

**PRESS RELEASE**

Text of the D.O.Letter dated 29.9.2015 addressed by Selvi J Jayalithaa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is reproduced below:-

"As you may be aware, Tamil Nadu has been successfully implementing a Universal Public Distribution System for the last several decades, which has won accolades from several domestic and international institutions including the Supreme Court of India. Through this system, the State has been able to address the issue of food security for all without exception.

I had raised a number of concerns about the implementation of the National Food Security Act in my letter dated 24.8.2013, addressed to your predecessor. I had also made a number of key suggestions to safeguard food security, as these issues were not adequately addressed when the National Food Security Act was passed by the then UPA Government. I had reiterated these suggestions in the Memorandum presented to you on 3.6.2014 and 7.8.2015. These suggestions include the following:

- The Government of India should provide a legally binding assurance on the issue price of food grains for the additional assured quantity provided for those States which are already drawing food grains over and above the guaranteed quantity under the Act (tide over allocation). Such additional quantities should continue to be supplied to the States at Rs.3 per kg.
- Preferably, the entire urban population should be covered as households eligible for allocation of subsidized food grains. Alternatively, at least 75 percent of the urban population should be covered as in the rural areas.
- The guarantee of supply of subsidized food grains with an assured level of subsidy from the Government of India under Schedule I of the Act should be extended from the present 3 years to a period of at least 10 years.
- A provision to obligate the Central Government to import food in times of scarcity is very crucial to make this legislation truly a Food Security Act. The "Provisioning of Funds to State Governments for Short Supply of Foodgrains Rules, 2014" is not an adequate safeguard for the interests of Tamil Nadu.
- The extended time period up to 30.9.2015 to complete identification of eligible households is not a realistic time frame, particularly as the districtwise break up data under the Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) is yet to be made available. Hence, at least 2 years time must be provided.
- The provision in the Act empowering the Central Government to introduce cash transfer and food coupon schemes must be

amended with a clear indication that any cash transfer scheme can be introduced only with the concurrence of the State Government.

While these lacunae in the Act are yet to be satisfactorily addressed, I had requested that the implementation of the National Food Security Act, and in particular the time period for identification of eligible families should be deferred by at least two more years.

The Government of India has given time to all the States up to 30.9.2015 to implement NFSA and to complete the process of identification of beneficiaries. The Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, in his D.O. letter No 15-25/2014-NFSA/4734 dated 17.9.2015, has reiterated the need to implement NFSA in the shortest possible time, without satisfactorily addressing Tamil Nadu's concerns regarding the National Food Security Act.

The time limit of 30.9.2015 to implement NFSA in Tamil Nadu is completely unrealistic. We have taken up the process of end to end computerization of the Public Distribution System, cleaning up the family card data base and the process of seeding the family card data base with Aadhaar numbers. Only after this process is completed will it be possible to identify the priority households under the NFSA. The Government of India will also have to take an early decision on Tamil Nadu's request and issues relating to NFSA, which are yet to be satisfactorily addressed.

In this context, it is essential to ensure that the Public Distribution System, which functions most effectively in Tamil Nadu, and is the pride of the State, is not allowed to suffer in anyway by imposing unrealistic time lines. Hence, I request that the Government of India should extend the process of implementation of NFSA in Tamil Nadu by at least one year and in the meantime address Tamil Nadu's legitimate concerns about NFSA.

Further, the level of allocation of food grains for Tamil Nadu should be maintained unchanged at the present level and at the present issue prices. This allocation includes 65,262 MT per month for Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) families, 1,04,936 MT per month for BPL families and 1,26,255 MT per month for APL families. I also request that the additional allocation of 27,969 MT of rice and 3,108 MT of wheat per month at BPL rates being provided since April, 2015, may also continue to be supplied for a further period of one year."

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