

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 13.3.2013 addressed by **Selvi J Jayalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to **Dr. Manmohan Singh**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is reproduced below:

"I invite your kind attention to the recent changes notified by the Union Public Service Commission in the scheme of the Civil Services Examination for the year 2013 onwards. These changes are highly discriminatory and appear to be calculated to bias the system against Civil Service aspirants from non-Hindi speaking regions of the country.

There are four major changes in the pattern of examination which adversely affect the interests of students from Tamil Nadu, particularly those from rural backgrounds. First, students who have had Tamil as their medium of education up to the high school level and who have subsequently done their graduation in the English medium earlier had the option of writing the Civil Service Examination in Tamil. This option has been removed with a new stipulation that the Main Examination including optional papers can be written in the Tamil medium, only if the candidates had studied in that medium up to the graduation level. This denies them the opportunity to write the examination in their mother tongue Tamil. However, there is no such stipulation for candidates who wish to appear in the Hindi medium. Considering that both Tamil and Hindi are languages included in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution, this clearly discriminates against not just Tamil speaking candidates, but against all candidates from the non-Hindi States, and in particular against rural students from the SC/STs, BC&MBC & other marginalised sections of the population who would have had their mother tongue as the medium of instruction up to the school level. This is violative of Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution of India and places such candidates at a disadvantage when compared to those students writing the examination in English or Hindi.

The second objectionable and discriminatory change is that candidates wanting to opt for the literature of a language as their optional paper can do so only if they had studied the literature of the language at the graduation level as the main subject. This is not just discriminatory but also illogical since such a stipulation has not been made for any other optional subject. Therefore, a student graduating in Mathematics can take History as an optional, but not Tamil Literature. This is illogical, discriminatory and unfair.

The third change notified by the Union Public Service Commission is that unless there is a minimum of 25 candidates opting for a particular language medium, those candidates will have to write the examination in English and Hindi only. This is inexplicable, discriminatory and violative of the Constitutional right to equality.

The fourth change is to remove the compulsory qualifying paper in an Indian language and the inclusion of an English composition and précis writing section as an evaluated portion of the Essay paper instead of the qualifying English paper. This change also clearly favours urban, English educated candidates and acts against rural students belonging to disadvantaged sections.

The changes made by the UPSC are invidious, discriminatory and militate against the federal nature of our polity and the constitutional equality bestowed upon regional languages like Tamil which are part of the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India. These changes clearly infringe on the Right to Equality in Public Employment enshrined in Article 16 of the Constitution of India. They work to the disadvantage of students coming from rural backgrounds who have studied in their native tongues at the school level and pursued higher education in another medium. All regional languages should be accorded equal status in a federal structure and aspirants to the Country's civil services should have the option to take the examination in any language, particularly their mother tongue, listed in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution.

I apprehend that these retrograde changes brought in by the Union Public Service Commission without adequate consultation with the State Governments are undemocratic and unilateral and will have the effect of unfairly denying the youth of Tamil Nadu their fair chance of representation in the Civil Services, and ultimately, hamper the governance of the country.

I urge you to intervene in the matter and prevail on the Union Public Service Commission to reconsider these invidious, unfair and discriminatory changes made in the scheme of the Civil Services Examination.

May I request an early response in the matter as it affects the future of several thousand young Civil Service aspirants in the State of Tamil Nadu?"

Issued by: Director, Information-Public Relations, Chennai.9

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