

Speech of Thiru R. Sakkarapani, Hon'ble Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, Government of Tamil Nadu at the meeting of the State Food Ministers on 25th November, 2021 chaired by Hon'ble Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles to discuss the Model Community Kitchen's Scheme to address hunger and malnutrition in the country and other issues.

Good morning Hon'ble Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles,

Hon'ble Union Ministers of State,

Hon'ble State Ministers and Senior officials from the Union and State Governments.

I am honoured to be a part of this discussion on Model Community Kitchen Scheme to address hunger and malnutrition in the country and other issues.

On behalf of our **Hon'ble Chief Minister Thiru M.K. Stalin**, I would like to thank you all for providing us this opportunity to present our

Government's effort on Food and Nutritional Security, particularly to the vulnerable sections of the society.

Tamil Nadu is implementing the Universal Public Distribution System for more than 40 years, extending the umbrella of Food security to all categories of people without discrimination of income or social status. Though the National Food Security Act, 2013, was implemented in the State with effect from 01.11.2016 by following the scale of supply as mandated in the Act, Tamil Nadu has retained the universal character of its Public Distribution System.

To improve the nutritional value of the food basket of common people, the Government in 2007 led by the then **Hon'ble Chief Minister Muthamizharignar Kalaaignar** introduced the Special Public Distribution System. Under this scheme 1 Kg of Turdhal and 1 Litre of Palmolein oil are given to all the cardholders at highly subsidized rates.

Immediately after assuming office our Government has distributed 14 grocery items at a cost of Rs.978 crores to all the 2.09 crore family card holders along with Rs.4000/- as Corona relief. We are also providing 21 food items at an estimated cost of Rs.1161 crores on the eve of Pongal Festival in January 2022 to 2.15 crore family card holders.

The Government of Tamil Nadu is running 650 Community Kitchens named as Amma Unavagam through Local Bodies throughout the State in order to provide hygienic food at a subsidized price to benefit the poor and needy people.

It is pertinent to mention here that the above number includes such Canteens run in all the Government Medical College Hospitals and in the Government hospitals located in the district headquarters for the benefit of patients' attendants and out patients. These Community Kitchens provide one idly for Rupee-1, Pongal for Rs.5, Variety rice (Sambar Rice, Curry Leaves Rice and Lemon Rice) for Rs.5 and Curd Rice for Rs.3 in the day times and 2 chapathis with dhal for Rs.3 in the evenings.

From 01.06.2021 to 18.11.2021 more than 2.15 crore people have been benefitted through these Community Kitchens. 30 thousand 490 construction workers including migrant labourers have also been benefitted under this scheme during the same period. During Corona period and at the time of natural calamities, the food is served free of cost in these canteens.

It has been proposed to open an additional 500 such Community Kitchens to be called as Kalaignar Unavagam in the coming days.

In the financial year 2021-22, upto the month of September, 3 thousand 227 metric tonnes of rice and 362 tonnes of wheat have been used for this scheme. Approximately 3 lakh 50 thousand rupees is being spent per Kitchen per month.

To run this scheme and sustain it successfully we request the Union Government to provide 100% assistance under the National Food Security Act, 2013 to extend to all the needy people.

I take this opportunity to thank the Hon'ble Union Minister on behalf of farmers of Tamil Nadu for relaxing the uniform specifications of paddy for KMS 2021-22 on the request made by us on 21st September, 2021 in person.

Our another request for the deposit of one lakh metric tonnes of custom milled raw rice with nearby States through FCI in exchange of equivalent quantity of boiled rice every month may also be conceded at the earliest.

I assure that under the visionary leadership and guidance of our beloved leader and **Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Thiru M.K. Stalin**, Tamil Nadu will work in unison with the Union Government and other State Governments to make India free of hunger and malnutrition.

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