefited by the decision to abolish the Common Entrance Test.

For Postgraduate Medical courses, the Government of Tamil Nadu gives preference to those who have served in rural areas, with additional special weightage to those who work in hilly and tribal areas. This has significantly improved the availability of doctors at remote locations and also strengthened the quality of primary health care. The State Government has also successfully obtained and enforced bonds from those completing Postgraduate education in Government Medical Colleges to serve the State Government for a minimum period,

which has helped us to meet the need for specialist medical manpower in Government Hospitals.

The introduction of NEET or any Common Entrance Test would nullify the implementation of such progressive policy initiatives and prevent furthering of the socio-economic objectives of the State. The National Test would be out of tune with the prevailing socio-economic milieu and administrative requirements of Tamil Nadu.

I would further state that as the Central Government has already filed a Review Petition, seeking a review of the judgement of the Supreme Court and the same is pending, it will not be proper to consider any proposal to introduce NEET for admission to both Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses as the same would amount to circumventing the judgement of the Supreme Court.

Hence, I wish to once again bring to your notice that Tamil Nadu strongly objects to any such fresh purported attempts by the Government of India to nullify the judgement of the Supreme Court by seeking introduction of NEET, or by introducing it in any other name or manner, as it infringes upon the State's rights and admission policies to medical educational institutions in Tamil Nadu."

Issued by : Director, Information and Public Relations, Chennai – 9.
Date : 9.2.2016