

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 28.7.2013 addressed by **Selvi J Jayalalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to **Dr.Manmohan Singh**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is reproduced below: -

"I wish to draw your attention to the recent landmark judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India pronounced on 18th July, 2013, by which the Notification of the Medical Council of India and the Dental Council of India introducing a National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for the Under Graduate and Post Graduate Medical and Dental courses has been found ultra vires of the Constitution and has been quashed. This has finally brought to an end a long pending and vexatious issue relating to a policy by which students aspiring for Medical and Dental seats at the Under Graduate and Post Graduate levels had to go through the agony of an uncertain selection process which militated against their interest and the interests of the State of Tamil Nadu. The majority judgment has rightly upheld all the valid objections raised by Tamil Nadu along with the contentions of the other petitioners. This judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court has been widely welcomed.

However, instead of abiding by the judgment of the Hon'ble Apex Court, a Press Statement attributed to the Union Health Minister Thiru Ghulam Nabi Azad has indicated that the Government of India may move the Supreme Court for a review of the judgment. This has again created confusion and frustration in the minds of thousands of students of Tamil Nadu who have already been covered by a fair and transparent admission policy laid down by the Government of Tamil Nadu which has been working well. Tamil Nadu **strongly objects to any such fresh purported attempts by the Government of India to seek a review of the judgment of the Supreme Court and efforts for reintroduction of NEET in any manner as it infringes upon the State's rights and admission policies to medical institutions in Tamil Nadu.**

You may recall that I had written to you on this issue twice, expressing the opposition of the State of Tamil Nadu to the introduction of NEET. The Government of Tamil Nadu had taken a number of deliberative steps starting from 2005 which culminated in the abolition of the Common Entrance Examination for professional under graduate courses in the State. The Common Entrance Examination would have put the rural students to great disadvantage because they lack the resources to enroll in training institutions and access materials available to urban students. Consequently, a large number of socially and economically backward meritorious rural

students have benefited by the decision to abolish the Common Entrance Test in the State.

Most importantly, Tamil Nadu has followed the policy of upholding social justice by following 69% reservation for Backward and Most Backward Communities and Scheduled Castes and Tribes in professional courses. You may be aware that, on my instructions, the Government of Tamil Nadu had enacted the Tamil Nadu Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of seats in Educational Institutions and of appointments or posts in the Services under the State) Act, 1993 (Tamil Nadu Act 45 of 1994) providing 69% reservation in education and employment for the depressed sections of Society and got it included in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. The introduction of a Common Entrance Test such as NEET would have created confusion and a plethora of litigations and confounded the smooth implementation of this reservation policy both in undergraduate and postgraduate medical and dental admissions in Tamil Nadu.

For the Post Graduate courses, the Government of Tamil Nadu gives preference to those who have served in rural areas, giving special weightage to those working in hilly and tribal areas. The Government has also successfully obtained and enforced bonds from those completing post graduate 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 would confound the implementation of these policy initiatives and socio-economic objectives of the State, since we would have to fall in line with the regulations of the national test, which did not have such enabling provisions. The national test would be out of tune with the prevailing socio-economic milieu and administrative requirements of Tamil Nadu.

The reported move of the Union Health Minister in seeking to file a review petition before the Supreme Court of India to reintroduce NEET should be immediately dropped. The Government of India should accept the decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court without seeking a review. "

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