

# **Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme Department**

## **POLICY NOTE 2008-2009**

### **CHAPTER 1**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The department of Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme under the guidance of our Hon'ble Chief Minister has taken on a new dimension with successful implementation of new and innovative schemes. The Government through its concerted efforts has touched the lives of the marginalized section of the society-women, children, old, disabled last but not the least the transgender as well. The 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan document very elaborately explains the need for a liberal allotment of necessary funds to provide a conducive environment for the upliftment of this marginalized group.

The introduction of three eggs a week in the NMP for the children between 2-15 years and one egg a week between 1-2 years is a very unique programme launched by the Tamil Nadu Government. The three eggs a week apart from being appetizing will contribute to the physical and mental development of these young children. Though malnutrition is prevalent in most parts of India, but with a wholesome NMP the percentage of under nourished is 0.04 % in the age group of 0 to 3 years children and 0.01 % in the age group of 3 to 6 years children, significantly lower than the national average. Special emphasis has been taken to educate the adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women on the importance of adequate nutrition, a healthy diet, education, sanitation and personal hygiene.

The marriage assistance schemes apart from providing financial support, has been an incentive for young girls to complete their school education. It is encouraging to note that there is also an increase in number of couples requesting for assistance in the inter-caste marriage scheme. In a nutshell the marriage assistance schemes are paving the way for women's education, remarriage of widows, breaking down of the caste barriers - social issues which the great Dravidian stands for.

The disabled sector has shifted from a charity mode to charity-cum-empowerment mode. Within the entire country the Tamil Nadu State Government alone has introduced various innovative schemes such as early detection and intervention centres for the hearing impaired and mentally retarded, provision of motorized cycle to the disabled, and has started undergraduate course for the hearing impaired. A financial assistance of Rs.500/- per month is being provided to nearly 30,000 severely mentally retarded.

The fund allocation for the Old Age Pension Scheme has been increased from 703.39 Crores to 836.55 Crores benefitting 14,46,804 persons. The transgender group for the first time

have been integrated into the mainstream society by issuing ration cards – a path-breaking step by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

With a rapid economic growth, and Tamil Nadu a model state for the rest of the country in various fields, our Chief Minister wants to ensure that the marginalized section of the society also enjoy the fruits of development through the department of social welfare and NMP.