

OPENING REMARKS OF THIRU M.K.STALIN, HON'BLE CHIEF MINISTER OF TAMIL NADU IN THE 1ST MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC ADVISORY COUNCIL ON 9th JULY, 2021.

Members of the Council constituted to transform Tamil Nadu into incomparable Tamil Nadu,

Prof. Raghuram Rajan

Prof.Esther Duflo

Prof.Jean Dreze

Dr.Arvind Subramanian

Dr.S.Narayan,

Minister for Finance & HRM,

Chief Secretary to Govt. of Tamil Nadu,

Vanakkam

Tamil Nadu is but a tiny speck in the vast wide globe. The State Government of this little speck constituted an Advisory Council, and 5 persons of your eminence agreed to join the Council. As the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, at the outset, I thank each one of you for having consented to join the Advisory Council. Your knowledge is extensive; your expertise is celebrated globally

and your services have been availed of by the entire world. This Government is fully aware of this.

At a time of such a severe crisis, you have accepted our invitation and joined the Economic Advisory Council. I wholeheartedly thank each one of you.

I am one who believes that the Chief Minister is not just an individual named Stalin. It is a shared responsibility. I have included you as part of that shared responsibility.

Although I have not had the opportunity of meeting each one of you in person and interacting with you so far, I have known each of you from a distance.

Each member of this Advisory Council is unique in their own way.

- Prof. Raghuram Rajan has been the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India.
- Prof. Esther Duflo is a Nobel laureate.
- Dr. Arvind Subramanian has been the Chief Economic Advisor to the Union Government.
- Prof. Jean Dreze is an economic expert who has co-authored books with Prof. Amartya Sen.

- Dr.S.Narayan has been the Union Finance Secretary and has served with distinction in many departments over the last 40 years.

Although Prof. Raghuram Rajan was born in Bhopal, his parents originally belonged to Tamil Nadu. Dr. Arvind Subramanian traces his roots to Tamil Nadu and he has been educated in Chennai. Dr. S.Narayan belongs to Tamil Nadu. The fact that 3 of the members of this Council belong to Tamil Nadu and they have in their own right risen to be globally renowned personalities is a matter of pride for the State.

Both Prof. Esther Duflo and Prof. Jean Dreze are not new to India and they have researched extensively on this country. Prof. Esther Duflo is from France, she now lives in America. She and her husband Prof. Abhijit Banerjee have written about eradication of poverty and have jointly won the Nobel Prize.

Prof. Jean Dreze is originally from Belgium, educated in England, and received his Ph.D in India. He has written books jointly with Prof. Amartya Sen. He was one of the architects of the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Programme which has created employment for millions of Indians who live in villages.

You know Tamil Nadu. You have understood Tamil Nadu. Hence, I do not have to explain about the field situation in Tamil Nadu to you in any great detail.

Tamil Nadu knows and recognizes each one of you. Dr. Raghuram Rajan's books have been published in Tamil. The book "An Uncertain Glory – India and its Contradictions" authored jointly by Prof. Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen has been translated and published in Tamil. In the book, Prof. Jean Dreze has dwelt in detail that the foundation of Tamil Nadu's progress has been growth with social welfare. He has written about how primary health care and the public distribution system have been instrumental to Tamil Nadu's development.

Prof. Jean Dreze also noted in his book and I quote:

"The question arises as to how and when Tamil Nadu developed this commitment to universal and well-functioning public services. Various interpretations have been proposed, focusing for instance on early social reforms (including the 'self-respect movement' founded by Periyar in the 1920s) the political empowerment of disadvantaged castes, the hold of populist politics, and the constructive agency of women in Tamil society".

There can be no higher praise than this for Thanthai Periyar, Anna and Kalaignar.

