

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. Letter of Thiru M.K. Stalin, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Thiru Narendra Modi, relating to the report submitted by the Parliamentary Committee on Official Languages.

I write this to bring to your attention to an important issue that has been recently reported in the media relating to the report submitted by the Parliamentary Committee on Official Languages.

It has been reported that the Committee, chaired by Hon'ble Union Home Minister Thiru. Amit Shah, submitted its report to the Hon'ble President of India, wherein *inter-alia*, has recommended that Hindi should be the compulsory medium of instruction in educational institutions of the Union government such as IITs, IIMs, AIIMS and central universities and Hindi should replace English. It also includes a recommendation that Hindi shall be made as the medium of instruction in all technical, non-technical institutions and all the Union Government institutions including Kendriya Vidyalayas.

I am further given to understand that it has been further recommended that youth would be eligible for certain jobs only if they had studied Hindi, and removal of English as one of the compulsory papers in recruitment exams. These are all against the federal principles of our constitution and will only harm the multi-lingual fabric of our Nation.

There are 22 languages including Tamil in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. I consider that all those languages have equal rights. There are several demands that some more languages should also be included in this table.

I would like to point out that the number of people speaking languages other than Hindi is numerically more than Hindi-speaking people in the Indian Union. I am sure you would appreciate that every language has its own specialty with its uniqueness and linguistic culture. It is with the objective of protecting our rich and unique languages from the imposition of Hindi that English has been made as the link language and continue to be one of the official languages of the Union Government.

Tamil Nadu has been consistently and strongly raising its voice for the rights and protection of not just Tamil but all state languages. Several brave young men of Tamil Nadu sacrificed their lives in 1965 in the anti-Hindi agitation that erupted in Tamil Nadu against the imposition and to defend the mother tongue Tamil. Respecting the sentiments and understanding the need to maintain Indian unity and harmony, the then Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru gave an assurance that "English will continue to be one of the official languages as long as the non-Hindi speaking people want". Subsequently, the resolutions

passed in 1968 and 1976 on official language, and according to the rules laid down thereunder, ensured the use of both English and Hindi in union government services. This position must continue to remain as the corner stone of all discussions on official language.

The recent attempts to impose Hindi are impractical and divisive in character; puts non-Hindi speaking people in a very disadvantageous position in many respects. This will not be acceptable not only to Tamil Nadu but also to any state that respects and values their mother tongue.

All the regional languages, including Tamil, should be treated equally in India, and that is the way to ensure the principle of unity in diversity. All languages should be accorded the status of official language of the Union Government.

Promoting the rich and varied cultural diversity along with respective distinct linguistic flavours is the pride and strength of the Indian subcontinent. The Nation stands as a shining example for multicultural and multilingual democracy in the world arena today, because of the inclusive and harmonious policies being followed so far. But, I am afraid, the continued efforts to promoting Hindi in the name of 'one nation' will destroy the feeling of brotherhood of people of different languages and cultures and is detrimental to the integrity of India.

I suggest that the approach of the Union Government should be to include all languages, including Tamil, in the Eighth Schedule, the official language, keeping in view the scientific development and technological facilities and promote all languages and keep open the avenues of progress in terms of education and employment equal to speakers of all languages.

I therefore request that the efforts to impose Hindi in various ways as recommended in the report may not be taken forward and the glorious flame of unity of India may be held high forever.

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