In his book “The Dravidian Years”, Dr. S.Narayan wrote and I quote:

“The Karunanidhi era was successful in creating a symbiotic relationship between politics, development, and administration, which laid the foundation for many more such programmes in later years”

This is what is called the Dravidian Model. Growth which includes all communities! Growth which covers all districts! Growth which includes all sections of the society! This is the Dravidian Model. I wish to see Tamil Nadu grow in this inclusive fashion. You have been invited to show us the way to achieve this goal.

- Please give us general policy advice on matters of the economy and social policy.
- Please give us your suggestions and recommendations on social justice and human development.
- How do we provide equal opportunities for women and the oppressed?
- Please give us suggestions on how to enhance the economic growth of the State, employment and productivity.
- Please advise us on how to shore up the fiscal situation of the State.

- Please make recommendations on how to enhance State capacity to deliver better services to the people.
- Allow us to consult you on new ideas and solutions for issues that we face from time to time.

I request you to analyze the issues and suggest possible remedies. Please feel free to render your advice at your earliest convenience.

We are all currently in different countries. Had it not been for the Covid-19 pandemic, we could have met and interacted in person. Once the pandemic abates, I look forward to meeting you all in person.

The very act of constituting such a Council has enhanced the image of Tamil Nadu globally. Leading newspapers in India have praised the Council, its members, the Tamil Nadu Government and me.

All this praise is a motivation to do more good to the people of Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu's economic growth has to accelerate. Employment has to increase. Per capita income has to grow. People's self-respect has to rise. We have to have inclusive growth which takes along everyone.

I am aware that these dreams cannot be easily realized. I am also aware that what we are contemplating and what is the reality today are different.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has a debt of more than Rs.5 lakh crores. The Public Sector Undertakings of the State have an outstanding debt of Rs.2 lakh crores. Financial resources are being raised only by a few departments that can be counted on the fingers of one hand. The State's autonomy in taxation has been taken away by the Union Government through GST. Hence, we cannot rely only on taxation measures.

We are in a position today where we can build on our own prosperity to grow more prosperous. Please show us the way whereby we can rely on our own resources to grow further.

Tamil Nadu has natural resources. It has good infrastructure. It has human resources. There is a sense of social responsibility. The world recognizes Tamil Nadu. People of Tamil origin live in more than a hundred countries across the world. This is the foundation on which we intend to grow. Please show us the way.

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam stands for social justice, equality, self-respect, love for the Tamil language, human rights, and State autonomy. Our growth strategy also needs to be founded on these principles.

Industrial development, social transformation, educational attainment, all need to happen at the same time. Growth cannot just be economic growth, but needs to be social progress as well. Economy, education, society, thinking and action all five need to progress. That is the growth Periyar, Anna and Kalaignar wanted to see. That is the Dravidian model of growth.

My Government needs to transform Tamil Nadu into the most favoured industrial investment destination in South Eastern Asia. We should be the State that provides high quality human resources to the whole world. We have to eliminate not just economic inequality, but social inequality as well.

Tamil Nadu should become the model State in India which other States would seek to emulate. You have to give us advice to make this happen.

These dreams of mine cannot be realized through ordinary reforms. I am aware that only through a total and dramatic transformation will my dream be realized. Let me assure you that Government of Tamil Nadu is prepared to do whatever it takes.

Today is an important day. I do not have to recall the renowned economist Dr. Amartya Sen to you. His book "Home in the World" about his life story was released earlier today. In it he asks:- "How do we measure whether a society is functioning well?" and

responds “It can be measured through the welfare of the individuals who have created the society”.

That is what my Government desires as well. I want every single person in Tamil Nadu to celebrate and proudly proclaim, “This is my Government”.

I request you to be partners in realizing this dream.

We will continue to meet, we will deliberate and we will create a prosperous Tamil Nadu.

Prof. Raghuram Rajan, Prof. Esther Duflo. Prof. Jean Dreze, Dr. Arvind Subramanian and Dr. S. Narayan, a special word of thanks to each one of you again.

VANAKKAM.

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